

EXCHANGE

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The Teaching of Frank Pierce Jones: A Personal Memoir

Lester W. (Tommy) Thompson

Former Chair of ATI and Chair of the Sponsorship Committee

[Editor's note: This article first appeared in *The Alexandrian* in 1982, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.]

"...for we are not to imagine or suppose but to discover what nature does or may be made to do."

Francis Bacon, "The Advancement of Learning"

The Alexandrian has kindly asked me to write a personal memoir on my teacher, and former colleague at Tufts University, Dr. Frank Pierce Jones. I think of this memoir as a footnote to Frank's book, *Body Awareness in Action* [recently republished as *Freedom to Change*]. Frank's preference for the book's title shortly before his illness was "Freedom to Choose." His publishers no doubt felt that the infinitive left vague exactly what was to be chosen. And, admittedly, *Body Awareness in Action* is not an altogether misleading title; in fact, it probably attracts more readers than the one discarded. However, it was Frank's recognition of having available to him for the first time the freedom to make choices unencumbered by habit that persuaded him to continue having lessons. Subsequently, his realization of the implications of using that freedom as a means of expanding the whole range of human potential, learning, and interaction led him to teach the work. Had he not realized almost immediately in his lessons with both the Alexander brothers the extent to which his very perception was governed by unconscious patterns of use, perhaps he would never have made such a commitment.

Frank likened his condition prior to lessons to the "monkey-trap," the self-inflicted predicament brought on by the instinctual refusal to let go, to hold on for dear life to whatever you feel is good for you, even though your moti-

continued on page 4



ATI Vision and Mission

To establish an open means of global communication for people to discuss, apply, research, and experiment with the discoveries of F. M. Alexander.

To foster the use of the F. M. Alexander Technique in social and environmental interrelationships.

To create a vital organization whose structure and means of operation are consistent with the principles of the F. M. Alexander Technique.

In This Issue

Editor's Page	2
From the Chair	3
A Complementary Alternative?	7
Prosperity Principles	9
Book Reviews	12
In Practice	17
Gender Comparison in Encountering the Alexander Technique	18
An ATI Wish List	25
Coming Events	26
Alexander Technique on the Net	30
An AGM Workshop Preview	31

Editor's Page

Andrea Matthews, editor

Driving around my town recently I began to notice some red, white, and blue signs that made me do a double-take. The signs read—I thought—“Reality Consultant.” I blinked my eyes and shook my head a bit, and looked again. The signs actually read “Realty Consultant,” being perfectly ordinary signs of houses for sale. After a little chortle at my mistake, it got me thinking. There was something that resonated for me in that job description. It struck me that it would be a pithy explanation of what we do as Alexander teachers. I’m thinking of putting it on my business card.

With this issue I send good thoughts to all of you who will be meeting in beautiful Ireland! With the AGM upon us, a time when we catch up on the year’s events and refine our vision of the future, this issue of ExchangeE offers a little look back at a great teacher, Frank Pierce Jones, through the eyes of a student and now teacher and our former Chair, Tommy Thompson; the “In Practice” column this issue is an excerpt from another later piece by Tommy

Continued on page 30

EXCHANGE

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From the Chair

Jamee Culbertson, Chair of Alexander Technique International

We of ATI are at a *very* exciting and transitional time of growth and discovery. We are on the brink of association within our membership that is unprecedented. Soon we will be able to realize the positive changes that come from movement within “an expanded field of attention,” as Frank Pierce Jones says in his book *Freedom to Change* (p. 156). Why? Because this October so many of us will meet face to face at the Annual General Meeting in Ireland. By expanding our presence outside of America, as Frank Jones continues: “...this is the means by which change is effected in the Alexander Technique”—and in ATI.

Frank Jones writes about teaching: “The aim of teaching, as I conceive it, is to bring a pupil to the point of self-discovery that F.M. reached when he was able to translate what he saw in the mirrors into kinesthetic terms and apply this new knowledge to the solution of his own problems, and become in effect his own expert in the use of himself.”

What is the kinesthetic body of ATI? Maybe it’s an underlying rhythm and movement of ATI members who form a link of like-mindedness, a global link with as much potential as is born in the moment of discovery we’ve all

continued on page 24

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The Teaching of Frank Pierce Jones

continued from page 1

vating desires are principally governed by untrustworthy sensory appreciation. But the primal life force of self-preservation is deceptively strong, so the monkey sees the fruit inside the bottle, grabs hold of this life-sustaining, pleasure-giving fruit, and thus cannot remove his paw from the bottle of captivity: because he refuses to let go. Absurdly, the bottle defines the perimeters of his perceptive existence. And with no knowledge of how to change his situation, he remains trapped until a way out is discovered. Or else someone else happens by and offers the solution. Clearly, the monkey could use a few lessons from a qualified teacher.

Frank's illustration was not without application, for daily we find ourselves party and prey to the monkey-trap. And to escape, we can have lesson after lesson in the seemingly never-ending contest with our reactive patterns of unconscious behavior. Although,

along the way, at some point Frank thought it was really up to us to accept the full brunt of responsibility for the freedom from habit the work offers us: to go on from there, and solve our own problems. For though we might have little control over the events in our lives, we certainly have

...though we might have little control over the events in our lives, we certainly have control over our experience of those events, our responses to them, and how we allow them to affect us.

control over our experience of those events, our responses to them, and how we allow them to affect us. Once lessons offer the freedom to choose a better course of action than the one habitually taken, we truly encounter the depth of our own commitment, not just to the work, but to ourselves and to those around us.

Frank suggested early in lessons that I make conscious use of my kinesthetic sense, the "muscle sense" that registers tension within the body, and which tells us about changes in tension that accompany physical effort, movement, and variations in our mental and emotional state, to discriminate between what was a constructive level of tension and what was not. He explained that we become accustomed through habit to gauging all our effort and corresponding thoughts and feelings by whatever faulty sensory standard we've allowed to occur. Yet, because it is what we know, and it "feels" right, we continue to perform the daily acts of our lives with unnecessary and disproportionate effort and energy. By making the kinesthetic sense reliable, we learn to recognize unwanted patterns of behavior, previously unavailable to individual conscious control. So, I listened with my yet uncharted "muscle sense" while he guided me through lesson after lesson. For a full year, I barely said a word. When at last I did begin to question, invariably I would use myself in such a way that I would disturb the tensional balance of my head and neck which Frank had so skillfully restored two seconds earlier. No

better off than the monkey in the bottle, I too, for lack of acceptance of a better way, remained in my own way. Frank's hands provided the necessary point of reference sufficient to allow me the freedom to reason a more integrative way of continuing to speak. Whether or not I chose to do so, however, was left to me. This availability of choice outside one's habitual realm of patterned behavior, and what one did with that freedom, intrigued Frank. It intrigued me as well. Still it made no sense to me how he was able to perceive when the directions were present and operable in contrast to my unconscious interference, and whether that condition was in any way responsible for extending the boundaries of my performance. That awareness I thought necessary if one was to trust the absence of what one customarily felt as a legitimate basis for choice.

Frank explained that neither F.M. nor A.R. "showed" him how to "use" his hands. A.R., in fact, remarked that since Frank was fully capable of using himself, he was certainly capable of using his hands. "But where do I put them?" quizzed Frank. "Put them where they're needed," replied A.R. Two years into the work, and I seemed to be missing something essential. Frank could not "show" me the answer since apparently one's hands were "used" in proportion to the depth of one's own "use." But that was a subjective experience. I had encountered other Alexander teachers whose "use" of their hands enabled them to be skillful at conveying the working mechanism commonly associated with the Technique. Their lives, however, did not appear to be inhibitive of the reactive response, certainly not in the sense F.M. considered essential to understanding his work. The ball appeared to be in my court. I needed life situations apart from lessons for determining whether there was a measurable difference in my behavior when I allowed the directions to be ongoing in contrast to when I interfered with them. Only then could I trust the absence of what I customarily felt to represent a better condition of use. Alexander anticipated my quandary, writing in *The Universal Constant in Living*, "This experience of passing from a 'known' to an 'unknown' manner of use of the self is the basic need in making a fundamental change in the control of man's reaction...."

