

"Releasing Pain Through Touch"

by Barbara Ganim

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One touch therapist whose work is firmly rooted in the practice of emotional release to achieve optimal health and well-being is Kerstin (pronounced Sheesh-tin) Zettmar, so came to the US from Sweden 15 years ago in search of her calling. Although she was trained as an artist and journalist, she felt something was missing and returned to massage therapy and eventually the Rosen Method.

The Rosen Method is a unique form of hands-on bodywork focusing on the body-mind connection. It was developed over 35 years ago by Marion Rosen, who escaped as a young woman from Nazi Germany and fled to the US. Prior to her arrival in San Francisco, she lived in Munich where she studied and worked with innovative massage therapists who were just beginning to combine massage, breath work, and relaxation techniques with Jungian psychoanalysis. Further refining these techniques, Rosen developed her own approach in which unexpressed emotions were seen as "barriers" within the body, blocking the flow of energy and preventing the individual from expressing his or her true nature.

When Kerstin began studying the Rosen Method, she was already a licensed massage therapist with a demanding practice in Newport, Rhode Island. While acknowledging the benefits of traditional massage, she began to see that it was only skin deep. "As a friend once put it," she says smiling. Massage therapy is relaxation from the outside in.

The Rosen method is healing relaxation from the inside out."

Kerstin found the Rosen Method a fascinating combination of working with touch, awareness of breath, and the emotions to reach the inside of people - their feelings, their inner life. Many clients have noted that the quality of the touch is gentle yet powerful. The unconditional presence that they feel through the touch reminds them of what they have been yearning for since infancy. For some, it is the first time they have encountered another person that simply being who they are is experienced not only as enough but as something precious.

"The intention in the Rosen Method," Kerstin emphasizes, "is a partnership - a relationship between client and therapist. And that relationship is a reflection of how you relate to yourself and to the rest of the world. The body doesn't lie. We play all sorts of mind games, but truth shows up in the body as the pain that separates us from connecting to ourselves and then to others. This work is about learning how to be intimate with yourself and the rest of the world in a safe way. So, unlike massage where I make the body relax, with Rosen I work with the client to meet that part of the body that cannot relax. We work together to explore the nature of that tension, and together we find that the underlying emotional cause. When that is acknowledged, the tension will melt. It's a very different process."

Many people consider the mind-body connection to be the holistic approach to healing. But an additional component is necessary to form the base of holism spirit. While often mistaken as meaning religion, the idea of spirit means sensing and honoring our integral connection to all living

beings - past, present, and future - and the responsibility and power that comes with it. Some people extend that connection to a higher power. Most practitioners of therapeutic touch believe in the holistic triad of body, mind, and spirit, and that all three are interdependent and inseparable when working with an individual.

Kerstin Zettmar, born and raised in Sweden, has maintained a private practice named MIRA Holistic Services, in Newport, RI since 1990. She offers Rosen Method Bodywork, Massage Therapy, Expressive Art, Past life Regression, and Yoga and teaches various classes and workshops. For more information, a schedule of classes/events, to view her artwork, or read other articles she has written, please visit:

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