

Animal Healing: The Power of Rolwing® Structural Integration

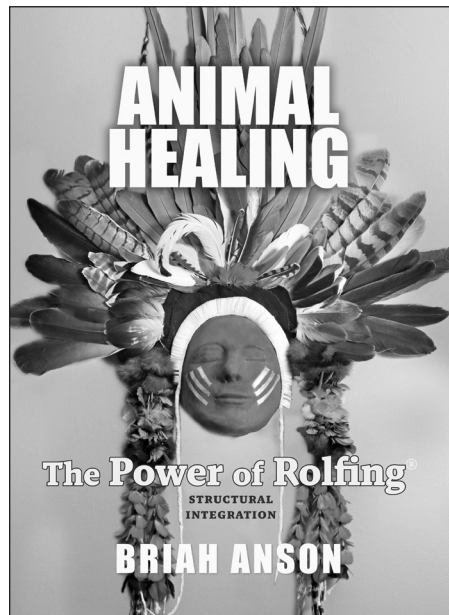
by Briah Anson, Certified Advanced Rolfer™

Reviewed by Marilyn Beech, Certified Rolfer™

Briah Anson graduated from the Rolf Institute® of Structural Integration in 1979. Before she had even finished school, she had already experimented with applying the principles of structural integration (SI) to her pet dog. While her practice has always been filled with humans, her passion, curiosity, and innate natural connectedness has always been with animals.

Her second book, *Animal Healing: the Power of Rolwing® Structural Integration* (Mill City Press, 2011), is a generous offering of the knowledge she's gained during her thirty years as a pioneer in SI work with animals. As in her first book, *Rolwing: Stories of Personal Empowerment*, (North Atlantic Books, 1998), much of the material comes from the lived experience of this work. The subjects – which include dogs, cats, horses, birds, and guinea pigs – regain not just their structural integrity, but their ability to be themselves, and their owners bear witness to the transformational process. The book also allows its readers to learn about the fascinating lives of sled dogs in northern Minnesota, the art of working with eagles, and the transformations in working dogs, racehorses, and house cats.

On the surface, this looks like a book that is meant for pet owners and the few structural integrators who work with animals. This is not so, however. In reading Anson's notes and viewing the abundant photographs that illustrate how she looks at animals, how she proceeds with a series, and how she determines when to finish, we are reminded of the basic principles of SI that Dr. Rolf wanted us to remember: the relationship of gravity to the structure as a whole, and how to read that relationship in the lines of support and movement over the ground (or in the air, as the case may be). Add to this the requirement of finding connection with the SI client to which both



Anson and her animal-owners speak, and we have in this book both a fascinating read and an experiential reminder of our basic roots that make us structural integrators and not just fix-it folks.

Anson has also left us with the perfect antidote to the remark "I've heard it hurts!" Many of the pet owners have received a series of SI sessions after watching the effects on their animals. Over and over, Anson describes the behavior of dogs whose eyes roll back and whose tongues fall out, the mountain lion that lies down and purrs, the eagles with deadly talons and beaks that become glassy-eyed and drool. It's not a picture of pain.

Anson's expertise has often been used by veterinarians in Minnesota, and one of the book's stories, written by Dr. Julie Wilson, from the University of Minnesota, gives us an astounding look at the potential of SI for remedying birth defects. If it can be

done with animals, what might be possible with humans? This book takes us on lively forays into the lives of animals and their owners, reminding us of the solidity of our root principles. It also reminds us that we can take those principles out into the world and let them fly in any way we can imagine.

Animal Healing is available directly from the publisher at www.briahansonrolwing-animalhealing.com.

"Intersubjectivity and the Practice of Rolwing" by William Smythe

Structural Integration: The Journal of the Rolf Institute® would like to direct readers to a valuable resource for understanding intersubjectivity and how it impacts our work. Certified Advanced Rolfer™ William Smythe's master's degree thesis, "Intersubjectivity and the Practice of Rolwing®," is now available online at the Ida P. Rolf Library of Structural Integration (http://pedroprado.com.br/cgi-bin/cont_ipr.cgi) where it can be searched by author name or title. It's unique url is http://pedroprado.com.br/cgi-bin/cont_ipr.cgi?cmd=show1artigo&ling=eng&id=1168.

Smythe notes: "Although Rolwing SI has primarily emphasized the need to work with a person's structural and neurofascial network, I chose to shed light on the more subtle aspects of the work – the therapeutic relationship, sensation, affect, imagery, and so on. I particularly wanted to emphasize what goes on within the intrasubjective world of the practitioner as he/she conducts a session. My clinical and teaching experience has led me to understand that much of what brings about discomfort and pain within a Rolwing session has most to do with the practitioner's inner state of mind-body."