

Was it Fate or Was it Destiny - How I became a Structural Integration Therapist.

Linda McClure was just 26 years old when she was first diagnosed as having osteo-arthritis of the hips. A top professional squash player who represented New Zealand on the world championship circuit, the New Zealander had pushed her body past its limits so often that her hip joints had become seriously stressed. Couple that with her passion for extreme skiing that lead to an equally extreme accident where she skied over 60 feet of rocky cliff face. "One of my friends who watched me going over the cliff thought I was doing it on purpose and was impressed until they saw my skis fly off and my body start cartwheeling and bouncing off the large granite rocks of the cliff face.

Miraculously surviving but breaking her back and twisting her pelvis, she developed osteo-arthritis in her spine and hips. Linda did not want to admit that she was in big trouble. She continued to play professional squash in the face of a lot pain and discomfort until one day when she was playing in Nairobi at the Kenyan Open squash tournament during the northern hemisphere off season she came across a woman who was about to change her life. That woman was a physiotherapist who happened to have studied Structural Integration.

"In Nairobi you are 4,000 ft above sea level and I was having trouble during that first week with my fitness levels and pain and was feeling depressed".

"Someone suggested that I go see this lady who gave a really good massage, I was not prepared for what ensued".

Linda said that the massage she had was very intense and at first she wondered why she had agreed to come. All those years of overtraining, overstraining and generally abusing her body came home to roost as the therapist went to work on her glued up muscles and over tight body. After the session she felt strangely light and free. Shrugging it off as just feeling relaxed she went to the local pool to start trying to gain some fitness back and get used to the high altitude rarified air. After swimming for a short time she realised that she was not gasping for air like she had the previous day. Puzzled that this should have changed in such a short time she thought she must have miscalculated the time. After swimming a whole kilometer she realised that this was no accident. It was clear that the deep tissue session she had from the therapists amongst other things had released her ribcage and enabled her to take a much deeper breath.

"It felt like magic, I could breathe so well. It felt like someone had given me a great oil and grease and I had virtually no pain".

Linda realised at that moment this therapy was what she just had to study.

"Receiving Structural Integration opened my eyes and enabled me to take responsibility for my body, myself and the environment I chose to live in, and a whole raft of different factors that I hadn't wanted to really see had contributed to my condition".

"In time I did eventually have to have a hip replacement because there was virtually no cartilage left in my hip joint after pounding it all those years on the squash courts and training on the road, but my experience in Nairobi and subsequent follow-up Structural Integration sessions gave me another relatively pain free 5 years before I had to have it done". "When I did have the operation I was able to heal very quickly, having continued to receive Structural Integration during my rehab."

“I can now quite comfortably do yoga and most forms of fitness that do not involve anything percussive like running.”

Essentially, Structural Integration is a form of specialised deep tissue massage, designed to lengthen and separate the soft tissue of the body. Over the eleven 90 minute sessions the bodywork, ergonomics and movement re-education is designed to help realign the body and produce a more relaxed and youthful state of being. Practitioners can also facilitate client’s awareness around how their physical tension may be intrinsically linked to their mental/emotional states, this in turn can effect a persons relationship with themselves, others and the world around them.

In 1988 Linda trained Hellerwork Structural Integration which is one of the many schools that stemmed from the Rolfing model of Structural Integration and more recently she has specialised as an Applied Structural Integration practitioner which develops and refines the assessment part of the Structural Integration program. This enables practitioners to more accurately design structural treatment plans that are tailor made for each clients situation, in other words it can be applied to a wide range of conditions and requirements.

After being in private practise for several years Linda’s passion for the work inevitably led to her into teaching where she taught on faculty with Hellerwork International for several years as well as a 5 year stint on their Board of Education. More recently with her partner Sean Petersen, Linda has founded the Australian School of Applied Structural Integration & Somatic Studies where she holds the position of Executive Director alongside a dedicated team of faculty who carry the focus of educational excellence and innovative learning to those interested in a professional career in Structural Integration.

“Its been a long road and if you had asked me if I would end up in this position 25 years ago I would have said you were mad, I was young I was at the peak of my career, travelling all over Europe earning more money in tournaments over a weekend than most folk would earn in a month. But in fact when I look back now, my international squash career was just the apprenticeship for becoming a Structural Integration Practitioner - I needed the life skills and more importantly the maturity to get to this place and I wouldn’t swap it for anything now.”

“As luck would have it, being a Structural Integration practitioner, just like my squash career, can take me anywhere in the world to work - I feel blessed”.

Structural Integration has been practised since the 1950’s when Ida Rolf began her first classes in America and has been available in Australia since the 1980’s although it is still a small community here.

“We now offer on the Gold Coast of Queensland the most comprehensive and thorough Structural Integration training in the Pacific Asia region. Our graduates are premier structural therapists who can be confident that their training is a world class program and is also ratified by the International Association of Structural Integrators. Our 1200

hr practitioner training is guaranteed to transform the lives of those who choose it, enabling them to engage in a very satisfying long lasting career that in turn transforms the lives of those they touch.”

For Pre-requisite workshops contact us on (07)5527 0333