

# EXCHANGE

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## 64 Colors

*Andrea Matthews*

*ATI Teaching Member, USA, and Editor, ExChange*

When I was a kid, there was a really cool thing: an enormous box made by Crayola that opened to reveal, arranged like the members of a grand choir on risers, 64 different colors of crayons. Plus, it had a sharpener built into the back of it. The romance of a 64 Crayola crayon box—especially a brand-new one, with all the papers neat and clean, the points crisp and undulled—is hard to describe. And the mystery of the really special colors, the silver, the gold, and the copper... Magnificent! The possibilities! Just knowing they were there gave me a thrill—I didn't even have to use them to feel the excitement.

Recently, while I was talking about the Technique with a student, the image of those 64 colored crayons came back to me. People so rarely use all the "colors" they possess—they even forget that they have more than five or six, if that. Unless they become actors or singers, they may feel those extra colors have no place in their lives. Perhaps they learned to hide the range of their colors because their vividness made someone else uncomfortable or jealous, and now they wouldn't know how to use them, if they even remembered they were there. Yet they feel something is missing. And they pay good money for others to show them their "true colors" onstage and onscreen.

What drew me to be a singer, I've realized more clearly in recent years, was the feeling that more of me was more fully engaged in that activity than anything else. Whatever anyone else saw or heard in me, when I connected with the singing, the thrill of being present and full of wonderful possibilities was like sprouting wings or being filled with light—or, now I see, like opening that brand-new Crayola box. I had more colors to be and to work with.



### 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.

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## From the Chair

*Jamee Culbertson  
Chair, Alexander Technique International*

“Vision without a task is a dream.  
A task without a vision is drudgery.  
But a vision with a task can change the world.”  
Black Elk

*Ed.: This will be Jamee's last column  
as Chair of ATI. We thank her for her  
enthusiastic and spirited leadership,  
and look forward to welcoming a  
new Chair to this space!*

I remember when I was first asked to chair ATI. It was Debi Adams who saw me in that role first. I didn't see it, so at that point I declined. A few months later she asked again, still I just smiled and said thanks but no. Then I was stuffing envelopes with Jim Froelich and Andrea Matthews one day for an ATI mailing and they both said, “Hey, you'd make a great Chair.” I thought about it a little bit longer and again said ... no thanks. A while later, Tommy Thompson said to me, “Have you thought of running for Chair?” Soon after that David Gorman was in town and he said something positive about me being Chair. Interestingly enough, at the time I was taking a course called “Mastering Circumstances” that met once a month for a while; when I mentioned it to them they all sang a resounding “yes, expand yourself and go for it.” I called Debi again and we talked a bit and I began to think about it seriously, trying to imagine myself in the role that all these other people, who knew me pretty well, already did.

At one point I simply said to myself, even if I don't know how to drive this ATI train right now, I can certainly bring my life experience to it and

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# EXCHANGE

*ExChange* is published three times per year by Alexander Technique International (ATI), the purpose of which is to promote and advance the F. Matthias Alexander Technique. *ExChange* is designed to disseminate information regarding the Technique to ATI members and the public.

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begin where I am. There certainly seemed to be enough support for me to go ahead into this unknown territory. So, that time I finally said yes.

At the following AGM, I met three of the other new Board members, Jan Baty, Marsha Paludan, and Lucy Venable. As soon as I met these wonderful people (I soon met Assistant Chair Robin St. Clair by phone), I knew that we would take this journey together with a creative focus and we got to work.

I asked, what was our vision? There certainly were a lot of tasks to address. ATI already had in place a purpose, a vision-mission statement, bylaws to uphold, the guiding principles of the Alexander Technique, and the countless hours of our predecessors, the previous Board members that had led us thus far. So that part of the vision was already in place. Then I asked myself, so what is my vision? I carried a vision of a world at harmony. I saw that ATI, Alexander Technique *International*, was an opportunity to weave a harmonious thread throughout the world and to do something positive.

That was 1998. I still carry that vision inside of me and as I look back now on the past four years as Chair I feel as though this was an opportunity to put that vision into play through the numerous tasks that were in front of myself and the Board. In this way, as Black Elk put it so clearly, "... a vision with a task can change the world."

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## Alexander Technique International

For membership information, please contact Bérengère Cusin at the address below or by email at [membership@ati-net.com](mailto:membership@ati-net.com).  
ATI membership: \$55 per year.  
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Singing and acting have the advantage of being rather obviously total psychophysical activities, calling on energies and availabilities we don't often think of tapping into in "ordinary" life. But why don't we? *There's* a philosophical question for the ages. Why do we leave our vividness for other, "more special" people to live out for us?

Perhaps those are questions that cannot be answered so directly. In my experience of teaching Alexander, it is only when students challenge their limiting assumptions about themselves that the hidden reasons for the limitations reveal themselves. Here are some examples:

A student will release the cramping of her fingers and neck, playing her guitar flawlessly, yet note almost anxiously, "But I feel so out of control!" In learning to "control" her performance through tension, she had lost track of her "freedom" and "ease" crayons.

Another student will momentarily cease to throw her attention automatically and exclusively on her disgruntled spouse—and she'll exclaim, "But I'd be so powerful! Is that ok?" Clearly, at some point, it was not, and her "power" crayon had been tossed out of the box.

After a while the "box" itself gets smaller. A third student suspends his habit of condensing himself to sing a challenging phrase: "It's so much easier. But I feel so big! There's so much more space!"

One of the things I love about teaching the Technique is that I get to see the look on students' faces and the change in their being when they open that box and see colors they didn't know or remember they had all along. That look and that shift speak a thousand words: "That's me! I didn't know that was in there! What a big box of colors I have!" ☺

*Ed.: This article is the fifth in a series intended to provide ATI members with articles they can reproduce or adapt to promote the Technique and their teaching practices. Permission is granted to reprint these articles, provided authors and the ExChange are credited. Your suggestions and submissions are highly welcome!*

# Children at Risk: Backpacks and How the Alexander Technique Can Help

*Glenna Batson, PT*  
*ATI Teaching Member, USA*

## The Problem

It shouldn't have to take extensive scientific research to prove that backpack use among school children is injurious to their musculoskeletal health. Through simple observation alone, one can surmise that an 8-year-old child probably carries more on her back than a U.S. marine fully outfitted for combat. Backpacks, filled with books and supplies, act like deadweight on sensitive, immature necks, spines, and shoulders. This scourge on children's health has caught the eye of the consumer press. However, while numerous articles have alluded to the effects of heavy backpacks on a physically immature skeleton, no single solution appears to be on the horizon for these children whose future musculoskeletal health is at risk.

The most frequently reported symptom of improper backpack use in children is pain. This type of pain (common soft-tissue or joint strain) usually disappears after a short rest. In children, a good night's rest is frequently enough time to clear the metabolic and subjective effects of mild strain, even though this pain returns with repeated backpack usage.

What's neither stated nor determined is the long-term effect on the musculoskeletal health of these children—the (albeit hypothetical, but reasonable), sequelae of chronic headaches from forward head posture, swallowing and breathing problems, and long-term postural changes and spinal degeneration. Other possible sequelae include numbness and tingling in the hands from traction on the cervical nerve roots (radiculopathy), and the overall systemic effect of not being able to regain full upright equilibrium and balance.

