

An Initial Inquiry: Thoughts on Rosen Method and Spirituality, Part 1

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Abstract

This inquiry arose out of the authors' curiosity about how Rosen Method community members perceived the relationship--if any--between Rosen Method and their individual spiritual lives. We inquired, in general, about whether the process of receiving Rosen Method Bodywork (RMB) and Movement (RMM) offered new possibilities and understandings of their unique life path, including spirituality and how their spiritual path and embodied self-awareness evolved. Although spirituality as part of well-being is referenced in existing Rosen Method literature, we were curious about what practitioners had noticed in themselves, during training, and later in their work with clients.

Some elements of Rosen Method also occur in spiritual paths, for example, attention on the breath, presence, awareness, and self-reflection. We sought to explore whether participants felt some of the specific elements of Rosen Method relate to their own experiences of spirituality. We used a broad description of the term "spirituality" to invite participants to share from the full spectrum of their varied experiences.



Marion Rosen, the founder of Rosen Method (later referred to as “Marion”), focused on listening deeply to the body; her orientation evolved directly from years of clinical physical therapy practice. At the time Rosen Method was introduced to a broader public, Marion sought to frame the work in the context of whole person well-being. Marion’s primary purpose and intention was not to promote a spiritual outcome or to provide a spiritual resource for people. Her ideas on spirituality are expressed in depth in many of the books about Rosen Method, in which she urged Rosen students to invite each person to feel into their own truth, their aliveness and individual self. From the beginning of her teachings, there were students who reported experiences they characterized as spiritual.

We worked as a collaborative team to conduct listening groups and individual interviews with 33 participants from the Rosen community. All of the participants in listening groups or interview sessions reported instances of deepening embodied self-awareness during and after receiving RMB or RMM training. Almost all described this awareness as spiritual. All of our participants reported finding a deeper sense of their “true self,” as they described it, according to their individual perception and language.

Introduction

Marion Rosen’s favorite quote from Paracelsus:

“Inside every human being, there exists a special heaven, whole and unbroken.”

The authors (sometimes referred to as “the team”) came to the inquiry with “beginner’s mind,” knowing of our interest and the spiritual references in Rosen literature, but uncertain about what we would discover in the community of Rosen practitioners. We were aware of the need to be present and fluid as our inquiry developed. Our goal was to examine the shared experiences and the wisdom of others in our community.

The authors are aware that certain experiences are ineffable, difficult to express in words. They can be intimate and personal, hard to articulate, and we rarely have opportunities to feel safe enough to share them. Many individuals do not describe their experiences in what might be considered spiritual or religious terms; they may use words like “authenticity” or “truth.”

As we began our exploration of the interface of these two topics—Rosen Method and spirituality—we were sensitive to the challenges of communicating experiences in two such intimate and unique spheres. We realized that we were exploring these concepts and that a formal, statistical study would not yield the insights and depth we sought. Our approach reflects the choices we made in order to capture, as much as possible, the individual insights and differing perspectives of the participants (also referred to as “interviewees”). The reader will note the italicized quotations that follow each section. These are the comments of participants, whose voices and views are their own, illuminating their personal points of view.

During our exploratory interviews, we gathered a great deal of information and our first attempts at written summaries were daunting. We hoped to frame this inquiry in a manner that was “reader-friendly,” requiring us to alter the structure of this report several times. Because of the volume of the material we

gathered, we have created a two-part article. One is a description of the listening groups, interviews and our summary. The second part contains background readings and reflections from our team of authors about our process.

This project evolved from our early team explorations in 2017 until Fall, 2020, revealing a wealth of information and insights that the authors found perceptive and profound. We acknowledge the responsiveness of participants to the topic, and we hope for an ongoing future exploration in the Rosen community. If we have any regret, it is that we could only speak with a few members of the Rosen community, due to the time limits of using a team of volunteers. This initial inquiry offers a beginning, and we look forward to further conversation.

1. Developing a Plan

1.1 Guiding Questions

These questions inspired this inquiry as initial exploration prior to any future project on this topic.

1. Is the Rosen community interested in exploring the intersections between Rosen Method and individual spiritual experiences of members?
2. Can certain elements of Rosen Method support spiritual development? For example, can the aliveness or full embodiment encouraged by Rosen Movement influence spiritual life?
3. Could a pre-existing spiritual commitment or orientation inform the experience of learning Rosen Method?
4. Are there essential qualities emphasized in Rosen Method training that are also valued in various spiritual paths and practices?
5. Could strengthening embodied self-awareness support spirituality, in any way?

1.2 Process

For this preliminary exploration, we were influenced by a Collaborative, Participatory, Empowerment (CPE) approach. We adapted this approach to embrace Rosen-style communication values. CPE-style evaluation builds upon three evaluation approaches: Empowerment Evaluation, as described by David Fetterman, Ph.D. (1994) and Collaborative Evaluation, as taught by Liliana Roderiguez-Campos and Rigoberto Rincones-Gomez (2013). Using a CPE-style engages members of the community in the process. A collaborative approach ideally increases understanding among the participants, which often enhances the inquiry. The authors collaborated in shared decision-making throughout the whole process, from gathering information from other community members, developing the questions to ask, conducting the interviews, examining the responses as a team, summarizing what we learned in writing and considering conclusions.

We began by talking with a few Rosen community members, along with doing background reading for a preliminary literature review. We held frequent Zoom discussions of our insights and experiences within our team of authors. Then we asked several practitioners to help us create two discussion groups, as an initial foray to see how a few members of the Rosen community might respond to a group conversation about Rosen Method and spirituality. We asked them to reach out to long-term practitioners in the San Francisco Bay area of California, who were interested in this topic and could meet when two of our authors were in the area.

We gathered insights from these small listening group sessions as background information to develop our written queries and verbal interview questions. We recognized that different spiritual paths have different vocabularies, so we struggled to frame our questions, to make them broad enough to embrace various paths but clear enough to evoke meaningful replies. We then developed written questions and an interview protocol to use with a wider circle of practitioners. We explored the use of specific questions with some peers.

To identify individuals we could interview, we used the Rosen Institute membership list and contacted multiple colleagues, including members of the listening groups who assisted us in identifying additional participants. The criteria we used to choose participants was to select practitioners with varying years of Rosen practice, and to select for diversity in multiple types of spiritual practice. Initially we hoped to find a balanced number of those with spiritual practices and those with little interest in spiritual issues. Finding Rosen professionals to interview was difficult, due to availability and time constraints. Interviews were conducted with 33 Rosen community members. In our one-to-one interviews, the participants were deeply thoughtful as well as emotionally engaged in sharing their experiences, thoughts and insights.

Timeline: This project began in early 2017 and the interactions between interviewers and participants concluded in the fall, 2019. During 2020, the authors compiled the data collected, identified themes, and completed this article. A timeline detailing the stages of the project can be found in the Appendix.

2. Listening Groups

We held two listening groups that were more informal than focus groups, to encourage Rosen-style speaking and listening. Our study team selected questions for the listening groups based on our reading of Rosen Method literature and our background knowledge. Our goal was to learn from the participants' experiences and to explore the usefulness of the questions for future individual interviews.

In July 2018, four members of the team of authors conducted two groups before development of the written survey and telephone interviewing began, in order to improve the relevance of our interview process. For these groups, we asked Rosen colleagues to suggest RMB practitioners who might be interested in talking about Rosen Method and spirituality to join us in group discussions. These community members had many years of practice and training, with several also working as senior teachers of Rosen Method and as Rosen Method Movement teachers. They helped us by affirming their interest in the topic, by sharing the development of their spiritual journeys while studying Rosen Method, and by offering inspiration and suggestions for broader inquiry.



2.1 Questions for Listening Groups

We used spacious questions which participants were invited to answer as they wished, to explain as much as they chose. That is, as in typical Rosen discussions, individuals chose whether and when to participate and how much to share.

1. Do you consider yourself on a spiritual path, or identifying with a particular religious or spiritual tradition? If so, would you describe it?
2. Have your Rosen Method experiences and your spiritual journey influenced each other? If so, how?
3. Has your spiritual path or affiliation changed since you began your Rosen training? Are there new practices you have added, or has your personal identification with a spiritual path or group shifted over time?
4. During your time receiving RMB, did you have spiritual experiences during or following a RMB session? Or during your participation in RMM? Consider experiences that you might feel were “spiritual” even if you did not perceive this when they occurred, including those that you might describe as positive and blissful, or difficult or disturbing.
5. As a practitioner, have you had clients who have had what they or you consider spiritual experiences, or have you had spiritual experiences while giving a Rosen session or teaching Rosen Method movement? Please share some examples.

2.2 Spiritual Histories of Listening Group Participants

Participants in the listening groups described a wide variety of spiritual backgrounds, and many described their original paths as unfolding into other traditions or practices. Among the spiritual paths pursued throughout life were:

Buddhist (Zen, Tibetan, Thich Nhat Hanh), Yogic/Hindu, Jewish (Kabbalah), Christian (Protestant, Episcopalian, Quaker, Anglican, Catholic), Diamond Heart, Universal Order, Divine Feminine, Native American, Shamanic, and Nature or Earth-Based spirituality

Some individuals remained in their original spiritual tradition or religious affiliation but their connection deepened; others explored many paths as seekers and changed affiliations over time. Many of these seekers revealed that they now embrace a more expansive view of spiritual affiliation rather than one singular tradition, and they used terms like oneness, universal or non-dual to describe their current state. In addition, some have grown to feel that Rosen Method work is their spiritual practice.

Participants recalled the process of learning about spirituality in the faith traditions of childhood in their family of origin, or independently as teens or young adults. Some found deep insights in nature. Many were comfortable exploring a variety of practices and faith communities. These practitioners and teachers, who have been working on their own paths and with many clients over the years, also had extensive experience in related disciplines like yoga and various forms of meditation, and some had long-standing affiliation in various spiritual communities.

2.3 Insights from Listening Groups

Group members shared deeply; many said they experienced RMB as profoundly spiritual. Several pointed to the significance of Marion Rosen’s focus on the truth as inspirational. There was general agreement in the group that the silence of a session could result in a felt sense of “what is beyond space and time, that which just is.” Many reported that both RMB and RMM allowed them to feel a deep place within and to reach out to feel connection with others. They found significant learning in Rosen circle sharing groups, as well as the feeling of connection.

Participants asserted that the use of intentional touch, unconditional presence, and deep listening helps people learn to be with all their experience with openness and curiosity, to hold the full range of pleasurable and painful experiences. Several mentioned the value of combined RMB and RMM.

Many experienced a connection between the work received in a Rosen session or a RMM class and their spiritual journey. Many had received sessions from their practitioners that they considered deeply spiritual. They indicated that the process of spiritual unfolding is gradual, and that Rosen Method could gently soften the defenses the body has accumulated over time. One noted a moment in particular when the diaphragm let go and the state of awareness became a bliss state. They affirmed that, in general, in their experience, over time, RMB and RMM had led practitioners and clients to a deeper awareness of a sacred presence within.

Some of the remarks from the participants in the focus groups follow.

