



HELLERWORK

Authored by Dan Bienenfeld and Jake Schultz

The Hellerwork School began in 1978 with a strong group of original students. The story, for me (Dan Bienenfeld) is personal. After experiencing Rolfing® Structural Integration in 1975 by Hadidja Lamas, I applied to the Rolf Institute to attend classes in 1978. At the tender age of 21, I was told that I was too young and to come back when I was 25 years old. I continued with my University studies and received advanced Rolfing sessions from Joseph Heller in the mean time- Joseph was the president of the Institute at the time, and Joseph encouraged me to stay with it. My mother and father were getting Rolfed by Joseph at the time, and I would sit in to watch their sessions. One day my mother asked Joseph, “Why don’t you train Danny?” Of course I was very embarrassed that she asked this, but it turns out that my mother planted the first seed in Joseph’s head that he needed to teach the work.



Nebraska Training Team: Denis Berger, Anne-Marie Duchene, Keri Yamamoto, Dan Bienenfeld, Joseph Hunton and Jake Schultz.

Within a year from that time, Joseph called me and asked if I would like to train with him. Don St. John and I were among Joseph’s first students. Of course I said yes, thinking that I would become a Rolfer™, which didn’t end up happening, but becoming a Hellerwork Practitioner instead. I graduated in 1980, joined the faculty in 1986, and am now the senior faculty member of the school.

The politics around Joseph Heller starting his school are very dicey. Joseph decided to start teaching the work, although he was not a sanctioned teacher for the institute. He had very specific things that he believed needed to become part of the curriculum of Rolfing, which I will detail below. Joseph’s ideas were not embraced at that time, and it became necessary for him to start his own program, which he did. But what do you call it? We met for long brainstorming sessions and finally came up with the name, “The Heller Method” of Structural Integration, which later became Hellerwork, then Hellerwork SI. Politics aside, sometimes people need to do their own thing, and I’m very happy that he did.

The Hellerwork series teaches the basic 10 series, almost exactly as Joseph Heller learned it from Ida Rolf, with a few exceptions: First of all, Heller added an 11th session to the series. The 11th session was designed to be a completion session for the basic series, often times a session without bodywork. It contains potent contextual elements to empower the client in several ways. One way is to focus of reviewing the movement work that accompanies the Hellerwork Series, and to make sure that the client is taking it into their

life. The other element of the 11th session is that of punctuating the free allowance of expression. When emotional expression is not allowed to be practiced, the body becomes influenced around the holding back of that emotion. This happens from trauma and conditioning, and later results in rigidity and pre-mature aging. We give clients the opportunity to explore how they can utilize their body to express the many emotions that life situations call for. Many people are frozen and have not allowed the natural expression to authentically express. Freeing the expression in the body and in the psyche allows one's process to move forward. The final component of session 11 is about completion. The client can really share about the process, give feedback if they haven't already, review before and after photos and become clear on how to utilize the work from this point onward.

Secondly, Hellerwork includes movement education and therapeutic dialogue as part of each SI session. These added components compliment the bodywork and take the client deep into their own healing process and really help the work last. First the Movement aspect" As the movement patterns shift to become supportive to the new alignment and expansion process, the client doesn't merely maintain the level of gain the series provides, but learns to take it way beyond where the series leaves off. To become ones own movement teacher is a very beneficial insurance policy that the client will continue to the evolutionary process of SI by learning to self-monitor and self-correct aberrant patterns and create fluid and expansive choices instead.

Here is a little history about how this movement work developed: Dr. Rolf recognized the profound effect that our movement patterns had on our bodies, and originally invited Dorothy Nolte, PhD, an noted writer-poet, nurse and therapist- and later, Judith Aston- to come and develop a movement re-education complement to Structural Integration. There were others as well who helped evolve movement work to teach SI clients to move within the principles of SI. Awareness in movement helped clients of SI take the work off of the table and into their lives. Many SI practitioners now commonly practice this movement awareness framework. Movement work was originally applied to SI by following the SI series with movement education by a trained specialist. After his studies with Judith Aston, Joseph Heller began to integrate movement work into the SI process itself. His recognition that movement work is essential to the longevity of SI results fostered the union of these two powerful modalities. Joseph believed that no one would know a client's body better than the practitioner who was doing the SI work, so he combined the two arts.

