

Using NLP and Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Alexander Technique

**David Owen of
LoosenUP.org**

Using NLP and Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Alexander Technique

Outline

- Introduction
- Part 1 Intro to NLP & Conditioning
- Part 2 Differences
- Part 3 Teaching Stages and Achievement Criteria
- Part 4 Summary - Future Plans - Invitation
- Discussion & Demonstrations

David Owen

Using NLP and Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Alexander Technique

All the slides are on my website:

[Loosen uP.org](http://LoosenUP.org)

No need to take notes, unless you want to,
or to remember a point for discussion.

Introduction (1/14)

About me



Introduction (2/14)

About me David Owen

- Career in technology including:
Gyros, sonar, metal detectors, radiotherapy equipment, kidney dialysis machines & then BBC engineer including camera maintenance and producing video special effects.



Introduction (3/14)

About me David Owen



- Career in technology including:
Gyros, sonar, metal detectors, radiotherapy equipment, kidney dialysis machines & then BBC engineer including camera maintenance and producing video special effects.
- 2 ½ Years Alexander Technique in Cardiff with Tasha Kjeldsen/Miller & occasionally Tim Kjeldsen (Totnes.)
- 1 yr: Decided to train as a teacher– toured schools: Carringtons, McDonald, Magidov, Walkers & Jeanne Haahr.
- 3 Year STAT training with Jeanne Haahr née Day (Carrington) Totnes. The course split half way through.

Introduction (4/14)

About me David Owen



- Career in technology including:
Gyros, sonar, metal detectors, radiotherapy equipment, kidney dialysis machines & then BBC engineer including camera maintenance and producing video special effects.
- 2 ½ Years Alexander Technique in Cardiff with Tasha Kjeldsen/Miller & occasionally Tim Kjeldsen (Totnes.)
- Decided to train as a teacher– toured schools: Carringtons, McDonald, Magidov, Walkers & Jeanne Haahr.
- 3 Year STAT training with Jeanne Haahr née Day (Carrington) Totnes. The course split half way through.
- Trained in counselling and psychotherapy during my course. Also discovered NLP.
I set up an NLP practice group & arranged a local course. Recognised opportunities to fine tune the Technique.
- A-Ha! Moment regarding ‘relaxation’ during my last year.
- Post course: Workshops with John Gorman, Tommy Thompson, Don Weed & visited Fellside.

Introduction (5/14)

About me David Owen



- Career in technology including:
Gyros, sonar, metal detectors, radiotherapy equipment, kidney dialysis machines & then BBC engineer including camera maintenance and producing video special effects.
- 2 ½ Years Alexander Technique in Cardiff with Tasha Kjeldsen/Miller & occasionally Tim Kjeldsen (Totnes.)
- Decided to train as a teacher– toured schools: Carringtons, McDonald, Magidov, Walkers & Jeanne Haahr.
- 3 Year STAT training with Jeanne Haahr née Day (Carrington) Totnes. The course split half way through.
- Trained in counselling and psychotherapy during my course. Also discovered NLP.
I set up an NLP practice group & arranged a local course. Recognised opportunities to fine tune the Technique.
- A-Ha! Moment regarding ‘relaxation’ during my last year.
- Post course: Workshops with John Gorman, Tommy Thompson, Don Weed & visited Fellside.
- Early on I discovered I was setting people back with negative feedback & corrected that, using positive reinforcement and developing a very explicit verbal style.

Introduction (6/14)

About me David Owen



- Career in technology including:
Gyros, sonar, metal detectors, radiotherapy equipment, kidney dialysis machines & then BBC engineer including camera maintenance and producing video special effects.
- 2 ½ Years Alexander Technique in Cardiff with Tasha Kjeldsen/Miller & occasionally Tim Kjeldsen (Totnes.)
- Decided to train as a teacher– toured schools: Carringtons, McDonald, Magidov, Walkers & Jeanne Haahr.
- 3 Year STAT training with Jeanne Haahr née Day (Carrington) Totnes. The course split half way through.
- Trained in counselling and psychotherapy during my course. Also discovered NLP.
I set up an NLP practice group & arranged a local course. Recognised opportunities to fine tune the Technique.
- A-Ha! Moment regarding ‘relaxation’ during my last year.
- Post course: Workshops with John Gorman, Tommy Thompson, Don Weed & visited Fellside.
- Early on I discovered I was setting people back with negative feedback & corrected that, using positive reinforcement and developing a very explicit verbal style.
- Took many NLP courses as well as assisting and co-training.
Trained to Licensed Trainer level with Dr Richard Bandler, its originator & subsequently assisted him and Paul McKenna, his co trainer, and then ran my own licensed trainings.
- I have now worked as an Alexander Teacher and NLP practitioner and trainer since 1990.

Introduction (7/14)

Why I am doing this

- **I don't have to do this.** I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.

Introduction (8/14)

Why I am doing this

- I don't have to do this. I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.
- I believe that the Alexander Technique is in decline. Our usual markets of middle class people, actors, musicians, and people in pain, now have less time and money. And the Technique “**has slipped from public consciousness in recent years.**”
- We need the Technique to be more accessible. That means: **Easier, quicker** and **cheaper** to learn.

Introduction (9/14)

Why I am doing this

- I don't have to do this. I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.
- I believe that the Alexander Technique is in decline.
Our usual markets of middle class people, actors, musicians, and people in pain, now have less time and money. And the Technique "has slipped from public consciousness in recent years."
- We need the Technique to be more accessible. That means: Easier, quicker and cheaper to learn.
- I made changes in **how** I teach the Technique to make it easier to teach and understand.
This **in turn** made it quicker to learn and **therefore cheaper** overall. I had no intention of making it quicker or bringing the price down: I am an absolute stickler for adhering to the principles of the technique.

Introduction (10/14)

Why I am doing this

- I don't have to do this. I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.
- I believe that the Alexander Technique is in decline.
Our usual markets of middle class people, actors, musicians, and people in pain, now have less time and money. And the Technique "has slipped from public consciousness in recent years."
- We need the Technique to be more accessible. That means: Easier, quicker and cheaper to learn.
- I made changes in how I teach the Technique to make it easier to teach and understand.
This in turn made it quicker to learn and therefore cheaper overall. I had no intention of making it quicker or bringing the price down: I am an absolute stickler for adhering to the principles of the technique.
- I believe we are going to have to very **vigorously promote the Technique**.
We must look far **beyond our traditional markets** and become a global household word: On Oprah within 5 years! We need to **promote the Mindfulness and aliveness aspects**, as championed by Peter Nobes.
It has to be **targeted to specific niches** in order to get market penetration.

Introduction (11/14)

Why I am doing this

- I don't have to do this. I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.
- I believe that the Alexander Technique is in decline.
Our usual markets of middle class people, actors, musicians, and people in pain, now have less time and money. And the Technique "has slipped from public consciousness in recent years."
- We need the Technique to be more accessible. That means: Easier, quicker and cheaper to learn.
- I made changes in how I teach the Technique to make it easier to teach and understand.
This in turn made it quicker to learn and therefore cheaper overall. I had no intention of making it quicker or bringing the price down: I am an absolute stickler for adhering to the principles of the technique.
- I believe we are going to have to very vigorously promote the Technique.
We must look far beyond our traditional markets and become a global household word: On Oprah within 5 years!
We need to promote the Mindfulness and aliveness aspects, as championed by Peter Nobes.
It has to be targeted to specific niches in order to get market penetration.
- It is one of the **most valuable and groundbreaking disciplines on the planet!**
I believe it is part of the true **next phase of human evolution** (Way beyond the advent of AI!)
It is desperately needed in a world where **good assessments, choices and decisions** are **tragically lacking!**
- I want to promote and spread the technique and I want to invite other qualified teachers to be part of it.

Introduction (12/14)

Why I am doing this

- I don't have to do this. I should have been retired 10 years ago, but I feel I have something important to offer. I held back for many years as I suspected my approach may not be welcome. I have got beyond that now.
- I believe that the Alexander Technique is in decline.
Our usual markets of middle class people, actors, musicians, and people in pain, now have less time and money. And the Technique "has slipped from public consciousness in recent years."
- We need the Technique to be more accessible. That means: Easier, quicker and cheaper to learn.
- I made changes in how I teach the Technique to make it easier to teach and understand.
This in turn made it quicker to learn and therefore cheaper overall. I had no intention of making it quicker or bringing the price down: I am an absolute stickler for adhering to the principles of the technique.
- I believe we are going to have to very vigorously promote the Technique.
We must look far beyond our traditional markets and become a global household word: On Oprah within 5 years!
We need to promote the Mindfulness and aliveness aspects, as championed by Peter Nobes.
It has to be targeted to specific niches in order to get market penetration.
- It is one of the most valuable and groundbreaking disciplines on the planet:
I believe it is part of the true next phase of human evolution (Way beyond the advent of AI!)
It is desperately needed in a world where good assessments, choices and decisions are tragically lacking.
- I want to promote and spread the technique and I want to invite other qualified teachers to be part of it.

Introduction (13/14)

Conduct of the Workshop

I have a lot of slides..... Mostly based on my ATI ExChange Article (On my websites)

I don't *always* intend just reading them out, though I have just over ½ a minute for each.

I will just read or point out some, though feel free to ask. Others I will dwell on.

They are placeholders for both yourselves and for me– So I will be conversational at times.

I welcome participation, especially responses when I ask for them. Plus clarification questions.

You may well not agree with some of the ideas I present

I welcome your requests for me to justify them

And I welcome your perspective– and I am willing to learn from anyone

However, you may need to just take a note of the differences for now

And I invite further constructive discussion during the discussion section at the end.

I aim to present the material within about an hour...

And I aim to leave around half an hour for discussion and demonstrations

These slides are available on my [LoosenUp.org](https://loosenup.org) site, along with my ATI ExChange article

https://loosenup.org/wp-content/uploads/ATI_Exchange_May2025_Using-NLP.pdf

https://loosenup.org/wp-content/uploads/Dublin_Congress_Aug2025_Using-NLP.pdf

Using NLP and Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Alexander Technique

Introduction (14/14) Outline (repeated)

- Introduction
- Part 1 Intro to NLP (brief) & Conditioning (self evident)
- Part 2 Differences— Where the above count
- Part 3 Teaching Stages and Achievement Criteria (easy)
- Part 4 Summary - Future Plans - Invitation (short)
- Discussion & Demonstrations

1

Part 1

NLP and Conditioning

NLP and Conditioning (1/3)

NLP Neuro-Linguistic Programming™

Based on modelling– how we think and how we behave

Conditioning and Positive Reinforcement

Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, Karen Pryor (Dolphins, Clicker training) *Don't Shoot the Dog*,
Ken Blanchard *The One Minute Manager*.