- *"The focus on the breath is a blessing."*
- *"I found that my spiritual practices and teachers and community influenced my study of Rosen and vice-versa. I learned how to hold unpleasant material that comes up and not to become too attached to it."*
- *"Rosen Method influenced my spiritual path. RMB created a sense of rest in my brain and I love how I can feel joy or rapture in my moods, my body, my feeling state. I also find this in movement, where the music and moving and connection to others creates a flow and sense of community. The movement is for me an embodied spiritual practice."*
- *"As a practitioner I have been with clients who expressed having a spiritual experience, sometimes a profound past life awareness, sometimes something visual or tactile, like being held by the Divine. Often it feels like a meditation in joint space."*
- *"I use verbal rapport and touch to connect to people on my table, and then in the second half I use deep silence. In this deep space there is grace and love, peace and freedom. Being together with someone is a great blessing."*



2.3.1 Insights on Healing and Expanded Awareness

Several participants had faced serious health crises like cancer, and they described the Rosen Method as a valuable resource during focus on recovery. Others mentioned a profound connection to nature--a feeling of certainty that we are not separated from the cosmos, that we belong to an overall oneness. Many noted personal experiences of expanded awareness and of living more in the present moment, in a state of "being" more than "doing."

Participants shared that their process included learning to be with their own suffering and that of others. Often, as they discussed their long journey into Rosen work, they found that they grew more comfortable with mystery.

- *"Most of my sessions with my clients are deeply spiritual. I give permission and opening to my clients . . . I bring sensitivity and awareness. On my flyer I speak of this Rosen work as unhurried, spacious grace."*
- *"I remember how the work helped to address my stubbornness. (As I continued) I felt that I was love. It was a non-dual experience that everything is connected, all is one. Totally clear the substance was love .*
- *"I had a sister and I loved her so much. When she became ill . . . I wanted to learn about touch. Touch is central to love. It is very profound to touch and be touched. Right now I am touching a friend who is dying. As I worked on him with touch, he felt safe enough to talk about his death. This process reminds me of my sister. I am now comfortable in this place of touching and also I no longer feel a need to know anything as I am in the place beyond knowing, in the mystery beyond thinking. There is nothing, except what is."*

2.3.2 Insights about Rosen Method Movement (RMM)

Listening group participants indicated that RMM was a powerful tool to support recovery of body awareness and spiritual learning, through the experience of joy and connection. The learning in RMM offered a direct experience of feeling the body in motion, observation of the breath, a sense of community, and joyfulness. The regular movement classes contributed to a softening of defenses or habits of protection. Participants noted that deepening from RMM is a long process and occurs over time. Some mentioned that RMM helped them feel more connected to nature, as a physical sensation, not separated from the cosmos but connected to Oneness.

2.4 Summary of Listening Groups

Every participant in the listening groups expressed strong interest in the interaction of Rosen Method and spirituality in their work and their lives. They noted the deeply private nature of spiritual life, and the importance of navigating a unique path, to be true to your inner essence or self. Many had sought out Rosen Method because it was recognized as a gentle and respectful way to support coming into greater awareness in the body.

All of the listening group respondents had some spiritual path or practice, ranging from formal connections to specific, often more traditional, religious organizations to individualized spiritual practices that evolved from decades of deep spiritual work. Participants agreed that receiving RMB or participating in RMM had allowed them to access places of rest and ease, states of peace and bliss, and direct expansive experiences of non-ordinary states beyond space and time. They indicated that pursuing this learning gave them a deeper understanding of love and connection.

Overall, participants felt their Rosen practice and their spiritual practice to be very connected. Some mentioned that for them, RMB and RMM were the core spiritual expression and community in their life. They cited examples of connection through a sense of presence shared between practitioner and the client. Many indicated they had experiences of sensing a deep connection with their practitioner and some noted that a kind of grace-filled awareness had been discerned with their practitioner, or one of the teachers during a training intensive process. All indicated a deepening trust of inner knowing. They mentioned being with mystery in a more curious way, more expansive in an ability to hold the unknowing. Some also affirmed a sense of connecting to a Divine Presence. Each had found a unique affiliation or way of practice that suited their inner truth.

The listening groups indicated that RMB and RMM can support an individual's inner truth and unique journey. The participants confirmed that their own spiritual lives and their Rosen experience had influenced each other in important ways. They also noted that the experience of spiritual expansion was not unusual for their clients. Their responses supported our intention to conduct individual interviews with more practitioners.



3. Creating the Process

The authors developed the written and verbal interview process based on the listening groups, and exploration of related literature. Several listening group members offered to provide additional suggestions and feedback about our questions. We selected key topics and settled on a limited number of qualities in RMB and RMM to discuss with our interviewees. We drafted questions, attempting to choose language that was clear and would be understood across many different spiritual backgrounds.

Prior to sending any material to participants, we sent e-mail invitations to a number of community members outlining our project and requesting their participation. We affirmed that their responses would be confidential, that is, not attributed to anyone by name. At the beginning of the verbal interview, we also requested explicit permission for recording.

3.1 Written Questions and Interview Questions

After multiple discussions, the authors selected 11 written questions (some with sub-parts), primarily regarding demographics and spiritual history, as an introduction to the concepts of this study. We wanted the interviewees to understand our approach to the project and to feel at ease in the later telephone interviews. These confidential questions invited the respondents to reflect on their spiritual background, including information about spiritual seeking and connections to religious or spiritual organizations, before and after Rosen Method training. We inquired about their Rosen Method roles, and their decision process to pursue Rosen training. We also invited reflections on their own internal process and information about spiritual experiences of their clients. (see Appendix)

The confidential telephone interview followed the written questions and included 12 items. These asked respondents about their spiritual recollections in early childhood, the qualities they felt supported their own spiritual unfolding while receiving Rosen sessions, and the qualities that support spiritual unfolding in general. Questions also asked what respondents observed in the spirituality of clients during their work as a practitioner or RMM teacher. The specific topics of embodiment, states of non-ordinary awareness, and being with suffering were included.

3.2 Selecting and Interviewing Participants

We chose to interview a range of individuals, including both RMB practitioners and RMM teachers, from those having 5 years or less of experience to those of 20 years or more of experience. We included teachers (workshop teachers, Senior Teachers) and some retired practitioners. The team selected individuals with known backgrounds in identifiable spiritual practice and those without affiliations. We selected

interviewees from a variety of diverse career backgrounds and some who had second vocations. Twenty-seven of our participants were from the USA, and we also interviewed six individuals from other countries.

Via telephone and e-mail, we contacted the participants and informed them that we would be asking written questions, followed by an interview by telephone or face-to-face. The same interviewer worked with the same interviewees throughout the whole process. We assigned interviewers considering time zones and distributed the interviewees consistent with the time and availability of the interviewing team. Each of our interviewers contacted participants both known and unknown to them. Participants were informed that comments in the interviews and survey were to be kept confidential; that is, their responses were to be anonymous in the written study.

Prior to the interviews, our team of Interviewers worked together to practice clear interview strategies, becoming familiar with the questions by using them with colleagues. The anticipated length for both written response and interview was approximately two hours. The training and the interviews were conducted during 2019. We collected 33 interviews and the accompanying written surveys. During the interviews, we found that the use of open-ended, evocative questions resulted in responses that sometimes showed deepening levels of self-revelation across more than one item, or in both the written and interview documents.

4. Summary of Participants' Responses

The written survey began with background inquiries: what drew the individual to Rosen, the duration of their Rosen career, and what roles they had in the Rosen community.

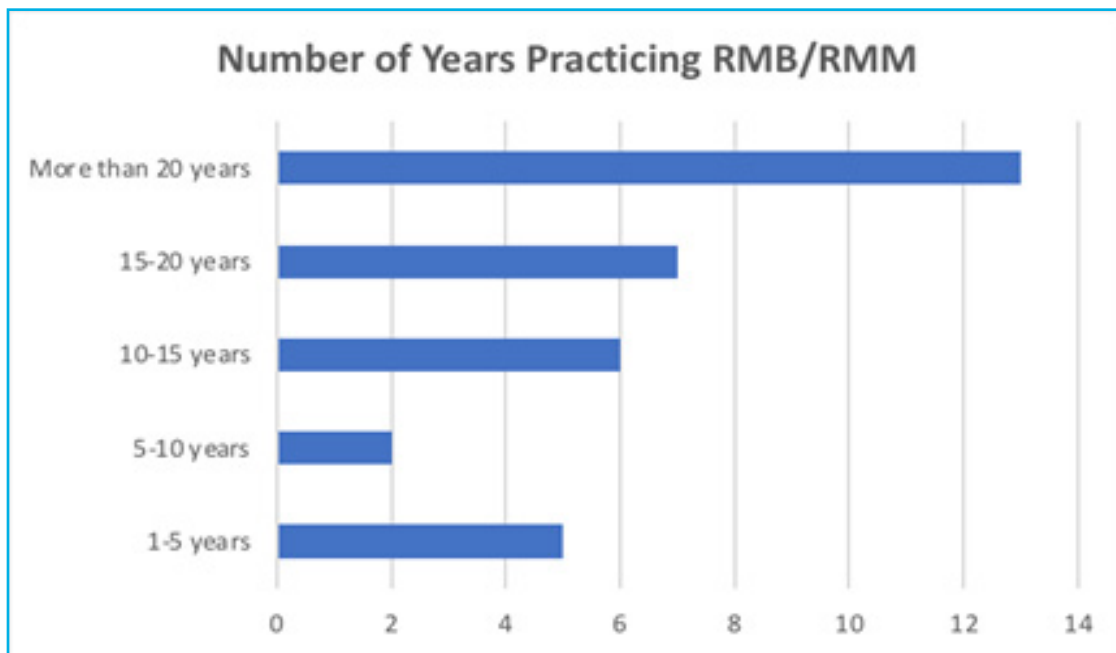
4.1 Reasons for Studying Rosen Method

Our interviewees reflected a wide array of vocational and educational backgrounds and previous careers, including massage therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, law, nursing, teaching, spiritual direction, art, hypnotherapy, and various kinds of ministry or religious roles and callings. There were many different reasons that individuals chose to study Rosen Method. Many came to learn this work to supplement or enhance their existing careers, like massage therapists and physiotherapists. Some came from professions that involved either mental or spiritual emphasis, and they wanted to integrate the life of the body. Others began to receive the work for individual healing and then continued to study to become practitioners.

