

Using NLP and Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Alexander Technique

David Owen
Loosen uP.org

Four Leading Questions:

1. What is the most important or valuable aspect of the Alexander Technique?

Four Leading Questions:

2. Why do we do Table Work and Lying Down?

Four Leading Questions:

3. Is it OK to have and gain an End?

Four Leading Questions:

4. How do we prevent End Gaining?

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2. Why do we do Table Work and Lying Down?
3. Is it OK to have and gain an End?
4. How do we prevent End Gaining?

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Outline

- Introduction
- Part 1 Intro to NLP & Conditioning
- Part 2 Differences
- Part 3 Summary - Future Plans - Invitation
- Part 4 Discussion & Demonstrations

David Owen

Introduction

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.

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NLP & 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)

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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*.

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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

NLP Origins

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

Chickpea Salad

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)

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- Submodalities. Change how we think, feel and act:
including 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)

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- 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)

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- 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)

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- Timelines & temporal language. Used in planning & therapy
- Logical Levels: Environment, Capability, Beliefs/Values, Identity, Transcendence.

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Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement

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

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 (for the most part.)
- **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)

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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

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!

Competence

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



→ 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 (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 a lot of information at once while I am teaching,
But my motto here is:

$$7 \pm 2 = \text{Maximum } 4$$

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

Plate Spinning



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

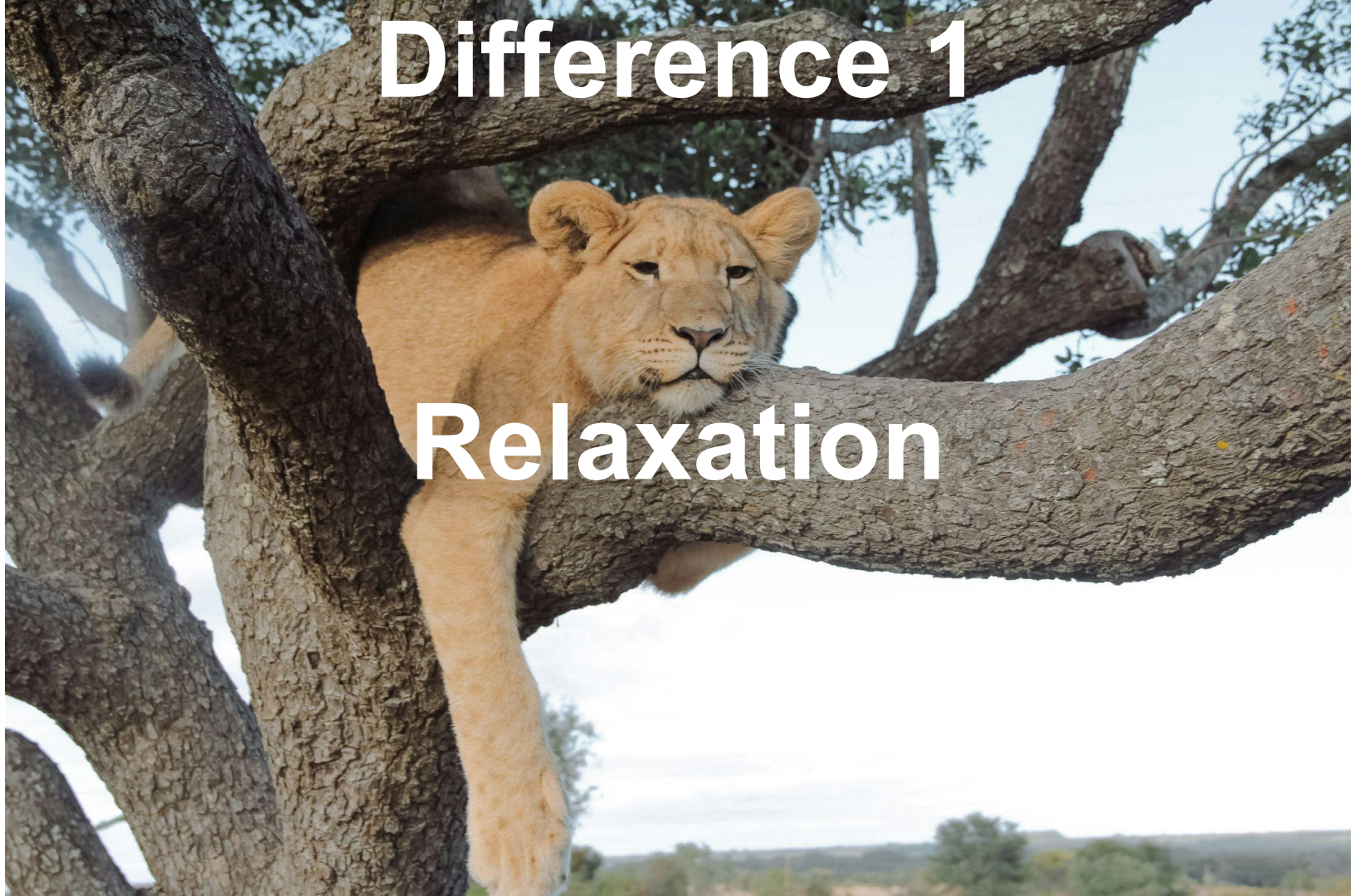
Differences

As a result of NLP and in order to implement the positive reinforcement, 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