## The Research

Is this negative prognosis supported by scientific research? Yes. Recently, researchers have attempted to measure the injurious effects of backpack use on school-age children and on the military. The musculoskeletal adaptations and postural compensations with heavy backpack use are well researched. Not only are the spine and extremities afflicted, but also general posture and gait:

1. Elevated shoulders
2. Forward head posture (increased craniovertebral angle), allegedly worse in teenage girls, regardless of wearing a backpack or not
3. Forward trunk lean
4. Disproportionate compression on L5-S1 lumbosacral segment
5. Potential shearing stresses at the SI joints
6. Fatigue

## Children at Risk

What is meant by a “heavy” backpack? Researchers have observed the effect of loads up to 35% of total body weight. In considering the pathomechanics in carrying an overloaded backpack, especially on an immature skeletal frame, we need first to consider the *magnitude* of the static load.

In heavily weighted backpacks, the load is often poorly distributed, causing abnormal traction (hanging and pulling), compression (pushing down), or shearing (oblique pulling) forces. Some cultures effectively carry large loads “axially”—on the head. Typical backpacks hang on the backs of pre-pubescent children whose structures are more sensitive and flexible, and more easily subjected to strain.

Second, we need to consider the *duration* of the load (how long the load is carried), to observe the onset of physiologic fatigue in the joints and muscles.

Last, we need to consider the dynamic donning and doffing of the backpack. Children often use efforts like flinging, slinging, and flopping the backpack off their backs onto the ground, subjecting their joints to excessive traction or shear.

### The Response

Knowledge of these ill effects on children’s bodies has prompted ergonomists and healthcare professionals to design adaptations to backpacks that help redistribute the load more optimally. Rather than all the contents being lumped at the bottom of the pack, for example, these packs help redistribute the contents more widely across the back, with straps that act as added struts to keep the load from collapsing to the bottom. Cost, availability, and competitive marketing have kept these ergonomic packs from being widely used. Even with better weight distribution, however, differences in backpack frame design are not necessarily enough to affect energy cost or perceived exertion.

Ideally, children should not have to carry anything more than 10% of body weight. While rolling carts have not yet become “cool,” it would be good if some major company could begin to promote them as one ergonomic answer to the problem.

Some educators have alluded to the need to improve the level of physical conditioning among children, calling for more exercise, especially stretching. This is advocating plain old common sense. However, the most sensible thing adult educators might do is provide classroom storage for

supplies, or copies of the textbooks on hand in the classroom to eliminate the problem of having to carry heavy books altogether.

However, children need more than adult-inspired design and common sense. School children need to use their *active sensing* to help them carry these loads. Active sensing is the Alexander Technique solution, one that ensures longevity of musculoskeletal health through good use. Alexander Technique teachers could help children with learning to don and doff the backpack by keeping their muscles lengthening and their joints opening. Further, they could teach a child to continue to refresh her spinal buoyancy as she carries the pack. They could teach the child to squat to put the backpack down, rather than slinging it down (which puts an enormous traction force on the neck and shoulder). Finally, they could teach the child to recognize signals of needing to rest, remove or shift the position of the pack, and avoid strain.

References available upon request. Useful guidelines for optimal backpack use have been posted on websites by the American Physical Therapy Association ([http://www.apta.org/news/feature\\_releases/backpack](http://www.apta.org/news/feature_releases/backpack)) and by the American Chiropractic Association (<http://www.amerchiro.org>).

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**“Is there any way we can lighten his load?”**

*from The Wall Street Journal—Permission, Cartoon Features Syndicate  
(artist: Harry Schwalb)*

## From the Chair

*continued from page 3*

Have we changed the world? As teachers of Alexander principles we have an understanding of a unified whole, the psychophysical *Self*. In a world that so often relates in such a fractured way, it takes courage to keep and promote a vision of unity, and we are doing it.

We've had consistent contact with other organizations of the Alexander Technique worldwide. We have advanced internal operations by utilizing modern technology. We have promoted the Alexander Technique with our yearly Conferences and publications and by making available ways to promote our Teaching Members and their work. For the first time we have had meetings outside of the United States so that we could meet and share experiences with our members in other countries. We have continued and increased regular communications between all of our World Offices so that the international voice of ATI can be strengthened.

Our continued experiment to oversee the operations of ATI with the guiding principles of the Alexander Technique has been interesting and revealing. Sometimes it was a case of pausing *just one more moment* before acting to allow a new idea or solution to present itself, or to simply remind each other of our vision so that we could continue to approach tasks with support and vitality. The ATI bylaws are the structure from which we took our course but it was the Alexander principles that we explored in governing that helped us with our behavior as we related to each other, to the membership, and in outreach to the public.

Earlier this year a number of our members got together via email to begin developing a new “marketing” plan in order to find out if we would like to “reinvent ourselves.” Email discussions have included talks about how many young people today do not know or cannot relate to F. M. Alexander’s peers who were proponents of his work. Questions are being posed: How do we reach out to new generations? Who is still alive and relevant today that we can add to the list of famous people who have lessons? How can we increase public knowledge of our work? These are certainly creative times and sometimes that means being bold.

On behalf of the Board of ATI, I would like to thank all of you whom I have served and especially Board members with whom I have worked intimately—Marsha Paludan, Jan Baty, Robin St. Clair, Lucy Venable, Teresa Lee, Tommy Thompson, Cathy Madden, and George Pryor. I hope that your dreams of service have and are being fulfilled and that we have all made it easier for upcoming Board and Committee members to join in with their vision to give continued life to ATI. It takes courage to keep and promote a vision of unity, and we are doing it. ☺

## Rebirth of the Cool

*David Horsman  
ATI Teaching Member, France*

This article is a follow-on from Andrea Matthews' "So...It's like Yoga?" in the June 2002 *ExChange*. Andrea's article put a finger on some of the difficulties we face as a business and presented some really practical observations about how we could start tackling the issue of an "Alexander Technique Brand" or an "ATI Brand." This article, cobbled together from earlier correspondence with her, seeks to address some of the more tenacious underlying issues preventing our work achieving the cult status of, say, Yoga. It also points to a few solutions, solutions which may require us to give up some of our long-standing habitual patterns!

I have long been concerned about what people think of the Alexander Technique. I came to the work more from a philosophical viewpoint than from a practical "I need to resolve a problem" point of view. In Alexander's work I found experiential proof of a perennial observation made throughout history. Whether couched in scientific, philosophical, literary, religious, medical, or shamanic terms, the teaching is always the same: holding on prevents pure being and it is this—the curse of consciousness—that provides our primary existential (and marketing) dilemma.

The actual "mechanics" of "letting go" have been peddled by a bewildering array of religious pundits and others across the centuries. Alexander, like many before him, understood that to allow unimpeded perception by the discerning instrument is to allow Reality. However, in attaching supreme importance to his Primary Control, he brought the quest firmly into the concrete somatic realm: by "letting go" of the physiological obstacles that prevent the "normal" functioning of the Primary Control we achieve ease, or pure being. And, hey presto, it works! Although often incremental, it is the source of joy that informs our lives as Alexandrians.