Participants shared these reasons for studying Rosen Method:

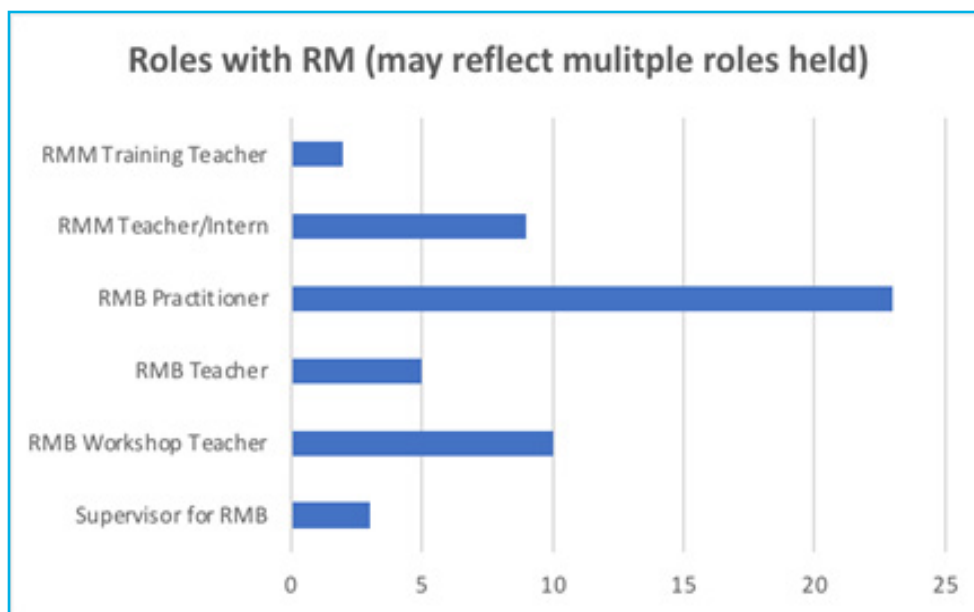
- To heal suffering, including grief, trauma or to recover embodiment
- To expand professional skills, for example, in physiotherapy (PT), psychotherapy, massage
- To study and/or engage in a career in which the whole person is explicitly addressed
- To follow the inspiration discovered in a transformative session of RMB or direct influence of their practitioner or teacher, from attending a presentation or receiving a session, or reading a book about RMB
- To pursue a referral by friend, co-worker, therapist
- To seek deeper inner knowledge; interested in truth, awareness, and embodiment.

4.2 Figure 1. Number of Years Practicing RMB/RMM



1-5 years: =5 5-10 years :=2
 10-15 years:=6 15-20 years: =7 More than 20 years: =13

4.3 Figure 2. Participant Roles in Rosen Method



RMM Training Teacher: 2 RMM Teacher/Intern: 9 RMB Practitioner: 23
 RMB Teacher: 5 RMB Workshop Teacher: 10 Supervisor for RMB: 3

4.4 Spiritual Backgrounds of Participants

In the written survey, participants described a wide variety of spiritual backgrounds, practices and affiliations which they pursued before, during and after Rosen training. In response to the question, "Did you have a spiritual practice before you began to experience Rosen Method," 25 of those who responded said, "Yes," three said "No," and five had responses that were more complex. Some were also devoted long-time members of one faith path or church or temple.



Others found their curiosity and interest in a broad range of spiritual practices expanding during the time they received Rosen, often pursuing multiple practices simultaneously and identified as seekers who had explored multiple paths. Several who had expansive spiritual unfolding of unitive consciousness or non-dual awareness found they readily embraced a very wide, diverse, multi-faceted spiritual life and practice. Other participants found spiritual fulfillment in art or had developed an individualized set of spiritual practices.

Although some interviewees have continued in a similar faith-based path, for example remaining in a specific Christian denomination, or practicing as clergy or chaplains in a single faith tradition, others were seekers in several paths. We offer the following examples of the different paths taken by single individuals, pointing to their quest for deeper truths.

- Jewish, feminist, Native American Shamanic perspective
- Catholic tradition, which changed over time based in prayer and the Way of the Heart
- Christian, Sufi, Buddhist, Thich Nhat Hanh, Pir Vilayat Khan
- Jewish, Buddhist, Yogic, evolving into Advaita Vedanta
- Christian, atheist, Goddess devotee
- Buddhist, Sufi, Jewish and Yogic evolving into a spiritual focus on movement, art-making and being in nature; Rosen bodywork as a spiritual practice
- 12-Step work, meditation, martial arts
- Meditation (Buddhist, Zen, Vipassana, Tibetan), Hatha Yoga, holotropic breathwork, Shamanism, and dance

4.4.1 Spiritual Upbringing

Participants had a wide range of spiritual upbringings, some that included active involvement in faith communities, some from environments with no connection to a faith tradition. More than half of the participants had connections to faith-based exposure as children through family experiences with religious institutions; these included both positive and less than positive experiences. A few had very little structured experience with formal or organized religious connections as children in their family of origin, but often had experiences in nature or the connection to a loving adult to provide guidance.

Regardless of childhood spiritual experiences, they either found spiritual 'homes' in a very wide variety of religions and spiritual practices in adulthood



or indicated they had created an individualized practice that suited them well. The amount of exposure to religious teachings or faith communities in childhood did not seem to influence the spiritual unfolding that all participants revealed from their time receiving RMB.

Several reported visions in childhood or a pull to the mystical. Some interviewees who had strong faith-based affiliations in organized religion shared memories of mystical feelings. Several noted that during teen and college years, they were introduced to spirituality through friends, extended relatives, or adult friends of the family or neighbors.

Many found learning and comfort in the natural world. They described being in nature as a formative experience during childhood and adolescence, with tremendous power to lead to a spiritual sensitivity. Almost all cited a strong connection to nature in their present adult lives; floating in a lake, seeing the ocean, and being in the forest brought them home to their own quiet center.



Some reported painful events, losses, and challenges before adulthood that they felt influenced their spiritual development. The majority had spiritual seeking experiences in young adulthood and this continues. They wanted to make sense of their lives, the world, to find approaches to help them grow and heal, and they sought out a wide range of teachers and opportunities to learn more.

They explored some forms of spiritual connection and learning on their own. When asked whether participants recalled any spiritual experiences from childhood, interviewees shared the following memories:

- o *"As a child I was overcome with a sense of awesome wonder, of being alive, of coming alive. I felt myself not in the context of my family but aware of connecting with something bigger and deeper."*
- o *"At the age of 10 or 11, I woke up fearful and saw a choir of angels singing out in the stairwell and felt suddenly safe. This was not a dream, I was wide awake."*
- o *"One time as a child in the synagogue where the scroll of the Torah is kept, I had a mystical feeling. You had to open a door, and then another door and then the scroll was opened. I had a sense of something opening for something else to open . . . a sort of no end to the opening. I had a feeling of endlessness."*

4.4.2 Formal Roles Within a Faith Community

We asked, "When you began your RBM/RMM training, did you work in a formal role in a faith community?" Six participants said they had been involved in religious occupations such as ministry, spiritual direction, or chaplaincy. Some were lay leaders for retreats in their tradition or congregation. There were 21 respondents who said they had not been involved in either a professional or lay role within a formal faith community.

When asked about work as a professional or lay volunteer in a faith community after RMB/RMM training, 28 participants responded. Of those, 10 indicated that they had been involved in formal or lay/volunteer roles. Three led meditation groups, one became a chaplain, another a spiritual director, one an Episcopal pastor, one a Protestant pastor, and one an interfaith leader. In addition, one became a Sufi Community volunteer leader, and one became a university professor and program director.

4.5 Spiritual Life after Learning Rosen Method

We asked if, and how, participants perceived that RMM and RMB contributed to changes in their spiritual lives. Some participants reflected on their spiritual journey and made decisions to alter their roles. Several of the respondents now work as clergy, in spiritual direction or in pastoral care as chaplains, and others have leadership roles as mentors, group leaders, and meditation teachers. One described a complete life change, leaving a faith vocation of many years to explore an entirely different tradition and path. Some said they remained with their original church or sangha (Sanskrit term for spiritual community) but felt stronger, more open, and more loving. Most of the Interviewees responded that Rosen work and/or the connection with a practitioner's presence had a significant impact on their spiritual development.

- *"My spiritual practices are less rigid, more fluid; I live with more spaciousness."*
- *"Learning Rosen Method helped me build the infrastructure for my spiritual life, founded upon recognizing my inner truth and allowing that to guide me. Everything in my spiritual life became coherent after I began working as a practitioner, when I finally found spiritual teachers who knew the depth and breadth of kundalini experience and could correct and support difficult risings. Having made progress at last in my spiritual life, I've come to understand and even better appreciate the depth and potential in RMB."*
- *"Through Rosen Method, my spirituality opened up and I participated in a Shamanic training program. I feel more secure in my intuition."*
- *"Learning Rosen Method Bodywork gave me confidence about my emotions and helped me as I deepened in my Vipassana practice. As I learned to live with my suffering I was better able to be with others in their suffering."*

5. Reaching Spirit Through the Body

In response to the question, "How can you reach spirit through the body?" participants affirmed that this was not a rare event in Rosen Method, that spirit could indeed be reached through the body. They described the way embodied self-awareness led to changes in understanding and the felt experience of aliveness, both for themselves and for clients.

- *"For (one to reach spirit through the body), the person must first accept and respect that there is a greater reality within us. Through the practitioner's respectful touch and not-knowing presence, this can happen. The client can only open to it, to the extent that the practitioner is open to the possibility of it happening."*
- *"RMB is for me a spiritual experience, because it addresses itself precisely to our real being and to what we are, and it is stimulating and awakening our consciousness of events forgotten and put in subconsciousness . . . but these events are precisely the barriers to breath, life, and wellness."*
- *"Through use of presence and touch, in the quietness of a moment, there is an opening created when a soft hand and open heart meets another person, (literally) through resonance. This is an unquestionable*



actual link to our spiritual selves. A true meeting, from one soul to another. Resonance is an actual physical experience that welcomes and allows a spiritual connection with another."

- *"You can reach spirit, through the body, the breath, by paying attention, touching, intending to touch the places that are held."*
- *"When both practitioner and client are in line, with an open connection, then (the body can reach spirit), it can happen."*
- *"I can relate to something bigger than myself through myself. We are given a body so that we can become consciously aware that we are connected to everything."*

5.1 Mutual Support Between Spirituality and Rosen Method

We asked whether participants found their spiritual life and Rosen Method experience to be mutually supportive, each influencing and enhancing the other. Some participants reported that RMB and RMM strengthened awareness of the body; others noted that the learning in RMB led to increased non-dual understanding. Some asserted that their spiritual path led them to Rosen Method, as they recognized this professional role as a way to express their existing values and their desire to help people in a tactile, personal way.

Many felt that Rosen Method deeply informs their spiritual practice, integrated so thoroughly that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. Several people asserted, "Rosen Method is my spiritual practice!"

- *"RMB is for me a spiritual experience because it addresses itself precisely to our real being and to what we are and it is stimulating and awakening our consciousness of events forgotten and put in our subconscious--but these events are precisely the barriers to breath, life and wellness."*
- *"Rosen is a way of life. Learning how to touch and be touched in Rosen gave me an understanding of how to navigate in life which did not come from the mind, it came from the body and the spirit. In my training, when I was taught to do something with my hands, I was being taught to do something with my heart."*
- *"RMB offered a model for so many qualities sought in spiritual life: presence, non-judgment, allowing things to be without fixing or analyzing, allowing intuition to offer up its insights, sitting quietly and waiting for what might arise."*
- *"I find that Rosen Method Bodywork and Rosen Method Movement are inseparable from spiritual practice."*
- *"It was also a great help to learn in Rosen that insight can be glorious but afterward, hidden/forgotten pain can arise. At first I felt blindsided and betrayed by the emergence of the old pain, but I found that it was the fruit of the process—the opportunity to hold it differently or to let it go more freely."*

Our participants revealed many spiritual lessons that arose from their Rosen Method experiences. For example, one *“experienced the awareness of that Divine expanding, when I receive bodywork and when I move, it is the experience of the Divine transcendence and immanence--both.”*

- *“My spiritual practice is amplified when I touch people with love, as in Rosen. I want to embrace life. This is Rosen Method work.”*
- *“The body is the outer expression of what we really are in ourselves, in our inner being, the vehicle of our soul.”*

5.2 Embodied Self-Awareness

Central to Rosen Method is the acknowledgement that embodiment (embodied self-awareness) is what the work seeks. Some respondents spoke of the diaphragm as an immediate indicator of truth, because, they said, thoughts “flutter with the diaphragm.” Others noted they were helped by meditation practice, or by directing the attention to open, non-judgmental thoughts. Many interviewees observed that they found receiving RMB and participating in RMM profoundly helpful for supporting spiritual unfolding.