Therapeutic Dialogue is the other component that Hellerwork added to the SI work. To understand it better, it may help to know some history from where this aspect of the work arose: Joseph Heller, a Cal Tech graduate and former NASA aerospace engineer who was also deeply interested in the body/mind realm, left his aerospace career in the early 1970's to train with Ida Rolf. In addition to combining Movement Integration with SI in sessions, Joseph was also influenced by consciousness work, which he began to also use with SI. That aspect of what later became Hellerwork was influenced by Brough Joy, MD

and Carolyn Conger, PhD- teachers of energy and consciousness work- and from Hal Stone, MD and Sidra Stone's Voice Dialog method, an offshoot of Gestalt therapy. Rolfing became popular in the throes of the human potential movement of the 1970's. This was a time of encounter groups, tough love, the sexual revolution, bioenergetics, the Esalen Institute, Werner Erhard's EST and many other branches of the human potential tree. Joseph studied and worked on himself using many of these methods. Instead of being confined to one modality, his field of vision extended across many. His understanding of how all of the parts of a life come together was progressive, and he was committed to helping people become who they really are by giving them all of the tools that he believed in that helped this cause.

The Dialogue work is an exploratory process that helps clients learn to relate to the communication between the mind and the body, to identify feelings and sensations and often how to decode the cryptic messages that the body is always giving us, if we were only to listen. The dialogue work is utilized in two main ways: One way is to allow the issues to simply present themselves as the work is happening, for example, when an area is filled with emotion, pain or desensitization. Hellerwork practitioners will encourage the client to go into the area and notice, sense, feel, listen to- whatever is going on in there, to bring it out and even to heal the past. This requires training that Hellerworkers learn during their practitioner training. The other source and use of Dialogue work we call Hellerwork Themes. These themes correspond to each session of the Hellerwork Series. Joseph tells the story about how this came to be: As a Rolfer, he found that as he worked on different parts of the body, his clients would often begin talking about the same kind of themes, themes that are a general concern for most people. For example: In session one, we're working on freeing up respiration and balancing the rib cage over the pelvis. In opening up the facility for breathing, we explore issues around inspiration, both literally and figuratively. We might explore how this particular client allows or affords inspiration in their life. Are they inspired about their job? If not, how could they get to a state of inspiration, or find a job that allows them to live in a state of inspiration...Otherwise, all of our good work to open up the chest will probably not last. A person cannot stay inspired if they can't get to a place of inspiration about their work, life, wife, etc. It is really about spirit, the Latin root of the term inspiration. One can create inspiration throughout their life if they are connected to spirit. So, how can you lead a life that is more connected to your spirit? These are the kind of things we might explore during that first hour (session). What you will see is that we have a great deal of flexibility in this inquiry, and often times the dialogue about this will simply emerge from the body, as this is not about putting a message in, but about letting the old and tired messages come out and transform. So, Joseph Heller simply created themes as a springboard into self-awareness. Other themes from the Hellerwork SI series are:

Second session – Standing on your own two feet

Third session – Reaching Out

Fourth session – Control and Surrender

Fifth session – The Guts

Sixth session – Holding Back
Seventh session – Losing your Head
Eighth session – The Feminine
Ninth session – The Masculine
Tenth session – Integration
Eleventh session – Coming Out; Empowerment, Completion, Full self-expression.

More extensive information on the themes may be researched in Dan Bienenfeld's book, *Align for Life, Journey to Structural Integration*, www.journeytostructuralintegration.com or Joseph Heller's book, *Bodywise* <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/78170/bodywise-by-joseph-heller/>

It is important to note that, although Hellerwork Practitioner may use the themes as a springboard to help connect a client to their body and the healing of such pertinent issues that the themes draw out, it is never assumed or required that these themes be explored. The client's needs always come first, and sometimes there is little of no dialogue. This depends on the circumstances. For a practitioner to dialogue successfully, he or she must walk a delicate line in order to avoid placing an agenda on the client, or taking the client out of the experience of being in their body and sending them into their head. This art is one that requires great sensitivity and training on the part of the practitioner.

The more masterful a Hellerwork practitioner becomes, the more inseparable the movement work, the bodywork and the dialogue process. This trio of modalities creates movement in one's body, life and process. After all, movement is energy, it is the psyche and the spirit, and it is what the body is made of. Movement seems to be the interpreter of the mind and body's different dialects. It speaks the language of the soul. What else is the body here for, but to move it, express ourselves through it, and feel all of life. As we learn to live in our bodies, to feel our world more intimately, more sensorially, we experience our ecstatic nature. This includes feeling all of life. As the body returns to its fully experiential nature, we become more and more able to let go of the past, to experience more of the here and now, and to really be present in and to our lives. This is what our work is really all about.

We are proud to be providers of experiential teaching. We offer courses that allow our student practitioners to go through an incredible process of self-examination, healing, and training that result in them becoming prepared to actually work with people in the most powerful way. Doing one's own work should always be done prior to helping others. The Hellerwork Training is really like a mystery school that allows the practitioner to develop into the authentic being that they really are, and to facilitate others from that place. The student's personal growth becomes their most important tool into becoming a good practitioner. They learn the art and science of SI and they learn to truly be with people in the healing relationship.

