



Lesson 6

Definitions of Structural Integration

Asking Questions that Open Doors

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Definitions of STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION

You are going to get asked for this so it's good to spend a bit of time coming up with a simple explanation. I've read articles that talk about different bodywork modalities and they have included Structural Integration. They were written by people who have limited experience with SI. They throw together a few catch phrases and think they've done a good job. They haven't so it's up to you to know this well.

When they define SI, they near always call it myofascial bodywork. That may be the delivery method but we do so much more than “squish tissue.”

Myofascial bodywork is a massage technique. The phrase does not explain **WHY** this method works so well and is capable making such permanent changes in structure and movement. SI is the systematic unwrapping of the tissue as you get down to the core elements and also the sequential series of work, the way that body unfolds and the fascia is restructured. That's what is important to explain. It's not just that we press hard. :-)

HOMEWORK:

Write two brief explanations of Structural Integration.

- 1) 2-3 sentences — what you'd say if someone asked what makes the body change?
- 2) 4-5 sentences in a paragraph — how you'd answer that in print.

NOTES: When you are speaking or writing, remember to use active and descriptive verbs (stands, balances, flexing) rather than passive verbs (is, was, will be)

Remember your word definitions from first class,, bring in “Awe, Connection, Beauty, Love” into your conversations with horse owners.

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* ASKING QUESTIONS THAT OPEN DOORS

I love marketing -- I have great success at it. Why am I good at it?

Why is this fun for me and maybe not for someone else?

I understand how to ask questions that open doors. I much prefer that feeling of having a conversation that invites the two of us to walk through a door together rather than being stopped by a slamming or closed door.

You do not have to use falsehood, trickery, or bamboozling to be good at communication. My dear friend Molly Gordon said, "People think they need a 'personality transplant' to market themselves." Not true! The show-time tap dance does not need happen.

The biggest mistake most people make is guessing what you think your potential client wants or needs to hear and then dumping LOTS of facts into her lap. If it doesn't look like you're convincing her, most people will push harder, talk longer, give more facts. Then everyone's uncomfortable. Let's do this a different way.

(1) Listening is really important

(2) If we want to get good answers, we need to ask good questions.

Effective marketing is built on these principles:

Know how to structure authentic, natural conversations.

Listen to needs and respond.

Each element is supported by and essential to the others.

Speak with respect and honesty.

When you lecture (blah, blah, blah), people often feel either bored or alienated because the conversation is all about you, what you have or can do.

Big secret — Marketing is not about you. It's all about HER! It's the opposite of what most of us imagine it to be. This is why we spend so much time identifying our IDEAL CLIENT. This is the person you want to learn understand. To do this, all your questions are geared toward learning everything about her: how she feels and thinks, what her ideas are, what is her horse's story, her story, what she wants to do with her horse, how far she has gotten. You want to shine the light on her!

Marketing is NEVER about you or your business. I hope you read that and give a big sigh of relief. The light is never meant to shine on you, only her. You have no need to put on your dance shoes and strut your stuff.

See why I love this? It's not about me. I just need to listen to this person and find out what's going on with her. When you listen fully and reflect what you hear, you give all your attention to that person, you honor the conversation and the person.

Giving solutions without listening first alienates people and puts them off. In my conversations, I want to be truthful, just like I am with a friend. If you hear something questionable in the air, make note of it. If you heard a friend with a waver in her voice, you'd ask "What's going on with you today?"

Often in conversations with potential clients, we know enough that we may even seem intuitive. Something calls your attention and you may not know what it is, but you tune your ears to hear, "Hmm... what's that?"

The exception is when you are standing at the front of the room speaking with a group. In that situation as the ONLY speaker, it is appropriate to explain what you and your business do, but we still come back to the client's story even in that.

Whether you are speaking with a prospective client, a referral source, or a business contact, the conversation needs to be entirely about serving that person, not about you.

*** LISTEN**

The most important thing you can do in marketing is to LISTEN.