- *“Just as suffering causes the body to numb and shut down, fuller embodiment makes space for attention and awareness, easing the process of surrender, release, letting go.”*
- *“RM created more somatic awareness in me. I know when I am tight, bracing, and being triggered. I still get triggered but I am aware now I have more self-knowing.”*
- *“I learned to have an embodied sustained awareness--strengthened by my meditation. Yet I found that being on the Rosen table one can move into that awareness; it feels so much easier than in the meditation hall.”*



5.3 Support for Awareness through Rosen Method Movement

All of our interviewees had participated in RMM classes during their training in Rosen Method Bodywork. Many of them continued their training to become RMM teachers: We interviewed seven participants who had completed the RMM teacher training, and three who are in or have been in the RMM training process, plus two who are senior RMM teachers. The RMM teachers in our sample were very clear about the spiritual unfolding that can occur from participating in RMM classes. *“The movements, stretching, and music stir up things, bring up and allow feelings to be named and felt. They open up and assist connection with oneself. RMM supports spiritual growth and one can reach spirit through the body if one is open to it.”* The experience of an overlap, or mutual support, between RMB and RMM, can influence and assist a deepening relaxation.

- *“In RMM there are moments when opening the chest, or lifting the arms, with the right music have made me feel extremely joyous, even cathartic.”*
- *“One strong experience I had at an intensive was when my diaphragm relaxed completely. I felt total peace, it was a big opening and in the moment it was so much greater than me. There was no effort.”*

RMM has been key for me in finding the effortless of that experience. It affects every part of my life, and I try to do things with as little effort as possible. The less effort I make in RMM the less effort I make in life in general."

When RMM teachers spoke of their own inner sense of spirituality when leading a session, they affirmed a sense of "deep respect, reverence, and appreciation" for the people moving with them. One teacher said, *"I myself have had deep insights during movement classes. I hope my students learn that these Rosen style movements open them to a world around them."*

Several teachers stated that RMM classes, to keep the mind and body healthy and in good working order, are part of their spiritual quest. They describe a natural unfolding experience of togetherness and joy as they observe students moving, they indicate feelings like a sense of "awe" to see people "open up."

Several RMM teachers pointed to the experience of connection that can emerge from moving together; one described it as a magical feeling. Another teacher shared that she has the sense that *"I am no longer leading, I'm in a wonderful dance with all those who come to my classes."*

- *"It is greater than our individuality and so we connect without knowing it, even when we don't touch. The rhythm of others' bodies enters our own. We can forget ourselves, and out of the circle a new wholeness is born in the moment."*
- *"It is that connection and deep caring for the circle we've created together. The class forms a container for what we experience together, a safe place to share and hold one another."*



Several interviewees pointed to the way RMB and RMM together provide powerful support, as a person learns the deep relaxation and healing of embodied self-awareness.

One teacher said, *"We can dissemble with our words and pretend with our faces, but when we start to move, especially with some forgetting of the self, our truth is exposed. In RMM, we may be graceful, clumsy, out of step but it is all right in the container of an RMM session."*

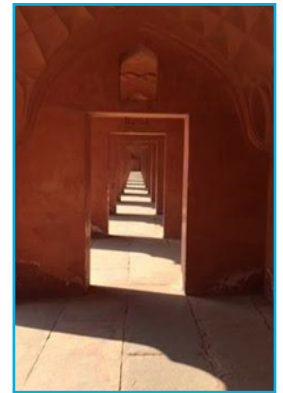
- *"In movement classes I have experienced a non-ordinary awareness in clients, and this sense of expanded consciousness. I find non-judgmental pursuit of 'moment to moment unfolding' of the truths stored in the body is a wondrous feeling-experience in itself. We are so much more than what's just on the surface."*

6. Expanded Awareness Experiences

We asked participants whether they had experiences of non-ordinary awareness or expanded consciousness in RMB or RMM? We also asked if their clients had experience with this? All of them affirmed that they had. Several described the feeling of spaciousness and opening after a RMB session, as well as particular experiences of non-ordinary awareness. Others told us of a sense of calm, peace, oneness with Spirit, space without structure, a place of undefined unity, emerging during or from RMB. Several described

the experience of connecting to emptiness. Many noted what they felt were personal spiritual awakening experiences. Many found expanded consciousness to be present with a relative regularity. One seasoned practitioner clarified that her experience involved many small awakenings or insights rather than a single stunning emergence.

- *"It has been a continuous journey with a number of spiritual experiences and awakenings, especially during intensives."*
- *"In Rosen sessions, the connection is deep, vast and spacious; the client and I find ourselves in an altered space."*
- *"We were gathered in a Rosen circle and I felt the power of the circle. This was the biggest spiritual awareness, the feeling that I was not alone, and that I was able to be aware of other people."*
- *"Because of Rosen, I have developed in my (daily) life, and therefore I have more spiritual experiences on the table. They are often realizations about my connection with Spirit, they are more personal. I become more aware of myself as being and more self- understanding. It is like entering a stream and getting in touch with who I am. I also often have experiences in my life. They are more universal, being part of everything, merging, being part of all that is, being part of everything."*
- *"What we have as human beings is our senses. I have a feeling of Spirit, now it means something bigger than me, something holy. It cannot be destroyed, it just is. How do we know that Spirit is there if we cannot feel it?"*
- *"RMB and RMM have been a wonderful door towards the spiritual path. As is said: there are 10,000 dharma doors and any committed practice can shape and deepen and open one."*
- *"I was receiving a session. [An image arose], a very beautiful storm cloud with light along the edge of the cloud, bright light emanating. . .There were no longer boundaries. An experience of a web of interaction, everything is breathing together, a quality of dynamism, exchange, some kind of expansiveness, very subtle movement. . .The image didn't last. The experience is integrated into me, a spiritual quality, expansive, aware, vivid, yet sensual."*



6.1 Surrender/Letting Go/Release

The concepts of surrender and letting go are intrinsic to many, if not all, spiritual practices, whether or not expressed in exactly those words. We asked whether the experience of Rosen Method had contributed in any way to increased ease with surrender or letting go. Almost every respondent spoke of learning greater and more fluid access to letting go, or surrender, or release through Rosen Method.

Participants were not uniformly comfortable with the concept of surrender. Some preferred "release." For some, the idea of "letting go" meant "giving up." Others described this general concept in different terms, such as "felt in the body as release," or "letting go of the clinging to that which no longer serves."



- *"The embodiment that RMB and RMM encourages helps and sustains the awareness of surrendering, of letting go."*
- *"There is a poem about a father teaching his daughter to float, and I used to cry every time I read it, I was so moved by the impossibility of it. To trust that it is safe to surrender and let go has come very gradually in my life. Feeling safe in Rosen, safe to feel, safe to speak, and feeling my own trustworthiness have increased my capacity for surrender and letting go."*
- *"The moment I say 'I,' there is not surrender, not letting go. All of a sudden, it can happen, it is not 'I' any more and there is no fear."*

6.2 Oneness

Like so many concepts, oneness is nearly impossible to articulate and yet the experience of oneness or unitive consciousness was expressed by numerous participants. Thomas Merton, in *The Asian Journal* (1975), described it: *"And the deepest level of communication is not communication but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity. My dear brothers and sisters, we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. So what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are."*

Some of our interviewees described their experiences of oneness:

- *"I frequently have a sense of merging with all that is. I feel at peace that I'm all right just as I am. I often gain important spiritual and emotional insights. Recently when giving sessions, sometimes I feel another presence supporting me and the client. This allows me to connect more deeply with the client."*
- *"... almost a disintegration of the physical 'me' into something grander."*
- *"... moments in a session when it feels like a silence, a pause; you feel something has shifted and there's an opening. In RMM there are moments when separateness disappears."*
- *"We are all one. Everything is part of the same whole. For me that's ALL inclusive, not just the human species. The oneness of it all, the connection to everything"*

7. Observations about Clients

7.1 Client Experience of Expanded Awareness

Interview participants were asked, "In RMB and RMM have you experienced non-ordinary awareness or expanded consciousness?" and "Have you observed this in clients?" All participants responded with examples of clients who had dealt with spiritual issues. They noted that people seek RMB or RMM for a variety of reasons, including childhood distress or suffering, pain and loss at any stage of life, illness, physical or emotional trauma, and the effects of these issues in the body. Participants spoke of client comments about the sense of freedom they felt after the tender issues were shared and acknowledged through the body.

Almost all of those interviewed spoke of moments when their clients described being in states of non-ordinary consciousness, or when a vision emerged, or when they experienced expanded consciousness. Some of these moments of sharing occurred when the client was on the table, while some sharing took place after the session. Some participants spoke of a strong sense that a client had been in a non-ordinary state, though it was not discussed.

- *"One client had a series of visions of his grandfather performing shamanic rituals on a mountain top. Another told me that he felt he was in the lap of God. These were specific experiences that they shared, in addition to the non-ordinary experiences of deep connection that happen often in giving and receiving touch, like shared meditations."*
- *"What I've heard from clients, 'Oh my God, I had no idea I had such space in me!' when becoming aware of such an expansion within."*

7.2 Referring Clients for Spiritual Guidance

We asked whether our participants typically referred other professionals to support those clients who felt stuck or struggling with spiritual questions. Although there was a range of responses, most said the intensity of struggle that might call for a referral had not occurred often (or at all) in their practice. Many said that they would consider referral to a psychotherapist or spiritual director whom they knew as capable of holding a spiritual container. While some of our participants said they recommend community resources to learn meditation, or they announce workshops, refer to 12 step programs or Adult Children of Alcoholics programs, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Family Constellation work, only a few made direct referrals for spiritual work.



Several respondents also have additional training or work as chaplains, ministers/clergy, meditation teachers or spiritual directors. Some said they felt comfortable listening to spiritual issues with clients, after the clients brought it up.

No one felt it was appropriate to offer or impose their spiritual beliefs or convictions upon clients.

The variety of responses about referrals regarding spiritual issues suggests another topic for future exploration in the Rosen community. We are mindful of the RM scope of practice guidelines and the need for discernment about referrals on the part of practitioners.

7.3 Clients with Physical Manifestations of Spiritual Experiences

The authors perceived a link between spiritual experiences and the more long-term, and often more intense, processes of spiritual emergence or kundalini. Both terms refer to the experience of an awakening of inner spiritual power which may come about through spiritual practices, a faith tradition, or perhaps unexpected peak experiences.

The processes of spiritual growth such as kundalini or spiritual emergence often include physical manifestations that could be perceived in the client during RMB sessions. In a Rosen session, for example, the client could feel rising or flowing energy, sudden heat, or a pounding heartbeat and share those sensations with the practitioner. Or the practitioner might observe the client moving involuntarily, jerking or writhing or making spontaneous gestures or poses. These experiences can be varied in both the action that occurs and the duration.