Difference 1

Relaxation



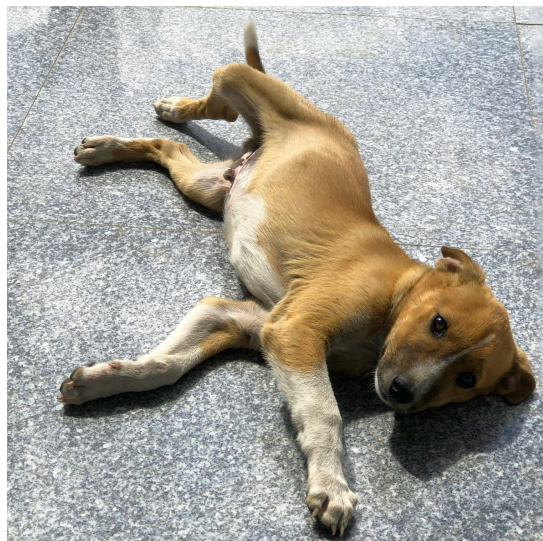
Difference 1

Relaxation

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 a Single Celled Creature



Difference 1

Relaxation

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 the relaxation techniques of his time: they apparently disturbed proper tone.

However, he did use lying down or table work, sometimes called 'inhibition work'.

Arguably, this did bring about the relaxation of various structures, though usually by indirect means, rather than telling someone to relax a certain part.

He had also originally taught the Delsarte method, which included 'withdrawing energy' from a limb, which tends to remove excess tone from it as the person relaxes.

Difference 1 Relaxation

I use long table work sessions during four sessions within two weeks.

With this I can usually eliminate most background tension early on and establish a new baseline, needing little further maintenance. If this frequency and baseline is not achieved, the work usually stagnates. However, one needs to go carefully releasing tighter necks, or it can lead to insecurity and neck spasms.

I was restricted to giving 5 to 10 minutes maximum tablework during my training, but once I was teaching, 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.

Difference 2

Thinking rather than Directing



Difference 2 Thinking

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

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

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.

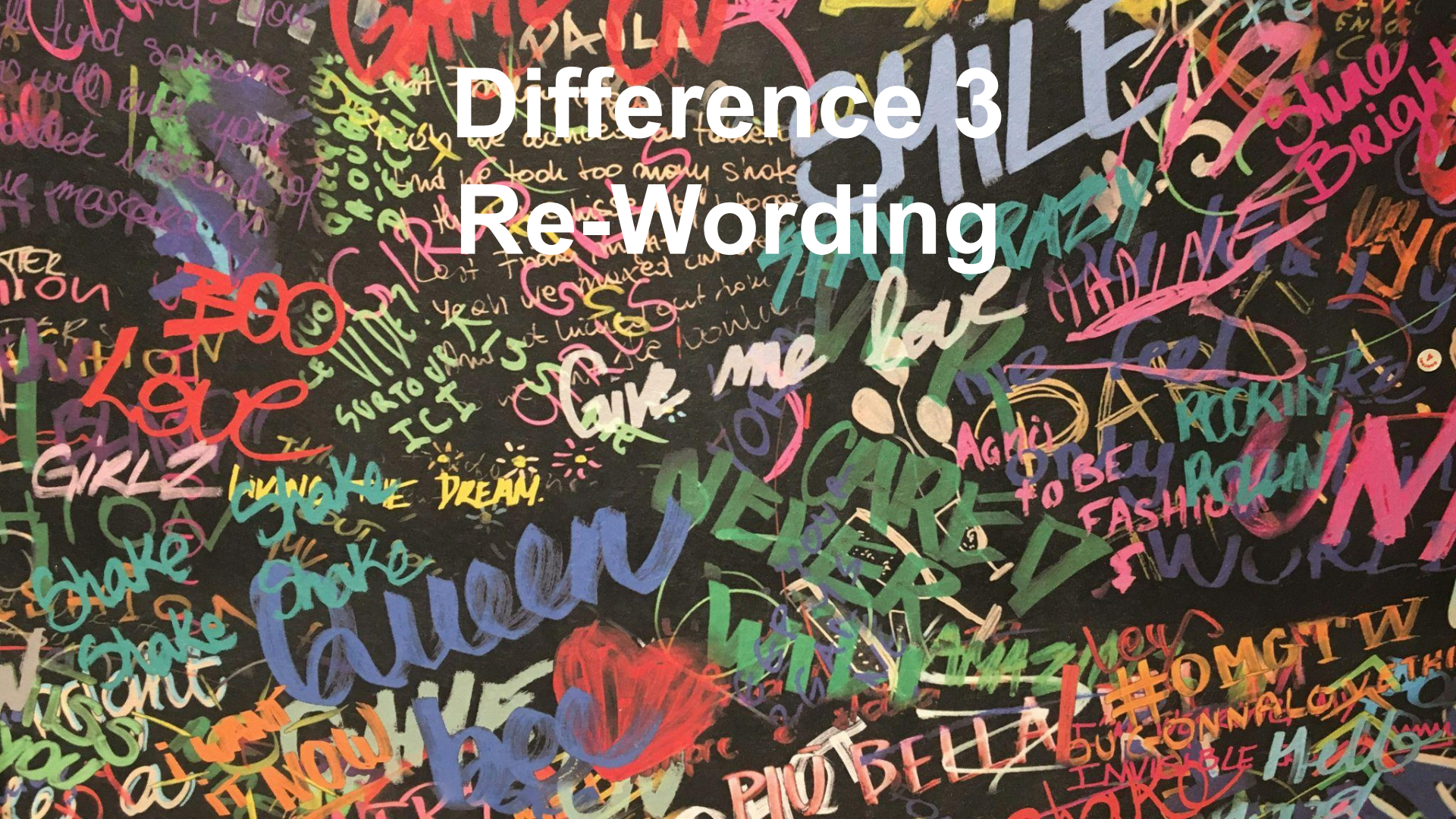
An upward direction of the head is analogous to pointing it to the ceiling or sky, and I sometimes use this with my pupils, and there is usually little or no perception of effort once background tension has been eliminated.

