

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2003

THIS NEWSLETTER IS FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO 'THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX' AND CHOOSE TO USE THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE TO DISCOVER DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACHING HABITUAL ACTIVITY.

This month we start a new series of 60 second tips, designed to help you become more aware of how you can perform some of life's less thrilling activities with less wear and tear on yourself.

1. 60 Second Tip: STAND UP TO YOUR HOOVER

Floor cleaning may not be the most fascinating of activities. Yet we tend to pull ourselves floorward as if the whereabouts of the Holy Grail might be written just ahead of our broom, mop or vacuum cleaner. (The mothers of AT teachers clearly fell down on their duty, because *we* were never told about the almost irresistible attractions of bog-standard household dirt.) Imagine, instead, a crocodile just ahead of your implement, hold yourself erect so as to escape the gaping jaws, and the benefit to your spine (and fantasy life) will be significant.

2. I AM A FATHER

An old Jewish man was once on the underground where he sat down next to a younger man. He noticed that the young man had a strange kind of shirt collar. Having never seen a priest before, he asked the man, "Excuse me sir, but why do you have your shirt collar on backwards?"

The priest became a bit flustered but politely answered "I wear this collar because I am a Father."

The Jewish man thought a second and responded "Sir, I am also a Father but I wear my collar front-ways. Why do you wear your collar so differently?"

The priest thought for a minute and said "Sir, I am the father for many."

The Jewish man quickly answered "I too am the father of many. I have four sons, four daughters and too many grandchildren to count. But I wear my collar like everyone else does. Why do you wear it your way?"

The priest who was beginning to get exasperated thought and then blurted out "Sir, I am the father for hundreds and hundreds of people."

The Jewish man was taken aback and was silent for a long time. As he got up to leave the tube, he leaned over to the priest and said "Mister, maybe it's your pants that you should be wearing backwards."

The moral of this story?

- a) Beware of sitting next to elderly Jewish men on the tube; you may not always enjoy their slightly idiosyncratic take on life.
- b) If you want to change the results you get, try doing things 'backwards' sometimes.
- c) Ask yourself whether a story has to have just one moral.

3. ON BEING HIDEBOUND

Nobody wants to admit that they are hidebound. It isn't the world's most attractive characteristic. Yet a lot of people are physically hidebound, and they don't even know it.

What keeps us physically hidebound is habit. Habit causes us to keep doing the same old things in the same old way, automatically. Habit means that we are not even aware that there might be other ways of doing things, which we just haven't found out about yet.

Habit save us the bother of thinking about things – even if it means we keep on getting the same old results. After all, if we're *really* good at being creatures of habit, and most of us are, we won't even connect that we keep getting the same old results precisely because we keep on doing the same old things.

Sometimes, our habits work in our best interests: generally speaking it probably is advantageous not to wear your trousers backwards. But even such routine activities are best performed with a modicum of awareness. (We all know of people who have attended important appointments in two unmatched shoes, or with strategic buttons or zips undone.)

Sometimes habits work against us. When we find a routine act difficult, our habit tells us we can't do 'X' or 'Y'; not that we can't do it *that way* and need to start looking at other ways. A pupil of ours with severe back pain had tremendous difficulty lowering himself onto the loo. Since this act was decidedly not optional, he stepped outside his habit and used his AT thinking to do so without pain.

Another aspect of hidebound thinking is that for as long as we can 'get away with' using our body in a way that we know is potentially harmful, we can't be bothered to do anything about it. For a lot of people, it's only pain that spurs them on to address their habits.

4. WHAT OUR PUPILS SAY ABOUT THE AT

Work on the web site goes on and we have received a lot of truly touching testimonials from our pupils. What moves us most is the number of pupils who say that they have found either a serenity or a feeling of confidence and well being that they could not have anticipated.

We are passionate about what we do. Still it is always a delight and a bonus to hear that our pupils get far more benefits from the Alexander Technique than they had anticipated. It works both ways: our pupils give us far more joy than we could anticipate as we watch the many ways in which the AT enables them to develop themselves.

5. FUTURE EVENTS

Introductory AT Workshop at Pearl of the Orient 33 Warley Hill, Brentwood, on March 8, 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. For details call 0845 6442341.

ALEXANDER INTRODUCTORY TELECLASSES. We will be running teleclasses over the next few months, enabling people to find out what the AT has to offer them at minimal cost, from the comfort of their own homes. Please pass this information on to people you know, who you think might be interested. They can find out more simply by contacting us at madelene.webb@virgin.net, or email@annie-kaszina.com.

6. PUBLICATIONS

Annie has recently published an article on "The Alexander Technique and (Health) Labels" at www.chisuk.org.uk, for people who are interested in reading a more conventional piece on the AT.

Have a great March,

Annie and Madelene

Anything you can do, you can do better.

To receive 50 Top Alexander Tips or to subscribe to this free e-newsletter email:

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