Although we are unable in this study to offer more than an acknowledgement of such powerful and profound spiritual experiences, we wanted at least to offer the concepts for Rosen Method professionals and other readers' consideration.

We wondered whether Rosen Method professionals are aware of kundalini process and referral resources. Only two in the six of those who responded to this item had made referrals on account of a client's spiritual emergence or kundalini process. Three felt no need to refer out to an expert on kundalini or spiritual process. They felt able to be fully present as a RMB practitioner.

Another person noted that the client was already well-supported by an additional, appropriate professional team. Another said, *"Although my Kundalini process occurred ten years before I began studying RMB, I was unable to find coherent ways to help myself or others. I went to numerous therapists and got a master's degree in Counseling Psychology and still, I encountered no one who actually knew how to support Kundalini process. I knew no one I could trust for a referral, had I felt it was appropriate."*

In general, we wondered whether many practitioners had little contact with spiritual emergence or kundalini, and perhaps did not recognize them. This may be an area for later exploration in the Rosen community.

8. Qualities in Rosen Method that Can Support Spiritual Awareness

The authors posited that there were particular qualities or aspects of RMB and RMM that, at least for some people, could support a person's listening within to their truth, to aliveness and to spiritual unfolding. From our listening groups and our background reading and discussions, we selected 10 qualities as some of the important underpinnings for Rosen Method. These 10 qualities were included in a survey question. In interview questions, we inquired about two additional aspects of RMB the authors considered fundamental: learning to be with suffering, and being supported in release or surrender. Thus, we include 12 qualities in the list below.

We offered these qualities and invited the input of our participants about additional qualities that were meaningful to them. To reiterate: There are numerous aspects of RMB and RMM qualities that are profound. We chose to limit our list so that the respondents could consider their own experiences and reveal qualities that they had felt or witnessed.

Qualities Included in Inquiry

- Presence
- Touch
- Listening
- Non-judgment
- Connection to increased body awareness
- Self-reflection
- Enhanced trust in intuition
- Capacity for connection to others
- Experience of joy
- Experience of release or freedom
- Surrender, letting go
- Being with suffering



The interviewees affirmed that they experienced all of these qualities during RMB or RMM. However, three of the respondents expanded upon their answers. One suggested that the experience of self-reflection more accurately arises afterwards, not in a session, and two felt that the experience of joy was not a frequent reaction but instead a possibility that occurred only some of the time.

Of the 12 qualities that might contribute to bridging body and spirit, we have selected four for deeper discussion. We chose not to dwell more deeply on all the qualities in this report due to time and space constraints. All the qualities noted in the survey and by participants are important underpinnings in Rosen Method and in spiritual life; we are sharing the participants' responses to Presence, Touch, Connection, and Being with Suffering as especially compelling.

8.1 Presence

The focus group participants and the interviewees noted the importance of presence felt in spiritual practices and in Rosen Method. The quality of presence is described as essential in Rosen Method and noted in several books. Marilyn J. Davis, (2002), declares presence as the soul of Rosen Method. She says, *"When I began to learn the Rosen Method, it dawned on me that the essence of the work was presence. This realization was a wonderful awakening for me, a kind of return to myself—to my original life's commitment to be a presence to others, lending stability to those who feel they are about to come apart . . ."*

Sandra Wooten (1995), in her book and in her teaching, says, *"The Rosen practitioner simply is with the other person. Rosen Method practitioners are trained in the art of presence and the skill of gentle touch . . . (with) the intention of being present in a fully accepting and non-intrusive manner. The practitioner is respectful of whatever emerges."* Wooten explains, *"I watch, I feel, and listen with rapt attention to the client, while at the same time drawing on my own experience, internal awareness and knowledge, in order to assist in the unfolding of the client's process."*

Many interviewees noted how presence permeates all of the connections in Rosen Method, that is, they spoke of "presence with self," "presence in a session," "presence in Rosen circles," "presence in Rosen Movement," and also the frequent experience of awareness of a greater Presence illuminating each of these encounters. They asserted that unconditional presence and deep listening in RM help clients learn to be with all of their experience and that over time may lead them to a deeper awareness of the sacred within.

- *"There is a quality of beingness about this presence, an aliveness, when the practitioner is totally present to me, open and receptive. The whole of me is being seen . . . the experience of sustained presence allows me to deeply relax into the experience of receiving myself and whatever arises from within myself."*
- *"It is important to recognize the real power of Rosen. The combination of presence, of witnessing, and of words in facilitating the person's increased awareness about themselves and their own life, is very important in Rosen Method."*
- *"I use verbal rapport and touch to connect to people on my table.....In this deep space there is grace, love, peace and freedom. Being together with someone is a great blessing".*
- *"We are held by the presence of a practitioner's attention as we explore the interior of ourselves, the deepness within that we all share".*



Interviewees observed that working with deeply spiritual practitioners and teachers has a huge impact. Interviewees noted strong respect and a felt spiritual presence from teachers who clearly had spiritual experience and depth.

"As practitioners we learn this deep therapeutic presence, a quality of being, which feels healing, steady and safe, through receiving Rosen sessions. There is a quality of beingness about this presence of the Rosen practitioner, an aliveness, when the practitioner is totally present to me."

One participant summarized, *"RM has assisted me to become aware of (my feelings), to recognize the moment an emotion arises and to notice my stopping them. If I hold back my emotions, I cannot transform them. This is a very spiritual practice for me, presence with myself and everything that is."* Another said, *"When I rest I am in my body directly. Now I can easily rest and reflect with myself. I could never have reached that without RM."*

During Rosen Method training, both for movement and bodywork, a sharing circle offers students an opportunity to speak their own truth, to share their difficulties and vulnerabilities, and the sharing is held in a respectful way. The teachers often guide the person sharing to the felt sense; for example, by asking where an emotion is felt in the speaker's body. A number of interviewees mentioned the particular presence of the sharing circle, a unique way of speaking and listening in a group. Interviewees also noted that in RMM classes they felt a sense of group presence, immediacy, and attentiveness.

- *"What I learned from RMM is that now I am inhabiting my own space, to be present to myself, to wake up in my body and feel spacious and graceful in my body because the movements were healing."*

Some interviewees also described the recognition of an expansion of presence into a greater Presence, for example: *"... a sense of greater presence . . . my trust in something bigger than just me and a client, an experience that happens between worlds."*

- *"Presence applies directly to the being of the client. It is very difficult to acquire it but every second of real presence has the value of eternity. In our being we all have the same potentialities, are one, peaceful, joyful."*

- *"I remember one dream I shared with my teacher. I was dreaming and I was starting to do a session on a male client and I realized God was within him, and that was an important realization. She confirmed, she said, 'Yes, you've got it'. That it was about recognizing the Divine in each person we worked on."*

8.2 Touch

Use of a specific type of touch is fundamental to Rosen Method. It is an essential element in facilitating the process of emotional, psychological, and spiritual development. Touch has been used in the laying on of hands in Christian traditions, in shamanic practices, and in qi gong healing work, for example. However, this study was not designed to review all the ways that touch is used across multiple spiritual traditions and practices.



In RMB, practitioners use a relaxed open hand, with the palm making a connection, as the warmest and softest part of the hand. The type of touch used in RMB allows for a degree of connection that is experienced as a communication from the heart. The soft, focused sensation of the hand allows receivers to feel themselves from the inside out.

Ivy Green describes the intentions informing Rosen Method touch: "The touch Rosen Method bodywork practitioners use is intentional. The first intention of the touch is always to make contact, to begin a relationship. The second intention . . . is to listen and receive what the client's body is expressing. The third intention . . . is to explore using curiosity. The fourth . . . is to provide support to an area on the client's body that has drawn the practitioner's attention and curiosity. The fifth intention of the touch is possibility." (Green, 2016, p. 25-31)

Marion Rosen and Gloria Hessullund, in an article called "Spiritual Dimensions of RMB," described the feelings arising when they touch. They noted feeling awed by the other person, affirming that they feel respect and reverence. (Keller, 1993)

All of our participants noted that when they touch clients, it provides a connection of deep respect, reverence, and appreciation or caring.

"There is a dance between the two hands of the practitioner: one hand leads, explores, the other one listens and vice versa, aware, in this presence, of love and beauty and suffering and compassion."

- *"Human beings, Quakers say, have 'that of God' within them. I was touching what was in a person, some aspect related to the divine, to God in my language, but also touching the physical person."*
- *"One time on the table, the practitioner's light touch relaxed my whole body. I had a painful spot around my heart for years and did not know what it was. During the session, it opened up and I became aware that it was about the love I had put away."*
- *"... when I touch the muscle tension, I touch the place that made the effort to protect the self. This is the place that blocked the aliveness."*

- *"I received my first RMB session about ten years ago and that had an enormous effect on my body and soul--to be touched and spoken to in such a caring way."*
- *"During my first few sessions of receiving Rosen, I could hardly receive without crying. I was reminded about how little care I had received from my mother. Through the care, the attention, the soft voice of the practitioner. Having her present for a whole hour totally focusing on me, who saw me, who wanted to stay with me and did not leave me, felt too much for me. I could hardly take it in. . . When a woman touches, we think of the mother. It was good for me that the practitioner was a woman."*

8.3 Connection

Connection is multifaceted and multi-layered. It includes connection to ourselves, within our body, to our clients, to our community, and on to the circles of deep connection we feel to the planet and beyond. In RMB, it distinctly includes touch--touch which intentionally makes physical connection is one of the main hallmarks of RMB. It also includes the connection that emerges in presence and in our use and phrasing of our verbal connection.

The connections that emerge in both RMB and RMM can be between outer-inner, between past-present-future, connections that may be unseen but are nevertheless real. This fluid connection is an acquired skill, like developing the ability to see the breath move through the body. Discovering the connection is elusive yet tangible, felt yet almost unseen, limitless yet concise, secret yet shared by many.

RMM also provides community and connection; being in a circle and moving together provides community. The circle makes a difference. Interviewees spoke of that connection and "deep caring" for the "circle we have created together." The class forms a container for what we experience together, a safe place to share and to hold one another. In the words of interviewees, RMM gives "a sense of joy within community," it "fosters community," it "provides opportunity for people to connect with those they know and with strangers." In movement class there is this shared sense of deep community and human potential, connection with self and with others.

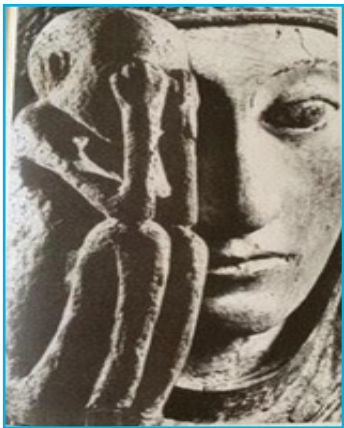
A few interviewees shared their insights about how some of these many levels of connection found in Rosen Method have a spiritual significance for them.

