

Taking The Trying Out Of Being Alexander Newsletter June 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.

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1. You have two tenths of a second to change

Do you have a yen for self-improvement? If you do, just nod once, discreetly, while you read this, so that we know. .

Ok, so we won't know. But if you're interested at all in the Alexander Technique, we think it's reasonable to assume that you have an interest in self-improvement.

Why bother? Well, obviously, because it offers you the greatest possible opportunity to make far reaching, beneficial changes in your life.

Which is why it's become such a huge industry right now. First of all, through skilled copy writing, the self-improvement industry puts into words for you exactly what it is that you want, and then it offers you endless books, workshops, CDs and you name it that will provide all that and more.

So why is it that we're all still teetering on the verge of perfection, but not quite there yet?

Well, one reason is that we haven't quite 'got' the message yet. It's all there for us and... a couple of things get in the way.

One is that we don't really believe that we can have all the benefits allegedly on offer. We'd like them, but we tell ourselves that 'life's not really like that, is it?' (Which is a great way of making sure that it isn't.)

Another is the sheer trouble of putting in the work required to make change. We all have busy lives, don't we? Finding the time isn't easy. (Of course, we never fritter our time in front of the television, or at the computer, or in moronic telephone conversations with salespeople who call you just when you're about to sit down and eat....)

Speaking personally, we as Alexander teachers are committed to change; our own and the change that our pupils come to us to implement. We preach the gospel of change – although, hopefully, we don't ram it down anyone's precious, delicate neck. Yet change still exercises our mind also.

At a recent Alexander workshop that both Annie and Madelene attended, the trainer pointed out that we have two tenths of a second to change. That is to say we have two tenths of a second, to choose our response to a stimulus. It could be the stimulus to slump forward to peer at something on the computer, to question whether sagging into a chair really is the best way to relax, or to choose whether telling another person just how frustrated we feel is the best way of getting the desired result.

Two tenths of a second may not sound like a lot. But it can start to look seriously s*xy (that's our considered, measured metaphorical finger held up to the spam filters) when you compare it with our habitual concept of change.

The self-improvement industry spawns endless books, tapes, workshops etc. which in 90% of cases, produce a great deal of revenue, but not a lot of change. This is not the fault of the information they purvey but the mentality they encounter.

We assume that change is an uphill job; it's like Sisyphus forever pushing his boulder up the mountain (we love that image).

Actually, it isn't. All it is is two tenths of a second on any given occasion. Sure there are a lot of them in a week. But the other thing is, you only have to do something for 21 days, max, and it becomes second nature. If you were to work out the maths (which is asking more than we're capable of, but some mathematically gifted reader out there might like to do so), you'd probably find that change wouldn't take much more than an hour or so, spread over a few weeks.

When you put it that way, does "you have two tenths of a second to change" start to look more doable?

2. The life of a geek

In the best of all possible worlds you wouldn't ever get sucked into what you're doing so that you forget about what you're doing to your body – and even forget that you have a body that needs taking care of at all. But it happens.

Most of all it happens at the computer. July's issue of "Taking The Trying Out Of Being" didn't happen, because Annie spent a good couple of weeks Taking The Being Out Of Trying, as she slaved over a hot keyboard, building her first website from scratch.

It was a huge learning curve. At one point she ended up speaking to her technical support guy (named, for ease of identification, Guy) about some problem and after a few minutes Guy said, with a new, barely veiled, admiration in his voice: "You know, Annie, I've never heard you swear like that before." (Editor's note: You'd never catch Madelene cussing like that.)

Seemingly, turning the air blue is one of those things that go with the territory, together with weight gain –from all the frustrations – aches and pains that reach parts never previously reached, and hours that disappear as you struggle with seemingly inexplicable problems.... Reader, it was terrible.

But good things came out of it. First, the website, obviously -www.celiacliving.com for anyone interested. Then a new empathy with techies everywhere, based on Annie's new appreciation of the trials and tribulations of the techie life.(Techies just love it when anyone connects with their human side.)

Last, but by no means least, was an acknowledgement that sometimes a person's just gotta do what they've gotta do, even when it's not the best thing for their poor body. (The truth is that everyone – even Alexander teachers – does a bit of that;occasionally.)

When it happens, you can go the time honoured route of rubbing your own nose in it – acting on the spurious logic that if you're already feeling bad about something, making yourself feel worse about it will somehow make you feel better. You can carry on doing the same thing, because now you've started there's no point in trying to do anything else. Or you can take comfort in the fact that you can use the Alexander Technique to neutralize the ill effects.

In a perfect world, everything we do we'd do for Mr Alexander with a free neck and a lengthening spine. In this world we tighten, slump, sag, hunch, twist and contort. It would be better if we didn't, but we do. And the Alexander Technique remains the single best method for not hobbling through our day looking like Quasimodo clones and feeling a prey to tension and chronic aches and pains.

3. Wisdom

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 the 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.

Obviously this joke is all about interpretation: you can either read it as a thinly veiled feminist tract, which is not how it is intended, or you can see it as a sort of Alexander parable of how knowledge reduces problems to their most manageable proportions. You choose. You have two tenths of a second to stop yourself from levelling the charge of rank sexism at us.

4. Forthcoming Events

Saturday, September 24th, Introductory Alexander Technique Group at Shine Holistic 52 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16. Call 07939 347099 or Shine on 7241 5033 for more information.

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

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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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