NLP and Conditioning (2/3)

NLP Neuro-Linguistic Programming™

Based on modelling— how we think and how we behave

Conditioning and Positive Reinforcement

Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, Karen Pryor (Dolphins, Clicker training) *Don't Shoot the Dog*,
Ken Blanchard *The One Minute Manager*.

Both NLP and Conditioning have been accused of being manipulative

Derivation of Manipulation

Mane = Hand. 'Pele = Poly or Full. Therefore 'Handfull.'

1827 Used to mean to move skillfully with your hand.

1864 Used to mean "To manage by mental influence," especially for one's own purposes*.

NLP and Conditioning (3/3)

NLP Neuro-Linguistic Programming™

Based on modelling– how we think and how we behave

Conditioning and Positive Reinforcement

Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, Karen Pryor (Dolphins, Clicker training) *Don't Shoot the Dog*,
Ken Blanchard *The One Minute Manager*.

Both NLP and Conditioning have been accused of being manipulative

Derivation of Manipulation

Mane = Hand. 'Pele = Poly or Full. Therefore 'Handfull.'

1827 Used to mean to move skillfully with your hand.

1864 Used to mean "To manage by mental influence," especially for one's own purposes*.

HOWEVER– We cannot not communicate or manipulate:

Thoughts affect physiology. Words and observations affect thoughts.

As Alexander teachers, we are already deliberately manipulating!

We can only learn how to manipulate consciously, intentionally, effectively and above all, respectfully.

* <https://www.etymonline.com/word/manipulate>

NLP Origins

NLP Origins (1/3)

1970s Maths & Physics graduate Richard Bandler. Musician & R&D - Holograms.

- Worked on early computers at University of Santa Cruz. No Post Grad course.
- Psychologists and Psychiatrists used computers for statistics.
- He was curious about how few therapist were effective.
- Wanted to find out how the few effective ones worked.

NLP Origins (2/3)

1970s Maths & Physics graduate Richard Bandler. Musician & R&D - Holograms.

- Worked on early computers at University of Santa Cruz. No Post Grad course.
- Psychologists and Psychiatrists used computers for statistics.
- He was curious about how few therapist were effective.
- Wanted to find out how the few effective ones worked.
- Modelled characteristics, behaviour and thinking patterns.
- Started by modelling therapists & their clients-
- Moved to also modelling more general problems and success strategies.
- Joined by Prof. John Grinder, a linguist, who helped co-create the field.

NLP Origins (3/3)

1970s Maths & Physics graduate Richard Bandler. Musician & R&D - Holograms.

- Worked on early computers at University of Santa Cruz. No Post Grad course.
- Psychologists and Psychiatrists used computers for statistics.
- He was curious about how few therapist were effective.
- Wanted to find out how the few effective ones worked.
- Modelled characteristics, behaviour and thinking patterns.
- Started by modelling therapists & their clients-
- Moved to also modelling more general problems and success strategies.
- Joined by Prof. John Grinder, a linguist, who helped co-create the field.

The name comes from when Bandler was stopped by a traffic cop who asked his occupation.

There were 3 books in the car:

One on neurology, one on linguistics by Grinder, and one on programming.

He said “I’m a Neuro-Linguistic Programmer!”

NLP Aspects

(You are excused from learning this!
Just get the gist of it :-))

NLP Aspects (1/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)

Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.

Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR

NLP Aspects (2/8) Examples - Representation Systems (Modalities)

VAKOG & AD. We think in our five senses, plus language.

Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.

Example:

You are in a restaurant, reading the menu:

You see 'Chickpea salad.' Inside your mind, you might **say** "Chickpea salad" to yourself,

or go straight to **seeing** what that would look like in your imagination.

You know within your mind, what it would **smell** like, **taste** like
and how it would make you **feel** to eat it,

and you **say** "Hmmm" to yourself, with either a positive, neutral or negative internal **tonality**,

and that tonality gives you a **feeling** of whether you want it or not.

You then go ahead and either actually order it or continue through the menu.

NLP Aspects (3/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)
Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.
Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR
- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act.
Perceptual Positions

NLP Aspects (4/8)

Examples - Submodalities

In each of the thinking channels, there are differences in how we can perceive them.

A major visual example is the distance you perceive an image at. Is it 'In your face,' 'At arm's length,' 'Beyond reach' or 'Far away?' Plus position, brightness, sharpness etc.

However the most powerful difference is between being

'In the picture' or 'Looking at it from outside.'

Example:

Remember a time when you felt wonderful.

Remember it as if you are back in the memory, seeing what you saw at the time, hearing the sounds around you, feeling any sensations, the air and the temperature, remembering any scents or tastes.

Notice that this brings back a lot of the good feelings of this time.

Now 'step out' of the memory and remember it as if you are looking at back at yourself in that memory, from some distance outside, say around 10 metres or 35 feet.

Notice how the feelings associated with that memory are now a lot less.

NLP Aspects (5/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)
Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.
Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR
- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act.
Perceptual Positions
- Our 'Model of the World'— derived from
Actuality → Perception → Deletion, Generalisation, Distortion = Our Model
Our Model of the World IS our 'Reality' – We do not perceive 'Actuality'

NLP Aspects (6/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)
Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.
Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR
- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act.
Perceptual Positions
- Our 'Model of the World'— derived from
Actuality → Perception → Deletion, Generalisation, Distortion = Our Model
Our Model of the World IS our 'Reality' – We do not perceive 'Actuality'
- AD 'Auditory Digital' = Language & linguistics
Listening to language, speaking language & talking to ourselves.
All shape our perception of 'Reality.'
- Language **Meta Model** – Incisive (Book: *The Structure of Magic*)
Recovering original situation from our or other's model.
- Language: **Milton Model** – Suggestive (Based on a famous hypnotist)
Creating models and realities. Used in hypnosis.
Presuppositions handed to us v used constructively.

NLP Aspects (7/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)
Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.
Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR
- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act.
Perceptual Positions
- Our 'Model of the World'— derived from
Actuality → Perception → Deletion, Generalisation, Distortion = Our Model
Our Model of the World IS our 'Reality' – We do not perceive 'Actuality'
- AD 'Auditory Digital' = Language & linguistics
Listening to language, speaking language & talking to ourselves.
All shape our perception of 'Reality.'
- Language Meta Model – Incisive:
Recovering original situation from our or other's model.
- Language: Milton Model – Suggestive:
Creating models and realities. Used in hypnosis.
Presuppositions handed to us v used constructively.
- **Timelines & temporal language. Used in planning & therapy**
- **Logical Levels: Environment, Capability, Beliefs/Values, Identity, Transcendence.**

NLP Aspects (8/8)

- Modelling others, and by inference, ourselves. (Subjective. Not scientific!)
- We think in our five senses, plus language: VAKOG & AD
(Thinking Modalities/Representation Systems)
Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Digital = Language.
Different preferences and sequences. Predicates. Eye access cues. EMDR
- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act.
Perceptual Positions
- Our 'Model of the World'— derived from
Actuality → Perception → Deletion, Generalisation, Distortion = Our Model
Our Model of the World IS our 'Reality' – We do not perceive 'Actuality'
- AD 'Auditory Digital' = Language & linguistics
Listening to language, speaking language & talking to ourselves.
All shape our perception of 'Reality.'
- Language: Meta Model – Incisive:
Recovering original situation from our or other's model.
- Language: Milton Model – Suggestive:
Creating models and realities. Used in hypnosis.
Presuppositions handed to us v used constructively.
- Timelines & temporal language. Used in planning & therapy
- Logical Levels: Environment, Capability, Beliefs/Values, Identity, Transcendence.

Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement

(This time you need to understand it!!!
Though it is pretty simple :-)

Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement (1/3)

I had set students back by giving negative feedback. So I developed positive feedback.

Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement (2/3)

I had set students back by giving negative feedback. So I developed positive feedback.

Based on Ken Blanchard's *The One Minute Manager*:

- **Be clear** what you want!
- **Ignore** everything you don't want
- **Praise** the first instances of what you Do want
- **Avoid criticism** (According to Karen Pryor, negative reinforcement can backfire.)
- **Take responsibility** if something goes wrong and find a mutual solution

Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement (3/3)

I had set students back by giving negative feedback. So I developed positive feedback.

Based on Ken Blanchard's *The One Minute Manager*:

- Be clear what you want
- Ignore everything you don't want
- Praise the first instances of what you Do want
- Avoid criticism (According to Karen Pryor, negative reinforcement can backfire.)
- Take responsibility if something goes wrong and find a mutual solution

Need to avoid overloading. Therefore use:

- **The Four Stages of Learning**
- **“Seven plus or minus Two” items of attention and**
- **Plate Spinning**

The Four Stages of Learning

The Four Stages of Learning (1/4+1)

Incompetence

Unconscious Unconscious incompetence:
You have no idea you
cannot do something.
Innocent and oblivious.

The Four Stages of Learning (2/4+1)

Incompetence

Unconscious Unconscious incompetence:
You have no idea you
cannot do something.
Innocent and oblivious.



Conscious Conscious incompetence:
You discover that you
cannot do something.
Can be uncomfortable!

The Four Stages of Learning (3/4+1)

Incompetence

Competence

Unconscious

Unconscious incompetence:
You have no idea you
cannot do something.
Innocent and oblivious.



Conscious

Conscious incompetence:
You discover that you
cannot do something.
Can be uncomfortable!



Conscious competence:
You gradually develop competence,
but you have to pay attention and
work at it. Can be hard work.

The Four Stages of Learning (4/4+1)

Incompetence

Competence

Unconscious

Unconscious incompetence:
You have no idea you
cannot do something.
Innocent and oblivious.

Unconscious competence:
Gradually you get better at it until it
becomes second nature
and you don't have to think about it.



Conscious

Conscious incompetence:
You discover that you
cannot do something.
Can be uncomfortable!



Conscious competence:
You gradually develop competence,
but you have to pay attention and
work at it. Can be hard work.

The Four Stages of Learning (All)

Incompetence

Competence

Unconscious

Unconscious incompetence:
You have no idea you
cannot do something.
Innocent and oblivious.

Unconscious competence:
Gradually you get better at it until it
becomes second nature
and you don't have to think about it.



Conscious

Conscious incompetence:
You discover that you
cannot do something.
Can be uncomfortable!



Conscious competence:
You gradually develop competence,
but you have to pay attention and
work at it. Can be hard work.

Seven Plus or Minus Two

Seven Plus or Minus Two (1/2)

George A Miller in 1956 claimed that we could process around seven things at once or have about seven things in short term memory. From his research, the range was from about 5 to 9 items or plus or minus 2.

(The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two:

Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information. George A. Miller 1956.

<https://web-archive.southampton.ac.uk/cogprints.org/730/1/miller.html>)

Seven Plus or Minus Two (2/2)

George A Miller in 1956 claimed that we could process around seven things at once or have about seven things in short term memory. From his research, the range was from about 5 to 9 items or plus or minus 2.