Our only campus at this time is in Omaha, Nebraska, partnered with Universal College of Healing Arts. The next Hellerwork Practitioner Training is scheduled to begin on October 27, 2015 and is to be held at the Universal College of Healing Arts (UCHA). UCHA is an accredited institution, approved by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES). It is also approved by the U.S. Dept. of Education, which allows for students to be eligible for financial aid.



These are two of the reasons that the America Hellerwork Structural Integration Association decided to partner with UCHA to produce Hellerwork Trainings at the Omaha site. UCHA also has a very nice facility and wonderful staff to work with.

So how did this connection with UCHA and Hellerwork happen you might ask? A number of years ago, Jake Schultz, CHP and HW Faculty member began doing Hellerwork presentations and workshops in Omaha. Jake grew up in Nebraska and was interested in bringing structural integration to his home state. During this time he connected with Paulette Genthon, Director of UCHA. They established a working relationship and Jake became a part-time member of the UCHA faculty, offering workshops and teaching a class in the Associates Degree program that the school offers. About 3 years ago, Jake asked Paulette if the school would be interested in co-producing a Hellerwork Practitioner Training at UCHA. She most graciously said yes and we have been pursuing this possibility since that time. The Hellerwork Training Program has been approved by the accrediting bureau ABHES and also the U.S. Dept of Education. The programs at the school including the Hellerwork Practitioner Training are also approved for Veteran's (VA) funding and approved by Homeland Security to allow for international students. This is the first Hellerwork Practitioner Training in partnership with UCHA and our goal is to have many more trainings scheduled in the future at this location. In the past we have had campuses in Canada, Los Angeles, Jackson Hole, New Jersey, Tokyo, New Zealand and Australia.

The basic Hellerwork Practitioner Training course, beginning on October 27, 2015, will span 17 months long, with 6-16 day intensives and 1,025 hours of instruction. The instruction is dominantly geared to the hands on SI work, and secondarily, movement and dialogue facilitation (somatic psychology), then business, pathology and ethics. There is distance learning to be done in between the intensives with reading materials, online questions and answers, and video for review. When students complete the training they will become Certified Hellerwork Practitioners, (CHP). For more complete information on the training visit www.hellerworktrainings.com website.

The Hellerwork Faculty created a Training Team for this training of Dan Bienenfeld, Training Director, Jake Schultz, Joseph Hunton, Anne-Marie Duchene, Denis Berger, Keri Yamamoto, Caroline Tremlett, Laurie McMenemy and Anne Rojo, Associate Trainers. Other Trainers that will participate in the intensives are Don St. John, Linda Bienenfeld, Regina Buckwalter and Lonny Fox. The variety of teachers for this training is one of the values for the students. It gives the students the experience of different approaches and personalities of teachers, all with the same structural integration goal in the end. Hellerwork is focusing on training new faculty to replace older faculty who have retired and we are incredibly blessed that we are now training 5 Hellerwork Teachers to become trainers. The quality of our candidates is very exciting and the upcoming training will be their debut.

We are aiming to have 2 trainings per year with training centers opening up in Hawaii, England, Scotland and New Zealand. We have trained close to 600 practitioners since the school began in 1978.



Hellerwork International offers continuing education workshops utilizing our own faculty and practitioner body, and we also bring in instructors from other schools. For example, there will be a Continuing Education Workshop, October 23, 24 and 25, 2015, at UCHA. It is a Hellerwork Int'l sponsored CEW and will feature David Davis, from Crestone College of Structural Integration, presenting on scoliosis. David will focus on the

different kinds of rotoscoliosis and the patterns they express in the body and methods for unwinding them to create new options for our clients. All SI practitioners are invited to come to this workshop. Look on the IASI CEW list for registration information.

Dan Bienenfeld (www.danbienenfeld.com) will be offering advanced training later this year, for SI Practitioners wanting to integrate SI with movement education and therapeutic dialogue. Hellerwork International's continuing education requirements for its practitioners is to complete 36 hours of CE's every two years and offers CE workshops every other year. We also allow credit for our graduates to attend external opportunities with other SI schools and other allied healing disciplines. We figure that the more our graduates gather in their tool chest, the more valuable they will be as they work. Joseph Heller was more interested in getting the results than he was interested in having the practitioners do it a specific way. He taught that energy is the pervasive tool that transcends technique. Don't worry, our work still looks exactly like SI, however our individual practitioners are encouraged to find their own way of doing it, allowing their own styles to guide them to success.

We offer Advanced Training to our graduates from time to time and encourage our graduates to attend other SI programs to get other perspectives from which to advance. From Cranial to Visceral, from Movement to Psychology- all of these modalities have a place within our work.

The Blended Art of SI with Movement and Dialogue all wrapped in a bow of heart centered healing contact is the legacy that we are leaving. We still have a lot of work to do to get this approach 'out there'.

Informational websites: www.hellerwork.com , www.hellerworktrainings.com and www.ucha.edu/