

Helping Clients Understand Their Fascial Network

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Can you imagine living in a house where you didn't know all the names of the rooms? Or maybe you do know the names, but aren't sure exactly where they are. Or how about knowing the names of all the rooms and where they're located, but not knowing what the furniture inside them is for?

Sadly, this is often the understanding most of our clients have about their bodies. The good news is that most people are truly hungry for more knowledge about what their bodies are and what they can do with them.

As Structural Integrators we are in a unique position to serve not only as therapists, but also educators. We have the opportunity to teach our clients about the reality of their bodies and correct misperceptions about the way they function. In doing so we can offer an opportunity to change and expand their awareness about what kind of healing may actually be possible for them. So how do we best communicate the essential concepts of fascia, tensegrity and connection in ways that are clear and memorable to our clients?

In this article we share some of our favorite metaphors and teaching tools from a variety of sources. Because mental and somatic experience is so varied, the more ways we have to communicate these concepts the more people we can reach and educate about the bodies they live in.

Fascia

The website for the Fascial Research Congress (www.fasciacongress.org) defines fascia as "the soft tissue component of the connective tissue system that permeates the human body. It

forms a whole-body continuous three-dimensional matrix of structural support." This is a great, concise definition but how can we make those two sentences come alive for our clients?

One way is with pictures. Not every anatomical atlas really gives fascia its due, but the *Wolf-Heidegger Atlas of Human Anatomy*¹ is unique. What's notable is that it features side by side illustrations that are virtually identical except one includes the deep investing fascia overlaying the traditional muscle picture. Any anatomy book will show the lumbodorsal fascia and IT bands and most also include cross sections that show the septums of the legs. Seeing these structures can help many clients understand that it's not all about muscles.

Another option: if you are a good imitator, you could try putting on your best Alec Guinness voice and paraphrase Obi-Wan Kenobi from the first "Star Wars" movie, circa 1977, and say: "The Fascia is what gives a person their shape and resiliency. It's a tissue field inherent in all living creatures. It surrounds our muscles, organs and bones. It also penetrates, separates yet binds the body together." Don't worry if you're not a good mimic, just convey the essence. It's also a nice segue to the older idea of the fascia as a full length body stocking. Encourage them to think of this matrix as one fascial garment with over 600 pockets, one for each muscle.

Clothing

One way to demonstrate this idea is pull the waistband of your pants toward your armpits. Call attention to the creases in adductor area and

