

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2003

THIS NEWSLETTER IS FOR PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF ONGOING LEARNING; AND ARE WILLING TO BENEFIT FROM ALL THE DIFFERENT TEACHERS THAT LIFE PUTS ON THEIR PATH

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### 1. WHEN THE TEACHER IS READY... THE SMALL MAMMAL APPEARS

Madelene and Annie are not among those dotty Alexander teachers who put our pets on pedestals. Absolutely not. We won't end up in a residential home for elderly Alexander teachers, where you have to fight four legged friends for access to the furniture; but then receive a wonderful lesson, because AT teachers, like fine wines, just get better as they get older. (*Let's hear it for the AT*)

No, we *know* it won't come to that; not least because we don't anthropomorphize. What us???? Put words into our pets' mouths? We don't think so. Sure we've thought seriously about having a Wit and Wisdom of Sharon Kornfeld and Nerina Webb webpage, but that's only because our pets have real insights to share.

Recently one of us – no names given here to protect the innocent - was talking with a pupil about our pet's very clear sense of boundaries. The pet, we'll call her X, had been confronted with a new arrival of her own species and had made it very clear to her human that she would take no responsibility for the new creature. X hadn't asked for her and wasn't going to carry the load for her.

Now this is clearly a wise attitude. A lot of us would do well to learn that it doesn't serve us to shoulder difficulties that are not of our making, letting the culprit off the hook. But just notice the vocabulary that is creeping in; 'load', 'shoulder', 'hook'.

X was very clear about what she would and would not accept and her body language remained free and clear.

That set us thinking about how much our postural set is a result of our lack of clarity. How much is your physical set informed by worry, anxiety to please, nervousness, apprehension, shyness or any number of other emotions? And how relevant are they to your daily life in the present?

Could you start to become aware of the vocabulary and emotions that underlie your body set?

Have lots of fun with this one and see what you notice.

## 2. HOW TO IMPRESS A POODLE

It was with great sadness that we were forced to face facts: Political Correctness is dead and buried. We now live in a Post-Politically Correct world. We struggle to make sense of where that leaves us, and to find a future focus for our habitual levity.

While we wait for inspiration, we relay this month's joke, which is dedicated to Rob Dubery, website builder extraordinaire and barbecue maven. It has been suggested that Mr Dubery, like the mythical Mr MacGregor, *might* make short work of the small furry creatures that venture into his garden. We don't think that such an even tempered industrious person as Rob, would ever prepare *chili con canine*.

**Three handsome male dogs are walking down the street when they see a beautiful, enticing, female Poodle. The three male dogs fall over themselves in an attempt to be the first to reach her, but end up arriving in front of her at the same time. The males are speechless before her beauty, slobbering on themselves and hoping for just a glance in return.**

Aware of her charms and her obvious effect on the three suitors, she decides to set them a challenge. "The first one who can use the words "liver" and "cheese" together in an imaginative, intelligent sentence can go out with me", she says.

The sturdy muscular black Lab speaks up quickly: "I love liver and cheese."

"Oh, how childish", says the Poodle. "That shows no imagination or intelligence whatsoever."

She turns to the tall, glossy Golden Retriever and says: "What do you have to say?"

The Golden Retriever thinks hard, then comes up with: "I HATE liver and cheese."

The Poodle sighs: "That's no better than the Lab's sentence."

She turns to the remaining dog and says: "How about you, little guy?"

The last dog, tiny in stature, but big in style and finesse, is the Taco Bell Chihuahua. He winks one big brown eye at her, flashes a ravishing smile, then turning to the Golden Retriever and the Labrador, he bares his tiny teeth and snarls:

"Liver alone, cheese mine!"

## 3. THE SILLY SEASON

At this time of year all pretence at rational thinking is shelved and people say disapprovingly: 'It's the silly season'; as if nothing could be worse than shedding their cares and stresses for a few weeks.

Perish the thought of putting serious concerns on the back burner for a while and enjoying a little light-heartedness! There's nothing like responsibility, worry, gravitas, even a good dose of misery to keep our feet firmly on the ground, is there? After all, we wouldn't want to be getting 'above' ourselves.

Well, we happen to think that this is a great time of year to get 'above' the habitual careworn body set. We could – and did – 'do' heavy and careworn as well as the next person. It didn't suit us but it brought plenty of aches and pains in its wake.

With the Alexander Technique we opted for physical and emotional lightness- it's part of what we make available to our pupils.

By lightness we mean not superficiality, but grace, agility, positiveness and mirth. These qualities, like a little self-aware silliness, sit more lightly on our shoulders than do earnestness and sobriety.

For the next few weeks why not give a little silliness – oh, ok, *controlled* silliness - a chance? It could be worth adding to your resources for swift undoing of tensions. And please feel free to let us know whether silly works for you.

#### 4. SPREADING THE WORD

This month we have done our bit towards writing about the Alexander Technique in an accessible way. We feature in 'Runners' World' with our Top 10 Tips for Runners, and The Alexander Technique for Optimum Health in 'Positive Health', complete with footnotes, bibliography and biographies. Talk about pushing back the envelope!

#### 5. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday September 7, Open Day (11.a.m.-5p.m.) at Shine Holistic Saturday 28th June 2-5pm, 52 Church Street Stoke Newington N16 ONB. For details Tel: 020 8533 6476 or 07939 347099

Saturday September 20 (10a.m.-12.p.m.), Pearl of the Orient, 33 Warley Hill, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5HR What is the Alexander Technique and what can it offer you? Interactive workshop £40 including free Alexander lesson with first 5 bookings. For details Tel: 0845 6442341

Saturday September 27 (10a.m.-12.p.m.) Pearl of the Orient, 33 Warley Hill, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5HR, A New You. This workshop is for you if are ready to own harness your gifts and own your joy. £40 including 1-2-1 session. For details Tel: 0845 6442341

Sunday September 28 10a.m.-12.p.m. Running workshop for people who want to enjoy their running more and take the effort out of it. Venue to be arranged. Details will be posted on our website [www.nopain-gain.com](http://www.nopain-gain.com), or phone: 0845 6442341.

Have a great August,

**Annie and Madelene**

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