So I bought a seventeen-foot kayak. And for a period of four months from May through August in 1974, I would paddle several miles out into open ocean from Marblehead harbor, far enough away from land, and into swells large enough so there was always the clear and present reality of not returning safely unless I consistently made demonstrably effective choices. I found when I focused solely on gripping the paddle without being attentive to letting my head and neck retain optimal tensional balance with respect to the torso, that this invariably impeded my ability to sense much movement beyond what I could see. Though, when I had a sense of the presence of my head and neck, and consciously refrained from fixing them in place while I

The Teaching of Frank Pierce Jones

gripped the paddle, I perceived a movement of the ocean much deeper than the visible waves. Inhibiting what “felt” like the right move to make when I had no clear sense of the directional movement beneath me freed me to reason the most appropriate response, among many possible, to that one clear undercurrent of movement that was not likely to change course by the time I determined which direction to initiate with my paddle. That way, I could let pass the lesser force, while taking advantage of the greater, surfacing one. The latter proved time and again to be the measurably more appropriate one.

There were times when I thought myself mad, and I consoled myself thinking if I did join the “many brave hearts asleep in the deep,” it would be nobody’s use but my own that put me there. However, after four months I concurred with Frank, whose notes for the uncompleted fifteenth chapter of his book stated,

“Some people read F.M. Alexander’s books or have a few demonstration lessons and are fired with enthusiasm for a vague, general idea of ‘non-doing’ or ‘end-gaining’ which they deduce from their experience. Others close their minds to the possibility of a new experience and refuse to see anything in the work but a kind of posture training.... Both interpretations miss the significance of the work completely. You can be wrong about something in a great variety of ways. There are also a great variety of ways in which you can be ‘right.’... What is more important to me, however, is the possibility of change in moral and mental attitudes and the extension of the range within which free choice and free will operate.” Perhaps it is fitting that when Frank first sanctioned my teaching it was to work with the U.S.A. Olympic Rowing Team. Shortly after the Marblehead experience, Frank encouraged me to carry on his teaching, charging, “I think you can do it, don’t you?” The choice was clearly mine—only to have made the choice carried with it an ever-widening responsibility. ☺

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A Complementary Alternative?

Robin Gilmore

Member of ATI and Chair of the Vision/Mission Committee

On August 28 I attended an open meeting of the Advisory Council of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a division of the National Institutes for Health (NIH). NCCAM was established to conduct and support research, train researchers, and disseminate information regarding complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatments and prevention modalities and disciplines. The budget for fiscal year 2000 is \$68.7 million and in all likelihood will grow annually. This is government money from taxpayers being used to advance the field and provide substantiated information to the public. Extensive information including current research, upcoming meetings, and grants awarded can be found on the website <http://nccam.nih.gov>.

Just what can be considered in the realm of CAM is a subject of ongoing discussion and revision. The current taxonomy includes five major domains: alternative medical systems, mind-body interventions, biologically-based treatments, manipulative and body-based methods, and energy therapies. Given just the domain names, the Alexander Technique might fall under mind-body interventions or manipulative and body-based methods. However, upon reading the entire document, one will find no inclusion of Alexander or other somatic movement disciplines. Earlier versions did contain specific mention of Alexander, Feldenkrais and more.

This seemingly glaring omission was addressed at the August 28 meeting in response to a letter written by AMSAT member Missy Vineyard. In addition, ISMETA has established a dialogue with NCCAM about this issue. ISMETA is the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association which grants qualified applicants certification as Registered Movement Therapists. As Acting President of ISMETA, Ellen Barlow has stayed abreast of the changing taxonomy for several years, and currently Catherine Eliot is serving as the ISMETA liaison to NCCAM. I was encouraged by the response of the Advisory Council at the meeting. They admit that the domain names are not as inclusive as they might be, and several times during the day comments were interjected into the discussion along the lines of, "let's not forget about movement-based modalities."

Another promising aspect of the Council's comments was the shared opinion that NCCAM and public health in general should ultimately shift from an emphasis on treatment to what one speaker visualized, "95% focus on prevention." NCCAM is in part consumer driven in that many alternative treatments are brought to attention by the public. From anecdotal reports of success to requests for information about specific treatments or methods,

A Complementary Alternative?

NCCAM learns about what is out there in current use. Only after scientifically sound research is conducted does NCCAM endorse particular methods or treatments.

Here is where all those millions come in. That money is available in the form of research grants, and grant applicants need not be scientists or doctors. In the minutes of the May 8-9, 2000 NCCAM meeting, a statement from the Director's Report reads, "NCCAM must engage in a proactive planning process by creating opportunities, rather than setting up hoops for investigators to jump through." If an individual practitioner has a grant proposal that is deemed worthy of funding, NCCAM will assist in finding trained researchers to shape the study into an acceptable format. The practitioner does what he or she is trained and qualified to do while leaving the science to the scientists.

In addition to NIH/NCCAM, the White House has recently established a Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. The White House Commission will hold town meetings around the country in coming months. As this commission will focus on legislative and regulatory issues, now is the time for non-licensed somatic practitioners to be heard. Inquiries about upcoming Town Meetings can be addressed to :
whccamp@nih.gov.

Here is a chance to demonstrate the value and benefits of the Alexander Technique to a government organization rather than fall victim to misguided regulation from uneducated legislators. In light of the recent controversy in New York regarding the use of touch by licensed massage therapists vs. somatic practitioners, it behooves us to be proactive. NCCAM and WHCCAMP may well be a vehicles for broadening public awareness and establishing a wider recognition of somatic movement practices including the Alexander Technique.

Here is a chance to demonstrate the value and benefits of the Alexander Technique to a government organization rather than fall victim to misguided regulation from uneducated legislators.... It behooves us to be proactive.

In the United States and elsewhere, the former fringe of healthcare is rapidly moving front and center. As the population ages, there will be a greater need for preventive approaches to health as well as less invasive or toxic treatments for chronic conditions. At the other end of the age scale, the rampant increase of children diagnosed with autism and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder signifies the disturbing trend of a disembodied generation. Alexander teachers and other somatic movement educators and therapists must be an important component of finding solutions for our shifting evolutionary needs. ☺

Prosperity Principles

Rounding off the 1999 Annual General Meeting theme of "Networking in the Spirit of Prosperity and Gratitude":

Imagination is a power.

It must be used to prosper.

Imagination is power to create.

It happens in one's mind. Images of what's next can be apprehended and supposed. The future really does call us to it.

To truly prosper, we respond to a future idea that is calling us, to go forward. We think of it. We picture parts of what it could be like. Symbols of the next new good should be around in today. This helps with envisioning. This helps make what's next real. This helps to keep on line with the idea.

Coming away from a very poor background, a client went far beyond conditioning to leave behind her little free Hallmark yearly calendar. She had carried around the complimentary item, as big as her palm, for years. Each year she would go to the card shop and pick up a free new one. When she realized it was a symbol of poverty, she was eager to purchase a symbol of success. A dated leather journal with gold edges and a silk ribbon quickly replaced the little dog-eared item. She felt more wealthy. Every time she put her hand on the expensive new calendar, she felt moved to believe in a future unlike the limited past. The wealthy symbol worked.

