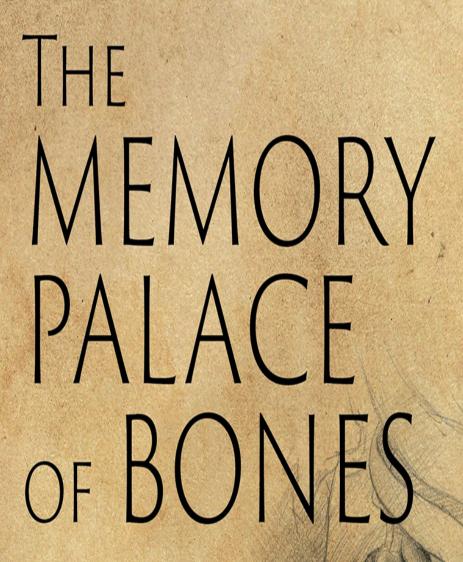
THE MEMORY PALACE OF BONES

Exploring embodiment through the skeletal system

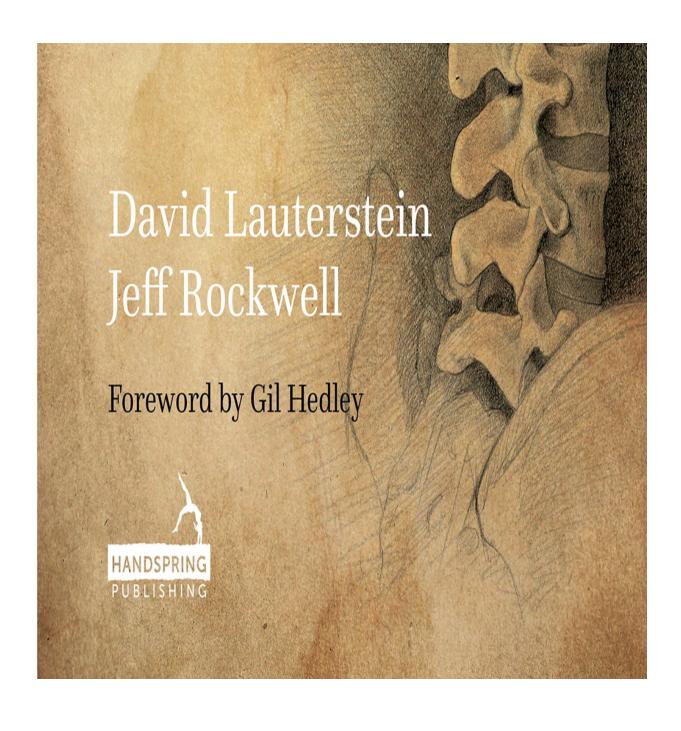
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THE MEMORY PALACE OF BONES

Exploring embodiment through the skeletal system

David Lauterstein, LMT, and Dr. Jeff Rockwell

Foreword by Gil Hedley
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I am always trying to convey something that can't be conveyed, to explain something which is inexplicable, to talk about something I have in my bones, something which can be expressed only in the bones.

—Franz Kafka

Acknowledgments

To the memory of my father and mother, with deep appreciation. To my greatest mentors, Drs. Janet Travell, Henri Gillet, Raymond Nimmo, and Robert Fulford, with unlimited gratitude. To David Lauterstein and Peter Ehlers, whose wisdom and work are continuous sources of inspiration. And to Dr. Brigitte Essl, who generously blesses me with her knowledge, helpfulness, and loving presence.

—Jeff Rockwell

I dedicate this book: to my co-author, Jeff Rockwell, who inspired this project; to John Berger, brilliant writer and humanitarian; to past teachers Bob King and Dr. Fritz Smith; to John Conway and faculty, staff, and students at The Lauterstein-Conway Massage School; to my son, Jake Lauterstein, and my wife, Julie Lauterstein; and in memory of her mother, Cherry Thomas Harper.

—David Lauterstein

Foreword

In order to remember, one has to have a thought, an experience, a connection upon which to base the recollection. David Lauterstein and Dr. Jeff Rockwell each have accrued decades of such conscious connection, derived from their professional and personal journeys exploring their own bodies and working in service of their clients, patients, and students. Here we have a pair of fellow travelers ideally prepared to build a "memory palace" of bones.

A "memory palace," as they share with us, is an inner world, an inner sanctum, created to bring back to mind a set of ideas, or meanings, or objects with which one wishes to remain in touch in the present. Setting their minds upon the bones, they have created a "memory palace" for us with which to connect, not with something from our past that is otherwise forgotten, but rather with something native to us all in this very moment which we might otherwise not have considered so deeply or felt for so intently.

This collection of connected and continuous crystalline structures most deep within our bodies affords us a strength, a resilience, and a certain sense of place and inner knowing that is completely native to us, an inner expression of life unfolded within us. Yet how can we come to appreciate these gifts without taking some time to enter into relationship with them a bit more deeply? Consider *The Memory Palace of Bones* a chance to contemplate, explore, and experience the gifts of your bones for the sheer joy of it, or to deepen your ability to serve others better for having done so.