However, the Primary Control is much more than the relationship between the head, the neck, and the back. It is our most primordial organization and orientation. From the simplest single-cell organism through to the most complex system, it is what allows us to "go out and be in the world," whether to feed, seek shelter, or reproduce. The Primary Control is not a metaphor for life, it is life itself. Despite our best intentions though, we remain locked in a tenacious dualism, one that is probably our worst habitual pattern. Although Alexander and his descendants firmly assert the wholeness and indivisibility of the human being, we continue to approach the situation as if the nominal concepts of consciousness or mind or spirit or emotion were something different to the soma. Even at abstruse levels of neuroscience, where consciousness is

## Rebirth of the Cool

believed by some to be a function of peptides, the language is still resolutely dualist (cf. Candace Pert's "bodymind").

So, our work deals with the Primary Control, the organization that defines us, and out of which emerge ostensible categories. Yet we seem unprepared to extrapolate this—or its implications—to include the organism's *entire* field of activity. In a world where so-called mind reigns supreme, our profession seems firmly in the body box, and as such is perceived as largely irrelevant. We are caught between two stools: on one side, we offer something that can "cure" "body" problems, problems that for most people mean they can "get back on with their mental" life. On the other side, our work is informed by a universal principle that goes far beyond any of these notional distinctions. This is our marketing difficulty and why there has been such a poor uptake of our work in areas outside (very broadly) therapeutic and performance fields.

Maybe it is biting off more than we can chew to lay the blame of failed marketing on the ghost of dualism. We need to ask why the Alexander Technique is not "cool": why more people don't aspire to it. Because aspiration is key to marketing. We can then look at what we have got to work with and how we can remarket it. Here are a few things that are un-cool.

### Alexander: Endorsed by the Dead

"So, who does the Alexander Technique?"

"Well, Sir Stafford and Lady Cripps were great fans, as was George Bernard Shaw..."

"Who?!"

Websites, brochures, journals, and most marketing materials I have seen on the Alexander Technique lazily and endlessly repeat the same old definitions and tired endorsements of hoary old nobodies. With the exception of Huxley (and him only because he was a borrowed icon of the counter-culture), who today has heard of Sherrington, Tinbergen, Magnus, or even Dewey? And who gives a damn? Even Paul Newman and Sir Paul McCartney are hardly cutting edge. If ever there was a desperate hanging on to past glories, this is it. All it does is reinforce the dated perception of the AT. Let's lose it. And let's lose some other reference points too, and cast ourselves off so we can actually come up with something new! After all this is what we teach! Regurgitating stuff is not going to take us anywhere new.

## Alexander: Unspeakable Cousin

This a curious one. For much of the last century, especially in England, antipodeans were well beyond the pale. Vulgar colonials with criminal backgrounds. Remember, Alexander lived most of his working life in England. He was an out-of-towner, charismatic, and at odds with the establishment, and he fought hard (too hard?) to gain respect. The internecine warfare that erupted in the fifties—and still regrettably persists—could be seen to have a snobby subtext: expunge the work's hick provenance. Whatever the situation, the legacy has degraded the work's legitimacy. We all want to be accepted by the establishment. As a fellow antipodean who moved to England as late as the beginning of the 1970s, I can assure you that anything antipodean was treated with scant respect. And whilst I can also assure you that both Australia and New Zealand at the time *were* resolutely hick, times have changed and they now have a currency that does not deserve to be squandered. Australian and New Zealand lifestyle, as exported through movies, soaps, and sports, has created a potent and aspirational image: natural, amiable, easy-going, resourceful, with a get-up-and-get-on-with-it attitude, it is a long cry from the pompous social-climbing Edwardian image. Why not position old F. M. up with the likes of Russell Crowe, Peter Jackson (*Lord of the Rings*), Kylie Minogue, Nicole Kidman, Mel Gibson, Kiri Te Kanawa, the late Peter Blake (sailing), Jona Lomu (All Blacks), Elle MacPherson...?

## Alexander: Guru Basher

Although Alexander had a well-known distaste for “all things Eastern,” he was largely a product of his time. Outside various heretical and marginal circles, Eastern Philosophies were not cool in Alexander's London. He sought the approbation of the medical and scientific community in an almost obsessive way. It led him to shut down or ignore large tracts of complementary information. The Alexander community has largely inherited this tendency, ignoring the potential of synergy, too busy concentrating on what separates us. The “guru” parallel has been drawn by many in different articles and there is no doubt that Alexandrian philosophy is deeply resonant with key non-Western philosophical systems. Do a web search for Non-Doing and a large proportion of responses are Alexander or Buddhist. Dig further, and you find yourself deep into the Tao, various meditative systems, and the Vedic pantheon. For those squeamish about the East, I was amazed on a recent pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (*ergo* Catholic) to find myself making slightly uncomfortable (for me) parallels between my work and the concept of Renunciation. Either/or there is the potential to tap into thousands of years of elucidation. To ignore the common ground is to fail to understand that “muscular” tension is “spiritual,” “mental,” “emotional,” and “physical” tension. It is all the same thing.

## Alexander: Uncle Fred

“There was something rather comforting about old Uncle F. M. His breezy declamations punctuated by stern admonishments; his spats, warm hands, and rich voice [doubtless not a hint of Ozzie twang left]. I am sure he would have loved to have been able to wear a white coat.” This portrait was given to me by my Grandmother who was “done” by Alexander in the late twenties. Whilst there is something distinctly less authoritarian about an Aunt or Uncle—indeed there is often something subversive about the relationship—it still presupposes distance. For many reasons, which should be obvious, this distance is necessary. Whatever the case, traditionally, Uncles are not that cool.

## Rebirth of the Cool

There is something gleeful about our work—the childish joy we have in learning more in a session perhaps than our client—that seems to call out for it to be imparted to us by a peer. A sister or brother or school mate. Something to share. Its formalization and, in some countries, medicalization puts it the same grave domain as the learned doctor or cleric. But there is a deeply feminine side to our work, and one that I think is poorly marketed. This has to do with touch, childhood, and learning. I tell my clients (although I hope not in stern admonishment!) that I can do nothing for them, but give them the optimism—depending, of course, on who it is—that they can reclaim some of the poise, openness, and wonder of childhood. But they must achieve it for themselves. Although a trifle cynical, reclaiming innocence has great and untapped potential, with its attractions of Endless Childhood, Eden, Eternal Youth, and, however wide of the mark, the imagery of Rousseau’s noble savage. And the promise of a return to a state of grace is obviously one of the most powerful and pervasive marketing images in Western history.

### Alexander: Control Freak

The oft-quoted story of F. M. charging into a room in Ashley Place and crying “Eureka!” because he “could do it without them” is retold (probably with accuracy!) with many different interpretations, depending on the persuasion of the teller. But, however told, the notion of control is dangerous and sets in motion the “other” control mechanism often mentioned in our world: the control mechanism that had doctors prescribing in Latin and parents going “Just do what I say.” External control. The abdication of responsibility towards an external force, be it doctor, boss, government, or priest is one of the most insidious tendencies we have as a social species. For, while natural, abdicating control has the most direct links with overall functioning, health, and well-being. Taking back control in the widest sense should be central to our work. But our traditions and metaphors dictate (ha!) that control be hierarchical. Self-control, although endlessly taught, is unfashionable. Let someone else sort it out. However, the worlds of science—and business—increasingly view the world as a series of interconnected self-organizing systems. Self-control, down from the labs and ivory towers, has changed its name, hit Main Street, and is about as fashionable as a pair of ? trainers. (I won’t show how un-cool I am by choosing the wrong brand...) Self-regulation is the buzzword in Artificial

...the promise of a return to a state of grace is obviously one of the most powerful and pervasive marketing images in Western history.