Before purchasing this property we had to do some work to afford it, to think we could round up the down payment, to think that it was possible. Our realtors worked coaching, listening, and reminding us that IT WAS POSSIBLE. We made image books, wrote affirmations, prayed, and shared ideas with people who helped us keep on intending. We found a lawyer. We had a sign that read: BRING IT INTO BEING. We posted it in the office for a year. We read it every day, then moved it to a tree trunk outside, so it could be seen by everyone coming up the driveway.

Every time I saw the sign, I remembered purchasing the property could be a fact. I came to believe it could be done. The papers were signed. The sale was complete. A series of miracles occurred. The owner leaned over a little to arrange a deal. The lenders took the risk of accepting a self-employed borrower.

We affirmed each day that a Divine Plan for us would become obvious. It did. The confusion of doubt cleared out. We signed papers. All cooperation needed, rushed to meet us. Within 24 hours, we had painted the house green.

Prosperity Principles

Things to do:

1. List 15 different styles of exchange that you see around you every day.
2. Make note of some things you give easily and freely. Notice that these things are plentiful with you. Notice what is being hoarded. By whom? See that for these people, these things remain scarce. Choose to give away weekly some of the usual things you hoard and find out what happens. Do this with a partner.
3. Pick five things you have around you. Say what they are symbols for. (example: Pens are for writing. Tape is a symbol of putting things together. Quilts are symbols of warmth. Candles are symbols of light.)
4. Give away six paper money gifts. Reflect later upon these actions. See if anything got started.
5. Notice that you won't be willing to give certain things away. Ask if you could easily accept these "forbidden-to-give" items from someone else or would you be suspicious? Plan to do some further research.
6. Check to see if the kinds of things you already have are the sort of thing you feel okay about sharing. Talk to a friend about what is discovered.
7. Carve out some high intention, high imagination times where you picture in your mind's eye and feel in your body what it would be to have what's being wished for... speak as if you are very certain that you will have what you want very soon. Say what will change, with someone who will do this experiment with you for twenty-one days.
8. Plan ways, with three other people, to use imagination daily.
9. Give attention fifteen minutes a day to what you want to see or see more of. Ask someone else to do this with you for nine days. See if anything changes around you. Keep notes.
10. Write each night for ten minutes, what has been satisfying, good, or miraculous about the day.
11. Choose something, then keep track of how many times you wonder if it was a good choice, how the other choice might have been, maybe you should have waited, etc. Observe what it takes to stay committed to what was chosen.
12. When someone gives and you are changed by receiving what was given, let them know as soon as possible. Talk to others about the vulnerability involved with genuine generosity.

13. In order to be grateful, one must be generous of spirit oneself. Each day pick three things you would rather not give, and expand the ability to give, by giving what's been withheld. Take notes each evening if you feel more grateful yourself in retrospect, for what's been given to you. Make a promise about it.
14. Tell the people around you when you notice you are complaining. "This is a complaining that I have..." Then make a request or a promise that takes it somewhere else. (example: I complain this room is too hot. I will open windows.)
15. Ask four people who have some wisdom, what do you think I am talking about, that I no longer want (example: talking on and on about rain when what you want is sun).
16. Find twelve new words that symbolize what's intended next for you, then put them into your daily speaking and writing (example: bounty, plenty, love, laughter, harmony, agreement, partnership).
17. Look around to discover five patterns of perception you admire in others. Praise them for how they do that, in person, on the phone, or in a note.
18. Look at pictures and words you have pasted up about what you want. Look at them every day.
19. Describe ten undesirable situations with a new slant and new words. Change your mind about what it was, into what you would like better. (example: "Somebody was mad at me" could become "he was having a challenging day.")
20. Select stories of heroes and heroines you admire. Read them for information, skills, and good advice you can give yourself about the life you are designing now.
21. Find some new people, groups, and gatherings where you can learn unfamiliar languages for describing life. Go where that conversation is.
22. Take five generous actions.
23. Read over the principles each day before beginning the day.
24. Put seven new plants in your work space to symbolize new growth.
25. Send ten postage stamps to ten people today as a small gift from you. ☺

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Book Reviews

The Philosopher's Stone

Diaries of Lessons with F. Matthias Alexander

by Jean M.O. Fischer, editor

Mouritz, London, 1998, ISBN 0-9525574-8-7. Hardcover, 110 pp., £14.95. Cover design, layout, and typesetting by Jean M.O. Fischer. Amply illustrated with B&W photos courtesy of Walter Carrington and others.

reviewed by Andrea Matthews

"What about a story?" said Christopher Robin.
 "What about a story?" I said.
 "Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?"
 "I suppose I could," I said. "What sort of stories does he like?"
 "About himself. Because he's that sort of Bear."

A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh

Well, I'm that sort of Bear, too. And since no one can tell you the story of what *you* will experience as a student and trainee, the next best thing is other people's stories, diaries, and reminiscences. Jean Fischer, in editing the various diaries that make up *The Philosopher's Stone*, has rendered a great service in preserving for us the experiences of these writers, which otherwise would have been lost or very difficult to locate. His introduction fills in the necessary background on the authors, and even the attractive presentation of the material is due to his tasteful typesetting and design. The volume joins the diary of Goddard Binkley, *The Expanding Self*, and others as a significant addition to the Alexander Technique bookshelf.

While one wouldn't necessarily recommend this kind of book as *the* introduction to the Alexander Technique, it can offer students reassuring glimpses of the territory they are entering upon, as experienced by very different personalities. For example, the writers note the struggle between wanting to be right and needing to let go of "knowing," or how a very successful lesson can be followed by a resurgence of habit because of wanting to hang onto the experience. The book offers a nice balance between contemporaneous, relatively "unprocessed" accounts and reminiscences polished by reflection over years. The reader can see how the "naïve subject" wrestles with novel experiences and at first ungraspable ideas, and can also benefit from the more distilled and "expert" observations in the reminiscences.

For the trainee and teacher, the book offers even more: There is James Harvey Robinson's 1919 article from the *Atlantic Monthly*, which drew many to study with Alexander in New York and Boston. We find glimpses into the

teaching styles, procedures, and personalities not only of F.M. Alexander, but of his assistants and trainees, such as Irene Stewart, Max Alexander, Walter Carrington, Margaret Goldie, Richard Walker, and Patrick Macdonald (many of whom can only be known to us now through such recollections, alas). The stories of how people were attracted to the Technique—in the case of Anthony Ludovici, even badgered into studying—enliven one's thoughts on how to reach out to potential students. Most of all, I was struck by the writers' ability to express with clarity experiences that were initially confusing in the extreme and, in the case of Louise Morgan's Miss G.R. ("Recording a Miracle") particularly, students' heroic struggles to be whole and independent again. If only that chapter could be left in every doctor's waiting room!

There are little gems scattered throughout the diaries, such as Irene Stewart gravely explaining that even F.M. has had students he couldn't teach. (Very comforting!) Sir George Trevelyan comes to the realization in his lessons that "the practical test of intelligence was the ability to control against habit and to accept and act on a new idea." Further on he coaches himself: "Every day must be begun in the hope of discovering something new." Then there is Eva Webb, able to write after her last lesson, "It is all beginning to belong to me...Beyond that, uncertainty (of the unknown), spontaneity, a worthwhile freedom." Surely that is what we all hope to send our students away with.

I was impressed, too, by the effectiveness of daily lessons over a several week period, which was the norm in F.M.'s studio, yet seems hardly practical today, as well as the ability of even beginning students to read

Sir George Trevelyan: "Every day must be begun in the hope of discovering something new."