Our authors use art, poetry, story, science, personal reflections, and embodiment exercises together to treat the great gathering of bones within us with respect, appreciation, and a sense of wonder. "Every bone bears us a message," we are told, and these two angels of the bones have set out to

help us hear those messages from them all. This is not a book to be simply gobbled like so much information candy. Lauterstein and Rockwell have, rather, created an opportunity for the reader to savor their encounter with their bones, to drop in, and to build a lasting relationship with this "memory palace" within us. Taking time to listen to the messages borne to us, we step into a connection with ourselves that we might otherwise take for granted or miss altogether. Stop and feel your bones, and let their voices ring out.

"Bones are as alive as your heart," we are asked to consider. And what blood would there be spinning through the 60,000 miles of vessels of our whole hearts if not that which is brought to life from deep within our bones? This is not a book about the skeleton. *Skeletos* means "dried." The dry bones are quite removed from the experience of bones and bodies. A skeleton, over there, is a rattling thing, an abstraction apart from us. If that is the mirror we look into to enter into relationship with our bones, that relationship will be deeply short-changed. Lauterstein and Rockwell invite us into relationship but not with something dead and over there. The relationship to which they call us is with our own life within us, pulsing, watery, green, resilient, musical, and true.

This book is also full of intellectual curiosity and satisfaction for the mind. The authors have soaked in the wealth of offerings from a host of brilliant teachers. They carry forward the intellectual and clinical legacies of a Who's Who of luminaries from the fields of manual therapies, including Ida Rolf, Bucky Fuller, Fritz Smith, Emily Conrad, Andrew Taylor Still, Daniel David Palmer, and William Sutherland, to name a few. Their "memory palace" is built not only from their own experiences but from their lifelong engagement with several lineages of thought and practice. These traditions of practice, each with its own sophisticated engagement with the bones, afford an even greater leverage with which to dig into one's own relationship with these marvels living within us all. We don't have to wait for a bone to break before we get to know it. We can take our authors' lead and benefit from their rich experience with their own teachers. We can enter into relationship not only with our living bones but also with the traditions that love them still. Welcome to your tour of *The Memory Palace* of Bones: in this hall of mirrors, you will only see yourself more clearly. Enjoy!

Warmly,

Gil Hedley, Ph.D.

Important Note to Readers

The Memory Palace is a place to marvel at the life within and around us. One naturally pauses with wonder when contemplating a mountain, a heart, a beautiful poem, a remarkable person. Accordingly, please read this book itself as a Memory Palace. Read each section slowly once or twice and pause between the exploration and embodiment of each bone. We'd recommend reading perhaps just one or two chapters at a time. This book is not meant to be read as if walking quickly through a museum, temple, or palace without pausing. Please slow down, savor, and feel the resonances in your own body, mind, and spirit though your and our reflections upon each bone.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Memory Palace!

Why *The Memory Palace of Bones*? How can understanding the title of this book help you make the best use of what you read? Here's the story of how and why we came up with, and were inspired by, this title.

David's first book was on the anatomy, kinesiology, and roles of muscles in our lives. *Putting the Soul Back in the Body: A Manual of Imagination Anatomy for Massage Therapists* was published in 1984. In early 2020 Jeff told David he wanted to co-write a similar book, but focused on the bones.

As we began collaborating in our writing, the notion of "memory palaces" became more and more intriguing and persistent.

The practice of creating memory palaces was first recorded around the time of Cicero. Before printing, learning was transmitted through the oral tradition, which required considerable skill in remembering important conversations, events, stories, songs, and sacred texts. So, naturally, methods to enhance memory were invented.

One of the fundamental techniques was to create an imaginary structure, called a "memory palace," in one's mind. This could be based on a palace one had actually visited or that one simply imagined. The interior of this palace would be constructed with many rooms, called "loci," each decorated with scenes and objects, designed to trigger certain memories. It could be a dramatic scene in an antechamber to recall the details of a case going before a high court. The more dramatic and detailed the scene, the more memorable would be the memories triggered. "The classical sources seem to be describing inner techniques which depend on visual impressions of almost incredible intensity" (Yates 1966, p.4). Remarkable feats of memory were recorded using this method. "The art of memory is like an

inner writing...depending on inner gymnastics, invisible labors of concentration..." (Yates 1966, p.16).

Over time, the concept of the memory palace evolved. St. Augustine explicitly wrote about his challenges searching for and not quite finding God everywhere within his memory. In medieval times, churches began incorporating paintings and frescoes designed to evoke memories, worship, and righteous behavior—the "corporeal similitudes of subtle and spiritual intentions" (Yates 1966, p.76). In the 14th century, Dante created one of the greatest memory palaces in literature through his *Divine Comedy*, depicting travels through the various levels of hell, purgatory, and heaven. In the 16th century, we find the first explicit attempts to create an actual memory palace. Giulio Camillo, an Italian philosopher of that time, claimed to have made a small building that a person would enter and be instantly flooded with memories and knowledge of all times. The theory and practice of the art of memory then played a role in the writings of the 16th-century Italian philosopher and astronomer Giordano Bruno, who wrote of memory as the art "by which we may become joined to the soul of the world" (quoted in Yates 1966, p.259). All this and more is explored in great detail in Frances Yates's masterpiece of alternative intellectual history, *The Art of Memory*.