Intelligence and Information Technology, amongst many other “cutting-edge” disciplines. Gee! Isn't that what we do as well? Shouldn't we be getting into bed with these guys, too?

### **Alexander: Vorsprung durch Technik**

Isn't “technique” an awful word? It makes me think of Audi advertising and sterile sexual manuals. I am not sure what to say about the term. We are rather saddled with it, although personally I refer to my own teaching as “the development of somatic intelligence.” That fools ‘em. “Technique” is tied up in how we value objective and subjective points of view. “Technique” is objective; something we can know, do, teach, quantify, and put in manuals. It is “out there” so fits in neatly with our perception of the world as being external. Our subjective internal experience, on the other hand, has had scientists howling with laughter for centuries. “Can't measure it! Can't be very worthwhile.” It is only recently that the smile has been wiped off the face of Cognitive Science as it realizes that our bafflingly unknowable lived experience is all we have got. “So we better start finding out some more about it!” Suddenly our subjective experience is on the menu again. Cool. And what do we spend our time doing, if not examining in the most intricate and detailed way, our subjective internal experience? Shouldn't we be offering our services to the Cognitive Boffins, or at least finding common ground?

### **Alexander: Household Item**

On top of all this, there is the overwhelming perception that the work is about posture, comportment, and bad backs. Countless are the times I have witnessed the same response to first hearing what I do: looking like they have just sat on a broomstick, they announce in the same breath, “I've heard it's very good. ‘Bout backs, isn't it?” and then the pain is too much. Cool!

This caricature, like the others before it, is self-created and perpetuated by us as teachers, and by us as a profession. Whilst we all have our specialties and ways of working, and these are more or less consciously defined, it is worth us all asking where on the continuum of each caricature we find ourselves, and where we would like (or not) to move. Although far from exhaustive, these caricatures do give us a glimpse of some of the obstacles to the “right functioning” of the Alexander Technique's Primary Control.

Bearing the above in *body*, I think there are three main areas where we could make headway in our quest to become more relevant to a wider clientele.

First, we could situate the Alexander Technique as part of a wider cultural shift. This can be summarized as follows: a move from mechanical to biological; from reason to intuition; from masculine to feminine; from science to spirituality; from objectivist epistemology to subjective somatic epistemology; from a dead universe to a living universe; from reductionism to holism; from material to spiritual; from intellect to consciousness; from “old” science to “new” science; from Newtonian physics to quantum mechanical physics; from unlimited growth to sustainability; from analytic to poetic; from Modern to Postmodern; and from materially progressive to cosmically evolutionary. Phew.

Seeking out parallels and positioning the Alexander Technique more clearly within this context—most people can identify aspects of this—positions it on the crest of the wave of a paradigm shift. It gives immediacy,

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## **Sidebar: Marketing ATI— Some Practical Considerations**

There is a move within our association to give greater focus to ATI's marketing capacity. All of us have to market our professions, whether through referrals, networking, advertising, or PR. Some of us are good at it, some of us recoil in horror at the thought. As ATI is made up of individual teachers, we must benefit from pooling our resources so the association becomes "more than the sum of its parts." Being "associated" with ATI should be a door-opener, a mark of professionalism, and the reference point of excellence in the profession. To do this, ATI must be leading the way. That requires having a clear idea of where we are now, where we wish to go as an association, and most importantly, a focus on how we can achieve it.

This is not something that happens overnight. It requires a sustained vision. ATI—in my view—needs to become a lobbying force in all fields where its teachers operate. This is more than representing the professional interests of its membership. It means intervening at all levels and in all ways.

For this to be successful, we need to have a much clearer idea of our image "out there" in the world. A strong clear image, forcefully enunciated, will attract attention, increase membership and enhance individual and collective standing. It will mean more clients, access to the ears (at least!) of more powerful and influential people, and a sense of pride.

Many teachers may (do!) think they have enough clients in the areas that interest them and do not want to move further afield. Nor do they see the value in cultivating influential or well-known advocates. While I respect this individually, it does not work for a profession. Without focus and championship, our profession becomes an amorphous and misunderstood mass of willful little nodes in a fractured landscape. It waters down our "offer" and erodes its legitimacy. Without a clear image, our profession will disappear, our work consigned to being learned as an adjunct to other disciplines.

The importance of marketing is exemplified by a comparison between the Alexander Technique and chiropractic. I know very little about chiropractic, except for some general research and having had it forcefully (and very "scientifically") marketed to me at various Mind-Body-Spirit Fairs. I cannot vouch, therefore, for its legitimacy or not. However, QuackWatch ([www.quackwatch.com](http://www.quackwatch.com)), an extensive website dedicated to uncovering quackery run by Stephen Barrett, M.D., has hundreds of mentions and articles doubting its claims. The Alexander Technique, by contrast has only the following in a dictionary link (The Expanded Dictionary of Metaphysical Healthcare, Alternative Medicine, Paranormal Healing, and Related Methods © 1998 Jack Raso, M.S., R.D.):

"Each of the 1,200 methods described in this book: (a) has a mystical or supernaturalistic application, theory, significance, or pedigree; (b) has a name wherewith proponents or writers have called to mind a method, a group of methods, a system, or a general "approach"; (c) has been portrayed as a means of improving and/or delineating the health of individuals; and (d) has been a subject of uncritical public discourse in English since the late 1950s...."

"Alexander Technique® (Alexander method, F. M. Alexander Technique): A purported means of integrating one's mental, physical, and spiritual "aspects." According to its theory, maintaining alignment of the head, neck, and back leads to optimum overall physical functioning. Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), an Australian Shakespearean actor, developed the method at the turn of the century and wrote *The Resurrection of the Body*. Although his original purpose was to assist voice projection, Alexander concluded that faulty posture was responsible for diverse symptoms. He posited that habitual unbalanced movement

affects the functioning of the entire body, implying that postures entail behavior patterns and that bad postural habits can distort one's personality. Alexander further posited that all proper bodily movements flowed from one basic movement, the maximum lengthening of the spine, which he termed the "primary control." He stated that, in a sense, his method embraced all religions, and he posited an "all-wise" invisible "Authority" within the "soul of man." Practitioners ("teachers") of the Alexander Technique press manually on various parts of the "student's" body and simultaneously repeatedly pronounce phrases that are key to the method."

Although an "interesting angle" on the work, it pales in comparison to the vitriol poured on chiropractic from a wide range of professional and governmental organizations. Yet, in the public's opinion, chiropractic might as well sit on the right hand of Hippocrates, with the Alexander Technique on the left of Color Chakra Balancing. Despite the purported lack of legitimacy, chiropractic has marketed itself extremely well.

So, how do we go about marketing the Alexander Technique and ATI? There are a number of "steps."

1. We need to know what it is we are selling. My accompanying article points to some of the problems. Are we selling lifestyle? Education? Philosophy? Therapy? Or are we selling the precursor to all learning?