Three ways to listen:

1. Internal Listening -- Listen to yourself. How do things affect you? This is self-centered listening and is what most people do.
2. Focused listening -- With the attention you'd bring to an ill child. Listen for what is going on in detail. Notice content, tone, body language. Notice how your questions affect her as well as what she says in response.
3. Global listening -- 360 degree listening,. You are taking in and paying attention to everything. Do this with openness and your full attention. Like when you are reading a horse using your soft focus skills, and your intuition.

Examples:

#1 (internal)

Blurting out your info until the person isn't interested. The relationship is done. Glazed eyes. That's usually the point when you ask yourself, "What's going on in me? This activates your fear list and your gremlins take over: "I'm doing it wrong. She doesn't like me. She's bored." It's all about me.

Ever done that? That is often the way we feel when we are trying to sell someone something and they aren't buying.

#2 (focused)

Listen for HOW CAN I SERVE HER? What would be of value to her? What does she need? Your interest in her keeps her in conversation and relationship advances.

Good, but not total. This is where most of us get to and we do pretty well.

#3 (global)

Here is focused listening with extra. You learn what's going on in her world, her home, her work. What does you intuition tell you to ask? Follow the subtle clues. Do that and she will think you are insightful. Your connection builds relationship. The conversation was not about you. Even if you don't end up working together, you made a good impression.

Listening honors people. Honored people want to be near you. They give you good word-of-mouth. You introduce and bring a heartfelt relationship to all your interactions. They want to support you, to be around you. You're not trying to "get" something from them. As in a session, you ask, "How do I serve this horse?" Here you ask, "How do I serve this person?"

First let's find out who this person is. Learn everything you can about her as you speak:

Listen to her voice, her pacing Is it quick or drawn out? The tone of her voice, is it all business or friendly? Does she speak loudly or quietly? Is her breathing fast and shallow, or slow and deep?

What happens when you match breathing with horse? You build rapport because you are sharing something, the breath. You are able to say and recognize, "When you and I breathe this way, we feel more connected." Even the horse knows this.



* ESTABLISH RAPPORT

Match her throughout the conversation. Pay attention and be gentle. Get on same wavelength. Stay in intimacy.

What happens if you forget to do this? Start when you remember.

This is how you respect another person's state and style. It is not about mimicking them. Feeling aligned synchronizes the two of you. You are building a holy shared space.

* ASK QUESTIONS

The second most important thing you can do in a conversation is to ask questions.

IT'S ALL ABOUT HER.

You can do this even when you introduce yourself. Say your name, your business name, and the purpose of your visit. The skill is to do this in a way that is about her, not you. Me-oriented introduction:

I'm Martha Hornblower from Horse Heaven. I want to find out if you would be interested in learning about my work that restores function and balance to horses so they perform at their fullest potential. I have a structured sequence of sessions blah blah blah...

Could you hear that? Why didn't you hear it? Because she came on gangbusters.

Her-oriented introductions:

I'm Laura Daniels from NW Equine Bodywork. I have a booth here at the show. That's a fine looking horse. I saw you in the ring and noticed how deep his corners are. Have you got a few minutes to talk? Was he naturally good at that or did you have to work long and hard to get there?

What's different from the first intro? When the conversation is about her, you are far more likely to find out if she has a horse you can help. Maybe yes, maybe no, but you will get there through a shared conversation rather than jumping in and selling yourself to her.

Through the conversation, you will find if there's a problem you can help her solve.

I'm going to ask you a general question. Who is the person each of us is most fascinated with? Me, of course! And by extension, my horse.