- *"There is a certain feeling, a numinous kind of feeling, that can occur in a Rosen session and is analogous to prayer. A numinous quality that is a relationship, a connection."*
- *"You are completely connected to another human being, and when you're connected to another human being, you're connected to God . . . I mean, you're just aware, when you get into that altered state, you're in the presence of love and beauty and suffering and compassion and everything is in perfect order, somehow. And just to be in that presence is awesome, it's the greatest thing in the world for me. . . I'm not afraid to die, I'm not afraid of anything, because it's the real thing."*



8.4 Being with Suffering

Rosen Method teaches clearly that suffering lives in the body as well as the mind. The story of our lives dwells in our bodies, how contained we may have felt required to be, how much tension we've learned to tolerate, how hurt we've been, how unseen we've felt. Rosen Method Bodywork and Movement aim for the healing of the suffering in our lives, as the suffering is held in the body. We inquired about personal suffering and also the practitioner or teacher's response to the suffering of clients, acknowledging that some people overlook, or minimize, or block the suffering they've experienced.



The body is a primary reference point, and the practitioner and client are both engaged in gently inviting it to reveal its truth. When it does, there may be an eventual sense of release, of ease, and that experience can expand into deep peace. Many of our respondents indicated that feeling through the suffering to the peace that lies beneath it often resulted in a spiritual understanding, a softening, or deepening of being more fully in their truth.

In this inquiry, we asked two questions: Has Rosen Method helped people to alleviate suffering? Did their spiritual paths help to alleviate suffering? The many insightful responses included the following:

- *"One of the body's defense mechanisms is numbness, and so if we have to suppress our feelings, or injury to body, mind, or spirit, we hold that. Then we go numb around it and then we go unconscious around it. Rosen allows us to release the numbness and have our feelings when we're in a place where it's safe to have the feelings."*
- *"The Rosen training was a training in how to be present with another person's fear, nausea, anxiety, hate, pain. It was like being a nurse who had to develop an immunity to all the illness that comes in, and Rosen was a way of developing tolerance of whatever that person's pain might be. You have to stand with and withstand their suffering."*
- *"I was carrying a lot of suffering and Rosen helped the suffering to melt down and become transformation."*
- *"I've worked a lot with the dying, and being able to hold the love is profound. This work is about being with someone even in their most unbearable moments, without trying to fix anything. You can just be there with the person."*
- *"Rosen Method supported the transformation of suffering on many levels. It has been the process of discovering my whole unbroken self. It has given me experiences of wholeness versus brokenness."*
- *"Rosen helped me to feel more wholly my feelings, including losses and grief and suffering . . . and this increased my capacity to be fully with others. My understanding was deeper and I knew there is something, like a peaceful understanding on the other side."*
- *"I learned compassion and to stay with my own suffering, and then be with others. I used to downplay my own suffering. If I don't know my own suffering, how can I know others?"*

- *“One of my daughters was diagnosed with leukemia when she was two years of age. I learned from her how to be with her suffering, to be with her as she was. . . . This experience brought me to Rosen, and I learned in Rosen to be with suffering as it is.”*

The other dimension of our inquiry was whether the individual’s spiritual path helped them to be present to suffering.

- *“If it weren’t doing that, what kind of spiritual practice would it be? Isn’t that what spiritual practice is about, to enhance the capacity to be present to suffering? to feed the poor, help the sick?”*
- *“My spiritual practice gives a sense of living within a much greater fullness and purpose. There’s the duality of joy and suffering but there is something more.”*
- *“My spiritual practice helps me to be present to my suffering. I learn to be present to my own pain.”*
- *“I think the more you’re aware of the body, you know when suffering occurs or judgment, you can—the Buddhist way—kind of watch it in the body and, as Thich Nhat Hanh might say, say hello to it, and that helps it become less and slacken.”*

9. Additional Qualities Identified by Interviewees

In the interview, we invited participants to consider and suggest additional qualities found in RMB and RMM that they felt supported their spiritual growth and awareness. Our survey limited the entire field of qualities included in Rosen Method, to encourage their responsiveness. What they said listed below is reflected in the books and articles about Rosen Method, discussions in our research team, and among the focus group participants.

- Love
- Awakening/expanded awareness
- A sense of joy, happiness, bliss
- Feeling awe and wonder
- Feeling safe/trust
- Being with mystery and unknown
- An expanded and expansive sense of “knowing,” awe, gratitude
- Truth-telling/the truth
- Self-acceptance
- Feeling affirmed/feeling cherished
- Deep stillness, silence, spaciousness
- Increased noticing, seeing
- A taste of surrender/spiritual liberation
- Peace, restfulness, moving deeper into myself
- Simplicity
- Coming to a place of grace
- Transformation of a sense of heaviness into a sense of humor
- Emotional transformation



- Nurturing of creativity
- Feeling grounded
- A sense of Oneness
- Aliveness
- Breath
- Trusting deep and meaningful experiences through the body
- Being held (being held within my suffering, profound grief and loss)
- Wisdom in the body, the appreciation that the body offers immediate and unmistakable wisdom if we pay attention
- A sense of homecoming, of healing
- Resonance, meaning that energetically the practitioner is in communication with the client and vice versa, an actual energetic resonance
- Acceptance from practitioner, deep accompaniment
- Being met and seen with reverence
- Practitioner affirming curiosity/affirmation of inner knowing
- Being with another (without fixing or changing)
- Being with another (resonance, shared meditation)



The authors wish to emphasize the attention and the eloquence that interviewees brought to the topic of Rosen Method and spirituality. Because they offered qualities that held deep meaning for them, we wanted to share examples of their additional comments on three of their suggestions: simplicity, aliveness, and love.

9.1 Simplicity

Rosen Method, both the bodywork and movement, can foster simplicity. Through its practice we may return more and more to our authentic being, divesting ourselves of protections and pretensions which we may have needed at some point in our lives. The practice of simplicity seems related to the way the practitioner stays in the moment and listens to their inner self. It comes into the way we reflect inwardly to feel the truth and essence before we speak when working with a client, when leading a movement class or when participating in a sharing circle.

Australian practitioner Judith Nicholson, in her autobiography, notes, "To see Marion give a session is to be struck with the simplicity, the gentle, non-invasive nature of the work, at the same time one watches in wonder at its power and effectiveness. She also said of Marion: *"She doesn't talk very much, yet when she does, she talks specifically to my body, quietly, slowly--what's happening now? She uses very simple phrases, almost as if talking to a child. As she is, of course, for she is talking to my unconscious. . . This I know now is the essence of the work--the simple meeting of the person, one human being by another, free from conditioning and distortions."* (2006, p. 51)

During interviews, some participants noted that spiritual experiences are not necessarily dramatic awakenings or uplifting events, but rather can be quotidian, about the simple acts of daily life.

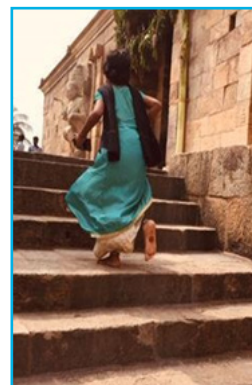
- *"What we do is so simple and unpretentious. Marion distilled the essence of the body and how we can grow into ourselves through moving naturally."*

- *"RMB is to become more and more present to our Inner Being, and to work with simplicity and humility."*

In movement classes we learn to choose words which engage the participants and elicit the ease of their movements. When practicing bodywork, we stay with the body which is our guide. We observe how the breath moves or does not move the body; where ease is felt or tension under our hands and our words reflect what is felt in the body--very simply. It is simply about being who we are and supporting this in other individuals.

9.2 Aliveness

In reflections about the training in RMB, many participants spoke of the sense of "felt aliveness" which Marion sought for each person. Respondents noted that Marion sought much more than just relaxation--she wanted what resulted when the person relaxed, a feeling of the whole person, a fullness, an essential expression unique to that person. To some interviewees, this sense of aliveness was seen as a spiritual experience.



- *"When our bodies are fully alive, we realize we are spiritual beings. The physical barriers we carry are also dampeners on our spirit. The more people have been constrained or harmed, they shut down the body and spirit, in a pattern of defense. But if we can remove all the defenses and allow ourselves to be free in the moment, then we realize that we are physical, emotional, mental and spiritual beings."*
- *"Aliveness was one of Marion's favorite words; she witnessed a full range of motion and fluidity in the body and extension when she observed dancers. Coming fully alive was her paradigm or model for what is humanly possible. She was then thinking of removing barriers or the tension and tightness in the musculature. I find that when our bodies are fully alive, we realize that we are spiritual beings."*
- *"Rosen Method is a continuation of all I have pursued that brought me a lot of aliveness and I feel this aliveness in the bodies of my clients. When I touch people, I feel this aliveness like a cord between me and the client."*

9.3 Love

Love is a thread that carries through the personal histories and spiritual experiences that Rosen practitioners and movement teachers shared with us. Participants spoke of love that has been withheld, love that floods us, love that emerges in the gentleness of touch, love that we learn is at our own core.

Marion described how clients find the love within: "But one day I noticed that when people began to let go even more deeply in their abdomens, they seemed to be in touch with a love they had never felt before. It seems to be the last feeling they allow to come up, and only happens when both the diaphragm and abdomen relax completely. A trust has to develop first, and then surrender, in order for the diaphragm to have its full movement. When people access this love, they enter a completely different realm.... Some people may call it "God." (p.30, Rosen and Brenner 2003).

- *"Recently in a sharing circle, I had a flashback of my grief, and this time it was not like a towering block. The word "love" came to me. Love is where grief comes from, because we only feel grief when we love someone close to us. When I realized this, everything changed."*
- *"In one particular session, my heart opened in unexpected and very surprising ways—a flood of higher feelings of the heart, I guess, love."*
- *"I remember from my Rosen sessions, I felt that 'I was love,' it was a non-dual experience that everything is connected, all is one. Totally clear the substance was love."*



10. Discussion

We have learned from this exploration that the individuals we interviewed, who practice RMM and RMB, have learned to listen within deeply. With increased embodied self-awareness, they found greater clarity regarding their individual truth. They experienced an underlying drive for wholeness, presence, and often an interest to relieve suffering, their own and others. The interviewees noted that, as they healed their places of wounds or suffering and opened to their aliveness, they connected deeply with their center.

There were several broad categories of the ways our participants perceived and articulated the relationship of their spiritual life to their Rosen practice. Some perceived the experiences that they had in Rosen Method as critical support for their spiritual path or practice; a positive influence on their ongoing path, or a prompting to a new direction.

For some participants, their spiritual practice and Rosen work were intertwined, each informing the other. Other respondents identified Rosen Method as their spiritual practice, in and of itself.

Out of the 33 participants, two did not situate their experience in the context of spirituality or use spiritual language. They spoke of "increased aliveness," "personal truth," and "embodied self-awareness."

- All participants reported some experience of spirituality (according to their individual definitions) before they discovered Rosen Method. Both joy and suffering were identified by some people as doors to spirituality.