(uncomplainingly) and benefit from Alexander's books, which seem so challengingly dense today. Current teachers are at something of a disadvantage, with the shorter attention spans of students

generally and greater gaps between lessons. Serious thought must be given to how we as teachers can cope with those constraints; reading these accounts does encourage one to buck convention and recommend more frequent (perhaps shorter) lessons, especially at the beginning of lessons.

In preserving and organizing such material, Mr. Fischer has provided a significant resource for current and future students and teachers. Most of all, books such as this stimulate our internal dialogue with our work and with our predecessors, prompting new insights, rekindling old ones, filling in the history of the work, and sparking our curiosity.

* * * *

Book Reviews

Articles and Lectures

Articles, Published Letters and Lectures on the F.M. Alexander Technique

by F. Matthias Alexander, edited by Jean M.O. Fischer

Mouritz, London, 1995, ISBN 0-9525574-6-0. Hardcover, illus., 372 pp., £25.

reviewed by Andrea Matthews

Having completed the smaller volume of Alexander diaries more recently produced by Jean Fischer (*The Philosopher's Stone*, above), I braced myself for the more imposing task of reading his edition of F.M.'s lesser known writings—and was very pleasantly surprised. Again, I found the readability of the text much enhanced visually by Mr. Fischer's expert design and type-setting, and intellectually by the provision of profuse notes, introductions to each piece, a thorough index, illustrations, and cleverest of all, a chronology of F.M.'s writings inside the front and back covers. Adding to that the fact that F.M.'s papers were lost in a fire in 1964, and thus Mr. Fischer had to round up these materials from various sources rather than a convenient archive, his efforts seem to me all the more impressive.

For quite some time, I've had the book on my shelf, and I would think, "Oh yes, I really must get around to reading that," the way one thinks, "Oh, I really should be eating more fiber..." I'm pleased to say I raced through it and still wanted more. Much more of F.M.'s intriguing personality shines through this collection than we meet in his books. I was struck time and again by F.M.'s willingness to seize the moment and by his youthful daring and ambition in setting off on his job searches and later his acting career, particularly considering his chronic illnesses up to that point, and finally leaving even that behind to concentrate on teaching. His pragmatism and sheer chutzpah in selling rather than just giving away his promotional pamphlet in Sydney in 1900 made me think about how I promote my own teaching; he has a good point in saying people value what they pay for. And I was touched by his foreword to a lost (alas!) autobiography which he undertook "for the sake of one who is still young and very dear to me," as he discreetly said (Fischer explains that he was referring to his adopted daughter, Peggy); at the same moment one glimpses his tender concern for her and also realizes how very little of his personal life has come down to us.

These writings, bolstered by Mr. Fischer's commentary, provide a wider context for the books and their very deliberate style. Grouped as much as

possible chronologically, they give further insight into such topics as Alexander's struggles to communicate the Technique in print (here Mr. Fischer skillfully references passages in the books), why he left performing for teaching, and the constant difficulties he faced from plagiarism and misrepresentation of his work, including the South African libel case.

As Alexander moved in his writings from simply advertising his method to struggling to describe and defend it in print, we see many of the same challenges we face today; foremost among them is the problem of "conveying an experience in words" (p. 39). I smiled in recognition, for example, at his description of his search for teaching rooms in Sydney around 1900 (p. 242):

I arranged the necessary announcements for a recital [he had found that his recitals attracted students] and selected suitable teaching rooms but had considerable difficulty in getting a lease of them. Naturally, the agents for the building asked what was my profession. I did my best to explain the nature of my practice and theory but this just served to bring questions such as: "Are you a doctor, are you a physical culturist, are you a teacher of singing?" to which I had to answer, "No." The expression on my interviewer's face clearly showed that he wanted to say, "Well, what the devil are you?" but he didn't. Really, he wanted to do what he could for me, and, had I been able to give a name as such that would indicate my teaching and convey the nature of it, he would have been satisfied. I tried to explain to him that you can name something that is a part of a whole but you cannot do this in respect of the whole, and pointed out that [in] teaching my technique for changing and improving the use of the self one is concerned with the whole organism, not with a part of it.

As he told the Child-Study Society at a lecture in 1925:

I know you read my books and you probably say, "Why does not this fellow tell us something?" All that has been left out of my books is the sensory experiences, and no one will ever live on earth who will be able to convey a clear sensory experience in words or through the sense of hearing. That is practically impossible. (p. 154)

Being forced to address that challenge, however, seemed to spur and focus his thinking about his method as he moved past its origins as a method of "respiratory re-education" to grasping its fuller implications as "kinesthetic re-education" and finally as a approach to human personality, belief, and reaction. In the "Teaching Aphorisms" (previously published by Edward Maisel in *The Resurrection of the Body*, but here presented with background on their source), he notes that habit is a kind of addiction: "This end-gaining business has got to such a point—it's worse than a drug." (p. 196)

Book Reviews

He also neatly sums up his approach: “You are not here to do exercises or to learn to do something right, but to get able to meet a stimulus that always puts you wrong and to learn to deal with it.” (p. 203)

He offers observations that seem to me to contain the germ of David Gorman’s new direction in teaching:

In all these things we do not use our brains. We see people do certain things and without thinking or questioning we copy them. Don’t. Don’t do it.

Do what I recommended everybody in the world do in my first book. That is, to sit down and think over all the beliefs and ideas they have got and find out where they came from. You would not have many left. After a week’s thought, you would throw them overboard.” (p. 172)

You would not think that the matter of belief comes into our sphere. You have all got your ideas of what belief is. Do you know what we have found that belief is? A certain standard of muscle tension. That is all. (p. 174)

Talk about a man’s individuality and character: it’s the way he uses himself. (p. 207)

Especially among the lectures in this volume, one finds some less formal, more accessible encapsulations of the ideas and process of the work than in the books. In the 1925 lecture, “An Unrecognized Principle in Human Behaviour,” he explains that he cannot convey the technique “in general” and proceeds to offer the example of how he would work with a particular student, stating emphatically that attempts at specific cures only cause more problems (p. 153):

...if you come to me and ask me to teach you how to walk, I will look at you and I will say to myself, “Ah, this walking does not matter. What is wrong is so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so.” Those are the fundamental troubles. We are always on the non-essentials. That is happening all the time with teaching exercises. The teacher tries to eradicate a defect or to effect a specific cure in this way. Let me go and see him, and if I don’t point out to you six defects he is really cultivating during the process, I will never teach again.

Other statements could usefully be entered in evidence in the Alexander Technique community’s efforts to establish the work as educational in nature and distinct from massage and medical treatments:

Continued on page 29

In Practice

Editor's note: *The aim of the "In Practice" column is to share the experiences, insights, and inspirations we encounter as students, trainees, and teachers. In that spirit, this selection has been excerpted from Tommy Thompson's address, "Frank Pierce Jones's Views on the Alexander Technique," presented at the First International Congress for the Alexander Technique in Stony Brook, NY, in 1984, and again at the Second Congress, in Brighton, England, in 1988. Reprinted with the author's permission.*

F.M. was once asked by John Dewey at a dinner they attended together what Alexander would regard as the best test of a person. F.M.'s reply was: "A person who can make the decision not to do something and then stick to that decision." [Binkley, *The Expanding Self*, STAT Books, 1993]

That's a whopping and wonderful statement with regard to our work. If, however, in saying "no" the person, like my neuropsychologist who left with no defenses [as she dryly remarked after a lesson], has no alternative experience from which he can trust the absence of what he customarily feels as a legitimate basis for response, then what good is "no"? The point, as Frank [Jones] saw it, and as I certainly see it, is that one never says "no" for "no's" sake. You withhold consent only so you can affirm a much deeper level of integrity within the body and being than your habits would call forth otherwise. Can this alternative be conveyed as part of the hands-on experience? It is essential that it can be if Frank's moral equivalent—and possibility of free will—will be reinforced in an approach to teaching the Alexander Technique. Did Frank convey this? He did for me. With him I experienced a profound and deeply unifying direction, curiously enough, within which I was permitted to be who I was—*however with neither the feeling that he was reinforcing who I was, nor attempting to change me.* That experience, conveyed through his hands, was for me the moment of highest tension—I could go either way. But because the moment was characterized by what Frank termed "the ongoing present," it drew upon the integrative action of the nervous system—not upon what I might have called into play through habit. This was the curiously supportive space, a freedom from the known, which more than anything else, gave me the freedom I needed to change. What his hands did was to reveal to me aspects of myself long since covered by defensive patterns of reactive behavior.

