

# Hands That Listen

by Jon Spayde, a St. Paul based writer and editor

**The Rosen Method uses the power of touch to reconnect you with yourself. *Feeling lonely or anxious?* You might want to try a form of bodywork called the Rosen Method. A methodology based on healing and centering touch, the Rosen Method aims to create relaxation,, well-being and self-awareness.**

## ORIGIN

Marion Rosen (b.1914) was working as a physical therapist when she learned about the power of human touch from Lucy Heyer, a dancer and massage therapist who belonged to the social circle of famed psychologist Carl Jung. Rosen also noted that her patients got better when she talked with them about the connection between their muscles and their emotions. By the 1970's she had developed a unique therapeutic touch method, along with a style of movement that combined physical therapy exercises and music.

## BENEFITS

“Relaxation is a goal, but because the relaxation is combined with an awareness of how our bodies have ‘recorded’ our emotional lives, it is a more profound experience than simple relaxation,” says Marjorie Huebner, a Minneapolis-based Rosen Method practitioner and teacher. “Awareness can bring change in our lives.” The method’s gentle, nonmanipulating, “listening,” touch brings its own benefits. “It stimulates our limbic brain, the ‘feeling’ brain that we share with animals, and it encourages the flow of oxytocin, the hormone of connection and calming that is in some ways the opposite of adrenaline,” she says. “Oxytocin is essential in bring down our stress level, and we get it when we are listened to, looked at without judgment and touched.” (See: “*Emotional Biochemistry*” in the November/December 2003 archives at [experiencelifemag.com](http://experiencelifemag.com))

## SIMPLE STEPS

Rosen Method bodywork is not massage, Huebner explains, but a “method of awareness.” The practitioner touches the client’s body in places where there is muscular tightness, inviting the client to notice the tightness and also, if he or she chooses, to talk about it.

“My touch helps you feel *you*,” says Huebner. “A muscle can either contract or relax, and if it has contracted when it isn’t doing any work like pushing or lifting, well, it’s doing something else, and if you don’t know what it’s doing, you are going to keep that muscle tight, which might lead to chronic pain and other problems.” Very often, she adds, the tight muscles is holding an emotion that, for whatever reason, you are not able to fully feel or express.

“If you have had a great loss, say of a loved one, you will experience a lot of grief,” she explains. “But you won’t experience it all at once. Your body will hold on to some of it as muscles tension. Or if it wasn’t OK in your family to express fear or anger, you might be holding that repressed emotion in that muscle.” The practitioner’s touch and the client’s memories and understanding of his or her own emotions dance back and forth during the Rosen session.

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