

Taking The Trying Out Of Being Alexander Newsletter February 2005

This newsletter is for people everywhere who are ready to learn.

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

1. Sipping your soup, the Alexander way.

A little while ago a small ripple occurred in a peaceful, Alexander pond when two perfectly normal teenagers infiltrated a gathering of 7 or 8 Alexander teachers.

The teenagers' motive was pure self-interest. They knew that the AT teachers would break for a delicious lunch – albeit a largely vegetarian one. It would be a lot easier, and nicer than hoicking from the freezer something pre-seasoned, pre-frozen (and probably pre-chewed. Honestly compels us to admit that they had been invited.

It was one of those situations in which two worlds collide. Since one of those worlds was the Alexander world, the collision was so subtle as to be entirely painless; almost unnoticeable. The only clear evidence of it was the mirth generated across both sides of the cultural divide.

The AT teachers sat quietly lifting their soup-spoons on the long journey from bowl to lips (a journey a full 100% longer than that made by the teenagers' spoons). Since their heads were perched in perfect poise atop a lengthening spine, they had plenty of time to glance around them as their spoons rose majestically up to lip height.

The teenagers, on the other hand were focused single-mindedly on the task in hand. Ok, it was late, they were hungry and as soon as they dropped their eyes to their plate, their head and body dropped forward also. They didn't notice the AT teachers glancing down at them from on high.

Suddenly, one Alexander teacher issued a muffled gasp as her eyes alighted on the older teenager's acrylic nails. A tepid debate ensued about the merits, or otherwise, of false nails.

The said teenager had had little prior experience of AT teachers and was rapidly beginning to suspect she had entered a parallel universe. The teacher nearest to her picked this up and, in order to take the heat off her, said in her gentle Alexander tones: 'You know, I tried nail varnish once, but I couldn't wear it. It was as if my nails couldn't breathe.'

At this point, both sides of the debate began to laugh helplessly, and soup travelled in all directions, fast. As one alternative therapist rightly observed, Alexander teachers are 'highly calibrated'. We are sensitive to the messages programmed into our pupils' bodies. We are exquisitely sensitive, sometimes tiresomely so, to the messages that come to us from our body. We are unusually connected to our physicality.

Outside 'Alexander world', the opposite is generally true: most people are remarkably disconnected. So they are blithely unaware of the tension they store throughout their body, from their little toe, right up to their scalp and in every area in between.

Even when they are aware of back or shoulder area, say, they have no sense of the tightness of their hands or ankles and how undoing that tightness is an essential part of resolving the bigger pattern of tension.

2. Your Life in Your Hands

When you look at your hands – if you look at your hands – what do you see?

Do you assess them in terms of how well manicured they look? Whether they look used to hard work? Do you see an instrument? A tool?

Do you see them as extraordinarily sensitive, skilled and versatile multi-taskers? No? We thought not.

If you had a Ferrari and you used it to do the week's supermarket shop, chances are you'd take care not to let your trolley knock it. Nor would you park it where other car doors would damage the paintwork. Not to mention your reluctance to drive those tyres over broken glass...

Your hands, on the other... hand, you treat like the average kitchen knife. What's a kitchen knife got to do with this? Plenty. Any half way decent knife will fare better if it gets a modicum of good treatment. If it isn't used on metal, left to soak, stored carelessly, if it's never properly sharpened from the time it left the factory That's the parallel. From the time you leave the factory, so to speak, your hands may get the odd cosmetic makeover, but precious little true care. You use them to perform a wide range of tasks, and frequently you'll crank up the tension before you even start. But do you think about taking the time to release the tension when you've finished?

One example you might consider is writing. These days, most of us don't have to do a lot of handwriting – which has to be a blessing. The tendency is to grip the pen, as if it were a young offender, and restrain it, while forming the letters.

The thing is, it doesn't stop there. The tension in your hand, will be communicated through your forearm, into your shoulder, which you may move forward and round to help you write better, and through to your back. Because the hand is connected through the arm to the back.

In other words, tension at one end of your physical continuum is bound to have a knock on effect at the other.

What do we suggest? Awareness. Consciously turning your hand palm up rather than palm down some-times,

when it is not active, and using that unfamiliar position as an opportunity to think about encouraging the fingers to uncurl, the thumb to drop and the wrist to soften.

The best way to break the old patterns, is to tune into the messages that your body is sending you. And the only foolproof method of doing that is, of course, the Alexander Technique.

3. Learning From Your Problems

The woman's husband didn't care much for her cat and decided to get rid of it by driving the cat a couple miles away from their home and leaving it at a park.

When the man arrived home, he saw the cat walking up the driveway.

The next day he decided to take the cat 10 miles away. He pulled over, put the cat on the ground and headed home. When he arrived home, there was the cat ambling up the driveway.

The man continued to take the cat farther and farther away, and the cat would always beat him home. Finally, he had had enough. He grabbed the cat, got in the car and drove and drove. He turned right, he turned left, he went over bridges, through tunnels, this way and that until he thought, surely this was far enough and put the cat out.

Hours later, the man called his wife. "Sweetheart," he said, "is the cat there?"

"Why, yes," she answered. "Why do you ask?"

Frustrated the man said, "Please put the thing on the phone. I'm lost and need directions."

We can't help feeling there is a piece in there somewhere about limited self-awareness aggravating problems.

4. 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

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Have a great month



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