2. We need to know to whom we are selling it. Our target markets:

- a. Schools: Kindergarten, Primary School, Secondary School, College, Research...
- b. Business: Boardrooms, Shop Floor, Production Line, Consultancies, Theorists, Stress...
- c. Conservatories: Dance, Theatre, Music, Cinema ...
- d. Clinical: Bodywork, Psychology, Pediatrics, Geriatrics, Trauma, Stress...
- e. Sport: Training, Sports Medicine, Professional Bodies...
- f. Government: Lobbies, Pressure Groups, Policy...
- g. Academia: Research, Think Tanks, Philosophy...

Each of us "specializes" in different areas that interest us. How can each teacher's points of reference be opened up to be more meaningful in other areas? What is the potential for marketing crossover, or for intervening further "up" the field? For example, if a teacher works primarily in geriatrics, can they market through articles in Third Age websites and magazines? If a teacher works with sports people, can they contact the governing body of that sport and offer an introductory session/presentation? As an association, we need to provide our membership with clear marketing strategies in all areas, and to provide backup.

3. Once we know what we are selling and to whom we are selling it, we need to formulate a USP or Unique Selling Point. This has to be broad enough to encompass the vast array of applicability the work has, yet focused enough to be both clearly understood and relevant. This means it has to be couched in terms that the target market wants and can buy into, not our own terms. Our concept of Inhibition is not yet as widely understood as Freud's, for example. A USP must confer legitimacy, for sure, but above all, it must address a need and create a desire. It is the difference between selling better posture and selling ease. It also needs to be short and compelling. The ATI website front page, for example, says nothing about why it might be of interest. Only on clicking through to the

*continued on next page*

## **Sidebar: Marketing ATI— Some Practical Considerations**

*continued from previous page*

“About the Alexander Technique” page, do you come across something approaching a description. The first thing you encounter in a 791-word “article” is an 81-word single sentence from that master of brevity himself, FMA.

4. Out of our USP then comes our image. This is tangible; what we can then market. It means logos, mottos, strap lines, color ways, layouts, promotional literature and all the other things that form the marketing “package.” A way forward for this could be the following:

- a. Select working team: creative director, art director, web developer, copywriter, project manager.
- b. Define objectives: relating to overall Marketing Plan and implementation into website, ExChange, Communiqué, promotional literature, letterhead, etc.
- c. Set timelines and budget.
- d. Request membership input on the above points and on specific objectives: names, colors, strap lines, motto, logos, mission statements, etc. Maybe run a competition? Make it clear that it is not an ongoing process of approval among all the membership. This might appear undemocratic, but the creative process does not work by committee!
- e. Produce a half-dozen roughs, storyboards, etc.
- f. Submit these to board or membership with fixed date for approval with round-one modifications.
- g. Reduce working materials to choice of 2 and work up for presentation.
- h. Presentation to Board.
- i. Second modifications.
- j. Approval.
- k. Implementation.

5. Developed in tandem with the marketing package is the Marketing Plan. This is the central document to the whole endeavor. It identifies specific ways of approaching the markets we have identified in a systematic way, altogether, one after the other... A number of methods are available. All need to be considered. Probably the most relevant are General Awareness (Press, PR, Radio, advertorial, specialist papers, lobbying) and Guerrilla Tactics (lists, competitions, piggybacking, etc., etc.). It must be a long-term strategy. If ATI targets health, for example, it needs to find ways into the Surgeon General’s office and stay there. If it targets business, it needs to target the HR departments in all the Fortune 500 companies. Or sponsor seminars at McDonald’s University. Think of the PR for them (and us). Although many teachers use these methods already, and very effectively, the marketing thrust needs to come (ostensibly) from the association as a unified body.

I hope to be able to have a “dummy” package roughed out in time for the AGM to serve as a point of discussion. I also hope to attend in person. Even if this not possible this year, I am committed to working to redefine ATI’s marketing image and strategy. Although I am by no means a specialist in this field, directing TV commercials for fifteen years did give me access to some interesting people who were. These are exciting times for our sort of work and the philosophies behind it. I have a tremendous feeling that *our* time is upon us. It would be a great shame to fail to seize the opportunity and relegate F. M.’s legacy to the “and also-rans.” ☺ —*David Horsman*

## Rebirth of the Cool

*continued from page 13*

relevance, and philosophical or practical endorsement in a wide number of fields. You choose.

Secondly, I believe the Alexander Technique could be marketed more as an “integrated lifestyle concept.” The principles and philosophy of Alexander are perennial, the only difference being that Alexander showed that they can be demonstrated and learned experientially, according to “accepted scientific fact.” I sometimes imagine it as “being zen-ed.” I have yet to find anything else that can actually demonstrate, in activity, what it means to do less. Wellness issues have more resonance with people when they are approached from a lifestyle approach, than a straight medical approach. However, virtually every AT website—certainly amongst individual teachers—focuses on the therapeutic aspects of the work. I see these as a pleasant byproduct that comes from being able to understand, very profoundly, that we can not only know our internal subjective experience, but actually do something about it.

Thirdly, the Alexander Technique lacks a USP, or unique selling point. F. M. identified, and worked with, crucial aspects of the human condition. This has been rightly interpreted by different people as a starting point for many diverse fields. But in so doing they have watered down the thrust of the work. Is it medicine, is it therapy, is it education, is it philosophy, or faith? The fact that it impacts on all aspects of our lives—because it deals with the very substance of life—makes it even more difficult for people to pinpoint it. And pigeon-holing is regrettably one of our principal ways of “understanding.” We are all afraid of being misinterpreted, because we know many of the traps. How, then, do we market something that so doggedly refuses to be pigeon-holed, something which has little cultural language to position it, something that runs almost entirely against the grain of most received Western cultural beliefs?

My answer is that you make those very things the Alexander Technique’s USP and market the Alexander Technique as the absence of doing, of fragmentation, of labeling, and of understanding as we know it (i.e., cognitively). Rather than a curse, we make “Understanding only happens when you stop understanding” our “Real Thing.” Or something like that... After all, these are things we grapple with each day; our experience is invariably one of great insight when we actually cease what we are doing, when we cease trying to get it. Promising less has been the USP of two of the most successful lifestyle marketing operations in the world: Buddhism and Christianity. I am certainly not advocating that one should take the parallels too far, but few would deny that the overriding core of our work is working practically against attachment. Is Buddhism the fastest growing belief system in the West because it is exotic or

## Rebirth of the Cool

because it touches the True Nerve? Is Yoga huge purely because it is something you can “do” that really makes you feel good, or is it because it provides a glimpse (in fact it is an integral part) of a more resonant philosophy? Is it the “letting be” that is the hook in these “products?” What can be learned from this?

I believe our future also lies in allying ourselves more generally with the somatic or embodied viewpoint as a whole, celebrating at the same time the sameness and universality of our inquiry, as well as the unique individuality of it. We are all singing from the same song sheet, in everything from the highly intellectual sphere of the late Francisco Varela’s theoretical work on subjective cognition to the clinical use of Zazen in the treatment of breast cancer patients. It is time we all accepted our part in a much bigger group, one I really believe will lead the way in health management, education, and business practice in the decades to come. From a marketing point of view, we are best to attach ourselves fully to the rising wave. Maybe in giving away some of our specifics, our speciality, we will gain—as will our clients—in the long-term. Doing, in other words, what we preach: letting go!! But that is the unique difficulty anybody has in working in this field. How do you market something that flies in the face of everything anyone has ever been taught? I repeat, I can only think we make a virtue of it. Zen found favor (albeit in two rather different periods of uptake—the 1930s and 1950s) because it celebrated its unknowability, made it its USP. Too many people explain the Alexander Technique in the exact terms they are trying to avoid. Face plant!