(The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two:

Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information. George A. Miller 1956.

<https://web-archive.southampton.ac.uk/cogprints.org/730/1/miller.html>)

I usually have to process seven or more things at once while I am teaching,
But my motto here is:

$$7 \pm 2 = 4 !$$

So I aim to only give my pupils five or fewer things to deal with at any one time.

Plate Spinning



Plate Spinning (1/3)

With each new teaching aspect, I wait until my pupil has reached a certain proficiency, so that they have enough attention available for the next. This keeps them within four or five points of attention.

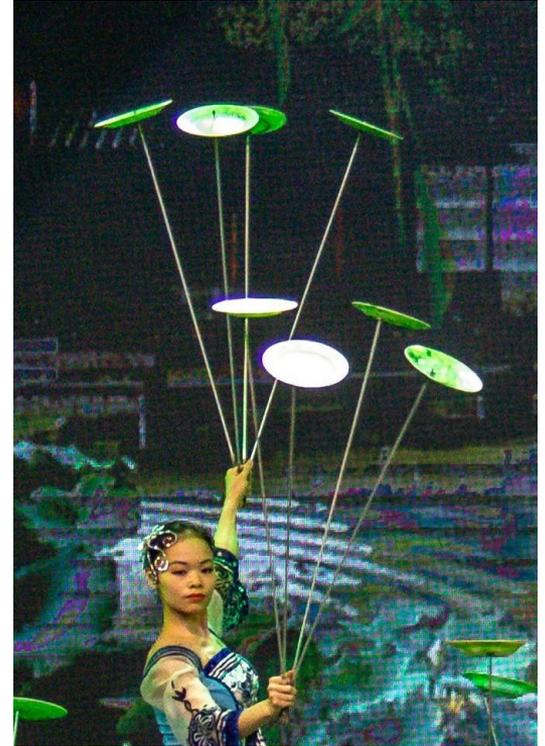


Plate Spinning (2/3)

With each new teaching aspect, I wait until my pupil has reached a certain proficiency, so that they have enough attention available for the next. This keeps them within four or five points of attention.

For example with table work while taking their head, I start by telling them to “Think of your neck being *soft*, *calm* and *relaxed*” and I wait until I feel some softening.

I will continue with this for a while before adding “Think of the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body” and continuing from there.

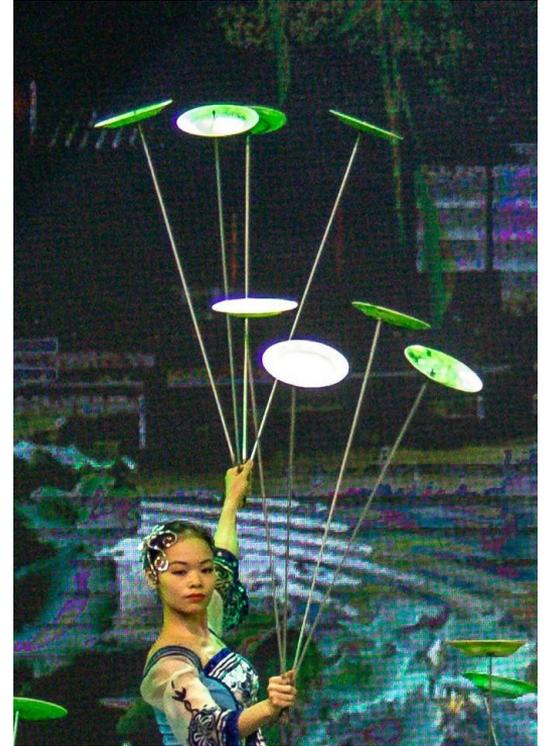


Plate Spinning (3/3)

With each new teaching aspect, I wait until my pupil has reached a certain proficiency, so that they have enough attention available for the next. This keeps them within four or five points of attention.

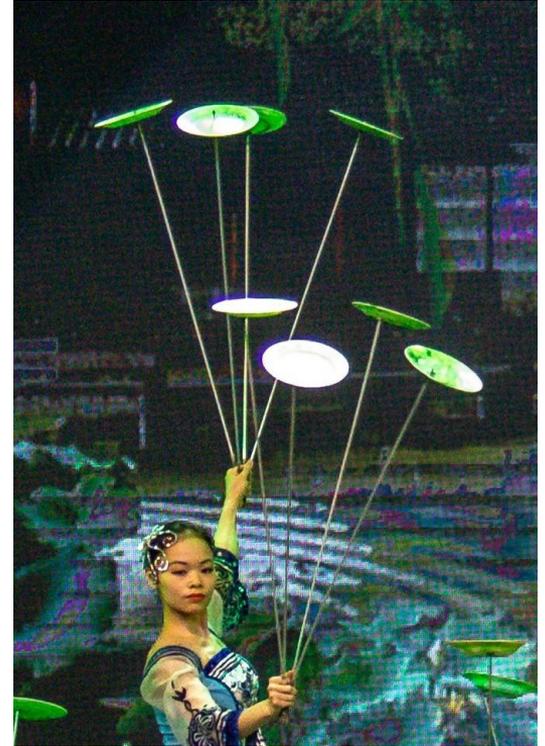
For example with table work while taking their head, I start by telling them to “Think of your neck being *soft, calm* and *relaxed*” and I wait until I feel some softening.

I will continue with this for a while before adding “Think of the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body” and continuing from there.

For their first homework I will tell them to think of their neck being *soft, calm* and *relaxed* until the next session.

Then I will add thinking of the back of their head releasing.

I will tell them to restrict themselves to just thinking the one or two thoughts as homework until I add others.



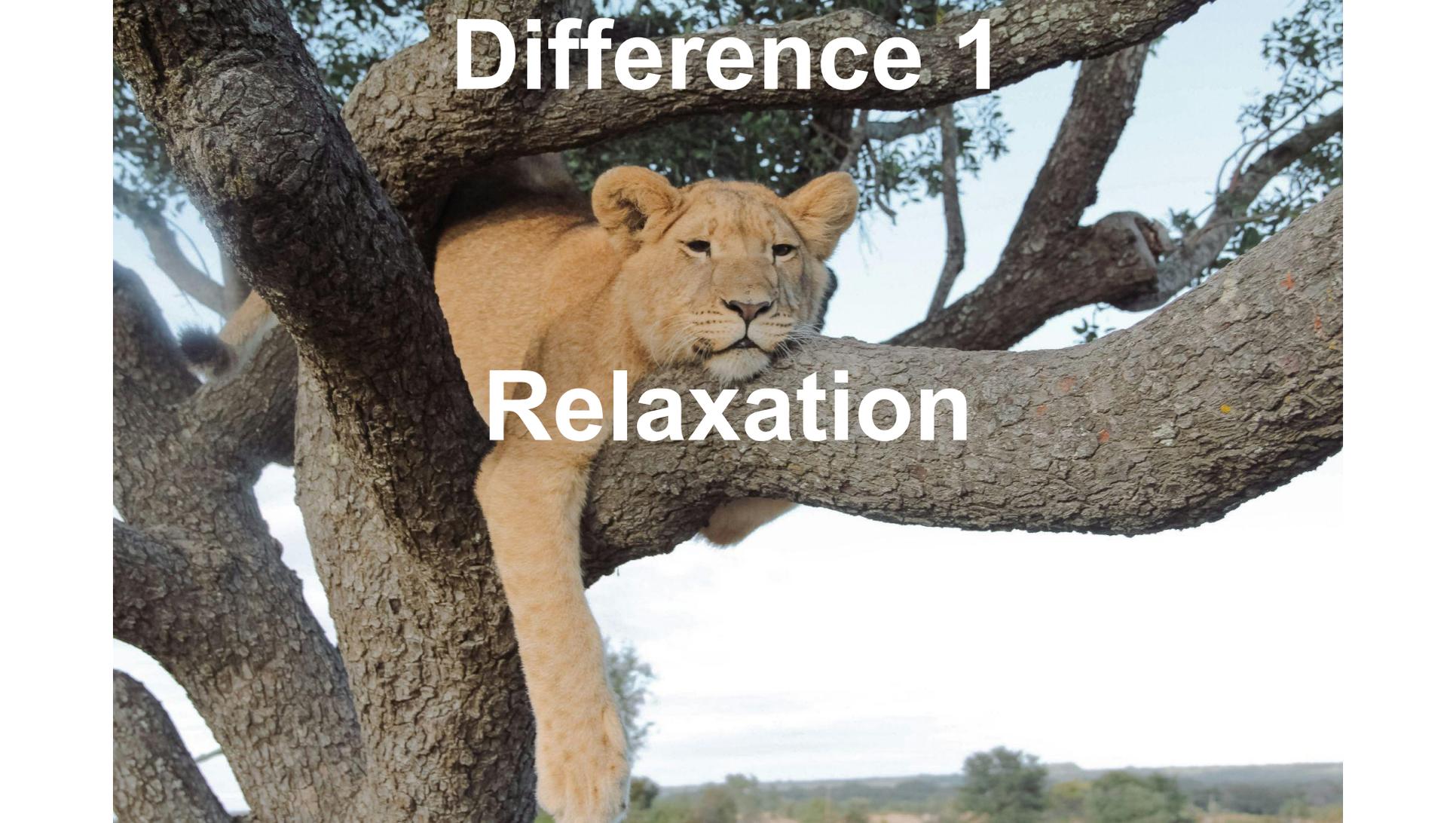
2

Part 2

Differences

As a result of and in order to implement the above, I developed several differences to how I was originally taught or understood the Technique

- 1 Relaxation
- 2 Thinking
- 3 Re-Wording
- 4 Away with Forward and Up!
- 5 Clarity, and I am Talkative!
- 6 Definition of the Technique

A lioness is perched on a thick, dark tree branch, looking towards the camera with a calm expression. The background shows a clear blue sky and some green foliage. The text "Difference 1" is overlaid in white at the top, and "Relaxation" is overlaid in white in the middle of the image.

Difference 1

Relaxation

Difference 1

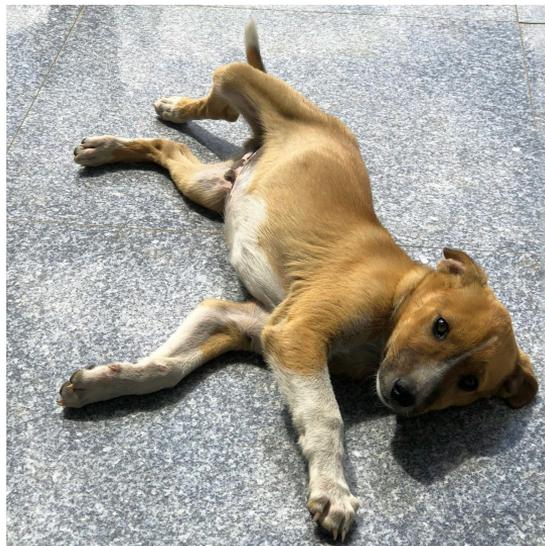
Relaxation (1/7)

During training I sensed that too much Forward and Up causes strain and tension

Four things impressed me one day towards the end of my training:

John Woodward – A Psychotherapist – A Puppy – and Single Celled Creatures

We knew about the startle response and freeing one's neck to utilise the primary control. But I determined that we needed to deeply relax background tension before we could improve our use.