- While all participants related to the concept of “being a spiritual seeker,” and many affirmed that they had always been seekers, curious about the meaning of life, a few saw it differently: “*Spirit sought me!*” and “*I see myself as a finder of spirit!*”
- Several participants came to Rosen Method from formal religious roles (such as minister, nun, meditation teacher) and a few acquired new formal roles as clergy or in faith communities in roles such as Chaplain (2), Minister (2), Spiritual Director (2), Meditation Teacher (2). Several others (4) said, “*My Rosen room is my spiritual setting.*”
- Most participants noted personal familiarity with non-ordinary awareness, or an experience of expanded awareness, like a sense of “beyond space, beyond time,” or they reported visions. For some, these experiences occurred during training and in their work with Rosen clients.
- Most participants said they had either observed non-ordinary experiences in clients or their clients had shared with the practitioner their own non-ordinary experiences.
- All participants affirmed that when, as practitioners, they touched people, they felt deep respect, reverence, awe, and appreciation. One distinguished a sequence of feelings unfolding from curiosity and caring to love. Movement teachers expressed similar feelings arising from the special connection of the group and the expanded opportunity to value the contribution of every individual.
- Almost everyone who responded agreed strongly that Rosen Method had helped them to address suffering in their lives and the lives of others and that their spiritual practice helped them to be present to suffering. Some could distinguish the differences they perceived between their spirituality and their Rosen learning; however, many of them found it difficult to separate the influence of their spiritual path from the influence of Rosen. They felt that the two merged in their lives.
- All participants, each in deeply personal and individual language, described some form of experience that they considered meaningful, mystical or spiritual.



11. Considerations in Interpreting this Inquiry

The authors sought to explore whether and how participants experience the relationship between Rosen Method and their spiritual lives, not to define or label Rosen Method as a spiritual path or practice. We have not assumed that the typical outcomes of RM are inherently spiritual, or that spiritual outcomes are what is sought in Rosen Method. We are curious about whole person well-being which can include spiritual awareness. There may be a number of Rosen practitioners and clients who value the work primarily for its somatic and overall well-being potential.

On the other hand, it appears from the participants in this inquiry that shifts in spiritual awareness occur with considerable frequency and potency. We have found in this small exploratory group of participants that many people experienced spiritual benefits from the work even though it is not, in its definition, ethics, or scope of practice, a spiritual discipline. Many participants in this inquiry find the practice of Rosen Method so profound that they consider it a spiritual practice.

In spite of the richness of these findings for appreciating the effects of Rosen Method, this project has a number of limitations or considerations that affect how it is interpreted.

1. The authors view this as an introductory exploration of this topic, not a formal scientific study. We have attempted to organize our results along the lines of a formal study for ease of reading, but we are aware of criteria for formal studies that we have not utilized.
2. The authors found support for this project in the existing Rosen literature, which consists of books and articles written by individuals or Rosen teachers. This is the first attempt to engage a larger portion of the Rosen community in a discussion about Rosen Method and the spirituality aspect of well-being; that is, to inquire about whether the experiences of practitioners and teachers are consistent with those dimensions and experiences of spirituality described by authors, beginning with Marion Rosen.
3. The team of authors have an abiding interest in spirituality. We are aware that our interest and curiosity may have affected the responsiveness of our participants and the results. As interviewers, we sought to be open and inviting, as well as attuned to the differing experiences of each participant. Our own broad spiritual backgrounds allowed us to understand the variety of spiritual and practical vocabularies the participants used. We believe our interest in the topic, and our sensitivity to how profoundly personal this topic is, supported the participants in sharing openly and deeply. A study conducted by disinterested interviewers might yield considerably different information, both in content and in depth.
4. Our selection of participants was influenced by who was available during the interview time period, and a number of individuals we hoped to include were not available. We also had geographical and time limitations, for both interviewers and participants. For these reasons, we chose not to attempt a Random Controlled Trial. Most of those we interviewed turned out to be practitioners and teachers suggested to us as people who had experience in both Rosen Method and in spiritual life. Hence, they could readily speak to the connections the authors found prevalent in Rosen Method and in spiritual paths and practices.
5. Our invitation to participate in this inquiry included our commitment to confidentiality, that is, to report the comments of participants without attributing them by name. When participants offered details that could disclose their identities, we have attempted to delete identifying material. We also requested permission to record individual interviews, which we then transcribed. This permission was given verbally prior to each interview.
6. It is possible that the way our interview questions were framed predisposed people to find or affirm spiritual significance in the work. Our team consisted of five authors, and six interviewers, only one of whom had prior experience in the construction of surveys. We were also determined to pursue the inquiry in ways familiar to us from Rosen dialogues and group interactions. This led to the creation of a "softer" exploratory inquiry process rather than a typical scientific/psychological study.

12. Suggestions for Future Inquiry

The authors have pointed out, throughout this text, some directions others may wish to pursue in continuing exploration of this topic. Since this is an exploratory inquiry, every topic, broad or specific, could be considered for further investigation.

1. A future question might be offered to the entire Global Rosen community involving what primary benefit or benefits practitioners perceive as flowing from the work: physical, psychological, spiritual, or something else. To the authors, Rosen Method can stand alone as science and art, but often it is more. We believe that Rosen Method can involve grace and mystery. This concept might be fruitful for further exploration.
2. We have noted that the practitioner's experience of transformative events such as spiritual emergence may influence the recognition of such occurrences in clients and impact the practitioner's approach. This may be a topic for inquiry.
3. Examining differences across cultures in terms of spirituality could also be an important exploration in the future.
4. Concerns about boundaries and ethics, in the context of how practitioners approach spiritual issues with clients, could be fruitful to explore. You are invited to note the following considerations:

Rosen practitioners welcome the emergence of all forms of growth with non-judgmental acceptance. According to the RM Scope of Practice and Ethical guidelines, "Rosen Method Bodywork offers a unique quality of touch that contacts multiple layers of the person –physical, emotional, and spiritual. This helps the person to relax and experience the possibilities of living a fuller and more satisfying life." (http://roseninstitute.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/RIEthicsPolicy_Jun2017.pdf, p. 7).

On the other hand, the explicit inclusion of spiritual practices and spiritual counseling is beyond the scope of practice of RMB and RMM:

"What Rosen Method Is and What It Is Not. Rosen Method Bodywork and Movement are unique and stand alone. Rosen Method is specific in its application and does not include any other healthcare modalities such as massage, psychotherapy, physical therapy, trauma recovery disciplines, and so on. Nor does it include any meditation approaches, breathing techniques, hypnotic induction, past-life work, energy work, or other modality that a Rosen Method professional may also know. In addition, Rosen Method Movement does not include any other movement modality. Rosen Method professionals are influenced by their life experiences and training in other areas: this is what makes each of us who we are and affects any interaction we have with another person. Life experiences become integral to how one listens and responds. However, the task as a Rosen Method professional is to bring oneself fully to a Rosen Method session or Movement class and provide only Rosen Method." (http://roseninstitute.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/RIEthicsPolicy_Jun2017.pdf, p. 8)

13. Our Conclusions

The responses we gathered reveal a deep stream of spirituality flowing within Rosen Method as noted by our participants. We found frequent discussion of it in the books, articles and workshop material listed in Part 2 of this report. Our participants included many long term practitioners and teachers and therefore reflects their insights, of having received this work and completed training. They have felt this embodied self awareness work as a client and as a practitioner or teacher.

In RMB, the use of touch, attention to the breath, listening, presence, patience, and attention are intrinsic qualities of this therapeutic work. They are also qualities that are valued in spiritual life. In RMM, essential qualities include the warmth of community, embodiment expressed (as well as experienced), joy, and freedom. For some people, these qualities also created opportunities for spiritual experiences.

It is important to note that basic characteristics of RMB and RMM were described by some participants not as expressions of a spiritual path but in language that implied their own personal path of growth and wholeness, like seeking their own "inner truth," "deep knowing," or "voice within." The interviewees were often drawn to Rosen Method to heal suffering, their own and that of others. People sought out this type of body-centered therapeutic work to examine issues of becoming more present in their bodies, to find a deeper aliveness.



Many participants affirmed shared or overlapping values between Rosen Method and their spiritual practices. Almost everyone we interviewed felt that spirituality was deeply relevant to their lives and their Rosen practice. Whatever we call the renewal that emerges from RMM and RMB, the participants in this study affirmed a clear, mutually reinforcing connection between their Rosen Method experiences, their sense of aliveness, and their vibrant, expanding spiritual lives.

Finally, many of the people we interviewed expressed joy at being able to examine and share their experiences on such a meaningful subject. The authors, too, felt a stronger sense of community and shared values as our deep conversations unfolded. It was as if this hidden stream in Rosen had come to the surface, and we witnessed its freshness and aliveness with delight.

OUR GRATITUDE

The authors wish to acknowledge the Rosen Method professionals we interviewed, each of whom offered gracious and articulate explanations of their spiritual life and how it relates to their Rosen practice. The participants in the focus groups at the beginning of this study gave crucial support. They helped us to understand the nature of our inquiry on a more nuanced level and they offered their own individual experiences and language to expand our knowledge base. They provided a depth of experience, both in Rosen Method and in spirituality, that made us feel we had chosen a compelling topic to explore. Perhaps most helpful at that point, they conveyed their enthusiasm and their pleasure in participating in a group conversation about Rosen Method and spirituality.

We are immensely grateful to each member of the Rosen community who was interviewed. Each participant generously contributed time and thought to this project, as well as kindness, patience, spontaneity, unique perspective, and breadth of experience. We understand that spirituality is deeply personal and private, and we are profoundly grateful for their generous sharing. Their vivid descriptions of personal experience are the substance, the rich essence, of this article.

APPENDIX

1. About the Authors
2. Definitions
3. Background References
4. Creative Support and Photo Credits
5. Project Timeline

1. About the Authors

John Bosman, DD., from Australia and originally from the Netherlands

John Bosman, DD. was born in Amsterdam and with his family he migrated to Australia in 1956. He is a Catholic priest and a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, a religious order. He holds a Doctorate in Theology (Rome), a diploma in Acupressure (Berkeley) and studied counselling and somatic psychotherapy (Sydney). In 1987 he met and studied with Marion Rosen, attending her last master class just a month before she died. He graduated as a Rosen Method Bodywork practitioner and a Rosen Method Movement teacher in 2012. He has a Rosen Method practice in Sydney.

Jill Breslau, J.D., M.A., from California and Maryland, USA

A lawyer and mediator, she arrived at the California Institute of Integral Studies in 1994 to study Integral Counseling Psychology and immediately discovered Rosen Method Bodywork. She arrived just in time to join the last bodywork class Marion taught weekly at the Berkeley Center and was certified in 1999. Her spiritual quest began in the mid-1980's and embraced many spiritual traditions before she met her teacher, Swami Chandrasekharanand Saraswati, in 2004.

Carol Cober, MS, LCPC, NCC, LMT, from Maryland, USA.

A licensed psychotherapist and Rosen Method Bodywork Practitioner in private practice, Carol also leads retreats on creative awareness practices. She became a Rosen Practitioner, in 2000, and is currently a student of Rosen Method Movement (RMM). Her path has been informed by her work as a gerontologist, counselor-supervisor, and evaluator for a research firm. Working with Deaf communities in 3 states and at Gallaudet University began her curiosity of alternative communication with the body in sign language. A spiritual seeker, her training in mindfulness and contemplative, non-dual practices, inform her life and her involvement in Quaker Meeting and in a interfaith contemplative community. An artist, she finds contemplative painting in watercolor and other mediums and poetry to be rich spiritual practices.

