

THE
SOFT POWER
OF *Metta*
IN CRANIAL WORK

BY ANDREW ROSENSTOCK | RCST®

It was a quiet Sunday morning, one of those rare, gentle pockets of time that seem to open all on their own. My five-month-old daughter was sleeping soundly with my wife in the other room, the kind of sleep that radiates safety and sweetness.

I was lying in bed, a bit tired myself, with one hand resting on my dog—a Bernadoodle who tends to carry a lot of buzz in his system. He wasn't totally calm, but something in him was a little less twitchy and softer than usual.

I hadn't planned to meditate, but with the stillness around me, a Metta practice seemed to arise naturally. For those unfamiliar, Metta is a form of meditation centered on cultivating goodwill and heartfelt wishing for others. It's often translated as "loving-kindness," but that phrase can sometimes feel a bit too thin, too glossy or shiny for some folks. Metta, in practice, has a rawness and honesty to it. It's about relating to others with warmth, spaciousness, and care, even when it's hard.

I began where it's easiest: my daughter. Holding her image in my heart, I quietly wished her happiness, ease, and peace. That part always comes with a kind of soft joy. Then in time, as the practice gently encourages, I turned toward someone more challenging—someone with whom things are more complex.

For me that morning, it was my mother.



I love her deeply, but love doesn't mean it's always smooth. She's moving further into dementia, and while there's still connection, there's also loss, confusion, and sometimes pain. Holding her in the practice stirred things in me. I could feel my nervous system flutter a bit as I tried to offer her Metta—not from a place of pretending, but from the edge of where I could meet her in my heart amidst my mental narratives of how I would like her to be.

That's when I noticed my dog again.

His breath had slowed. He'd stopped shifting around. The buzz had dropped even lower. And I realized I had almost forgotten that my hand was still resting on him.

But something in me had clearly shifted. I hadn't adjusted my touch. I wasn't "doing" anything. I was simply allowing the quality of Metta to bloom within me, moving gently through the layers of relationship—from my daughter, to myself, to my mother—and all the while, my hand remained on his body.

And he responded.

It wasn't dramatic, but it was distinct. His whole system softened. His tide changed. Something was syncing between us — not because I was trying to regulate him, but because I was meeting myself with sincerity and warmth. Because I was inhabiting a state of being that wasn't organized around control, fixing, or even helping—but rather a genuine spacious care.

And that moment stayed with me.

The truth is, I had been doing something similar in my cranial practice for a while—holding clients with goodwill, sometimes even with loving-kindness in mind. But what I came to realize in this accidental unfolding was subtle and significant: I had been directing that kindness toward the client.

“
IT WASN'T DRAMATIC,
BUT IT WAS DISTINCT.
**HIS WHOLE SYSTEM
SOFTENED. HIS TIDE
CHANGED.** SOMETHING
WAS SYNCING
BETWEEN US...
”

Not that it was wrong. I don't think intention ever truly goes to waste. But something in that approach kept me in a mode of doing—even if it was subtle. I was orienting at them, with good intentions, yes, but still aiming something their way.

This moment in bed—with no agenda, no client, no sense of trying—offered a felt distinction. I wasn't doing anything to my dog. I wasn't even holding him in the Metta field intentionally. I was simply being with the practice inside myself.

And that made all the difference.

It got me thinking about cranial work. Not in a theoretical way, but in the living, breathing way of practice.

What if we allowed ourselves to enter a state of Metta before or during a session—not by directing it at our clients, not as a technique—but simply letting that inner field arise, the way it had that morning?

What if, as biodynamic practitioners, we rested our hands in neutrality while quietly resting our hearts in loving-kindness?

I started exploring this gently with clients. Not every time. Not with an agenda. But simply as an offering of internal orientation. Letting the touch be the same as always—listening, receptive, non-invasive—but allowing my awareness to move through those layers of Metta:

- someone easy
- someone neutral
- someone difficult
- and sometimes, even all beings

And I noticed something.

The system responded. Just like my dog had.

Clients who usually took a while to settle began to drop in more quickly. The field felt fuller, richer, quieter. My own system stayed more spacious and less outcome-driven. It didn't feel like I was “doing Metta” to them—it was more that the practice attuned me to a relational state where healing could emerge without pressure or force.

“
**...OUR INTERNAL
 STATE MATTERS. NOT
 JUST IN TERMS OF
 PROFESSIONALISM OR
 PRESENCE, BUT IN A
 DEEPLY BIOLOGICAL,
 RELATIONAL WAY.**
 ”

REFLECTIONS

This experience reminded me of something so simple it's easy to overlook: our internal state matters. Not just in terms of professionalism or presence, but in a deeply biological, relational way.

When we enter the space of a session, we're not just bringing our hands—we're bringing our whole nervous system. And our system is always in conversation with our client's, whether or not we speak a word.

Metta is not magic. It's not a trick or a special tool. But it is a way of inhabiting ourselves with kindness. A way of softening the edges without collapsing. Of being clear and spacious without retreating. And when we're in that state, it seems others can feel it—even a hyper Bernadoodle.

GENTLE SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- **Try a short Metta practice before a session.**

Nothing elaborate. Just a few moments in the car, in the waiting room, or sitting quietly. Start with someone easy (a beloved friend, child, or animal). Then yourself. Then someone neutral. Maybe even someone difficult. Let it be organic.

- **Rest in Metta—not direct it.**

This isn't about doing Metta to the client. It's more about bathing your own awareness in that field, and letting the quality naturally infuse the session.

- **Let your body guide the practice.**

Notice how your system responds as you hold these different people in your awareness. What changes in your breath, tone, or touch? Let that be part of the session.

- **Observe without effort.**

See how the system of your client responds—not as proof or goal, but as part of the relational field. Be curious.

- **Remember: kindness is a state, not a performance.**

You don't need to be perfectly peaceful or endlessly loving. Just being willing to meet yourself and your experience with warmth is often enough. ✨

Andrew Rosenstock is a Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist, Rolfer®, Somatic Movement Therapist, and Yoga Therapist based in Boston. His work integrates trauma-informed approaches with embodied awareness and meditative practice, supporting clients in returning to safety, regulation, and presence through touch and relational depth.

He is the founder and host of the *Touching Into Presence* podcast. You can learn more at AndrewRosenstock.com and RolfingInBoston.com.



ANDREW ROSENSTOCK RCST®

Andrew lives and works in Boston with his partner Penny, daughter Lena, and dog Oleo, where life unfolds moment by moment and continues to shape his understanding of presence, regulation, and relational touch.