Difference 1

Relaxation (2/7)

During training I sensed that too much Forward and Up causes strain and tension

Four things impressed me one day towards the end of my training:

John Woodward – A Psychotherapist – A Puppy – and Single Celled Creatures

We knew about the startle response and freeing one's neck to utilise the primary control. But I determined that we needed to deeply relax background tension before we could improve our use.

Alexander was not keen on relaxation techniques of his time: they apparently disturbed proper tone.

Pat McDonald introduced Table Work during his course and the students would work on Alexander's clients before they went in to him. He does not seem to have complained, but *he* never taught it.

Difference 1

Relaxation (3/7)

During training I sensed that too much Forward and Up causes strain and tension

Four things impressed me one day towards the end of my training:

John Woodward – A Psychotherapist – A Puppy – and Single Celled Creatures

We knew about the startle response and freeing one's neck to utilise the primary control. But I determined that we needed to deeply relax background tension before we could improve our use.

Alexander was not keen on relaxation techniques of his time: they apparently disturbed proper tone.

Pat McDonald introduced Table Work during his course and the students would work on Alexander's clients before they went in to him. He does not seem to have complained, but *he* never taught it.

I was restricted to giving 5 to 10 minutes maximum tablework during my training, but I developed a knack of getting people to let go of background tension quite deeply, given enough time.

One needs to go gently releasing tighter necks, or it leads to insecurity, instability and torticollis.

I usually spend 4 sessions in quick succession: twice per week, mostly prioritising deep release.

If this is achieved, it sets a new baseline, needing little maintenance. If it is not, the work stagnates.

Difference 1

Relaxation (4/7)

Incidentally, Alexander *did* have a way of relaxing which did maintain tone.

It was the Delsarte method for acting.

Difference 1

Relaxation (5/7)

Incidentally, Alexander *did* have a way of relaxing which did maintain tone.

It was the Delsarte method for acting.

As an example one would raise an arm (familiar?) and 'De - compose' it by first
 'Withdrawing' the energy from one's fingers, so that they flopped
 Then from one's hand, so that it too dropped and flopped
 Then the forearm, and then the upper arm, also dropping in turn – As if lifeless.

Difference 1

Relaxation (6/7)

Incidentally, Alexander *did* have a way of relaxing which did maintain tone.

It was the Delsarte method for acting.

As an example one would raise an arm (familiar?) and 'De - compose' it by first

'Withdrawing' the energy from one's fingers, so that they flopped

Then from one's hand, so that it too dropped and flopped

Then the forearm, and then the upper arm, also dropping in turn – As if lifeless.

Then one would 'Re - compose' it by 'sending' one's energy back into each part in turn, so that the upper, then forearm raised, followed by the hand and fingers.

Difference 1 Relaxation (7/7)

Incidentally, Alexander *did* have a way of relaxing which did maintain tone.

It was the Delsarte method for acting.

As an example one would raise an arm (familiar?) and 'De - compose' it by first
 'Withdrawing' the energy from one's fingers, so that they flopped
 Then from one's hand, so that it too dropped and flopped
 Then the forearm, and then the upper arm, also dropping in turn – As if lifeless.

Then one would 'Re - compose' it by 'sending' one's energy back into each part in turn, so that the upper, then forearm raised, followed by the hand and fingers.

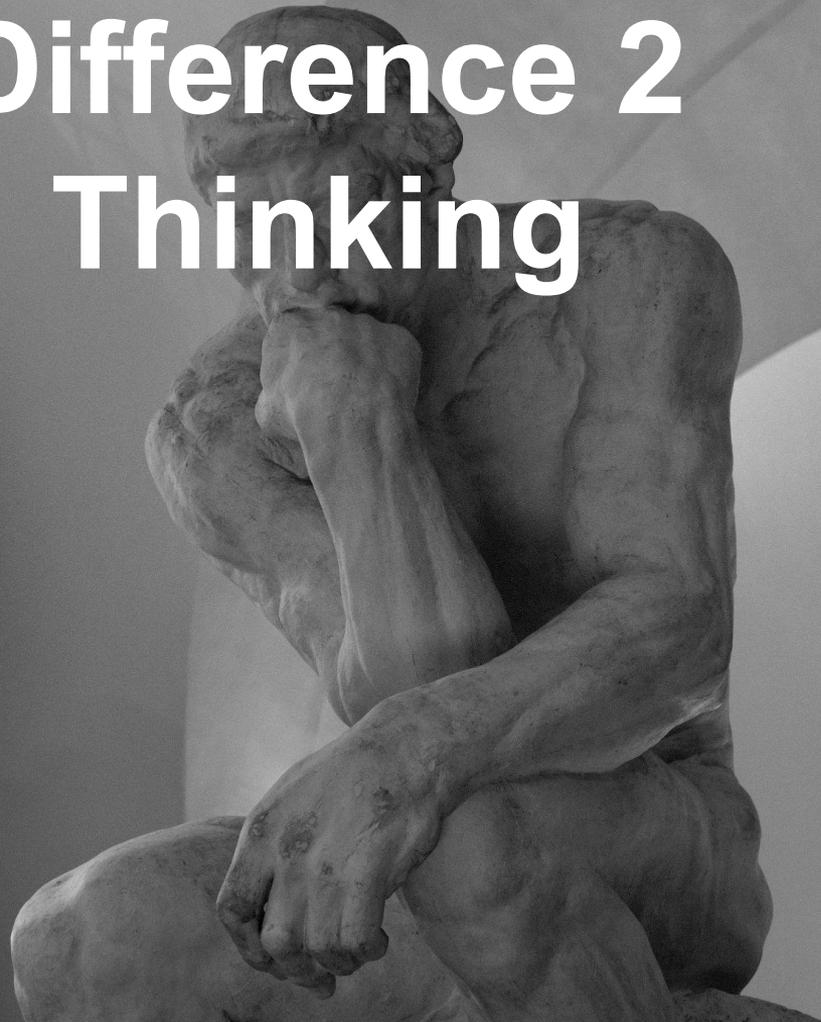
Many people talk as if there is *actual* energy being withdrawn or sent back.

We know anatomically though that the muscles are pre-primed with the fuel for contraction and are simply waiting for the nerve impulses to activate them.

The nerve impulses (or their cessation) come as a result of ***Thinking!***

Difference 2

Thinking



Difference 2

Thinking (1/3)

When we think of a movement, the muscles that would cause that movement are activated, even if we cannot see any movement.

When we 'talk to ourselves' inside our minds, the muscles of the tongue and larynx move slightly.

Our moods are reflected in our facial expressions and posture. And when we think of food, we salivate.

In fact, whatever we think consciously, produces a physical effect somewhere. Or as the saying goes "What you think is what you get!"

Difference 2

Thinking (2/3)

I refrain from telling my pupils to ‘direct.’ In NLP we class such a word as an ‘Unspecified verb.’ We don’t know what Alexander meant by it. He describes it as:

“the process involved in projecting messages from the brain to the mechanisms and in *conducting the energy* necessary to the use of these mechanisms.”

This is not very helpful unless you are familiar with the Delsarte method—Which clearly uses thinking, both to relax by thinking of energy withdrawing, and for what Alexander here calls ‘directing’ by *thinking* of energy *conducting* into the part he wanted to be active.

However, here and elsewhere, it is clear, at least to me, that he *eventually* meant to *think* of what he wanted without doing it directly.

(N.B. I **do** tell people to direct, once it is clear that this is thinking of the result.)

Difference 2

Thinking (3/3)

When we point at an object, we have no concept of the muscles involved, and yet, by intention, it is **as if** the finger is drawn towards the thing pointed at.

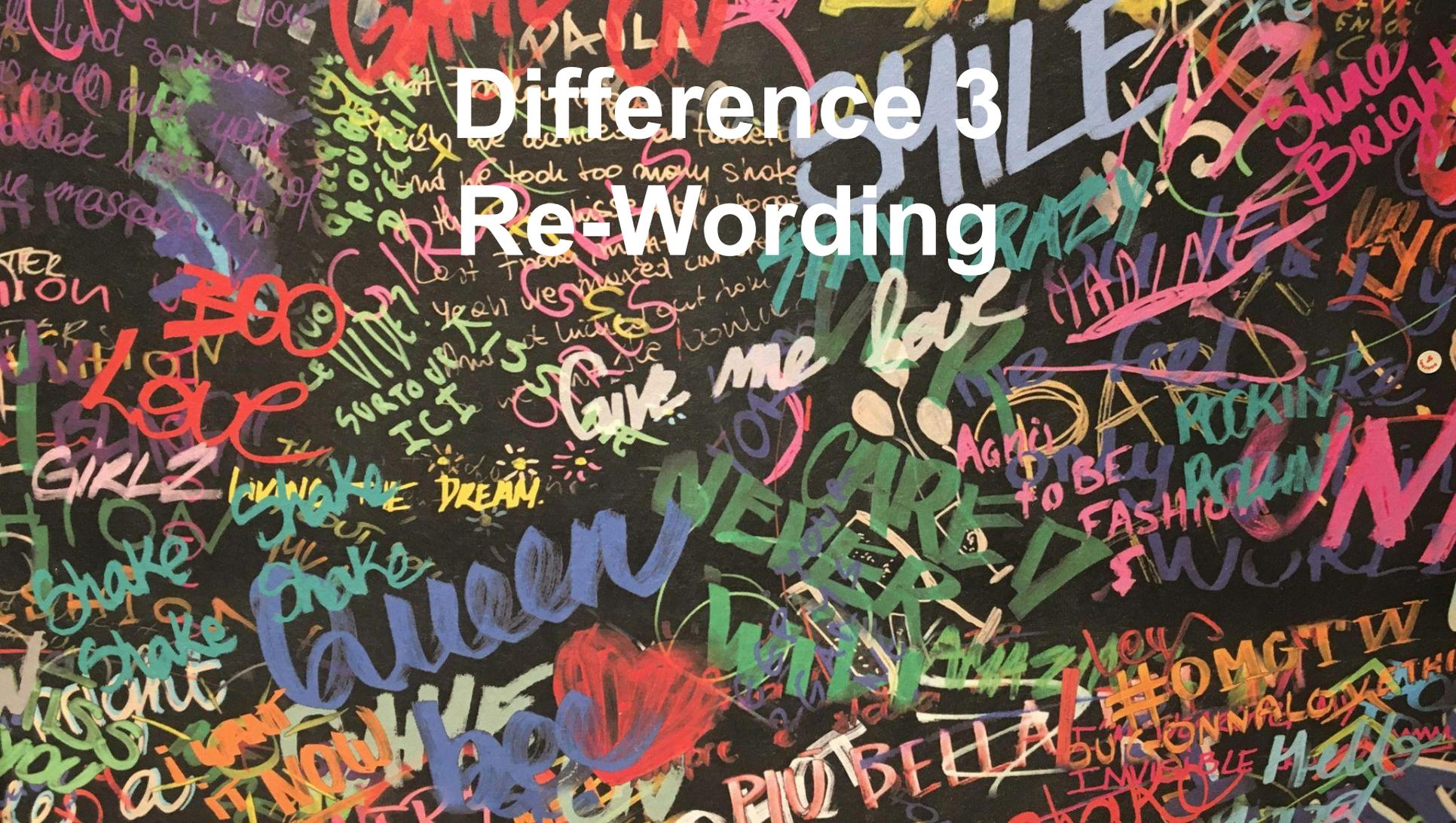
There is also usually no perception of effort when pointing, whereas 'Raising an arm' to the same position usually *does* give an impression of effort.

