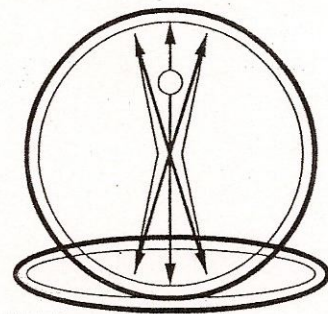




Improving My Posture and Ease of Movement



The questions below can be used to guide personal explorations and learning about posture, movement and grounding; they are most effectively used in conjunction with Movement Re-education sessions.

Happy exploring!
Rosemary Julea Faire

Key Questions and Principles

Attitudes Facilitating Change

- do I think of my posture as "wrong", and is good posture a "position I ought to be in when I stand or sit"? What if I experience my posture as a dynamic foundation to all my movements, and let a curious and playful attitude guide my experiments toward easier movement?

...changes are much easier to make out of play than out of "shoulds"...

- is supporting myself in gravity a struggle? When I make a change in my posture, does it feel like hard work and disappear as soon as I stop concentrating on it? What if I let the ideas of "lightness", "freedom", "ease", "effortlessness"... guide me rather than my ideas of what is "right"?

...letting go of effort leads to movement supported by natural reflexes...

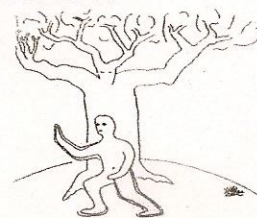
- if I reach a point of confusion and not knowing how to move during my explorations, can I be patient and accept this as a vital stage in relearning?

...staying with and using the zone of confusion/frustration can be the critical turning point for discovering new possibilities...

Bodily Sensing, Body Image and Attention

- can I pay more attention to my movements, "turn up the volume" on my kinesthetic sense, my body awareness, and fill my whole body with my aliveness and presence? What happens if I spend some time each day exploring slow movements with awareness, either lying or standing?

...restoring awareness and sensitivity to lost or "dim" areas of the body through conscious self observation during slow wavelike or antigravity movements (eg, t'ai chi) can fill in "gaps" and correct faulty brain "maps" which organise movement patterns...



- is there a place, intermediate between collapsing into gravity and bracing against it, in which I feel bouyant and supported by my own fluid body? Can I sense areas of chronic tension in my neck, abdomen, back, shoulders... that give my body its characteristic shape, even when lying down? What happens if I gently intend the opposite shape? Is there a middle ground?
...learning to sense involuntary tension as something I am doing to myself helps to restore voluntary control...

- am I always concentrating so hard on the "trees" that I lose the forest? What if I practice every now and then expanding my field of attention to include my whole head, my whole body and my whole surroundings in one?
...open focus awareness is more compatible with ease of movement than concentrated, narrow attention...

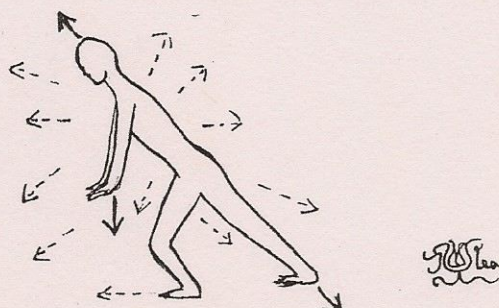
Thinking, Intending and Moving non-habitually

- which part of my body is initiating or leading this particular movement? What if I pause and begin it again, this time initiating it from my extremities:
 eg, my head leading my spine and whole body
 eg, my fingers leading my arms and whole body
...this is the principle of "distal initiation" and can lead to a smoother, less cramped movement style...

- can I harness the powerful effect of imagery on the organisation of my movements? - eg, intending to take up more space by radiating out in all directions: lengthening from my head and tail; widening across my shoulders and releasing my hip joints toward my knees...

eg, by feeling myself embody the qualities of power and love in every cell of my body...
 eg, by sensing the water that makes up most of my being, and the curves and spirals that allow my movements to be bouyant and fluid...