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

I avoid using the word ‘don’t’

The first problem I noticed having learned NLP was people saying
“Don’t stiffen your neck!”

What follows a ‘don’t’ becomes a hidden, negative or embedded command.
‘Stiffen’ here is an imperative verb, and neurologically gets the person to stiffen
before they can process the ‘don’t.’

You can use **Avoid**, **Stop**, **Cease**, **Forgo**.
Refrain from, **Keep** from, **Abstain** from doing.

So: “Avoid stiffening your neck.”

‘Avoid’ is the imperative verb, and ‘stiffen’ is softened to ‘stiffening.’

Difference 3 Re-Wording

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

Another 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.

In “Free your neck.” Free is the imperative verb.

And it is an ‘unspecified’ verb (similar to ‘direct’) in that we do not know how Alexander intended us to ‘do’ it.

“*Think* of your neck being free” is better, with ‘think’ being the imperative verb, but it is still likely to produce head wagging to get the sensation of freedom.

Difference 3

Re-Wording

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

I also tell my pupils to:

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

And avoid trying to feel if it is that way.

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

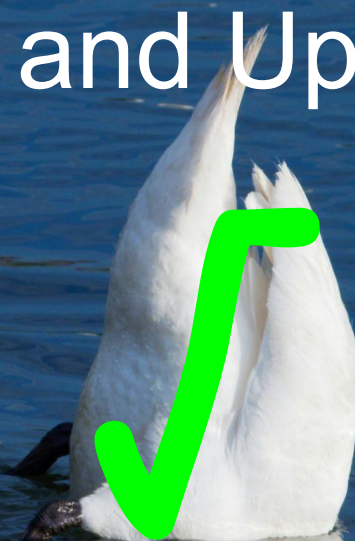
Just think of the idea, only as often as you remember it, and only let it be a quarter of a thought when you do.

($\frac{1}{4}$ of a thought so they can stay externally focussed

and minimise drawing on their ration of 7 ± 2 – or ‘3’ points of attention.)

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up!



Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up!

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/>

Kellow, J. (2009). 'Alexander's preterm birth.' In The 2008 Vol.1 Congress Papers.

<https://www.atcongress.org/papers>)

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, would also give the impression of extra breathing capacity.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up!

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 condition and alignment.

Difference 4

Away with Forward and Up!

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!

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!

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!

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!

I was taught almost completely silently...

The Trappist Tradition of Alexander Technique teaching.

As I now realise, this was to prevent me from end-gaining!

However, I didn't develop a full(ish) understanding of the Technique for 5 years.

Difference 5

Clarity, and I am Talkative!

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 what I want them to 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!

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!

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.