In providing direction which enabled me to free in response to what I feared letting go of, I was in effect able to remove my hand from my own bottle of captivity [the "monkey trap"] and begin to consider why I had ever to place my hand there in the first place. As time passed, experiencing his lessons became different. The inhibitive reality of the experience became more of a part of an ongoing continuum, which actually enhanced the affirmative aspect of the experience. It became as much a part of my behavior "not to do" something as it was "to do" something, which freed me to commit myself to whatever I did more completely. Only then, because the decision was made not to do something, in full view of the consequences, did that and that alone free the affirmative. It was part of a new body of knowledge, to paraphrase John Dewey, but it was more than that: the Alexander work became pure "means-whereby." And when response was called for, I stood in the presence of that knowledge, aware that I was free to respond in a particular way because I could freely choose not to respond in another way. ☺

A Gender Comparison in Encountering the Alexander Technique

Maribeth Hartwig Knaub, EdD
member, ATI

My conclusions to this question are based on research that was compiled for a doctoral dissertation. I found both similarities and differences in how each gender responded when introduced to various aspects of the Alexander Technique. The information presented here may be of interest to any Alexander teacher who wishes to be more insightful concerning the factors that are involved when communicating this technique to one gender as opposed to the other.

My research involved an examination of over 1,600 reports and journals written by the students of William Conable who studied the Alexander Technique with him at Ohio State University in Columbus between 1973 and 1998. These reports/journals were most interesting and profoundly rewarding to read. I was privileged to be given these documents (with the names deleted) for my research. Conable was inspired to investigate the ramifications concerning the size and location of the spine that had been part of his earlier work with various teachers. From this germ idea, he developed the concept of having an accurate body map. Conable states that, "The information sent to the brain is indeed accurate, but it is misinterpreted in experience...Since it (the body map) is formed out of many experiences over a long period of time and on the basis of an incomplete awareness of the totality of the body (or indeed, the self) it is quite usual for different aspects of the body map to be, if not grossly contradictory, at least subtly inconsistent" (Conable & Conable, 1995, p. 128). When Conable began to use body mapping ideas in his Alexander Technique classes, he found that his students' learning did indeed accelerate. However, it is clear from his teaching that body mapping does not ever take the place of Alexander work but is a complement to it, a helpful partner in the communication of Alexander's discoveries.

Therefore, my research reflects the work of one teacher, an exemplary teacher who has a strong proclivity to intertwine body mapping concepts and the Alexander Technique when teaching his students.

Since I am a musician, I chose to examine rigorously those reports written by music majors who were either singers, clarinet/oboe/bassoon players, upper string players, lower string players, or pianists. The qualitative computer program, NUD*IST (which stands for "Non-numerical Unstructured Data

Conable states that, "The information sent to the brain is indeed accurate, but it is misinterpreted in experience... it is quite usual for different aspects of the body map to be, if not grossly contradictory, at least subtly inconsistent."

Indexing, Searching, and Theory-Building”), was implemented as a vehicle for organizing the data. The indexing system within NUD*IST allows the researcher to assign statements quickly and efficiently to specific categories. These indexing systems are conceived in the form of inverted tree-structures with no limit to their size and intricacy (Tesch, 1990). Unlike other existing computer programs, NUD*IST supplies an entire separate database for the categories, their place in the tree-structure, and the information about the associated segments of the text.

The first category that was coded into the NUD*IST program was the gender of each student. An equal number of males and females was coded so as to keep the data balanced. The second category designated the musical instrument he/she played or if the student was a singer. After examining hundreds of reports, the following categories were found to be significant:

1. Conditions

These were problems that had existed before the course or problems that were previously unknown but now are apparent to the student.

The sub-categories included tension, pain, poor balance, breathing problems, misconceptions, and injuries.

2. Learning Strategies

These are strategies used by the teacher which enable the students to comprehend the subject matter more efficiently.

The sub-categories included imagery, examining an anatomical drawing, touching and examining a skeleton, “hands-on” work, reading the text, observation of self, observation of others, “monkey,” crawling, and visualization.

3. Body Mapping Errors and Discoveries

These errors included misconceptions about one’s own anatomy that contributed to a faulty manner of attempting to correct a problem.

Areas of the body from the top of the head to the toes were isolated into sub-categories. An additional category, deletion, was added in order to categorize students’ statements depicting an unconscious effort to ignore or totally blot out the existence of a body part.

4. Primary Control

Alexander’s own term, this has been defined as the dynamic relationship of our head, neck, and torso that organizes our movement and alertness (Gelb, 1995, p. 165).

A Gender Comparison in Encountering the Alexander Technique

Sub-categories were: neck free, head leads, body follows, inhibition, and psychophysical oneness.

5. Non-Musical Application

This category was assigned when students indicated that they were thinking about the technique as they spoke, bicycled, stood, sat, walked, ran, and climbed the stairs.

6. Musical Application

This category was assigned when students indicated in what manner they were thinking about the technique as they practiced an instrument, sang, moved on the stage, performed in a recital, played for their teacher, or performed within an ensemble rehearsal.

7. Consequences

When students applied body mapping concepts and Alexander's principles, the results of this action were divided into one of these sub-categories: no change, a change involving less pain or tension, improved facility and ease, greater self-awareness, greater environmental awareness, and a better musical sound.

8. Affective Experiences

Emotional experiences that became apparently obvious for some students when attempting to apply the technique were: fear, pleasure, frustration, and optimism.

The coding developed via the NUD*IST program allowed a comparison to be made concerning the learning process of the two genders within the same instrumental group. For example, similarities and differences among male pianists' statements about learning strategies could be compared with those from female pianists. The coding also facilitated comparisons among the responses of different instrumental groups, for example, the responses of male cellists with those of male clarinet players when asked to describe the relationship between the arms and the sternum.

Some of the differences in how men and women assimilate the Alexander Technique that were found in this particular research were:

- Pain in the hands and wrists while playing their major instrument was more problematic for females than males in all four of the instrumental categories (double reeds/clarinet, upper strings, lower strings, and piano).
- When describing breathing while playing or singing, females often

described breathing problems such as holding the breath, inhaling too much air, restricting the air's flow, and squeezing the air. Males often referred to parts of the body such as the ribs, the diaphragm, and the abdomen when describing their breathing problems.

- Males related “monkey” to activities such as golf, dodge ball, or sitting on a stool to play the bass. Females were much more concerned about how their experience had affected various parts of the body such as the toes, heels, legs, pelvis, and head.

- Concerning inhibition, male woodwind players and male pianists dominated this category with their remarks as they explained how they applied this principle to their instruments. When female woodwind players or female pianists mentioned inhibition, they did not describe how they had related this to their instruments. Rather, they described how they would pause and be more gentle with their daily movement patterns or think about how stopping unnecessary tension promotes more blood flow and flexibility to the brain.