An upward direction of the head is analogous to pointing it to the ceiling or sky, and I sometimes use this with my pupils, and there is usually little or no perception of effort once background tension has been eliminated.

I actually prefer the idea of buoyancy, as if their head is like a buoy, rising up on the tide, or as if it is made of anti-gravity material.

I base this on the concept that our reflexes are designed to get the head to rise as efficiently as possible.

Difference 3 Re-Wording



Difference 3

Re-Wording (1/3)

When it comes to thinking, the language we use can make a big difference.

A set of phrases that can have the wrong effect are:

“Neck free” or “Neck Loose” or “Free your/the neck.”

Have you noticed people often waggle their head when you tell them to do that?

In NLP we theorise that they do this to confirm a sense of freeness in their neck, which they can only verify by moving it.

“Free” is used here as an ‘imperative verb’ – an order to get us to ‘do’ something. And it is an ‘unspecified’ verb (similar to ‘direct’) in that we do not know how Alexander intended us to ‘do’ it.

We can de-potentiate the verb: “*Think* of your neck being free” is better, with ‘Think’ being the imperative verb, but it is still likely to produce head waggling to get the sensation of freedom.

Difference 3

Re-Wording (2/3)

We Alexander teachers know that excess neck tone is maintained unconsciously—The pupil has no awareness either of it in the first place, or that there is a neural process maintaining it. They cannot ‘Do’ anything to prevent this. Therefore we require **thinking** of an **ideal condition** other than the excess tone to modify the neural activity.

We need different words. In the long run, I settled on:

“**Think**’ of your neck being **soft, calm** and **relaxed**.”

These words neither imply or require any movement, so can be used to bring about the condition by the neurology gradually adjusting itself to send fewer messages to the neck muscles, until it has verified for itself what *Soft, Calm* and *Relaxed* might mean.

Difference 3

Re-Wording (3/3)

I also tell my pupils to:

“**Avoid** trying to make it soft, calm and relaxed,

And avoid trying to to feel if it is that way.

It doesn't matter whether it feels that way or not.

Just think of the idea, only as often as you remember it, and only let it be a quarter of a thought when you do.

($\frac{1}{4}$ of a thought so they can stay externally focussed and minimise drawing on their ration of 7 ± 2 points of attention.)

I avoid using the word 'don't'

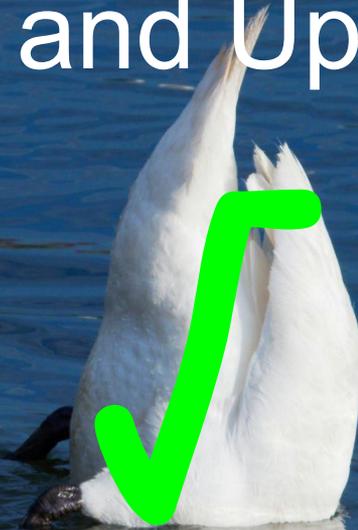
as what follows becomes a hidden or 'embedded command.'

You can use **Avoid** doing, **Stop**, **Cease**, **Forgo** doing

Refrain from doing, **Keep** from, **Abstain** from doing.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up!



Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up! (1/6)

This is not a linguistic objection.

Alexander's "Forward and Up" direction was due to his own condition.

He had breathing difficulties from his premature birth.

This would have resulted in him pulling his head back to try to get more breath.

(Credit to research by Penelope Easten: <https://alexandertechniqueinfo.org/> who in turn references Jennifer Kellow's work: <https://alexanderbabies.com/about/>)

In smokey Melbourne city, where it seems he lost his voice, childhood breathing problems would have been exacerbated. Arching his back and pulling his shoulders back ("Narrowing his back...") would also give the impression of extra breathing capacity.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up! (2/6)

Alexander is explicit that he not only had to project his head *forward* from his habitual back, but also **up**, to prevent it going forward and **down**!

Only **after** this point in *The Evolution of a Technique* does he claim he had been pulling his head *back and down*!

These days I rarely see people pulling their heads back, even if they are pulling their shoulders back. Most stoop or slump, a bit, or a lot.

I believe these directions were specific to him and those like him and that only the **Up** is useful to the rest of us.

We need a different set of directions that is universal to any condition, position or orientation, and to then maintain an ideal alignment.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up! (3/6)

Let's go back to Alexander's Means-Whereby principle:

1 Analyse the conditions of use present

My understanding is that most people have residual tension from unreleased startle response contractions.

In an actual startle response...

The upper trapezius and sternocleidomastoid muscles first relax for a split second, followed by the upper trapezius muscles contracting and pulling the back of the head down and thus *rotating* the head backwards.

Then the sternocleidomastoids contract, pulling the head forward and down towards the chest, and in the process, the head rotates forward again.

Difference 4 Away with Forward and Up! (4/6)

2 Reason out the means-whereby (and 3 Put them into effect)

Or to quote more fully:

“Reason out the means whereby a more satisfactory use could be brought about”
(UoS Ch1 Note 10)

As the upper trapezius contracts first, we want it to release first, releasing the back of the head away from the rest of the body and allowing a forward **rotation**. So having told my pupil to: “Think of your neck being soft, calm and relaxed.”

I will tell them to:

“Think of the back of your head **releasing away** from the rest of your body.” Using the present tense.

Or using continuous tense to *maintain* the release:

“Think of the back of your head *being* released away from the rest of your body.”

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up! (5/6)

To get the sternocleidomastoids to release next, if they are lying down, I tell my pupils to:

“Think of the **rest** of your head **releasing** away from the rest of your body.” Or,

“Think of the **rest** of your head **being** released away from the rest of your body.”

If they are sat or upright, I tell them to:

“Think of your head rising up away from your body, or

“Think of your head being *buoyant*, as if it wants to lift up the rest of your body.”

I will indicate the top of their head as the focus of the lift, rather than them thinking of their face or eyes rising.

Very soon, I will coach them in having the buoyancy or anti-gravity of their head lift them to being upright in a chair, stand them, keep them poised while moving and to lift them up hills and stairs etc.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up! (6/6)

What if someone's head *is* pulled back horizontally?

Firstly, thinking of their neck being soft calm and relaxed will tend to relax any muscles that were pulling their head bodily back.

There is likely to be excess upper trapezius tension, which releasing the back of their head would undo.

If like Alexander, their head goes down when it goes forward, then thinking of their head releasing away from their body, or being buoyant if upright, will undo the sternocleidomastoids.



Difference 5

Clarity, and I am Talkative!

Difference 5

Clarity, and I am Talkative! (1/3)

For positive reinforcement, people need:

A very clear idea of what the technique **is** (A clear definition as in 6 below)

A clear idea of **how it works** for them, and

A clear idea of **what I expect** of them from moment to moment.

I therefore need to be quite verbal and:

Tell my pupils what I am doing and why–

What is the purpose and intended outcome,

What I want them to do and avoid or refrain from doing, and

What and how to think etc.

I then give them positive feedback as to how well they are doing.

Difference 5

Clarity, and I am Talkative! (2/3)

I do not tell them everything all the time (Remember $7 \pm 2 = 4!$)

I need to introduce concepts gradually

and relieve my pupils of any pressure of too much expectation.

I will usually give a rounded yet simple explanation of the technique at the beginning of my work with them, checking that they have reasonable comprehension as I go along.

In subsequent lessons I will only bring up the subjects that I want my pupil to work with at that time.

When it is relevant, I will gradually explain table work, the various ways I use chair work, standing up, sitting down, walking, 'whispered Ahhs' and any application work. I will often just use their reflexes at first and then check what they they noticed.

Difference 5

Clarity, and I am Talkative! (3/3)

