



International
Association of
Rubenfeld Synergists

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RUBENFELD SYNERGY METHOD®
ILANA RUBENFELD, PhD ~ BIO

Ilana Rubenfeld PhD, creator of the Rubenfeld Synergy Method®, has earned the distinguished reputation as the "Grande Dame of the body-oriented therapy movement". Since the 1960s, she has been an influential teacher, healer, and workshop leader, who has trained thousands of practitioners in the art and science of integrative healing. The powerful and gentle holistic approach that bears her name is a unique fusion of touch, talk and compassionate listening, known worldwide as a groundbreaking modality.

Rubenfeld is distinctly known for directing mind-body energy as if conducting a symphony — which is understandable considering her former career as a music conductor. She graduated from the Juilliard School of Music and went on to have an accomplished career in conducting. However, a debilitating back spasm permanently shifted the direction of her life — starting her on a remarkable journey of commitment to innovation in the field of health, wellness and healing.

During her musical career, the rigorous demands of conducting resulted in severe pain. In search of relief, Rubenfeld went to a practitioner of the Alexander Technique, an educational approach that teaches how to use balance and posture to alleviate pain. When gently touched by her Alexander teacher, Rubenfeld's back muscles softened and a sudden welling of emotion followed. Untrained in the emotional realm, Rubenfeld's teacher referred her to a psychotherapist. 'On the couch' Ilana's intense feelings felt like a distant memory. Through her experience Rubenfeld intuitively understood a relationship existed between the body and emotions.

In her quest to explore this relationship, Rubenfeld became an Alexander teacher. She then studied with Moishe Feldenkrais learning the Feldenkrais Method, which explored habitual patterns of holding in the body. At the Esalen Institute in California, Rubenfeld trained with prominent Gestalt therapists, Fritz and Laura Perls. Their use of Gestalt therapy helped Rubenfeld discover another missing piece to the integration puzzle – the importance of the "now" (present experience) in mind-body work. From her experience with these techniques, Rubenfeld was inspired to develop her own integrative approach to healing that combined both talk and touch.

Ilana Rubenfeld explains that, "both the Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais' method taught people how to release tense habitual patterns held in the body. Neither, however, addressed the emotions behind those patterns, or their often vivid expressions when the patterns were unlocked. Conventional psychotherapy relied on talking through problems, and bodywork addressed their physical aspects. To me, these disparate approaches were fragmented, denying the unity of the body, mind and emotions." To create an effective bridge between these therapeutic approaches, Rubenfeld developed The Rubenfeld Synergy Method®. In 1977, she founded a Professional Training Program to teach practitioners how to move clients through various physical and emotional conditions by using her well-honed method. The program has since certified more than 400 Synergists.

At present, Ilana Rubenfeld is a renowned faculty member of the Omega and Esalen Institutes and is a former faculty member of New York Open Center. She is a sought after keynote speaker, known best as a storyteller who combines education with history and a healthy dose of humor. In 1994, she was honored by the Association of Humanistic Psychology with the "Pathfinder Award" for outstanding and innovative contributions. In 2002, she received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy. Among her many published works in the field of integrative healing, Rubenfeld is the author of *The Listening Hand: Self-Healing Through The Rubenfeld Synergy Method of Talk and Touch*.

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