

# Taking The Trying Out Of Being Alexander Newsletter December 2004

This newsletter is for everyone who wants more out of their body than for it just to 'get them around'.

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We grow through your recommendation – please forward this newsletter to a few friends and colleagues.

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## 1. Are you driving a hire car?

"Many people treat their bodies as if they were rented from Hertz -- something they are using to get around in but nothing they genuinely care about understanding."

Chungliang AI Huang

You know how driving a hire car is a totally differently experience to driving a car that you've actually paid for?

The hire car looks anonymous, handles differently, smells different, and there's no personal attachment to it. You approach it with a greater or lesser degree of tolerance depending on how far up - or down - the evolutionary scale it is. Naturally, you feel better disposed towards a BMW than, say, a Fiat Panda.

You're free to complain vociferously about its shortcomings and you can be as cavalier as you like about the minor mishaps it suffers at your hands; especially if you've paid an insurance supplement to cover the odd scratch here and the mini dent there...

On one holiday of blessed memory, one of us (we'll preserve confidentiality on this one), duly paid the insurance premium and beetled cheerfully around the quiet roads of Northern Italy - well, there's a clue!

Since Alexander teacher X lacks spatial awareness, the wing mirrors endured glancing blows, the paintwork suffered slightly and eventually one hubcap lost the will to live and fled the car... while the driver chortled merrily.

There was no sense of accountability; the car's future really didn't matter much.

Generally we're better towards the cars with which we have a long-term relationship... aren't we?? But still most of us don't go to the trouble of finding out how they function - beyond knowing that they need petrol/diesel frequently, and oil, water and tyre pressure checks intermittently. The technical stuff we leave to the experts; or, at least, those people in overalls we hope are the experts.

The analogy between the way we treat our cars and the way we treat our body is self-evident. Most of us will take some care over our vehicle's appearance, (hands up everyone who grooms their car on a Sunday). But it's the rare individual who will bother to wash and wax a hire car; unless we've been living unduly sheltered lives. We may wax lyrical about our own car or, less probably the hire car, provided it makes a statement about our taste, style and status. If it does none of these things we'll probably treat it with a degree of indifference, and limit ourselves to stating, somewhat apologetically: 'Well, at least it gets me around.' Either way, it's rarely a partnership,

in which man/woman genuinely cares about understanding the working of the machine. So it is with our body. We hammer it, pamper it occasionally, starve it, subject it to fuels of different octanes, fill the battery with alcohol, wax and preen it - so to speak. But we don't genuinely care about understanding what it is that makes it work they way it does and the small adjustments we can make that will get it to run smoothly.

Best of all, we love to park it by the kerb while we go off and get on with the business of the day, that is to say the mental stuff. As if mind and body were two totally separate things. Worse still, we don't even park it carefully; we abandon it.

Showing admirable Alexander restraint, we'll leave the analogy there. We trust you get the point.

As yet, the nearest thing to 'Exchange & Mart' for bodies that have taken a beating is still the Alexander Technique. So you can't have a Porsche, not everybody can. But you can at least take ownership of the car you drive. And the Alexander Technique will make your Ford Focus handle like a Porsche...

## 2. Why one size doesn't fit everyone.

Some readers may have noticed that the format of the newsletter has changed slightly this month. This came about as a result of a conversation with one delightful newsletter reader and pupil.

The conversation began with a comment he made about the brevity of his attention span. The Alexander teacher's delicate NLP antennae started to wobble gently. Somehow he came round to mentioning that he found the newsletter format difficult to concentrate on.

By now the teacher's NLP antennae were flailing about wildly, for she had identified the pupil, in NLP terms, as a 'Visual'.

Now, this is not the place to elaborate upon NLP classifications. Suffice it to say that, according to NLP, there are a few categories into which people fall. They each have different characteristics and each is equally valuable.

As a 'Visual', this pupil struggles with blocks of text, despite being highly observant. He commented that he can't understand people who don't notice what is going on in front of them. As a 'Kinesthetic', or feeling type, the teacher commented that she wouldn't notice the entire Russian army crossing the road directly in front of her.

So where is this going? 'Visuals' may suffer at school, because their abilities are not a fit with the literary and academic approach of schools, which judges by the 'one size fits all' rule.

The pupil was enchanted to learn that his perceived shortcoming was simply a difference that was offset by strengths (that he'd previously taken for granted). The information gave him greater awareness and understanding of the way he functioned.

Similarly, we have expectations of how our body should perform; which include sporting ability, co-ordination, flexibility and endurance. All are based on another set of 'one rule fits all' assumptions.

Despite all our assumptions to the contrary, bodies are no less individual than minds. They fall into a number of different types and beyond that we customise them by the use we make of them and the experiences they are subjected to.

Working with an Alexander teacher enables you to understand and enables you to exercise genuine care for the individual body you have. Not a bad thing really, when you think that, despite being a multinational, Hertz can't help you with a hire body.

## 3. The easy way of doing things.

Three men wanted to cross a river. They had no idea how to cross it, so one man knelt down on his knees and prayed "Lord give me the power and strength to cross the river." suddenly the man became very strong and swam across the river.

The next man thought: if it worked for him, it'll work for me. So he knelt down and prayed "Lord give the skills and the strength to cross the river." the man built a canoe and rowed himself across the river. The last man thought: if it worked for both of them, I know it'll work for me. So he also knelt down and prayed "Lord give me the wisdom and knowledge to cross the river." He turned into a woman and walked across the bridge.

Ok, so the joke may be just a little bit sexist. The point that we, as female Alexander teachers, are making is simply that just a little bit of focused thinking can enable people - of both gender - to simplify tasks and challenges considerably.

## 4. Forthcoming events.

Saturday, January 29th 3-6 p.m., Introductory Alexander Technique Group at Shine Holistic 52 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16. Call 07939 347099 or Shine on 7241 5033 for more information.

Special New Year's Promotion 6 lessons for the price of 5 only in January only available at Shine Holistic. Sunday January 30th 11.00-12.30 at Belsize Health, 16 England's Lane, London N.W.3:  
Find out about The Ultimate Mind-Body Make-Over,

## 5. Ultimate Mind Body Makeover

Are you ready for The **ULTIMATE** mind-body makeover?

Do you ever ask yourself:

- How to be free of nagging self-doubt?
- How to boost confidence at work?
- How to communicate successfully in every situation?
- How to stay focused?
- How to beat stress?
- How your body language can really work for you?

Now there is a 12 week programme to **CLEAR** the obstacles that have been holding you back.

You'll be free of the doubts that have held you back'

You'll be able to handle every situation

You'll meet challenges without stress

You'll be effortlessly persuasive

You'll have a great physical presence

Annie has developed the **UNIQUE** 12 week mind-body makeover using NLP and the Alexander Technique 1-2-1 to enable you to make the changes you really want **FAST**:

You don't have to put up with self-limiting beliefs

You'll love feeling motivated and in control.

You'll look forward to situations that once challenged you.

You'll look better.

You'll feel better.

You'll get rid of poor body language.

You'll be surprised how **EASY** it is to change.

Annie is an experienced Alexander Technique Teacher and an NLP Practitioner.

For more details contact  
Annie: 07712 924124

Have a great month



**DON'T KEEP US A SECRET. IF YOU LIKE IT, PLEASE FORWARD THIS E-NEWSLETTER TO FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO YOU THINK COULD BENEFIT FROM PROFITING FROM THOSE TWO TENTHS OF A SECOND.**

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