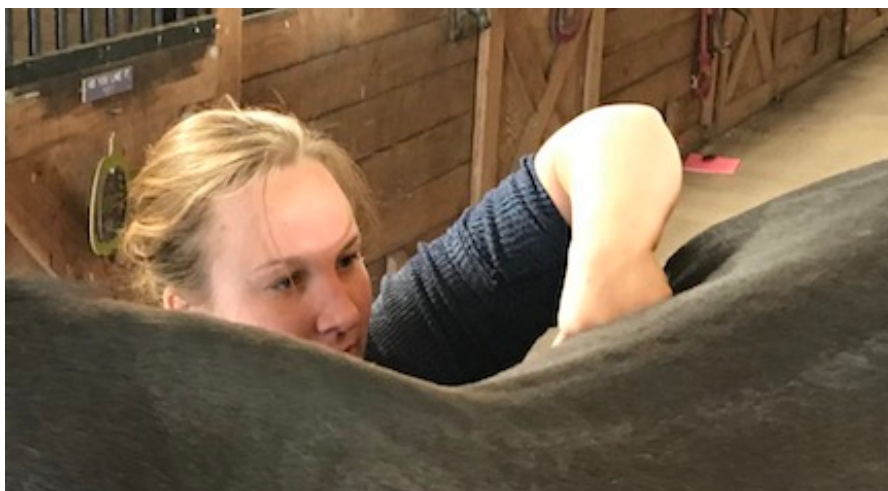
ASK PERMISSION

You achieve respect by asking permission at every step of the conversation. This lets you know the person you are speaking with is engaged and available.

Let's say you are at a show. Somewhere at the beginning (after identifying yourself), you ask, "Is this a good time to talk?"

If she asks you about your business before you understand her situation, you can only speak in generalities because you don't know yet if she has any reason to work with you. Don't rush!

I'd say something like, "I would love to tell you about my work. May I ask you another question first?" And then you ask about her horse. Stay on that topic. Usually something she says tells you has relevance to our work.



If I don't find that reason, it's okay. Then I'm just having a delightful conversation about horses with a fellow horse lover.

But, you may hear something and then a light goes off in your head that tells you how you could help. THAT is when I'd say, "May I tell you a little about what I do that may help figure that out?" Then you can tell her how you could help alleviate a problem she has.

Example:

Your conversation has been about past success in the ring. She mentions that she's been doing well at Second Level dressage, but she hasn't been able to move up to Third Level because her horse gets a little disorganized on the half turn and also hasn't yet mastered flying lead changes. They are getting very comfortable at Second Level, but that is as far as they can go right now.

Ah, the door swings open. You say...

"What I've found with horses who are stuck on a performance plateau is often they have a longstanding deep physical issue that prevents them from progressing. It's not their fault and it's often not something that further training can push them through. That might be why he gets confused about where all his parts are when he does that half turn. No matter how much you practice, there could be a structural reason why he can't go any further. He's trying as hard as he can but deep inside, he has parts that don't move as freely as they used to and he needs some help freeing those up again.

"That's what my work does. Once I have an idea about where the horse moves well and where he doesn't, I will have an understanding of how his entire structure is balanced. That's where the work begins. In a series of about five progressive sessions, I may be able to unravel him in a way that lets us free up the stuck areas and rebalance his open and fluid movement as it returns. That's how we get a horse off that performance plateau."

1. Listen -- Listening is both an element in its own right and a key to making the conversation all about her.

Listen like she's a dear friend. Listen with your whole mind and heart and body so your conversation is authentic and natural.

React to what you hear and see. If she sounds distressed or distracted, acknowledge that. It's a conversation, not a performance.

Listening tells you what to ask next. Also I find it helpful to have your first sentence figured out, then your mind can be clear and you can pay more attention to her.

When Joseph was getting his practice off the ground, we often went to horse shows and spent a lot of time in the barn. We looked at horses and spoke with people who weren't rushed and had time to chat. We didn't start conversations with people who were on in two classes. We looked for those who were "all groomed, tacked up and had an hour and a half to go..."

2. Ask questions

Questions are the tennis racquet that keeps the conversational ball in the other person's court. Your goal is to give her choice and power in the exchange.

For the first 80% of the conversation, there are only two things you do.

- (a) Ask questions and
- (b) summarize what you heard.

"So what I hear you saying is that your horse was flying along and doing well, moved up to second level and then you two just went flat and have stayed there a bit too long. Is that right? I get why you're frustrated."

Questions establish trust and build rapport. How you respond shows you've been listening and you relate to her issues. You're saying, "I get it. I understand the situation, I feel what your feelings are."



