

# "Intimacy with Number One"

by Kerstin Zettmar

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Ah, relationship! They are such wonderful catalysts to bring to the surface anything uncooked that may lurk in one's soul. For many years I worked very hard at becoming enlightened. Eventually, I got quite skilled at the thinking positive, being all-accepting, ever loving, and seeing a spiritual purpose in everything. This was true as long as I stayed out of intimate relationships. For some bizarre reason, the men I crossed paths with always seemed to be taken, live on another continent, or have a deep-seated fear of intimacy.

The men I did end up dancing a few rounds with would suddenly have the power to press all kinds of funny buttons in me. Pow! Out would come anger, fear, distrust, and a battery of other "unholy" emotions. How uncomfortable. I'd decided that they clearly didn't love me or they wouldn't do that to me, and out the door, I'd go. I developed an appreciation for people who chose a monastic lifestyle.

Since I wasn't quite ready to take that leap, though, I chose various therapies instead. That helped to reassure me that I was a wonderful, open woman with all the tools for an intimate relationship. Maybe I just hadn't met the right guy yet.

As life would have it, a number of years later I found myself at a workshop for something called the Rosen Method. It

was advertised as a form of bodywork addressing emotional root causes of chronic muscular tension. Since I was now working as a loving, caring massage therapist, I thought I might learn something that would prove beneficial for my clients. Little did I know how entering this workshop would change my own life.

Rosen work is about finding out and accepting who you really are at the core of your being. It aims at creating a safe space for you to become intimate with your innermost self, the person you are when you stop pretending, performing, or pleasing. Marion Rosen, its founder says, "This work is about a transformation from the person we think we are to the person we really are. In the end, we can't be anybody else." The key factor in this method is touch - a gentle, intimate kind of touch that clients at times claim they've been missing since infancy. In contacting the body in this way, the unconscious / forgotten feelings, memories, and dreams that have been held in by tight muscles and restricted breathing are evoked. Often what we have tried to conceal the most, even from ourselves, shows up the clearest in the body. The body doesn't lie.

I can still hear my teacher's voice as she with warm hands gently probed the tight muscles of my upper back in a class demonstration: "The first few layers of Kerstin are quite relaxed. When I stay on the surface with my hand like this, I get the impression of someone very open, trusting, and receptive. I don't see a lot of breath in her back, though, so that makes me want to explore deeper... and when I do, I find some muscles working very hard, holding very tight. Right here, over her heart, there is a big boulder that doesn't want to budge. Something is being very well protected here."

And she was right. As she contacted the big rock over my heart and just stayed there with her hands, very patient, with unconditional presence, it slowly started to melt. The melting was coming from inside of me, just like the tears that began to stream down my cheeks. Eventually, memories emerged, shedding some light on why I at one time, had felt the need to install this protective boulder - why it was so much safer to fall in love with people that I couldn't get very close to.

I feared that if anyone looked closer than the first few layers of me they'd find this very human being. Since childhood I had tried to be "Christ in drag," and with that goal in mind, a lot of my humanity seemed unacceptable. I had swept a lot of it under a rug of muscular tension; no wonder my back and shoulders felt so lumpy now.

That Rosen Method workshop was the beginning of a journey for me and on the winding road, I have run into many bumps. It can be messy at times being a real human being, yet it's much less lonely than being a phony saint.

For a long time, I was under the impression that so-called negative emotions were causing tension in the body. It came as real news to me that it actually is trying to suppress the unwanted emotions that causes the muscle to work over-time. I do believe there is something true about the notion that holding onto anger, grief, fear, and hatred can contribute to making a person sick. Yet when we give ourselves permission to fully feel our emotions through the whole cycle of beginning, middle, and end, they usually don't last very long. It's our trying to stop mid-stream that keeps us stuck and unhappy in our unfinished business. For some people learning to trust the cycles of emotions is a large part of this work.

These days I've given up on the idea of becoming a perfectly enlightened being. In my dance of intimacy, I still lose my balance from time to time. The difference now is that I take those moments as a wake-up call to examine what it is inside of me that might be calling out to be healed. I'm really much more interested in becoming whole than holy.

Being fully alive doesn't mean you are in neutral or that you always are up. In my experience, it means that you have all your emotions available to you but that you are not enslaved by any particular one of them.

As a painter, I sometimes think of it as having a full palette to choose from with all the colors of the rainbow. As a weaver, I know the importance of the dark or the cool strands of yarn to set off the light or fiery ones. We are all artists in co-creating our lives. Creativity is our natural inheritance. I've been fortunate to watch many people wake up to their creative potential as they have had the courage, to be honest with themselves and go through the barriers down to their core. And if we go deep enough we come to the place where we are all one. What could be more intimate than that?

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