- In the category “perception of greater facility and ease,” many females mentioned that through what they had learned in this class, they would be able to respond to stressful situations with more calmness and steadiness. Males did not mention this type of application but applied it to activities such as dancing, golfing, bicycling, reading, and Tai Chi.

- Males did not mention former problems with their elbow joints. However, females often mentioned the welcome relief that this work had allowed them to free the elbow joint, thereby allowing it to move with greater ease and flexibility.

...many females mentioned that through what they had learned in this class, they would be able to respond to stressful situations with more calmness and steadiness. Males did not mention this type of application but applied it to activities such as dancing, golfing, bicycling, reading, and Tai Chi.

- Regarding the two genders' perception of a better musical sound, females offered three times as many adjectives as males when describing how their sound had improved.

- The category “frustration” was dominated by males more than females in all instrumental and vocal groups by a ratio of 3:1.

- Female woodwind players mentioned that there was strain and/or pain in their thumb as they supported their instrument while playing. This problem was not mentioned by male woodwind players.

A Gender Comparison in Encountering the Alexander Technique

- The rib area was mentioned three times more by males than by females.
- Females were much more descriptive than males about their awareness of tension in their upper legs as they sat in a chair, the angle of the chair, their tendency to pull the thighs inward, and the balance issue between their legs and the floor.
- Females dominated the category “deletion of a body part”; mentioning that they wanted a part of their body to disappear to the point that they had blotted it out so that it did not exist for them.
- Males tended to apply Alexander’s principles immediately to playing their instruments. Females tended to refrain from immediate musical application on their instruments.

An important conclusion gleaned from this study was that females were more reflective and descriptive of their thinking process than males when absorbing the information imparted in class. When males received this information, they would often directly apply this information to a specific musical or non-musical activity. This is not to suggest that females did not apply this information to activities or their instruments. However, females tended to delay direct application to musical or non-musical activities, first verbalizing about how this would be accomplished and reflecting about the ramifications that these principles had upon the movement of their bodies.

It is valuable for Alexander teachers to understand the differences between the genders in responding to information about the Technique. It is surely a positive trait that females tend to be very descriptive of their thinking process. However, females might easily become overwhelmed when reflecting upon the many aspects that occur simultaneously. Therefore, females may need more affirmation than males that they are indeed capable of applying this to their lives, particularly in musical settings. Since males tend to apply this information immediately to activities, Alexander teachers may find it wise to suggest that they “step back,” reflect on their thinking process for a brief period of time, and ponder what this information means to them.

An important conclusion gleaned from this study was that females were more reflective and descriptive of their thinking process than males when absorbing the information imparted in class. When males received this information, they would often directly apply this information to a specific musical or non-musical activity.

It is also beneficial for a teacher to know some of the specific differences that were pointed out in the above list. For example, some females discover that

they have been inadvertently trying to make a part of their body disappear. This is not the sort of information that a student will tell a teacher. When an Alexander teacher knows that this is a possibility, the problem of deletion can be squarely faced and corrected.

This study and others like it provide new insights that allow Alexander teachers to improve how they communicate the Technique to their students. It has been a passionate and fascinating journey to examine some of the differences in how males and females assimilate and apply this information. My own teaching has been directly impacted by this experience. As Alexander teachers go forward in this century, may we ever desire to find better ways to communicate with our students as we still allow it all to open up “like a large cauliflower.”

References

- Conable, Barbara and William Conable. 1995. *How to Learn the Alexander Technique: A Manual for Students*. Columbus, OH: Andover Press.
- Gelb, Michael J. 1994. *Body Learning: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Tesch, Renata. 1994. *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*. New York: Falmer. ☺

[The renowned Zen teacher] Suzuki Roshi stressed repeatedly that, just like the swinging door, we should move freely back and forth through the various aspects of our lives, both wholly independent and, at the same time, completely connected to all things. He viewed the very act of breathing as the breath's entering and exiting a doorway. The image of stepping through a doorway is symbolic of your actual entry into your own life. It might be compared to a film loop in which you're entering the same door over and over again. You are always entering through the doorway of this very moment. There is no retreat. No heading for the exits. Just a continual "going in" to this eternal NOW!

Gary Thorp, *Sweeping Changes*, Walker Publishing, p. 13

From the Chair

Continued from page 3

encountered in Alexander Technique lessons.

You could say that the Alexander principles are the nuts and bolts of ATI. It's where we get back to basics in order to become aware of where we are and find out a way to go where we want to go. It's the beginning of awareness for a future we create in the present. While attempting to run an organization through Alexander principles we are always at the beginning of awareness in a way that we can become our own experts at being ourselves.

The Alexander Technique deals with change and development and so does ATI. It's happened to me personally. Before I became Chair of ATI, I was a general member who became a teaching member. I attended all of the AGMs so that I could support the birth and emergence of ATI. I thought that it was a good idea to have an international organization that would embrace the many students and teachers who were looking for recognition and community. I had met so many people from other countries while I was training that really expanded my view of the world we live in. Others in my group were from Yugoslavia, Israel, Switzerland, England, Germany, and France, as well as a few Americans. For all my dreams of traveling the world, I found that much of the world had come to me.

While I attended the Annual Meetings, I had not much interest in the inner workings of ATI. I always came to support the good idea that ATI is, to learn and join the community. I attended the business meetings—there were so many more of them back then than there are now—and I saw things sway and move and grow. I mostly sat back and observed the creation of ATI without having much to say. I imagine it's the same for many others of you.

At this time there seem to be two overlapping camps, two areas of interest that make up ATI. There are those who want a certifying body so they can find international recognition and receive a Teaching Certificate through ATI after completing their course of study; many directors of Training Schools find value in ATI for the sake of their graduating students. And there are those people who simply want a community that offers a chance to exchange ideas, attend workshops, and meet to work with colleagues, those who aren't interested in business or the inner workings of ATI as an organization. Many of us live in both camps yet some prefer the latter.

At first I was not so involved in the inner workings of ATI. Now, after two years as Chair of ATI, I can see how I have grown and changed in ways previously unimaginable, all because it became my job to reach out to you! Maybe some of you feel the same about discovering the unimaginable about yourself by becoming more involved and we'll get together in Ireland to hear your ideas.

As I write this, we already have nearly twice as many attendees registered for the AGM as in previous years by this time. Members are traveling from as far as New Zealand, Australia, and Japan. New members of ATI from Hungary will be attending. We have an extraordinary opportunity for unification through recognition and acknowledgment of our like-mindedness, through the open understanding we have of the Alexander Technique and its potential. Those members who are not able to attend, don't worry, through intention we seek to presence all ATI members at the Annual Meeting. Coming together at the 2000 AGM offers us a chance to pause and reflect on the road thus far and to take a glimpse of what's possible in the future.

Hope to see you in magical Ireland!

Slan leat charaid choir—Luck to you, dear friend ☺

An ATI Wish List

In this column we will be putting before the membership and the universe ATI's needs for its growth and prospering. We invite you to share your wishes and to answer these according to your talents and time!

The Nominations Committee is in need of a new member as well as a new Chair. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at 617-628-6570.

The Interchange eGroups forum is in need of a Moderator. For information, contact: Dan Arsenault at webmaster@ati-net.com.

ATI has a new phone system that needs some simple programming and occasional maintenance, which can be done by phone from anywhere. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at: 617-628-6570.

The Communications committee needs a Chair, and specifically someone to write and format the Communiqué from input from the Board. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at: 617-628-6570.

Volunteers in the Boston area are always needed to help our Administrative Assistant with ATI's many mailings, etc. For information, contact Raewyn Haywood at membership@ati-net.com or 1-888-668-8996.