Here are all the steps:

- (a) You introduced yourself.
- (b) You've got permission to continue.
- (c) You're using questions to begin the conversation and continue it.
- (d) Your questions delay responding to something the other person asks so you can gather more information before you start talking about what you do.
- (e) And you let her talk. Let it flow. Respond when needed.
- (f) THEN you know how to answer.

Invite her to talk.

Ask question to give her a way into conversation. The simplest question you can ask is this:

May I ask you a couple of questions?

Find out where the problem is. First the dream.

When you first got Buster, what did you want to do with him?

That tells you what her intention was, how she thought it would go.

Current situation

What's happening with him now? (she talks)

What's the problem?

It sounds like you're frustrated by the gap between wanting to get to gran prix with him and being stuck in second level? It sounds like his unwillingness is affecting your attitude, too.

What have you tried?

Discover what she's done to solve her problem. (Remember, it's the owner-trainer-rider who has the problem, not the horse!)

Has it worked the way you wanted?

Ask a simple yes or no question about whether or not she's gotten the results she hoped for.

Ask about the consequences.

Has that affected your relationship with Buster?

Ask how not getting results has affected her at shows, with other horses, at the barn, her personal ambitions, her dreams.

What you've learned --

You know her dream. The split between what she imagined and now what is happening, this is where she is experiencing pain. You know what she's tried and how that has worked. You also know the impact of not getting the results she wants.

(If she is getting good results, keep going! Just stay in the conversation, listen and react naturally.)

What do you want instead?

If you think that what people want is obvious, you're mistaken. Different people think and talk about solutions and results in different ways. One trainer might talk about having her reputation upheld. Another might talk about lifting the morale of the stable. A third might talk about the relief of knowing she'd done everything she could.

When we first got our dog, Joseph and he went to a dog trainer. This woman is well respected in the dog field and is a really good trainer. We've seen her at shows. Her dogs perform beautifully, but for one dog and he's a total butthead. He won't even come when called. He's good in competition, but the second he's done his run, he takes off. This dog is strong-willed and he has his own mind. Perfect obedience is important to most trainers and they'd never let a misbehaving dog onto the course, but she likes his performance and appreciates his wild streak. She doesn't care if people laugh, which they do when he plays chase-me after his run. He still wins and she loves his personality. She's motivated by performance, not behavior or other people's expectations.

So if you had a conversation with her, you'd learn that perfection isn't what motivates her. She wants her dog to keep some of his wildness. If you said, "I could help you work on calming him down and making him less boistrous," you would be way off base. Her motivation is the wild and crazy win. If you can help him get faster or more flexible, she would more likely listen.

One horse trainer might feel having all the horses get along improves the mood of the stable, while another counts success by ribbons on the wall.

So ask:

What kind of results would you like for Reggie?

How would having Reggie be able to jump with both forefeet more even affect the way you (ride, compete)? How would having Thomas be less fretful help in your barn? If Brigit were more flexible in her driving, how would it help?

If I could wave a magic wand, what would your ideal outcome for this animal be?

If there were a way for you to restore his function to how it was when you bought him, how would that affect your show performance? What might that do to your relationship with your horse?

This is where you get to explain the benefits of the work.

"The work I do directly addresses that. Would you be interested in hearing how I do that? First I do a 20 minute assessment to see what works well and where any restrictions are..."

OUR STRENGTH is that we know how to address all kinds of situations. It's never one size fits all. Each series is specific to this horse's situation.

"I want to find out if your horse is doing everything you imagined she would when you got her. Tell me your dream when the two of you started."
(This helps her remember her dream!)

Then "May I tell you a bit about how I think I can help?"

You've done it! Natural, warm, honest, authentic conversation with the other person taking center stage. You listened, empathized, and reflected back

all her concerns and in her language. You've learned how your work is right for her and why -- you didn't know that in the beginning! Now you and she both have some ideas about what problems you can solve for her.

The problem you solve is HER problem, not her horse's problem. You may think you're selling Structural Integration but she's buying an emotion -- pride, hope, relief, enthusiasm, joy.