I will often repeat particular points, saying

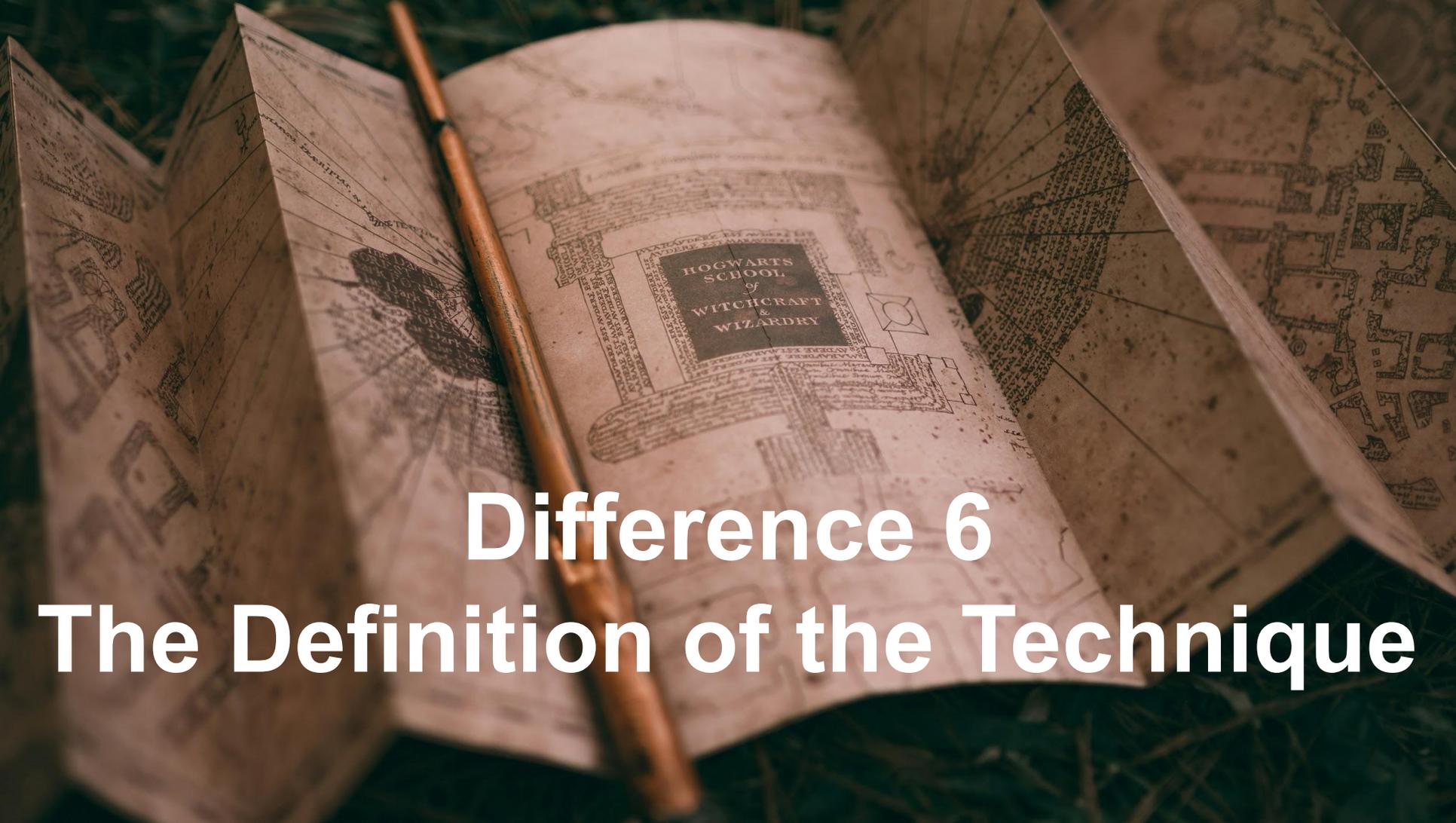
“As I have mentioned before...” “As I keep repeating...” etc
as softeners and acknowledgement of repeating.

The idea is to keep each of the plates spinning until they are self maintaining.

There are enough aspects to our work, and its principles are sufficiently novel to most people, that frequent reminders are worthwhile and will help the pupil to build a full picture or concept of the technique and its workings over time.

I especially avoid expressions such as “Yes, but” or “As I have already told you...” which blame the pupil for not having got that point yet.

I welcome questions, requests for clarification and general discussion about what I have been saying while we work together, though making sure we can both keep optimal use while we do so.



Difference 6

The Definition of the Technique

Difference 6 The Definition of the Technique (1/20)

To attain a goal, we need to know what it is. While I had lessons, the Technique was a mystery. I didn't know where I was going and I took ages to get there.

Difference 6 The Definition of the Technique (2/20)

To attain a goal, we need to know what it is. While I had lessons, the Technique was a mystery. I didn't know where I was going and I took ages to get there.

In the 1990s the definition was 'What is written in Alexander's books.' Inadequate!

Difference 6 The Definition of the Technique (3/20)

To attain a goal, we need to know what it is. While I had lessons, the Technique was a mystery. I didn't know where I was going and I took ages to get there.

In the 1990s the definition was 'What is written in Alexander's books.' Inadequate!

Currently STAT's definition includes:

“...based on the *teaching, practice, theory* **and** writings of F Matthias Alexander...”

(Articles of Association 2022 – 3.1)

Difference 6 The Definition of the Technique (4/20)

To attain a goal, we need to know what it is. While I had lessons, the Technique was a mystery. I didn't know where I was going and I took ages to get there.

In the 1990s the definition was 'What is written in Alexander's books.' Inadequate!
Currently STAT's definition includes:

"...based on the *teaching, practice, theory* **and** writings of F Matthias Alexander..."

(Articles of Association 2022 – 3.1) Their website currently says:

"...teaching you to change long-standing *habits* that *cause unnecessary tension*..."

(I think it is the other way around. Though F.M. had habits from premature birth.)

Difference 6 The Definition of the Technique (5/20)

To attain a goal, we need to know what it is. While I had lessons, the Technique was a mystery. I didn't know where I was going and I took ages to get there.

In the 1990s the definition was 'What is written in Alexander's books.' Inadequate!
Currently STAT's definition includes:

"...based on the *teaching, practice, theory* and writings of F Matthias Alexander..."

(Articles of Association 2022 – 3.1) Their website currently says:

"...teaching you to change long-standing *habits* that *cause unnecessary tension*..."

(I think it is the other way around. Though F.M. had habits from premature birth.)

We normally define a thing by what it **DOES** or achieves And by **HOW** it achieves it

The Definition of the Technique (6/20)

What it Does

My first experience of the Technique was of something natural being awakened, released or rehabilitated from within me. So my first definition would be

“A way to return to our natural state and functioning”

(Or at least closer to it)

In Maisel's *The Resurrection of the Body* p199, Alexander is quoted as saying:

“When an investigation comes to be made, it will be found that every single thing we are doing in the Work is exactly what is being done in Nature where the conditions are right, the difference being that we are learning to do it consciously.”

I argue that we are learning to consciously **prevent** and **reverse** whatever *disturbs* or *distorts* our natural state. (Room for debate, but definition is the same.)

The Definition of the Technique (7/20)



We can learn from animals. Cats are lithe and agile and know how to relax— completely! Cobras, swans and giraffes are the epitome of poise and alertness and don't have to think "Forward and Up!"

Our own natural poise brings confidence, external focus and more natural joy. However 'Inhibition' and 'Conscious Choice' are probably higher learned processes.



The Definition of the Technique (8/20)

What Disturbs our Natural State?

Background tension

Unreleased startle pattern from non physical threats and 'heavy' demands.
Unconscious forms of threat: Air pollution in Melbourne for Alexander,
Financial insecurity, Threatening environments, Emotional insecurity, etc, etc.

Physiological problems

E.g. Alexander's breathing problems from his premature birth.

Expectations and 'pressures' of so called 'Modern' living.

Especially insisting on rushed decisions.

Social conditioning

Mirroring how our role models stand move, plus mental attitudes etc.

What can Restore it?

Using Alexander's unique principles. Plus a way to reduce background tension.

The Definition of the Technique (9/20)

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

The Definition of the Technique (10/20)

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

Having breathed out completely, to wait for the natural reflex to bring about the inbreath. (An early and specific form of inhibition) (Credit to Penelope Easten and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.) Plus the Whispered Aaaaah.

The Definition of the Technique (11/20)

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

Having breathed out completely, to wait for the natural reflex to bring about the inbreath. (An early and specific form of inhibition) (Credit to Penelope Easten and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.) Plus the Whispered Aaaaah.

Recognition of the force of habit and recognition of faulty sensory awareness.

Bringing about changes without doing them directly, though similar Delsarte– (Directing.). I prescribe that we ‘think’ of the change or condition that we want.

The Definition of the Technique (12/20)

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

Having breathed out completely, to wait for the natural reflex to bring about the inbreath. (An early and specific form of inhibition) (Credit to Penelope Easten and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.) Plus the Whispered Aaaaah.

Recognition of the force of habit and recognition of faulty sensory awareness.

Bringing about changes without doing them directly, though similar Delsarte– (Directing.). I prescribe that we ‘think’ of the change or condition that we want.

Utilising the Primary Control. Also described in part by Rudolf Magnus and George E. Coghill. See Adrian Farrell at

<https://www.alexander-technique.london/articles/primary-control/>

The Definition of the Technique (13/20)

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

Having breathed out completely, to wait for the natural reflex to bring about the inbreath. (An early and specific form of inhibition) (Credit to Penelope Easten and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.) Plus the Whispered Aaaaah.

Recognition of the force of habit and recognition of faulty sensory awareness.

Bringing about changes without doing them directly, though similar Delsarte– (Directing.). I prescribe that we ‘think’ of the change or condition that we want.

Utilising the Primary Control. Also described in part by Rudolf Magnus and George E. Coghill. See Adrian Farrell at

<https://www.alexander-technique.london/articles/primary-control/>

To delay doing something until you know you can do it healthily and appropriately, before deciding whether to do it or not. (Inhibition as we know it.)

To make a fresh decision at the point of action. (Conscious choice.)

A Possible Definition of the Technique (14/20)

A Possible Definition of the Technique (15/20)

A way of *thinking* that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

A Possible Definition of the Technique (16/20)

A way of thinking that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

This is combined with a unique way of making better choices and decisions, and of avoiding and undoing unwanted habits.

A Possible Definition of the Technique (17/20)

A way of thinking that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

This is combined with a unique way of making better choices and decisions, and of avoiding and undoing unwanted habits.

Together they restore your *natural* poise and buoyancy, tone, fluidity and coordination. You stand taller, move more effortlessly, more efficiently, more skillfully, and when needed— more powerfully. It improves your performance in all areas of life: work, sport, performing, and even pleasure.

A Possible Definition of the Technique (18/20)

A way of thinking that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

This is combined with a unique way of making better choices and decisions, and of avoiding and undoing unwanted habits.

Together they restore your natural poise and buoyancy, tone, fluidity and coordination. You stand taller, move more effortlessly, more efficiently, more skillfully, and when needed— more powerfully. It improves your performance in all areas of life: work, sport, performing, and even pleasure.

The freedom, fluidity and poise make you look more attractive, feel more confident, and give you more presence and charisma. You are more clear headed, calm and serene, more alert, and in the zone, groove or flow. It is a natural state of mindfulness or Zen, and you have more natural joy.

A Possible Definition of the Technique (19/20)

A way of thinking that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

This is combined with a unique way of making better choices and decisions, and of avoiding and undoing unwanted habits.

Together they restore your natural poise and buoyancy, tone, fluidity and coordination. You stand taller, move more effortlessly, more efficiently, more skillfully, and when needed— more powerfully. It improves your performance in all areas of life: work, sport, performing, and even pleasure.

The freedom, fluidity and poise make you look more attractive, feel more confident, and give you more presence and charisma. You are more clear headed, calm and serene, more alert, and in the zone, groove or flow. It is a natural state of mindfulness or Zen, and you have more natural joy.

The relaxation relieves pressure on your muscles, bones and joints, and even your internal organs. This way they can *naturally* repair themselves as much as possible from any damage, including from the results of previous background tension or any miscoordination caused by it.

A Possible Definition of the Technique (20!/20)

A way of thinking that enables you to relax below the plateau level that most people think of as relaxation, even when active.