And the Exchange is always eager for your input! For submission details, see page 2. ☺

Coming Events

Events listed here are drawn from the ongoing listings on the ATI website, and may be edited to fit the Exchange's space requirements. ATI general and teaching members may list an unlimited number of events in the Exchange and on the website for free; non-members may list events in either medium for \$35 per listing. Please submit all listings directly to Dan Arsenault at webmaster@ati-net.com or by mail to him at 29 Wedgewood Rd., Lawrence, MA 01843 USA. The deadlines for all materials appearing in the Exchange are Dec. 1 (for the January issue), March 1 (for April), June 1 (for July), and Sept. 1 (for October). Take advantage of this perk of membership, and tell us and the world about your events!

ONGOING EVENTS

Judith Grodowitz

New York, NY, USA

Alexander Technique for cancer survivors

Ongoing class on Mondays, 5:30-6:30pm

Enhancing overall quality of life by learning to change habitual physical/postural responses to pain & distress.

Location: Integrative Medicine Outpatient Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital, 303 E. 65th St, New York,

NY, USA Open to people living with cancer and their families, and to the general public, space permitting. Preregistration required.

Contact: Sloan-Kettering at: 212-639-4700, or Judith Grodowitz at:

E-mail: jkgrod@earthlink.net

Tel/Fax: +1 212-675-1094

Address: 337 West 21st Street #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA

Website: www.alextech-nyc.com

OCTOBER 2000

Judith Grodowitz

Wray Studio, 114 Fulton St, #3W, NYC

Five Wednesdays, 7:30-9:00pm, Oct. 4 - Nov 1, 2000

New York City Alexander Lab - fall series

We will explore the Alexander principles through hands-on guidance, simple movement studies and improvisations, experiential anatomical ruminations, and partner work. Open to all. You must preregister. Registration information on the website.

Contact: Judith Grodowitz (see Ongoing Events, above)

Tommy Thompson

Flumersberg, Switzerland

October 5-8, 2000

In this workshop, we will learn how to read observationally, and with our hands, what is kinesthetic, and what is attentional interference; then how to distinguish between the two as a means of working with ourselves and our pupils. We will experience how to direct the person into and through their habitual interference from the teacher's ongoing commitment, from an expanded web of support. In this manner, since intention is the organizing principle around which the body organizes itself, one is asked to reorganize one's awareness but not to reorganize the body.

The workshop will consist mainly of hands-on work with Tommy and between the participants with Tommy's guid-

ance. We will also explore guiding a pupil through the inhibitive and directive experience through step-by-step dialogue with the pupil. In the evenings we will relate Tommy's work and vocabulary to Alexander's books and the work of Frank Pierce Jones. Bring your *The Use of the Self* and *Freedom to Change/Body Awareness in Action*. Cost CHF 500, approx. \$350 US, to be paid in cash.

Contact: Maya Dolder

Tel. 0041-61-322 68 79

Email: mayadolder@datacomm.ch

Richard Brennan

Kirkullen Lodge, Galway, Ireland

October 7-8, 2000

Weekend non-residential introductory Workshop for those new to the technique as well as those with previous experience. The course runs from 10:30 am till 5:00 pm each day. Cost £75.

Contact: Richard Brennan

Tel.: 091 555800

Email: rickbrennan@eircom.net

Judith Grodowitz

Swedish Massage Institute of NY, 226 W. 26th St, New York, NY

Sunday, October 8; 10am - 6:00pm (with lunch break)

Alexander Technique for Massage Therapists at the NY Swedish Massage Institute Continuing Education Program Introduces the basic Alexander principles, tailored to the needs of massage therapists. Learning to use your body well as you work. Open to Massage Therapists.

Contact: Swedish Institute at 212-924-5900 (to register); or Judith Grodowitz (see Ongoing Events, above)

David Gorman

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

5-Day LearningMethods Workshop

October 11-15, 2000 (Wednesday - Sunday from 10am to 4pm)

The LearningMethods work is an extremely powerful way to help you get at the underlying causes to problems and liberate yourself, simply, quickly and effectively. It does this by teaching you how to systematically explore your own experiences, thoughts, beliefs and reactions to make sense out of the problem and how to take the practical steps to real change. You will learn a set of tools you can use on any issue in your life, whether that be physical (tension, pain, etc.), relationship (conflict, misunderstanding, etc.), performance (practicing, stage-fright, skill-learning, etc.), fears and phobias (heights, driving, flying, etc.), indulgence and dependence (smoking, over-eating, etc.), self-esteem issues... you name it. The workshop is totally driven by your own questions, issues, experiences and insights. Maximum of 8 participants to provide enough time to explore in depth each person's issues and the principles of the work. It may be possible to attend part-time, but priority will be given to those attending the full workshop over those who can only attend part-time. The course will be held in Etobicoke, overlooking the lake from the 44th floor. Open to all. For further details see the LearningMethods website, or

Contact: András Weber

Email: weblan@pathcom.com

Tel +1 416-253-0812

Address: One Palace Pier Court, #4409, Etobicoke, Ontario, M8V 3W9, Canada

Coming Events

ATI Annual General Meeting, October 12-15, 2000

Armada Inn, Spanish Point, Miltown Malbay, County Clare, Ireland

Hotel email: armada@iol.ie; Tel: 065 84110; Fax: 065 84632. For information, call the USA ATI Office. The AGM brochure has also been posted on the ATI website. Join your fellow members for our first European AGM!

Tommy Thompson

Galway, Ireland (Workshop following ATI Annual General Meeting)

October 16-18, 2000 (at Richard Brennan's training course)

Explore what happens when you make changes in the primary source of interference (i.e., attentional recognition) versus making changes in what is reflected in the body (i.e., kinaesthetic recognition). You will learn how to read observationally, and with your hands, what is kinaesthetic, and what is attentional interference; then how to distinguish between the two as a means of working with ourselves and our pupils. Since intention is the organizing principle around which the body organizes itself, one is asked to reorganize one's awareness but not to reorganize the body. This workshop will consist mainly of hands-on work between Tommy and the individual participant and between the participants working with each other with Tommy's hands-on guidance. You will also explore how to accomplish the above without using your hands to guide a pupil through the inhibitive and directive experience through step-by-step dialogue with the pupil.

Contact: Richard Brennan

Email: rickbrennan@eircom.net

Tel: +353 (0)91-555800

Judith Grodowitz

Wray Studio, 114 Fulton St, #3W, NYC

Five Tuesdays, 10-11:30am, Oct 17 - Nov 14, 2000

Alexander Technique Laboratory for Massage Therapists

Going further, in a weekly format, with learning to apply the Alexander Technique as you give a massage, deepening your understanding of the Alexander Technique in all your movement activities. Preregistration required. Prerequisite: participation in prior group class or one private lesson with Judith.

Contact: Judith Grodowitz (see Ongoing Events, above)

Judith Grodowitz

Power Pilates Studio, 49 West 23rd St, NYC

Saturday & Sunday, Oct 21 & 22, 2000, 2-5:00 pm

An Introduction to the Alexander Technique for Personal Trainers

Learning to maintain good body use yourself while working with clients. Exploring several Pilates formats from an Alexander perspective. Open to Personal Trainers.

Contact: Power Pilates (to register) at 212-627-5852; or Judith Grodowitz (see Ongoing Events, above)

NOVEMBER 2000

Judith Grodowitz

Wray Studio, 114 Fulton St, #3W, NYC

Five Tuesdays, 10-11:30am, Oct. 17 - Nov. 14, 2000

Alexander Technique Laboratory for Massage Therapists, continued (see above)

Richard Brennan

Chrysalis, Co. Wicklow, Ireland

November 3-5, 2000

A weekend residential course in a quiet retreat centre near Dublin which is an opportunity to relax and be looked after. The course starts on Friday evening and finishes on 4 pm on Sunday. Cost £165.