How often have we heard the refrain “Our work is ahead of its time” as an excuse for our non-involvement in a broader context? How often have we heard the refrain “We must stick to principle,” when often we mean sticking to what we know? We are not ahead of our time; we are in it. Our operating principle—that we consciously inhibit that which we do to interfere with the Primary Control whilst consciously directing ourselves to be “in resonance with” that Primary Control—is a recurrent theme, from Shamanism to the New Age. Try substituting Inhibition with Letting Go, Primary Control with Life Force, and Direction with Positive Thinking. What is unique about Alexander’s work is the capacity to be able to impart inhibitory neurological information to allow experiential knowledge of what it means to “not do.” And that has incalculable value as subjective “proof” of the veracity of the Perennial Truth.

Overall, we have to work out what is not resonant with our target market(s), both individually and collectively, why it is not, and make it resonant. We might all lose some of our favorite crutches in the process! I

don't think it requires a huge amount of soul searching—we all do plenty of that anyway—but, rather, looking practically at our product.

It is easy to be cynical about marketing concepts. But, if working out what people want, and then giving it to them is cynical, so be it! It is how the world works! This does not mean prostituting ourselves, or changing the substance of our work. It does mean working consciously and flexibly to situate what *we* understand in ways that thrill and are of relevance to our target markets. This is not a slur on the extraordinary inspirational creativity I have witnessed in many teachers. It is, however, a call for our profession *as a whole* to do something radical about its marketing image, or we will find our schools emptying and our client base withering in favor of other “techniques” and “methods” that do resonate with their Zeitgeist.

## Postscript

I am often asked: ‘Where on earth do you dig up all this crap?’ Although many of them will be familiar, below is a list of books that, more from a process of osmosis than learning, have helped inform me on the above. (I have not included any of Alexander’s writing, the many commentaries on his work, articles in journals, nor information from the Internet.)

*Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature.* Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers

*Minding the Body: Clinical Uses of Somatic Awareness.* Donald Bakal

*The View from Within: First-Person Approaches to Consciousness.* Francisco Varela & Jonathon Shear, editors

*The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience.* Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, & Eleanor Rosch

*The Evolving Mind: Buddhism, Biology and Consciousness.* Robin Cooper

*Erotic Morality: The Role of Touch in Moral Agency.* Linda Holler

*Touching: The Human Significance of Skin.* Ashley Montagu

*Untouched: The Need for Genuine Affection in an Impersonal World.* Mariana Caplan

*Body of Awareness: A Somatic and Developmental Approach to Psychotherapy.* Ruella Frank

*Nature's Imagination.* Roger Penrose, John Barrow, Gerald Edelman, Oliver Sacks, et al.

*An Invitation to Cognitive Science.* Justin Leiber

*Fuzzy Thinking.* Bart Kosko

*The Web of Life.* Fritjof Capra

*The Quantum Self.* Danah Zohar

*Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers.* Robert M. Sapolsky

*Molecules of Emotion.* Candace Pert

*The Biology of Business.* John Henry Clippinger

*Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge.* Edward O. Wilson

*The Empty Raincoat.* Charles Handy

*Working with Emotional Intelligence.* Daniel Goleman

*Co-opetition.* Adam Brandenberger and Barry Nalebuff

*Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping.* Paco Underhill

*The Importance of Living.* Lin Yutang

## Rebirth of the Cool

*Zen: Merging of East and West.* Roshi Philip Kapleau  
*Three Pillars of Zen.* Roshi Philip Kapleau  
*Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism.* Lama Anagarika Govinda  
*The Way of the White Clouds.* Lama Anagarika Govinda

*David Horsman is a New Zealander who has lived most of his life in Europe. Following a career as a filmmaker, he trained as an Alexander Teacher with Marie-Françoise Le Foll in Paris. He is the founder of Somatic Intelligence, a business running experiential retreats, seminars, and workshops for business executives, based on F. M. Alexander's work, and the larger field of somatic self-regulation. He also has a private practice at the Eden Medical Centre in London and in Southern France. He is currently writing a book about the somatic aspects of pilgrimage.*

*David is also series editor for an upcoming issue of DIRECTION Magazine on Marketing and Business. To find out more about this issue—or how you can contribute to this ongoing debate—contact him directly at [david@somaticintelligence.com](mailto:david@somaticintelligence.com) or go to <http://www.directionjournal.com/coming/marketing.htm>. ☺*

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**To understand others you should get behind their eyes  
and walk down their spine.**

***Rod McKuen***

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ExChange is eager to share your 2002 AGM presentations, experiences, and impressions with members who are unable to attend. Please submit all materials by January 1, 2003 for inclusion in the February 2003 issue!

*Be soft in your practice. Think of the method as a fine silvery stream, not a raging waterfall. Follow the stream, have faith in its course. It will go its own way, meandering here, trickling there. It will find the grooves, the cracks, the crevices. Just follow it. Never let it out of your sight. It will take you.*

*Sheng-yen*

# Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals

*from Paul J. Meyer's Attitude Is Everything*

Specific  
Measurable  
Attainable  
Realistic  
Tangible

## Specific

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Where: Identify a location.
- When: Establish a time frame.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

(For example, a general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a specific goal would say, "Join a health club and work out 3 days a week.")

## Measurable

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

## Attainable

When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and

become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

### **Realistic**

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

### **Tangible**

A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight, or hearing. When your goal is tangible, or when you tie an tangible goal to a intangible goal, you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.

Intangible goals are your goals for the internal changes required to reach more tangible goals. They are the personality characteristics and the behavior patterns you must develop to pave the way to success in your career or for reaching some other long-term goal. Since intangible goals are vital for improving your effectiveness, give close attention to tangible ways for measuring them.

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**. . .only the truth that comes alive, becomes more than an abstract ideal but is “felt on the pulse,” only the truth that is genuinely experienced on all levels of being, . . .only this truth has the power to change a human being.**

***Rollo May***

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## Book Reviews

### The Alexander Technique

#### A Skill for Life

by Pedro de Alcantara

Crowood Press, Wiltshire, UK, 1999, ISBN 1-86126-286-8. Illus. paperback, 128pp., \$29.95

reviewed by Andrea Matthews

Pedro de Alcantara has followed up his 1997 book, *Indirect Procedures: A Musician's Guide to the Alexander Technique*, with this general introduction to the Technique. The book succeeds in presenting much of the thinking behind the Technique and lessons in a manner that the average reader can relate to. I found it enjoyable, accessibly written, well-bound and attractive, with some excellent illustrations, and many felicitous turns of phrase—the kind you want to post on your teaching room walls (see *sidebar*, pp. 26-27).

In terms of design, I find the margins and gutters too narrow, giving the pages a crowded feel not in keeping with the desired effect of the text, and necessitating repeated mashing of the book flat in order to read words toward the middle. For me, the type could be tad larger, but I soon acclimated to it, and after all, I can hardly complain, with the *ExChange's* type being the size it is (all the news that's print to fit, as it were).

