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Look Alive

A Perspective on the Alexander Technique

Hello everyone,

After last month's mailing, I've decided to re-launch a regular newsletter. Each issue will feature a short article on some aspect of the Alexander Technique that I hope will be interesting and useful to you. The newsletter will also include workshop announcements, the date of the next introduction, and other information. I plan to put together between ten and twelve issues a year.

For students, the newsletter should prove a nice supplement to the lessons. For those of you curious about the Technique, it should answer a few questions and give you a little insight into the work. However, if at any time you decide you'd rather not receive the mailings, you can easily unsubscribe by clicking on the link at the bottom of every issue.

In the meantime, enjoy!

Give Up The Posture Habit

I found [this video on YouTube](#) which nicely illustrates our faulty thinking when it comes to the idea of "bad posture" and "good posture." The video was produced by Roy Palmer, an Alexander Technique teacher and fitness coach in the UK.

The girl in the video starts off sitting in her chair in a slumped position. Most of us have experienced this and most of us would call it "bad posture." To correct it, we sit up rod-straight by throwing back our shoulders and hyper-extending our spines. We have been conditioned to believe this is "good posture" but quite frankly it's exhausting! Unable to maintain this stiff position, we yo-yo back and forth between our ideas of bad and good posture, between collapse and rigidity.

Clearly the very thought of posture puts us wrong. We either feel guilty because we think we do it badly or we end up rigid and stiff in our effort to do it well. Something must change.

Let's forget about posture, and let's think instead about how we direct our energies. Did you notice how already this idea is more fluid and opens up possibilities? When we collapse, we

are directing our energies downward. The result is a spine that lacks the necessary tension to keep it upright and elastic. When we overextend, we are not directing but pushing, forcing. The result is too much tension.

Try this: Gently direct your energies up along the spine, allow the head to balance on the spine, let the chair support you, and release your lower back. Instead of wondering if you're doing it right, trust that you have animated your spine and back with an appropriate amount of tension. (This is known as "thinking up and hoping for the best," and it's far more useful than you may believe at first glance.) You should find yourself sitting in a way that feels lighter and more natural. If you were to allow yourself to turn your head, raise an arm, or stand up, you'd probably find yourself moving more easily and with less effort than usual.

Those of you who have had lessons with me have experienced this state of being. I hope it was helpful to see it illustrated in this video. It's a brand new world when you give up the posture habit!

Next Introduction: Saturday May 15

The next introduction is on Saturday May 15, 2010 from 11:00-12:30.

Location: Paris, Bastille (75011). Métros: Bastille, Chemin Vert, Bréguet Sabin.

Cost: There is no cost to attend, but I ask for a check for €25 to hold your place. Your check will be returned to you on the day of the introduction. No-shows will be charged.

Currently there are two places left. [Click here to register.](#)

Connection & Flow: Summer Workshops



With:
Pedro de Alcantara

**Saturday, June 5 and Sunday,
June 6, 2010
3 to 6 PM**

The workshops are open to people of all backgrounds. No previous experience is needed. You can sign up for one day or both.

Day 1, Saturday June 5:

The Möbius Strip (or how to create an infinite circuit of connections from head to toe) and **Vocal Harmonics** (or how to use your voice's vibrations to free up your innermost energies)

Day 2, Sunday, June 6:

Energy (or how to generate, gather, hold, and project the energies of your body and your voice) and **Healing Hands** (or how to use touch to dissipate tensions, worries, aches, and habits)

Limited to 10 participants

Cost: €40 for one day, €70 for both

Studio Campus

12bis, rue Froment, 75011 Paris

Métro: Bréguet-Sabin or Richard-Lenoir

[map of the neighborhood](#)

[To register, click here to e-mail Pedro](#)

www.pedrodealcantara.com

Closing Words

That's it for this issue. Feel free to write with suggestions, article requests, or questions. I'll do my best to answer them in future issues. To reach me, simply reply to this message.

Until next time, keep thinking up and hoping for the best!

Alexis

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