Contact: Chrysalis, Donard, Co., Wicklow Ireland.

Tele: 045 404713

Richard Brennan

University of Limerick, Ireland

November 24-25, 2000

Weekend non-residential introductory Workshop for those new to the technique and those with previous experience. The course runs Friday 7pm-10pm and Saturday 10am-4pm. Cost: £50.

Contact: Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Tele: 061-202047 ☎

Book Reviews

Continued from page 16

I have evolved a technique, the object of which is to restore to my pupils a right use of their whole organism and not to treat manifestations of disease, in which I am not interested. I have found that where its application is successful, symptoms, whether manifesting themselves as “physical or mental illnesses,” tend alike to disappear in process... (p. 125).

If anything is wrong with a person’s use of himself, the first thing is to find out what it is he is doing that is causing the trouble, and to get him to stop doing that. Any other work to help him comes after. (p. 166)

As a performer myself, I was intrigued to finally read Alexander’s reason for leaving his beloved acting (which had provided the motivation to solve his vocal problems and develop the Technique at all) to pursue teaching: “...for years I was a Shakespearian reciter and a successful one, and I gave it up because I realized that in appearing in public one is appealing more to the herd instincts than anything else, and I gave up my career because of it.” (p. 153) I recognize that in my own sense that, with the Technique, one can encourage real and fundamental change in a student, whereas performing for audiences is less likely to empower them to see what they themselves might become.

I’ve only skimmed the surface here of all the book offers, but in the interest of space (and of not giving away *all* the treasures to be discovered), I’ll conclude by simply suggesting that ideally one would read the selections in chronological order (across the categories of articles, letters, and lectures into which they are sensibly organized), stopping along the way at the appropriate spots to read the four books. Similarly, the Autobiographical Sketch should be contrasted with Maisel’s introduction and “The Evolution of a Technique” from *Use of the Self*. Don’t be slowed down by my clever ideas, however; I certainly wasn’t! In any case, this is unquestionably a volume that every serious student of the Alexander Technique should own and ponder, right alongside F.M.’s four books. ☎

Editor's Page

Continued from page 2

about his experiences with Frank Jones. Taking us a bit further back to our roots are reviews of two books on the man who set us in motion, F.M. Alexander; one is a collection of reminiscences and journals of his students and the other a gathering together of his articles and writings beyond his four books. Carrying on the promise of the last AGM, we have another article on Prosperity. And taking us up to date and into the future are Cathy Madden's and Rosa Luisa Rossi's tantalizing glimpses of their workshops for this year's AGM, and Robin Gilmore's timely and important report on an open meeting of the Advisory Council of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a division of the National Institutes for Health (NIH).

I'm excited by the input coming from the membership, and want to encourage anyone interested in having his or her voice heard (or rather, read) to simply write or email to the addresses on page 2. Long or short articles on any Alexander-related topic, a paragraph or two on your experiences as a teacher or student—or both!, reviews of books you've read, your events, your news, your discoveries, your musings... there is room in these pages for you to express yourself. We can't meet as often as we'd like, and we can't all make it to any given AGM, but we need the conversation to continue, to inspire, challenge, enlighten, amuse, and connect us in the work we love. Who can't make use of a Reality Consultant from time to time? ☺

Alexander Technique on the Net

New items are always appearing on ATI's web site at www.ati-net.com. Also, at www.alexandertechnique.com/online, you'll find links to the rapidly growing number of Alexander Technique resources on the Internet. Alexander teacher listings can be found both on the ATI web site and on the Ask Dr. Weil web site at www.drweil.com.

ATI's internet mail group, Interchange, has been revived using a commercial mail-group service called egroups as ATI-Interchange. To join, send an empty e-mail to ATI-Interchange-subscribe@egroups.com. The list is growing fast, so join now! The new list has lots of great features, like common file storage and a chat room. To access these features you need to join egroups. Log into <http://www.egroups.com/> and join up!

You can send mail to the ATI board as a group at board@ati-net.com, or to individual board members at: chair@ati-net.com, assistantchair@ati-net.com, treasurer@ati-net.com, execsec@ati-net.com, or correspondsec@ati-net.com.

If you launch your own website, or find anything Alexander-related on the Web, let us know at: newsletter@ati-net.com!

AGM Workshop Previews

Cathy Madden: My presentation for the 2000 ATI AGM began with a question I had in teaching for the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington. In this program, I teach the students in “Alexander-only” classes and I team-teach in several other classes. What I started to see was that some students worked very well in Alexander class, but when they did specific kinds of exercises in another class, their coordination fell apart. What was happening?

I asked questions, and I experimented for several years. One day I asked a key question. I asked a student what he was doing to create an image, and I asked students to describe their images to me. What I found out is that all their images, including images of people, trees, mountains, were imagined the size of a computer or television screen. The images were also imagined two-dimensionally. The patterns I was seeing in their coordination began to make sense.

After several more years of experimenting, and working with my fellow faculty, I believe that we are seeing the results of too much television and too much computer work for children showing up as movement restrictions in the adults we are teaching. I’ve seen it in my actors, and in other students in my Alexander classes.

In my presentation, I’ll talk about what I’ve been seeing, talk about some of the research about electronic media and child development, and what I’ve been doing in classes to do what we call “image rehabilitation.”

Rosa Luisa Rossi: Exploring Teaching In New Areas. Do you sometimes have the desire to expand your Alexander Technique teaching into new areas, but at the same time you hesitate to create opportunities for it? What is in your way? In this interactive workshop we will explore what personal or organizational obstacles we may face when trying to organize and teach in non-traditional areas, such as organizations or corporations, and we will develop plans which will help us be better prepared for a successful outcome. ☺

Worldwide Offices of Alexander Technique International

continued from page 32

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Alexander Technique International (ATI) is a worldwide organization of teachers, students, and friends of the Alexander Technique created to promote and advance the work begun by F. Matthias Alexander.

ATI embraces the diversity of the international Alexander community and works to promote international dialogue.

About the Alexander Technique

Experience of the Technique has led to praise from George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley, Prof. John Dewey, Sir Charles Sherrington, Julian Bream, John Cleese, Robertson Davies, and many others. It is taught at the Juilliard School of Performing Arts in New York, and the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and the Shaw Festivals in Canada, Boston University, Brandeis University, and many other centers.

Olympic-level athletes have similarly used the Technique to improve their performance, as have leading golfers and business people. Medical studies have shown the Technique to be as effective in lowering blood pressure as the normally prescribed beta-blocking drugs. Other studies have shown significant improvement in respiratory function.

The common factor in all of these aspects of life is that how we are using ourselves—the way we do things—affects the result we get. The Alexander Technique is a means of improving that use. It has been called a “pre-technique” that people can apply to furthering their own special skills and activities. It is also essentially a preventive technique with which we can learn to improve and maintain our health.

The individual is the focus of the Alexander Technique. We are all unique, with different bodies, different experiences, and different problems. We go about the process of change in different ways and at different rates. For these reasons, what happens in an Alexander Technique lesson depends very much on the needs of the student at the time. In the basic sense, though, you will learn an attitude of not trying to gain your ends at any cost, and, at the same time, how to prevent your harmful habits that cause unnecessary stress and restrict your capabilities. Obviously, since what you are changing are patterns built up over many years, a permanent change will not be brought about overnight. However, the person who learns to stop and take time, to think constructively about how he uses himself in everyday life, will find that this simple procedure can have far-reaching results.

Further information about the Alexander Technique can perhaps best be gained from a teacher near you (see list at right for the nearest ATI office for teacher listings, or visit www.ati-net.com), as your changing experiences through lessons are the only real way to understand the nature of the work and what change is possible.



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