In terms of its content, I would recommend the book very highly indeed for teachers, trainees, and students with enough experience of the work to read critically. Due to some reservations on a few points, I think it requires a judgment call by individual teachers in recommending it for the public at large and for new students. In only a few places, Mr. de Alcantara makes some peculiarly arbitrary assertions (perhaps arising from his personal process of growth) that a novice might take as a mainstream Alexandrian thought. For example, he comments that for someone to settle on the same basic outfit every day in order to free attention for other things is a violation of the “healthy grooming instinct” may make sense for one student, perhaps one whose attention is already quite narrow, yet not for another, such as one for whom excessive concern with dress and grooming has been a problem.

Another concern I personally have about this book as a first introductory text is his assertion that end-gaining the final cause of misuse. But what causes end-gaining? My experience is that if you suspend end-gaining you tend to find the reasoning behind it. If that thinking goes unchallenged and is not uprooted, we can inhibit endgaining, but the powerful impulse to end-gain won't go away. A little more follow-through would be nice when he states: “...pulling the head back and down is particularly harmful, as the weight of the head then bears down upon the neck and spine, shortening and narrowing the whole back.” Well, yes—and I had to read it twice before I realized I was being carried along by my own knowledge of how bad a thing that is. But what does “shortening and narrowing the back” convey to a new reader? One more sentence could have revealed potential consequences of that movement: constriction of nerves, blood vessels, and structures; fatigue; loss of flexibility, etc., etc. The book as a whole makes clear that the Technique is about changing your thinking, and that pulling down has undesirable consequences, but shortcuts like these in an introduction can be confusing.

Quibbles aside, for such a slim volume, it covers a remarkable range of aspects of the Technique, offering admirably balanced observations on directions, touch, and other sensitive subjects. De Alcantara anticipates and

challenges common assumptions the average reader is likely to have (for example, about “posture” and “inhibition”), and points out the practical consequences of a change in thinking for functioning and living. Of course it bears similarities to other books introducing the work (such as recounting “the Australian story”) but with his own commentary as well as some novel and effective discussions, such as a sidebar on the negative effects of pulling down on the quality of a kiss. Extremely effective, too, are his uses of narrative and student/teacher “testimonials” (not praise of his work, but personal stories of the experience of lessons and teacher training). For example, he uses the story of teaching a student to juggle as a foil for describing the course and rationale of lessons, producing a parable of the movement from “reaction” to “response” in lessons and life. Noting that working effectively with them requires the supervision of a teacher, he provides a brief but vivid introduction to traditional “procedures”: monkey, lunge, whispered “ah,” and constructive rest. I was tickled by his noting that Patrick Macdonald recommended whispered “ah” for hangovers!

Other fine contributions of this book include discussions of the inseparability of mind and body, and how important the use of language can be in promoting either a false split, or in repairing it. In an excellent sidebar, he explores the perils of being a newly enlightened and enthusiastic student, tempted to proselytize and even put hands on the unsuspecting public: “to the neophyte, it is obvious that ‘the whole world’ needs to learn the Technique....” His discussions of the relationship of the Technique to disciplines such as ergonomics, physiotherapy, and psychotherapy, and of personal responsibility as a *sine qua non* in any meaningful improvement of being, are eloquent and thought-provoking. He even considers the similarities the Technique shares with Zen and the teachings of Krishnamurti, application of the Technique in defusing conflict, the link between use and “intelligence,” the “placebo effect,” the distinction between “normal” and “natural” use, and the importance of realizing that there is *always* movement and no positions are truly static.

In the second half of the book, he proceeds to a student’s personal story (adding his own commentary), which is a great way to give the reader the feeling of how lessons become necessary, and their effects, from the student’s point of view. With some superb input from other teachers, he looks at the application of AT in specific areas: general health and well-being (including pregnancy), sports and exercise, and performing arts, as well as a teacher’s view of training, with information on finding a teacher or a training, and working on your own. The concluding chapter offers his views on challenges in marketing the Technique.

## Sidebar: *For the Teaching Studio Wall?*

### **Memorable Quotations from The Alexander Technique, by Pedro de Alcantara**

“Even to speak of body, mind, and spirit working together implies some separateness between the parts.” p. 9

“Body and mind act together, at once, always, whether they do so efficiently or not.” p. 10

“what causes misuse?...Alexander [recognized] that the problem lies not in what is done to the individual, but in what the individual does to himself.” p. 12

“It is the absence of the right kind of tension in the right places for the right length of time that causes too much tension of the wrong kind in the wrong places for the wrong length of time....” p. 26

“A good position is that which you can alter with the greatest speed and ease.” p. 26

“When something upsets your inner balance...a single, sudden thought makes you misuse your whole self. Ideally, a single thought of a different kind should also trigger all the directions that establish the best use of your whole self.” p. 33

“The most useful lesson that you will learn from the experience of losing your balance in the hands of an Alexander teacher is that, in every situation, you have a range of possible reactions. You will stop believing (and claiming) that a situation, a stimulus, or a person *causes* you to react in an inevitable manner.” p. 38

“According to Pablo Casals, the great cellist, ‘*Si la pensée est juste, tout va*’ (‘if the thinking is right, everything works’).” p. 40

“The aim of a teacher is not to make you feel good, but to help you stop doing what is wrong, so that the right thing may do itself.” p. 41

“No position is good in itself; it becomes good or bad, health-giving or harmful, according to the way you direct yourself into the position, within it, and out of it.” pp. 45-46

“If your reactions are automatic and habitual, and if you are not even aware of your behaviours and of the mechanisms that animate them, then you are no more than a bundle of reflexes and instincts, just like an insect or a reptile. Is this your true nature?” p. 52

“It is *not being able to do otherwise* that is a problem. If you have the capacity to choose, you are a free person...If your choice is influenced by habit or addiction, then you are not spontaneous.” p. 53

“The better you use yourself, the more accurately you gauge a situation.” p. 55

“...the best thing you can do, for yourself and for the world, is to *change yourself*, not the world.” p. 60

"To inhibit is to decide, *for yourself*, how best to react in any given situation, and to have the ability to carry out your own decisions. There could be no greater source of individual empowerment and emotional well-being." p. 65

"All change, however beneficial, causes discomfort." p. 73

"We are so used to doing something, and to be seen to be doing something, that the very idea of doing nothing seems wrong." p. 74

"...I realized that failure is impossible, for the very concept of success or failure does not apply in the context of Alexander lessons. You just begin wherever you are and see how you change as you learn....Paradoxically, the more absorbed I was in the process rather than the end, the better the result became." p. 83

"All other things being equal, however, the one factor that will make your exercising healthy or unhealthy is the way you use yourself." p. 84

"Good use is an outlook in life, an attitude as well as a posture; to use yourself well is to use yourself intelligently." p. 84

"Inhibition, which is the cornerstone of the Technique, is the ability to say 'no' to the temptation of achieving unreasonable goals using unreasonable means – in effect, not giving in to the temptation of doing something that may harm you." p. 84

"Never take your form for granted." p. 89

"If you listen to the whispers, you won't have to hear the screams." p. 94

"A person who learns to work to a principle in doing one exercise,' wrote Alexander, 'will have learned to do all exercises, but the person who learns just 'to do an exercise' will most assuredly have to go on learning to 'do exercises' *ad infinitum*.'" p. 104

"To sum up..., you should always practice with the whole of yourself. The essential elements are attitude, posture, intelligence, imagination, humour, self-awareness, necessary tension, bilateral and quadrilateral transfer, rhythmic precision and forward motion, and musical content. If you leave one of these out, practicing could cause you more harm than good." p. 106

"The actor can learn to create a physicality that contributes to the character without harming the actor." p. 112

"I think many teachers have had the experience of giving fine lessons to new pupils who run away once they come to the realization that well-being is a choice that they must make for themselves daily, all day long." p. 119

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## Book Reviews

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ATI seems a bit of an afterthought in the list of AT organizations, but at least it's there, with our website address. I was startled not to see no mention of Michael Gelb's *Body Learning* (my usual recommendation for an introductory text), even in the Further Reading list. But that got me thinking it's about time I read that again, to see how it's holding up.