...embodied imagery bypasses unconscious habitual pathways that the brain uses to organise everyday movements...



- can I practice:
 - catching myself at the beginning of the movement habits I want to improve,
 - pausing for a moment,
 - changing my thinking about the movement (toward embodying these movement principles)
 - with delicacy resuming my task
- ...letting go of the goal (the "why") and being with the process (the "how") of movement...*

Strengthening the Foundations of Movement

- Are there joints in my body which regularly feel stiff or overworked? What happens when I apply the idea of "support... counter-rotation...and flow" to each major joint in the vicinity of these trouble spots?

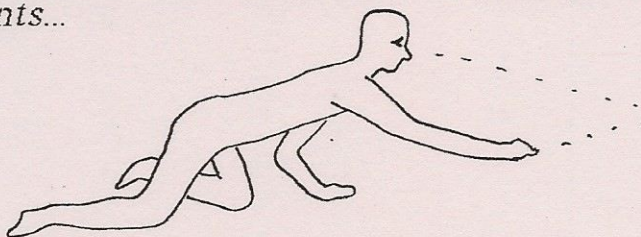
...pain or discomfort in one joint may point to neighbouring joints which are not allowing waves of movement to pass; counter-rotation is useful for teaching the nervous system to do the non-habitual...

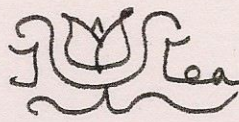
- Can I explore numerous different ways to send travelling waves through my body, initiated with a small pulsing push against the floor or wall with my feet, or hands...while lying down; on all fours; and standing? Can I let the waves easily through my shoulders and hip joints as they make a strong connection between my extremities and the centre of my body?

...connecting the periphery to the centre, using push against resistance and wave transmission, paves the way for smooth flowing whole body co-ordination...

- What would happen if I spent some time strengthening and experimenting with patterns of movement from lying prone, crawling, sitting, squatting to walking (the B.B. Cohen Developmental movements)? Can I find an easy, effortless series of movements, using my head and tail to lead and my arms and legs to push and reach, which take me up to supporting my own weight on my feet?

...Strengthening developmental reflexes and whole body movement patterns (homologous, homolateral and contralateral) in the three planes of movement (sagittal, vertical and horizontal) can restore power, balance and co-ordination to adult movements...





- can I spend time each day lying down, completely letting go into gravity, letting my weight be fully supported by the ground, feeling both the downward pull of gravity and the upward thrust of my supporting surface? While lying there can I experiment with travelling waves by pushing gently from feet or hands (eg, Bartenieff Fundamentals) and letting the motion travel fluidly through me? As I make my way back to sitting and standing, can I let both the downward pull and upward thrust travel from my base of support (eg, feet) through each successive joint up to my head?

... being able to sense "Earth support" and feeling whole and interconnected gives rise to being able to allow that Earth support to be experienced when upright, becoming "self support"...

Posture, Emotion and Integrated Change

- is my posture part of my way of being; is it saying something about how I relate to the world; is it part of the ways I have used to cope with my life? Can I be gentle with myself, allowing the meanings of my patterns to emerge in a supportive setting, so that I can let go of these coping strategies when I choose to?

...chronic patterns of muscle tension may reflect emotional defenses, which need to be addressed with respect and patience for change to be lasting...

These principles come from my own learning in the area of Movement Re-education or "Somatics", including Alexander Technique, T'ai Chi, Movement Educational Therapy, Body-mind Centering, Body-oriented Psychotherapy...each branch of this tree has different ways of approaching and embodying these principles and I encourage you to discover you own favourite fruits from among them...

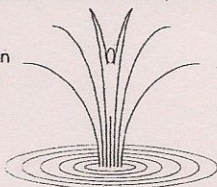
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- *Embodied Learning*
Body-based life skills -

Movement Re-education
Postural Enhancement
Body-based Life Skills
Counselling



EMBODIED LEARNING