Catherine Mac Guinness, RN, PHN, from Ireland, after many years in California, USA

Registered Nurse, Midwife, and Public Health Nurse, she grew up in Ireland, entered a religious community for 36 years, during which time worked in Ghana and Nigeria as a nurse and midwife for 17 years. She arrived in California in 1992 to participate in a Master's program in Spirituality, at Holy Names University in Oakland, California. She discovered the gift of Rosen Method from a Jesuit priest, became a practitioner in RMB in 1997, a RMM teacher in 2014, and a Workshop Teacher in 2015. As a spiritual seeker, in California her training also included the practice of Hospice Nursing, the Art of Spiritual Direction and Companionship, and Spiritual Emergence Syndromes. She studied Buddhism with Pema Chodron, then discovered Zen Buddhism which continues to nourish her deep contemplative spirit. She returned home to Ireland in August 2018 where her spiritual work now is to bring the joy, gift, and wholeness of Rosen Method to the many parts of Ireland where it is unknown.

(Rosemary) Jane Pittsinger P.T., from California USA.

Rosemary was born and grew up in Sri Lanka, of British descent. She has been a practicing Physical Therapist since 1973. She has always sought to work with the whole person, to which end she trained as a volunteer grief counsellor, and found the Rosen Method, graduating as a practitioner in 1996. She participated in a small tutorial group with Marion for the last 7 years of Marion's life and became a RMB training teacher in 2012. She is also a RMM teacher. Her formative years in Sri Lanka, where she lived among Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, Anglican, Sikh and Moslem peoples, influenced her studies in Universal religion and the perennial philosophy.

Interviewer:

Priscilla Varland, from New York , USA, Physical Therapist Assistant,
MS in Adult Education from Rochester, New York

Priscilla is a RMM teacher and RMB practitioner, and just retired from 30 years in physical therapy as an educator and practitioner. She has been a Spiritual Director combining Catholic and Protestant traditions, and when appropriate helps people integrate spirituality with embodied awareness. She finds great joy in movement, creating community, and in providing a safe container for deep healing. Her contemplative practices include nature immersion and photography and playing with her 9 grandchildren.

2. Definitions

These definitions attempt to offer the meanings that the authors found useful and that we believe the participants intended in responding to our inquiry. Many of these concepts are difficult to articulate to our full satisfaction, and we acknowledge that the reader's definitions may differ.

Embodied self-awareness/somatic awareness: Alan Fogel describes embodied self-awareness (ESA) as "the ability to pay attention to ourselves, to feel our sensations, emotions, and movements, in the present moment, without intervening judgmental thoughts." (Fogel, 2009, p. 1) To be embodied means that experiences are felt directly as arising from within the body.

Fogel further posits three states of embodied self-awareness: dysregulated, modulated, and restorative, and he describes RMB as a modality that enhances restorative embodied self-awareness.

- **Restorative embodied self-awareness:** Fogel affirms a transformative power in restorative embodied self-awareness, and he notes that there are links to spirituality and such experiences as “awe, grace, something bigger than self and other.” (Fogel 2020, p. 44)

Expanded awareness: Awareness is the state of being conscious of something; it involves the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. The concept is often synonymous to consciousness. When awareness expands, the experience is sometimes described as analogous to looking through a camera lens. In ordinary awareness, attention may have a narrow or close focus. When awareness expands, it is as if the lens opened to a wide angle, embracing a broader view. This expansion allows the viewer to perceive events or objects or experiences with a different grasp of proportions and perspectives. The experience of expanded awareness is a spontaneous event beyond conscious control or direction.

Kundalini: The term “kundalini” describes not a path but a universal process in every human being, regardless of an individual’s religious or spiritual orientation. Based on ancient texts of Yoga and Vedanta, it is ecumenical, a universal means for deepening connection to the Divine Source itself. All spiritual traditions encompass this dynamic process, though varying terms and symbols are used to describe it, and many methods are used to attain it. Although there are patterns in kundalini process that can be distinguished by knowledgeable experts, each individual’s experience is unique.

Among some of the signs of kundalini process (or spiritual emergence) that can be observed in clients are:

- Deep desire for inner development, spiritual yearning, strong compassion, and the wish to help others
- Inner experience of light, sounds, or heat, sensations of flowing energy or inner vibration, spontaneous body movements, and unusual body symptoms
- Heightened awareness of inner experiences, distinctive sensitivity
- Altered states of consciousness, intense feelings of happiness, mystic experiences, psychological symptoms
- The sense that something unusual, transformative, or holy is happening

Non-duality: Non-duality, or a non-dual experience, means “not two,” or one undivided without a second. The term refers to a state of consciousness in which the usual subjective experience of separation is transcended. In an experience of non-duality, a conviction emerges that there is only one reality, one essence underlying all creation. The term “non-dual experience” is often used interchangeably with “oneness” or “unitive” experience. Non-duality is a philosophy, as well as an experience. In this project, participants who used the term referred to their experience, rather than a conceptual or philosophical understanding.

Non-ordinary awareness: Sometimes called altered states of consciousness, this term refers to a temporary change in the usual pattern of a person’s subjective experience. The ordinary or normal waking state shifts; the usual rational function is altered. The experiencer might discover new perspectives, a broader view, a sense of transcending the ordinary boundaries of time and space, self and other.

Non-ordinary awareness can sometimes be found in meditation, hypnosis, and in deep relaxation--as well as through other means such as insight, certain physical/recreational activities (running, swimming, surfing, for example), and various drugs. The hallmark is a mind that can be aware but not in its usual waking state.

Presence: "All spiritual disciplines have one purpose: to get rid of illusions so we can be more fully present to what is. These disciplines exist so that we can see what is, see who we are, and see what is happening." (Rohr, October 29, 2018)

In Rosen Method and in a spiritual context, presence means having one's attention fully on the present moment and whatever arises in that moment. When we say that presence is an important quality or attribute of Rosen Method, we refer to the capacity of the practitioner to bring their wholeness and complete attention to the client, to maintain awareness of the significant details in the client's breath and body and words while also holding a larger space for the possibilities of whatever may emerge. There is often a felt sense to presence; people might describe it as loving or caring or spacious or even sacred.

Elaine Mayland quotes Ed Schmookler, PhD, as saying, "Your presence is the most important gift you can give. What is most important to . . . people is that they know you are there and that you care. It is often remarkably simple what people need. They need you to be able to be present, focusing your attention on them, and they need you to be open, listening to them with your heart and your feelings, feeling with them." Mayland goes on to cite Marion Rosen's words: "On the whole, it's not what we do to patients as who we are with them. People sometimes say they recognize Rosen Method Bodywork practitioners by their presence, attentiveness, and spaciousness." (Mayland, p.345)

Resonance: Resonance describes a quality and depth of connection between practitioner and client which comes about through the touch. Sandra Wooten explains this as an energetic communication in which the practitioner and client are completely in communication. She says, "Two people with overlapping intentions, connecting through gentle therapeutic touch, appear to create a profound opening or gateway to inner knowing. On the physical level, touch manifests a sympathetic vibration which then resounds on emotional and spiritual levels. . . . in this state of resonance, two people experience a profound level of communication" (Wooten, p. 23-25). The resonance implies that when the practitioner is listening in a way that when some thought comes to the practitioner, or some word comes to the practitioner and is spoken out loud, it is not just the practitioner's word but has been transmitted through this resonance.

Rosen community: By "Rosen community," we mean those people who have trained and completed RMB or RMM certification. They may be currently practicing, practicing part-time, or retired.

Spirituality: For this study, we intend to use the term "spirituality" in its largest sense, and in whatever form each interviewee might hold it. We use the word "spirituality" to explain deepest core values, as well as exploring any personal path as a seeker, and exploring multiple paths/traditions/practices. The term includes, but is not limited to, participation in any organized religion or faith tradition.

Exploration of "spirituality" could include, for example, such paths as meditation, yoga, tai chi, non-dual, earth-based, and shamanic paths. It includes work like Diamond Heart, 12-Step programs, The Course in Miracles, and ethical, humanistic groups, concepts and affiliations.

We also acknowledge, within the breadth of “spirituality,” felt experiences such as “finding one’s own truth,” “developing simplicity,” and “becoming more authentic.”

Unitive, oneness: The terms “unitive” and “oneness” are used to describe an experience characterized by a state of consciousness not usually accessed in everyday reality. When such a spontaneous experience occurs, it reflects an immediate and direct “knowing” that the experiencer is not separate and alone but is one with all that is. There is no split between self and other (for at least a moment), but instead a sense of joyful wholeness, of immersion in a loving universe, of union with nature, humanity, the cosmos, or the divine.

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4. Creative Support and Photo Credits

We received help from Amy Stowe with several of the editing challenges, chart-making, and photography. The following people contributed photographs:

- Jill Breslau
- Carol Cober
- Michael Legrand
- Amy Stowe
- Elise Wiarda
- Julia Wittich

Photograph Attribution

Page 7 – Legrand, Marion Rosen

Page 9 – Stowe, Main Lodge, Cacapon State Park, West Virginia

Page 11 – Breslau, Iona, Scotland

Page 13 – Stowe, Heart Leaf

Page 16 – Stowe, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, Austria

Page 16 – Cober, Nativity Scene, Washington National Cathedral, Washington, District of Columbia

Page 17 – Stowe, Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois

Page 18 – Stowe, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, Maryland

Page 20 – Cober, "Angel," Santa Fe, New Mexico

Page 21 – Cober, Rosen Method Movement Class

Page 22 – Breslau, Near Taj Mahal, Agra, India

Page 23 – Stowe, South Rim, Grand Canyon, Arizona

Page 24 – Breslau, Ashram, Vrindavan, India

Page 25 – Cober, Cherry Blossoms, Silver Spring, Maryland

Page 26 – Breslau, Holyrood Abbey, Edinburgh, Scotland

Page 27 – Breslau, Monk at Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

Page 28 – Cober, Mother's Hands, Scottsdale, Arizona

Page 29 – Stowe, Prayer Candles

Page 30 – Wiarda, Collage on Suffering

Page 31 – Cober, Washington National Cathedral Garden, Washington, District of Columbia

Page 32 – Breslau, Girls Beside the Ganges, Rishikesh, India

Page 33 – Breslau, Girl at Brehadeshwara Temple, India

Page 34 – Stowe, Assisi, Italy

Page 35 – Stowe, Kiawah Island, South Carolina

Page 38 – Cober, Brookside Gardens, "Beauty after many years"

5. Project Timeline

During 2017

- Preliminary planning meetings and background reading

Spring-Summer 2018

- Plan the core ideas and sequence.
- Explore background literature.
- Develop survey questions and interview protocol.
- Work with local Rosen contacts to identify focus group participants.
- Develop materials to recruit participants.
- Meet with two focus groups, in California, July 2018.

Fall-Winter 2018

- Continue reviewing existing literature.
- Explore and revise written and personal interview questions.
- Send written survey questions.
- Set up and implement phone and verbal interviews.

Spring-Summer 2019

- Continue individual interviews.
- Use both recorded and written summaries to identify themes.
- Interviewers summarize notes.

Fall 2019-Spring 2020

- Discuss and summarize combined written and telephone interviews.
- Team meets to discuss materials, participant quotes and thoughts.
- Team gathers thoughts, collaborates on use in drafts and writing.

Summer-Fall 2020

- Reviewers edit first and second drafts as part of the RMIJ review process.
- RMIJ Action Editing
- Submit to RMIJ for Publication