In the 20th century, the idea of constructed places triggering memory and inner knowing was embodied in the writings and architecture of Charles Moore. Moore was deeply affected by the idea that all structures, whether natural or human-made, had the capacity to evoke memory and knowledge. His books *Body, Memory and Architecture* (Bloomer and Moore 1977) and *Chambers for a Memory Palace* (Lyndon and Moore 1994) elaborate on this notion.

Jeff and I were intrigued and inspired by this notion of memory palaces. As we explored our own bodies, our memories, and our clinical experiences, we wondered: Could the body itself be a memory palace? After all, within us live all our memories, all our learning, all our lives. Don't we walk through this memory palace every time we lay our hands on the human body? And if so, what memories—ancient or recent—are carried within and reflected in our bones? When we say "I just know it in my bones," is that merely a figure of speech? What might our bones tell us—of ancient lives on the plain, of the evolution from walking on all fours to two-

legged locomotion, about the role bones play in the balancing of human structure and energy?

So welcome to the memory palace! We hope you enjoy the exploration, and that the messages and memories of the bones will speak to you and deeply support your wisdom, your memories, your lives, and your health.

-DL

When I was a child, my family moved to farm country and I spent days roaming through the woods and open fields. I often found rabbit or squirrel skulls, the ribcage of a deer, even the occasional bird skeleton. Fascinated, I took them home to study, later burying them at the side of our house to give them a "proper" funeral. I never found bones or skulls sinister; they were, instead, remarkable pieces of art.

In addition to these sojourns in woods and fields, I attended Catholic school, where I was taught that our bodies were the temples of God. At the same time, however, I was taught that the body was sinful. These contradictory teachings tormented and disembodied me for years and eventually drew me to bodywork and the human potential movement of the 1970s.

Throughout 2019, I recall wishing and hoping that 2020 was going to be better, kinder, gentler on our nervous systems than recent years; 20/20, perfect vision, I told my friends.

And then, just like that, it wasn't. COVID-19 arrived in the United States.

In California's Bay Area, where I reside, March 17 marked the first day of a state-wide shelter-in-place shutdown. Along with everything else, work came to a screeching halt.

Fortunately, being a chiropractic physician and osteopath, I was considered an "essential" worker. But for two weeks, patients understandably were afraid to leave their homes, let alone come for a hands-on treatment. I wondered what my work might look like—if anything—in a year. I heard about people offering remote or energetic bodywork. I was skeptical but signed up for an eight-week course on long-distance osteopathy. If the shutdown lasted as long as some were afraid it would, perhaps I could offer my services in this manner. The course was well

presented by a credible instructor, but I never felt inspired or confident enough to try it on a paying client. However, I received a gift: the assessments and techniques focused on the visualization of bones and skeletal anatomy in extreme detail. Lo and behold, I fell in love, once again, with bones.

My love for bones, along with a budding interest in spiritual practices and nature mysticism, led me to pursue careers in chiropractic and later in osteopathy. Somewhere along the line, I read a wonderful article that David wrote on the principles of manual therapy. This inspired me to read his book, *Putting the Soul Back into the Body*. It was equal parts poetry and science; it was aspirational philosophy plus origins and insertions. I liked his poetic and phenomenological approach to muscular anatomy and included it in the chiropractic courses I was teaching at the time. And I took some of his classes with him. We became friends, bonding over our mutual love for manual therapy, music, poetry, and, of course, bones.

After my online course ended, I knew I wanted to write a book on bones—not a scholarly textbook, but something akin to a poem. And I knew I wanted to write it with David. Remember when MTV first appeared in the early 1980s, and then MTV-Unplugged? They played stripped-down versions of Nirvana, 10,000 Maniacs, Eric Clapton—back to the bones of the music. Consider this book "Bones Unplugged," written by two bodyphilosophers in love with science, poetry, and the deep sanctity of the human body. Go deep, friends; your bones are ready to welcome you.

David Lauterstein co-founded The Lauterstein-Conway Massage School in Austin, Texas, in 1989. He has been a therapist and teacher for 40 years and is the author of *Putting the Soul Back in the Body, The Deep Massage Book*, and *Life in the Bones: A Biography of Dr. Fritz Smith and Zero Balancing*. His background prior to bodywork was in music composition. His teaching and writings reflect this, emphasizing manual therapy as an art as well as a science. He resides in Austin with his wife, Julie Lauterstein, and their two cats, Sister and Clifford.



Dr. Jeff Rockwell has been passionately involved in the fields of chiropractic, osteopathy, and somatic psychology since 1979. He has been active in the areas of education, research, clinical practice, and publishing. He was Professor of Clinical and Chiropractic Sciences for 11 years at Parker University in Dallas, Texas. In 2016, he was named one of the chiropractic profession's technique masters and was featured in a book of that title. He makes his home in Marin County, in northern California.

