

## ALEXANDER NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2003

THIS NEWSLETTER IS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE READY TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF INCORPORATING CHANGE INTO THEIR LIFE PAINLESSLY.

### 1. HUMAN BEING OR HUMAN DOING?

In a month in which Madelene will feature in 'The Times' - as an authority on 'posture', no less - we approach this newsletter with a new gravitas. There will be no talk of broken fingernails, alcopops or the wit and wisdom of small mammals. We will forebear even to discuss how Rob Dubery, our ever patient website builder, will manage his barbecue habit now that the end of the season draws nigh.

This month we *may* foreswear the ridiculous in favour of the sublime; provided we don't burst in the attempt. Happily, we have been inspired by an observation by John Bradshaw in his best selling book: 'Healing The Shame That Binds You'. He writes: '*I couldn't grasp... that there is no way to change your being by your doing*'.

Bradshaw was applying this observation to his own sphere of expertise rather than the Alexander Technique, but his words resonated with us for various reasons.

- First, the Alexander Technique is about integrity, i.e. walking the talk.
- Second, people wiser than we are have observed that the AT is, in reality, a 'Pre-Technique', or skill base enabling you to apply specific skills to any chosen task or goal as effortlessly and productively as possible.
- Third - and this point will not have been lost on our astute readers - yet again we risk charges of being hoist with our own petard or, worse still, of being dubbed 'Petard Fetishists' who change our doing (donning the mantle of *gravitas*), without changing our being (lightness).
- Fourth, but by means least, all of us have been there, trying to change our being by our doing. We've probably done it more often and in more ways than we care to admit; generally without too much success.

Now, we believe passionately in the reality of significant, major change. It is our job as Alexander teachers to facilitate change. It is also our role to present pupils with the significant link in the being-doing chain that makes change possible – and enjoyable. That link is *thinking*.

It is our belief that body-set (a.k.a posture) is underpinned by life experiences, traumas and vision of the self, or mind-set. Generally this (set) vision is like a pair of shoes long since outgrown that pinch and constrain every which way -and most of us know how hard it is to hobble through activity in shoes that hurt.

Thinking allows you to discard the shoes and care for the feet. It enables you to step into doing with a new freedom and energy of being.

And finally, as regards the initial question, a wise Life Coach once said: 'If you only have two choices, it's not a decision, it's a dilemma.' What about expanding the options to include 'a thinking being', a 'thoughtful human', or Frank Sinatra (do-be-do-be-do)?

### 2. DEFINITIONS OF A DOG'S LIFE

A man complains bitterly to the marriage guidance counsellor that he has a dog's life. To his surprise his wife doesn't argue. Instead she turns to the counsellor and says: "You know, he's absolutely right. He comes into the house with muddy feet, leaves his prints all over my nice clean floor, barks at nothing, growls at his food and makes himself comfortable on my best furniture."

Clearly the husband in this improbable vignette was attempting something still more ambitious and radical than the Alexander Technique would ever advocate: he was trying to change his wife's being by his doing. His wife, on the other hand, was endeavouring, with truly commendable steadfastness, to help him cast off a limiting mind-set and embrace a more positive way of thinking!

### 3. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday September 7, Open Day (11.a.m.-5p.m.) at Shine Holistic, 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 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 made easy: a running workshop for people who want to enjoy their running more and take the effort out of it. Paddington Recreation Ground, Randolph Avenue, Maida Vale, London W9 1PD Cost £35

Have a great September

Annie and Madelene

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