So now tell her what you do.

Keep it simple.

Talk about the results, not the process. “

This is an important point. I've seen practitioners try to explain the mechanics of a treatment, but that is not important. If you went to an acupuncturist, you don't need a 20 minute explanation of how needles and meridians work. You just want to know that your acupuncturist has helped other people get rid of chronic headaches.



Invite her to schedule an introductory session.

Don't explain your techniques unless she asks. If she does ask, put your antennae up while you give your explanation. That question may be handled with one sentence. “How do you do that?” she says and you say, “Hands on bodywork.” Done. Nothing about fascial planes or tensegrity structures. Keep it simple.

If there is any sign that her attention is wandering, stop talking about where you're headed and ask another question.

NOTE: At some point you may realize she is NOT your ideal client. If so, let her go. If she wants more information, she'll ask.

Here are a few starts of simple conversations. Which ones seem like they will head in the right direction?

"My name is Jacqueline and I'm an Equine Natural Movement practitioner. Can I ask you a few questions about your horse if you don't mind. What level is he at? How long have you had him?"

"I understand you have quite a few horses. I'm curious if you have one that is stuck on a performance plateau right now."

Or you might say, "...one that's unbalanced, inflexible, cranky." (I like that.)

"Do you have any cranky horses? Yes? Hmm, that sounds like you've got a horse who may have a structural issue. I do free 20 min. evals and out of that I can tell you if my work might help."

... (now shut up. Don't drag the conversation down. Let the owner speak.)

"...and I can explain what this work is and see if it's something that could help you. I work with the horse's fascial system to loosen up the connective system so he can move better ..."

Oops. You're losing me. Too much about technique when the owner wants results. Often these conversations (or monologues) are to please the practitioner, make us sound like experts, and they don't give the answers the owner is looking for.

Keep it personal. Is this your horse? (make a comment: "Great neck, gorgeous horse, nice topline. What are you doing with him?"

No one ever teaches us how to have a good conversation. The world would be different if we knew how to talk with each other and be respectful and open with each other. From marriage to politics to how we feel about our animals.

Be engaged and curious. You have no need to give lots of info, just draw them out so you both find out what is interesting about her and her horse.

When you do this well, these conversations become memorable. People find you intelligent and intriguing. They start to talk about you in a good way. Word of mouth is the HOLY GRAIL of marketing. When good info is exchanged, people remember and talk about you even if that person is not your client.

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*YOUR HOMEWORK

Come up with TEN QUESTIONS you can ask people to draw them out. Try them all out. Elderly people are really good for practice. Next time you're in a grocery store, pick the long line. Start a conversation. Give a compliment. Become a "Millionaire of Compliments." They cost you nothing and you have the power to make someone feel recognized, acknowledged, seen (especially the elderly).

Respond to what you see.

A mom with fussy kids -- "Are you having a rough day? I have those sometimes, too. I hope it gets better."

An elder -- "What a beautiful jeweled pin that is. Was it a gift?" or "Your hair is just beautiful. Did you just have it done?"

"What do you do for your skin? It's absolutely radiant."

GIVE 25 COMPLIMENTS A WEEK (for now and forever)

Make the world a better place by letting people know you see them.

A little something I have noticed is that when you give a compliment, everyone says, "What?" Not because they didn't hear you. They want to hear it again. Even though I know this, when my husband says something nice to me, I replay it eight more times that day. Give them freely!

Besides the questions, describe three times you started a conversation, and three times you gave a compliment successfully. Describe each situation.

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FOLLOWUP WORK

* YOUR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

When is it? If you haven't booked one for the next two weeks, please try to get yourself in front of a group before the next class. Remember to bring a friend with you who sits and smiles as you talk. If you've done one, book another.

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* DO I HAVE YOUR BIO AND PHOTO?

Bio that can go in a printed media, like a brochure -- do I have this from you yet?

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* ARTICLES

If I sent one back to you for more work, please get it back to me soon as you can. No need to wait for deadlines.

If your article is complete, submit it to the local horse magazine. Ask me if you need help with this.

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