### **Anatomy Trains**

#### **Myofascial Meridians for Manual and Movement Therapists**

*by Thomas W. Myers LMT, NCTMB, ARP; forewords by Deane Juhan and Leon Chaitow*

Churchill Livingstone, 2001, ISBN 0-443-06351-6. Illus. paperback, 280pp., \$39.95

*reviewed by Andrea Matthews*

How is it that when we put our hands on a student's arm or foot, we are able to make contact with their head and neck relationship? As Frank Jones asked, "What is the mechanism?" Thomas Myers, in his long-awaited followup to his 1999 video, blends the concept of tensegrity with his years of experience and study of myofascial anatomy to provide a powerful model for understanding these kinds of questions.

His contribution, in my opinion, is a fundamental guide to structure and the functional "relationing" of the body, and belongs beside David Gorman's series "In Our Own Image" and Raymond Dart's work on the double-spiral arrangement of the human musculature (a primary inspiration of Myers' thinking) among the primary texts for Alexander teachers and trainees. Phenomenally rich in detail, yet well-designed and comfortably organized for clarity and readability, *Anatomy Trains* will reward frequent review as the reader incorporates its ideas into practice.

Connective tissue, or fascia, plays a crucial but often overlooked role as the interface of bone and muscle. Through his years of work and study as a Rolfer, Myers has developed a metaphor for the lines along which fasciae and muscles flow longitudinally through the body. These "trains" or "railway lines" form a network of connections, creating a functional unity in the system, such that distortion (or release) in one area can be seen in effects at points far distant. Unless one takes into account these lines and their (seemingly) indirect effects, the process of undoing excess tension in the body will remain something of an unpredictable black box. As we

know from the “mapping” work of Barbara and Bill Conable, confusion about how things really work becomes embodied as confusion in use, for both student and teacher.

The book goes on to discuss structural analysis from this viewpoint, along with some manual interventions which are thought-provoking, if not directly applicable to AT teaching. A little bonus at the end is his concise but well-rounded list of some of the goals of myofascial and movement work, evidence of his concern not only with the body, but with the whole person’s ability to respond to life with awareness, ease, and resilience.

Refreshingly, Myers is clear about what the Anatomy Trains approach is not: an exclusive or comprehensive theory of manipulative therapy, muscle action, movement, or structural analysis, or even a complete anatomy text. He sees it as complementary and additive to other systems of looking at structure and function, and hopes his theory will “contribute to the dialogue and cross-pollination across technical boundaries.” Hear, hear! ☺

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**As we go to press, nominations are still open for the following important ATI posts! Nominate yourself, or a fellow member for:**

**Board positions :**

**Chair  
Executive Secretary  
Corresponding Secretary**

**Committee positions:**

**Membership Chair  
PDC Chair  
AGM Site Committee Chair**

Please send your nominations to **[nominations@ati-net.com](mailto:nominations@ati-net.com)** or to the ATI Main Office **ASAP**.

## Wafflers of the World

In and out and back and forth  
 on the edge deciding  
 to or not to  
 participate  
 sign-in, fly cross country  
 expand points  
 of view. On verge  
 of losing  
 the luck to be present  
 in the presence  
 of a world of colleagues,  
 miss the stimulation  
 of diversity  
 and the chance  
 to compare style, learn  
 something new, network  
 globally and play.  
 I'm a waffler—  
 Why would I  
 miss it? I am signing up: now.

— Carol Levin, ATI member

**PROCRASTINATE  
 NO LONGER!  
 SIGN UP NOW  
 FOR THE  
 2002 ATI AGM!**  
*see pages 20 and 29*

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## Alexander Technique on the Internet

Robert Rickover is pleased to announce that the F. Matthias Alexander Photo Gallery—a collection of photos of F. M. available for downloading—is now open at <http://www.alexandertechnique.com/photos>. If you have additional photos to contribute, contact Robert Rickover at [robert@alexandertechnique.com](mailto:robert@alexandertechnique.com) or (402) 475-4433.

New items are always appearing on ATI's website at [www.ati-net.com](http://www.ati-net.com). Also, at [www.alexandertechnique.com/online](http://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 website and on the "Ask Dr. Weil" website at [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com).

To join ATI's internet mail group, Interchange, send an empty email to [ATI-Interchange-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ATI-Interchange-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To access these features you need to join yahoogroups (at no cost!). Log onto <http://www.yahoo.com/> and join!

You can send email to the ATI Board as a group at [board@ati-net.com](mailto:board@ati-net.com), or to individual board members at: [chair@ati-net.com](mailto:chair@ati-net.com), [assistantchair@ati-net.com](mailto:assistantchair@ati-net.com), [treasurer@ati-net.com](mailto:treasurer@ati-net.com), [execsec@ati-net.com](mailto:execsec@ati-net.com), or [correspondsec@ati-net.com](mailto: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](mailto:newsletter@ati-net.com)! ☺

## ***7th International Congress of the F.M. Alexander Technique***

***17-22 August 2004, Oxford, England***



This will be the biggest Congress yet, with more than 40 different workshops and classes, bringing together all levels of experience and tradition. Invitation to participate will be sent out in summer 2003 to all members of existing societies.

The majority of events and classes will take place in the beautiful 19th-century Examination Schools, which is located in central Oxford. Full board is available in several colleges within 5 minutes walk from the Examination Schools. Tuition fees for the whole week will cost about £200. Accommodation example: for full board (incl. lunch and dinner) in one of the colleges, expect to pay about £500 (today's prices) for six nights. Details, as available, will be posted on the Congress website: [www.atcongress.net](http://www.atcongress.net).

Congress Directors:

Peter Ribeaux, 46 Stevenage Road, London SW6 6HA, +44 020 7731 6348  
Lucia Walker, 15 Hurst Street, OX4 1EZ, +44 1865 726 307  
Jean M.O. Fischer, 66 Wicklemarsh Road, London SE3 8DS, +44 20 8856 0804

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Please note that the email address for *ExChange* has changed to [exchange@ati-net.com](mailto:exchange@ati-net.com).  
We'd love to hear from you!

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### **Worldwide Offices of Alexander Technique International**

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**Norway**

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(+46) (0)8 641 0086  
(+46) (0)8 34 99 18 (fax)  
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8 St. Peter's Place  
Viewforth  
Edinburgh EH3 9PJ  
0131 229 9035  
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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](http://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.



## Worldwide Offices of Alexander Technique International

### Main Office, USA

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