This is combined with a unique way of making better choices and decisions, and of avoiding and undoing unwanted habits.

Together they restore your natural poise and buoyancy, tone, fluidity and coordination. You stand taller, move more effortlessly, more efficiently, more skilfully, and when needed— more powerfully. It improves your performance in all areas of life: work, sport, performing, and even pleasure.

The freedom, fluidity and poise make you look more attractive, feel more confident, and give you more presence and charisma. You are more clear headed, calm and serene, more alert, and in the zone, groove or flow. It is a natural state of mindfulness or Zen, and you have more natural joy.

The relaxation relieves pressure on your muscles, bones and joints, and even your internal organs. This way they can naturally repair themselves as much as possible from any damage, including from the results of previous background tension or any mis-coordination caused by it.

Above all, it allows you to be your Full, True, Authentic self!

3

Part 3 Teaching Stages and Achievement Criteria

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (1/10)

Introductory Lesson

Early Sessions and Table Work:

Chair, Standing Up, Standing, Walking, Sitting Down etc

Inhibition and Conscious choice

Breathing & Voice work

Application Work

Top Up Workshops

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (2/10)

It's not about 'My' teaching stages

It's about how my *methods* are applied to teaching stages

7 ± 2 = 4 therefore Plate Spinning acknowledging Four Stages of Learning

It could be applied to anyone's style and stages

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (3/10)

It's not about 'My' teaching stages

It's about how my *methods* are applied to teaching stages

7 ± 2 = 4 therefore Plate Spinning acknowledging Four Stages of Learning

It could be applied to anyone's style and stages

Each stage and technique within it needs to have a **clear goal or objective**

The *criteria* of each stage is *evidence* that the goals have been accomplished

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (4/10)

It's not about 'My' teaching stages

It's about how my *methods* are applied to teaching stages

7 ± 2 = 4 therefore Plate Spinning acknowledging Four Stages of Learning

It could be applied to anyone's style and stages

Each stage and technique within it needs to have a **clear goal or objective**

The *criteria* of each stage is *evidence* that the goals have been accomplished

The student is gradually introduced to the goals—

in terms of what I want to achieve for them

The student is then incrementally complemented for achieving each objective

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (5/10)

It's not about 'My' teaching stages

It's about how my *methods* are applied to teaching stages

7 ± 2 = 4 therefore Plate Spinning acknowledging Four Stages of Learning

It could be applied to anyone's style and stages

Each stage and technique within it needs to have a **clear goal or objective**

The *criteria* of each stage is *evidence* that the goals have been accomplished

The student is gradually introduced to the goals—

in terms of what I want to achieve for them

The student is then incrementally complemented for achieving each objective

I may have three or four objectives open at any time within a stage

Stages run into each other with overlapping objectives

I will complement incrementally for increased proficiency in each objective—

and complement them for when each objective seems completed

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (6/10)

It's not about 'My' teaching stages

It's about how my *methods* are applied to teaching stages

$$7 \pm 2 = 4$$

therefore Plate Spinning

acknowledging Four Stages of Learning

It could be applied to anyone's style and stages

Each stage and technique within it needs to have a **clear goal or objective**

The *criteria* of each stage is *evidence* that the goals have been accomplished

The student is gradually introduced to the goals—
in terms of what I want to achieve for them

The student is then incrementally complemented for achieving each objective

I may have three or four objectives open at any time within a stage

Stages run into each other with overlapping objectives

I will complement incrementally for increased proficiency in each objective—
and complement them for when each objective seems completed

An objective is completed when the student returns for the next class and *naturally* demonstrates the objective without being coached to do so

Wavering is handled by very gentle coaching and praise when corrected. Also use humour!

Occasional reinforcement of each objective, plus praise, keeps the plates spinning

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (7/10)

I have a fairly clear idea of my and my pupil's progressions through teaching and learning, though the stages are layered and overlapped.

I am also flexible to address what seems to need attention at any time.

Plus, if a pupil has a specific application for the technique, I am likely to include that at the beginning, mostly as a demonstration, but then leave specific application work until later, when my pupil has a better idea how to apply the principles to their application.

N.B. Whenever I refer to me drawing on, rotating or directing any part of my pupil's body, I am actually thinking of the release that I want them to have, and letting that thought translate through my arms and hands. I am sensitive to and 'talking to' their muscles and inviting them to release. If I feel resistance, I back off and wait, and then try again gently. This often produces a very gentle pull or invitation on my part—
Or it can sometimes be quite powerful

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (8/10)

My lessons are about an hour long.

After the introduction, I aim for two lessons per week for the first two weeks to establish baseline reduction of background tension.

If this is interrupted, the baseline is rarely achieved and three or four lessons in quick succession are still needed.

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (9/10)

My lessons are about an hour long.

After the introduction, I aim for two lessons per week for the first two weeks to establish baseline reduction of background tension.

If this is interrupted, the baseline is rarely achieved and three or four lessons in quick succession are still needed.

I then space out lessons to one per week for three or four weeks, as frequency is no longer required. As they become proficient, I space lessons further, to encourage them to apply the principles without my prompting and to wean them off reliance on and attachment to me.

Teaching Stages and Criteria – Intro (10/10)

My lessons are about an hour long.

After the introduction, I aim for two lessons per week for the first two weeks to establish baseline reduction of background tension.

If this is interrupted, the baseline is rarely achieved and three or four lessons in quick succession are still needed.

I then space out lessons to one per week for three or four weeks, as frequency is no longer required. As they become proficient, I space lessons further, to encourage them to apply the principles without my prompting and to wean them off reliance on and attachment to me.

If they have specific applications or needs, I may extend the number of sessions and be on hand for specific occasions, otherwise once I sense they can and *will* continue applying the technique for themselves, my work is done.

I may invite them back for a workshop from time to time, but otherwise, that is it.

Teaching Stages Introductory Lesson (1/1)

Initial case history, observation & examination and initial explanation.

If they have a specific application, demonstrate this if feasible, otherwise:

Demonstration of chair work and walking. Shortish table session.

I don't count this as a lesson so much as a taster.

Criteria: Get feedback that they understand the basics of what I am telling and demonstrating to them.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work



Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (1/13)

First four lessons objective:

Get rid of background tension and gradually introduce the basic principles.

I aim to achieve neck relaxation, followed by arm release and lengthening.

Then chest, abdomen and back (Most people are not shortening and narrowing their backs.)

I may not get to legs or shoulders until second time, and usually not to flying arms till 3rd or 4th.

I may let them nod off, in the first lesson, as this is often the deepest they have relaxed in a long time. However I will very soon encourage them to be awake and alert in that first lesson, to associate the relaxation with alertness.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (2/13)

First four lessons objective:

Get rid of background tension and gradually introduce the basic principles.

NB. If they are in pain, especially neck pain, this may take more than four lessons.

Optimum time is 20 minutes.

I aim to achieve neck relaxation, followed by arm release and lengthening.

Then chest, abdomen and back (Most people are not shortening and narrowing their backs.) I may not get to legs or shoulders until second time,

and usually not to flying arms till 3rd or 4th. I continue with table work less and less as sessions progress.

I may let them nod off, in the first lesson, as this is often the deepest they have relaxed in a long time. However I will very soon encourage them to be awake and alert during that first lesson, to associate the relaxation with alertness.

I will also progressively do more 'chair work' during these sessions.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (3/13)

Sequence of Table Work Procedures:

- Get them on the table
- Work on head and neck
- Left and right arm release
- Front of abdomen and back
- Legs
- Shoulders
- Fly arms
- Get them off the table

Stages are usually interspersed by going back to their neck and head.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (4/13)

Script for table work: Getting them On the Table

Being left handed, I prefer to get them on the table from what will be their right side once they are lying down.

Have them stand halfway along the table. I will be to their right.

Have them sit on the table half way across.

Have them turn to their left, facing down the table. (Knees up or down.) Support their back at this stage.

Put your right hand on the back of their head (your forearm in front of their face.) Left hand on their back.

Tell them “I am going to lower you down onto the table. I want you to just let it happen and allow me to support your weight.”

Lower them down onto your selected books or blocks (I use less height than most teachers.)

Adjust their hands and arm and adjust or raise their knees if not already raised.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (5/13)

Script for table work: Head neck and arms

(usually head/neck, left arm, head/neck optional, right arm.)

Cradling head and neck: Think of you neck being soft, calm and relaxed.

Think of the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body.

Think of the rest of your head also releasing away from the rest of your body

Taking usually left hand first: Think of your fingertips releasing towards the wall, beyond your feet.

Fingers soft and loose, palm soft and relaxed, wrist loose.

(I generally use 'loose' for joints, soft & relaxed for muscles.)

Forearm relaxing and releasing, and even lengthening,

as there are two bones that can slide along each other.

Elbow joint loose. Upper arm relaxing, almost *as if* it is lengthening, as there is only 1 bone.

(The shoulder usually releases.)

Think of your shoulder being soft & loose, and the release coming from the side and back of your neck, and all the way from the back of your head.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (6/13)

Script for table work: Front of body.

Cradling head and neck: Repeating neck head thoughts, then:

Think of all the muscles in the front of your body relaxing and releasing, deeply and completely.

Think of them releasing all the way from the top of your chest to the base of your abdomen.

Notice that you have not seen any sabre toothed tigers or marauding Vikings recently—

So it is probably safe for the front of your body to relax and open up—

Allowing its *right, full* (rightful = ambiguity) length and width.

As the muscles in the front of your body have 3 or 4 times as much leverage over your spinal column, this now makes it much more easy for your back muscles to relax

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (7/13)

Script for table work: Back.

Still cradling head and neck: Repeating neck head thoughts again, then:
Think of all the muscles in the upper part of your back relaxing and releasing, deeply and completely— Allowing the vertebrae to release apart from each other, so that the discs between them can expand and take in extra fluid for their maintenance and repair.

There is no blood supply to the discs, so they rely on expansion to take in fresh fluid. The protein in the discs hold on to this fluid, expanding like rice, and can expand by about a millimeter each. As you probably have 24 of them, it means your spine can lengthen by nearly an inch!

John Cleese reckoned he became taller by **two inches!** One probably from his spine physically lengthening, and another from not stooping.

(Repeat first part for middle and lower back, and in lower back include:

“Thinking of the release going all the way down into their sacrum and coccyx.”)

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (8/13)

Script for table work: Legs.

Putting both legs down– I take hold of both heels and draw on both of them, as one at a time usually tips the pelvis, giving a false impression of release.

“Think of your legs and feet and heels releasing towards the wall beyond me.

Think of the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body, and of that release coming from all the way down in your lower back

And think of the release of your legs, feet and heels

As coming from up inside your lower back.” (Psoas origin in lumbar spine.)

“Think of your toes being relaxed, foot relaxed, ankle loose.

Lower leg releasing– even lengthening. Upper leg releasing as if it is lengthening.

All this release coming from all the way up inside your lower back.”

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (9/13)

Script for table work: Legs.

I then rotate their feet and legs inward, releasing the Piriformis muscles.

Starting with left usually, taking their heel with my left hand and the side of their foot by the little toe, with my right, first moving the foot away from the other.

I then ease their foot inward.

“I am about to rotate your foot inward. I want you to just think of it releasing inward and think of the movement coming from your leg pelvis joint. Think of this joint and the muscles all around it, relaxing and releasing deeply and completely.”

I will also use the ‘Resist release’ technique: Get them to try to rotate their foot and leg inward as I resist the turn and hold it in place. Then tell them to let go of rotating it. Then I rotate it, and it usually goes further than before.

I will sometimes raise their leg and take their knee to the same and opposite shoulder, keeping the lower leg horizontal, and using similar verbal instructions.

Repeat for right leg. Finish by raising their knees, then check head and neck.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (10/13)

Script for table work: Shoulders and Fy Arms.

With their hands on their abdomen, I slip my left hand under their left shoulder joint, via their armpit and raise their shoulder joint and shoulder blade, so I can put my right hand under their shoulder blade, with my fingertips just beyond the inner border. I withdraw my left hand and place it on top of the shoulder joint. I then ease their shoulder blade and joint out laterally, saying: “Think of your shoulder joint releasing out to the side, and your elbow releasing down along the table.”

And as I am withdrawing my hand I say “Think of your shoulder joint releasing out to the side and back towards the table, as you think of your elbow releasing down along the table.”

Repeat for the other site and check their head and neck.

While placed at their head you can put your hands on their shoulder joints and ease them apart, saying:

“Think of your shoulders releasing away from each other and your upper chest releasing and widening.”

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (11/13)

Script for table work: Shoulders and Fy Arms.

Take their left hand in your left hand and cradle their elbow with your right. Straighten their arm out, giving a bit of lengthening direction. Take their arm out to the side, saying:

“Think of the release of your hand and arm as they go out to the side, as if they are releasing from your lower back.”

Passing right angles, rotate the arm clockwise 180° to turn the head of the humerus to continue taking their arm beyond their head. Still telling them to think of the release coming from their lower back. (Latissimus dorsi release.)

Now drawing their hand and arm out in line away from their body, beyond their head, tell them: “Think of your fingers releasing towards the wall beyond your head, and of that release coming from all the way down in your lower back. Fingers and thumb relaxed, hand and palm soft and relaxed, wrist loose, forearm relaxing- releasing- even lengthening, upper arm releasing as if it is lengthening, shoulder joint loose. Think of the release of your fingers and hand and arm coming from all the way down in your lower back, and from all the way up the side of your body, and from all the way up the front of your body.”

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (12/13)

Script for table work: Shoulders and Fy Arms.

I keep sensing if their muscles are willing to relax and let go, drawing gently at first and increasing strength gradually. If I feel reluctance or resistance, I pause or ease back and wait, continuing when I sense they are ready. I do not expect full release in the first couple of sessions. I will repeat my script each time I restart directing them and complement them on their release as it occurs. Sometimes in the early stages I will say "did you notice that releasing just then?" They usually do.

Once I sense they have released enough, I fold their forearm beyond their head and bring their upper arm forward above their shoulder in an arc, over to their abdomen and position their hand on their abdomen and their elbow at their side. I will now reposition the shoulder joint. Repeat for the other side and then return to their head and neck before getting them off the table.

Teaching Stages Early Sessions and Table Work (13/13)

Script for table work: Getting off the Table.

As I am left handed, I get them up to their right side.

I tell them that their eyes lead their head and to follow my hand as I move it (radially to their left and right, about 30cm from them, side of my hand facing them, far enough that the reflex moves their head to each side and then back to centre.)

I tell them “I am now going to get you up off the table. I am going to move my hand to the right in front of your face and your head will turn to the right. When it is there, I will put my hand under your head to support it. Then I will move my right hand in front of your face and your head will return to centre. Then I will put my right hand behind your left knee and rotate you clockwise and lift your body so that you are sitting up on the edge of the table. You can put your left hand on my right shoulder for support if you want. I want you to keep thinking of your neck being relaxed and the back of your head releasing and yet your powerfully releasing away from the rest of your body.

I then perform the maneuver as described until they are sat on the edge of the table.

I then give them some head neck lift to get them to sit upright and may tell them “I am going to give you some extra lift and you will find yourself standing up.” Then I stand them.

Teaching Stages Chair Work etc



Teaching Stages Chair Work etc (1/2)

Chair, Standing Up, Standing, Walking, Sitting Down etc

I have several sequential, though overlapping aims for this work. I want to:

- Ensure they can keep their neck relaxed and the back of their head released throughout these procedures.
- Follow my hands with minimal cues without resistance or anticipation.
- That they think of, recognise and then utilise their buoyancy, first to sit them up, then to keep them aligned while being stood up, while standing and walking and being sat down.
- While stood, I will demonstrate how their eyes guide them into following their intention and how weight shift takes the weight off one leg and foot, so they can move and allow the initiation of walking.
- Then I coach them to use their buoyancy to stand them of their own accord and keep them poised and aligned while stood, walking, doing tasks, and then to lower them into being sat, all of their own accord.
- I aim for them to stay relaxed and alert during all this.

Teaching Stages Chair Work etc (2/2)

Chair, Standing Up, Standing, Walking, Sitting Down etc

The mechanics for this are all standard, but I will tell my pupils what I am doing at each stage, what I expect of them and complement them on their successes until it is second nature, at which point I will complement them on this also.

Example scripts– While sat back in a chair:

“Think of your neck being soft, calm and relaxed, and the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body–

And now think of your head being buoyant as if it wants to lift your body up.”

(I assist and direct their head to lift their torso to upright position.)

To stand: “Continue to allow the release of the back of your head–

And think of where your head is going to be when ‘You are standing.’”

Stand the pupil while saying ‘You are standing.’

I will use similar instructions for other maneuvers.

Teaching Stages Inhibition and Conscious choice

Once they are developing inhibition during activity, I will start to add the concept of conscious choice. Usually by about the third lesson and then expand it gradually.

I tell them I have to exercise it all the time!

The practical stages are:

- Able to maintain state and sit or stand of their own volition, or just not = 2 choices.
- While stood, able to do nothing or walk or sit = 3 choices.
- Choice of in-line or spiral standing or sitting or moving = multiple choice.
- Catching or not catching balls– With me giving last second instructions at first, then by their own choice.
- Able to accomplish their own chosen graduated tasks– as above.
- Able to demonstrate ongoing inhibition and openness.

The early stages can be during table work, though chair and application work are obvious requirements thereafter. **N.B. It is a practical thing**

Teaching Stages Breathing & Voice work

This will be left until later lessons unless my pupil has specific problems or applications.

- I am first looking for natural breathing on the table.
- Otherwise I will probably introduce 'whispered ahhs' fairly early on.
- I will then have them breathe out fully, though not forced and wait for the natural reflex in-breath. (This was Alexander's very early innovation that seems to have actually solved his breathing problems.)
- With their neck relaxed, I will coach them in having natural in-breaths without sucking or gasping.

I will repeat all this while sat and then stood and then with hands on the back of a chair (i.e. Monkey etc.) I will then also coach them in voice production in these orientations.

Teaching Stages Application Work

As with voice work, I will use this as a convincer in their introduction if they have a problem or specific application. Otherwise I will leave it for later lessons and encourage them to learn the basics— though probably letting them do a little application as we go along, so they can track their progress.

With prior awareness of the proper techniques for the task, I want them to **maintain their condition, use inhibition and conscious choice, without anticipation or being drawn into the task.** This is with mostly external awareness and minimal thoughts for their directions.

Rather than ‘showing’ pupils how to do a task, we work together for them to discover how to apply the principles of the technique to that task.

I will often have them ‘show’ me how they already do it, or show me how they have been taught so far, e.g. to hold and play an instrument. I will then work with them to either achieve this or improve on it in a way that involves less effort or contortion etc. Otherwise, just adhering to principle is the golden rule.

Teaching Stages

Top Up Workshops



Teaching Stages Top Up Workshops

As mentioned, I space out sessions towards the end of a course, to encourage pupils to rely on themselves, rather than me or another teacher. However it is also useful to have regular group sessions available, both during and afterwards, to keep people fresh and give them some gentle plate-spinning.

Here, pupils can meet each other, encourage each other and learn from observing each other. It also serves as an easy introduction to prospective pupils, who are also entitled to a free introductory private lesson.

I can also introduce new techniques I am integrating, some of which work better in a group setting.

For this Autumn, I am arranging the 2nd Tuesday evening and the 4th Sunday afternoon 1 ½ hour sessions, to cater for people's different timetables.

They will be free for the first session and very affordable for subsequent ones.

4

Part 4

Summary - Future Plans - Invitation

(1/3) Summary

I used analysis of conditions, reasoning out, and application of Means–Whereby
To improve on perceived shortcomings in how the Alexander Technique was *taught*.

In doing so I have been conscientious to stay true to core principles.
The Alexander Technique is too valuable to be watered down or fudged.

In the current climate, where inhibition and the ability to make considered
judgements and wise decisions seem sadly lacking–

The Alexander Technique is needed more than ever!

(2/3) Future Plans

My branding is

Loosen uP

Trademark pending. It is what it says on the tin: A way to loosen and to naturally rise up. It is **NOT a replacement for the Alexander Technique**, but a way of **teaching** it.

Plans are:

Outreach to the General Public Worldwide

- I am currently experimenting with social media advertising. To be rolled out gradually.
- To be paid for by sales of online courses and resources.
- I will be encouraging contacts to seek personal training from a teacher.
- I will initially maintain a list of teacher organisations worldwide.

Provide **training** in both my methods and in NLP for qualified and trainee teachers.

- To provide website and promotional services for teachers trained in my methods
- To train up and approve teachers to teach teachers in my methods and to take them further.

Maintain a **non-profit** membership organisation

- For teachers agreeable towards or trained in my methods.
- To list these in priority above regular teacher organisations.
- And act as a community for sharing and developing the work further.

(3/3) Invitation

Consider what advantages there may be in my approach
Experiment with integrating my techniques into **your** teaching

Attend my Coaching session on Thursday at 5.30 (Now full!!!)

Leave your details with me, or leave them on one of my websites
to say you are agreeable towards my methods for inclusion on future lists
and to receive notifications of trainings and any other news or events.
Early adopters will get free or deeply discounted access.

<https://loosenup.org/>

<https://alexandertechniqueplymouth.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HowToLoosenUp>

<https://www.instagram.com/loosenuporg/>

Thank you!

David Owen.