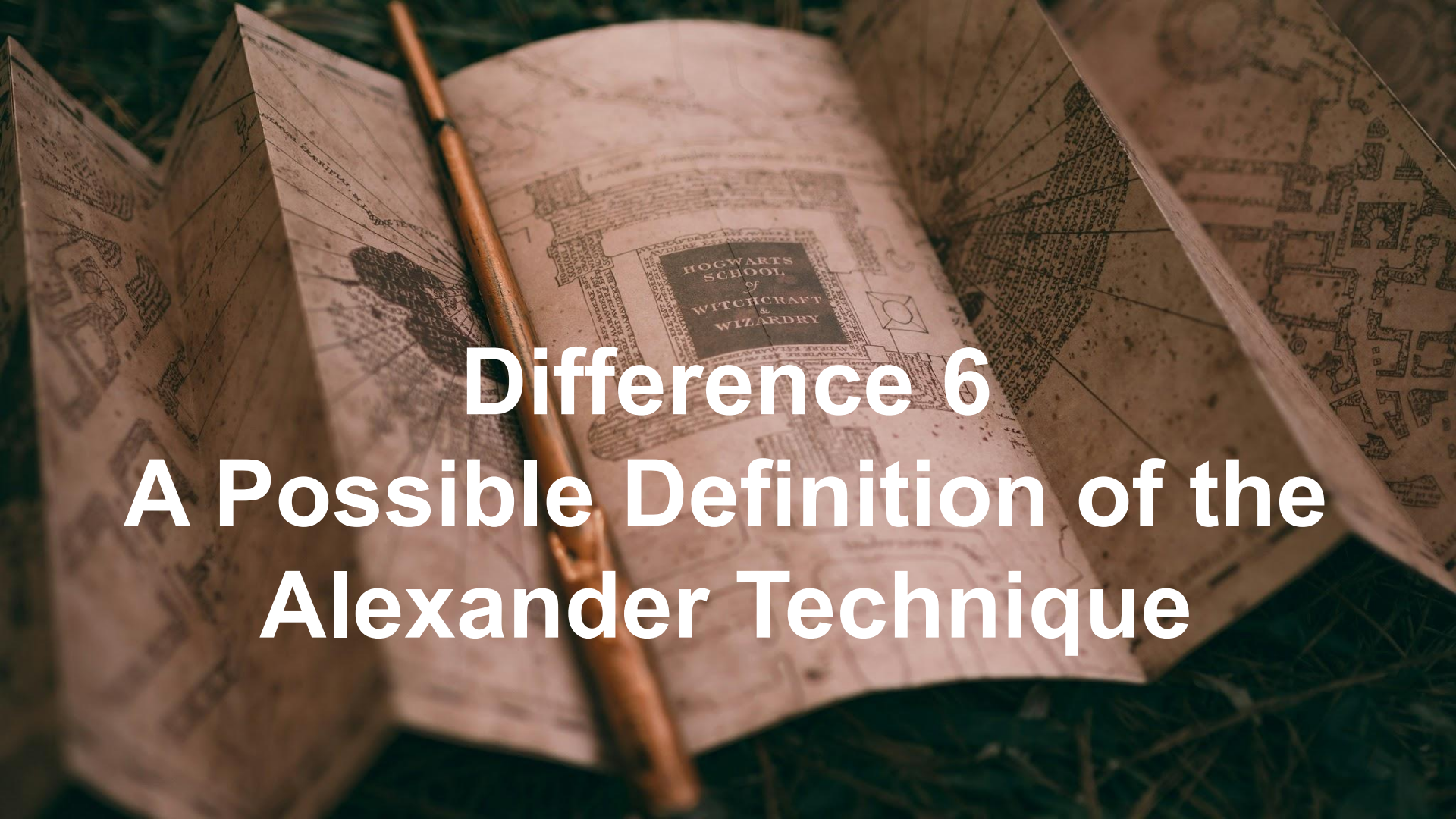
There are enough aspects to our work, and its principles are sufficiently novel to most people, that frequent reminders are worthwhile and will help the pupil to build a full picture or concept of the technique and its workings over time.

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

A Possible Definition of the Alexander Technique

A Definition of the Technique

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.

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Currently STAT's definition includes:

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

(Articles of Association 2022 – 3.1)

A Definition of the Technique

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.)

A Definition of the Technique

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

And by **HOW** it achieves it

A Definition of the Technique

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.)

A Definition of the Technique



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.



A Definition of the Technique

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.

A Definition of the Technique

What is unique about the Alexander Technique
That can restore our natural condition?

A Definition of the Technique

What is Unique about the Alexander Technique?

Inhibition

Having breathed out completely, to wait for the natural reflex to bring about the inbreath.
Alexander's earliest specific form of inhibition.

(Credit to Penelope Easten and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.)

A Definition of the Technique

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 Eastern and her course Walking alongside F. M. Alexander.)

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

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

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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.) and

To make a fresh decision at that point, whether and how to act. (Conscious choice.)

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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.

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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.

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

3

Summary - Future Plans - Invitation

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!

Future Plans

My branding is

Loosen uP™

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.

Invitation

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

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.

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4

NLP & Positive Reinforcement Demos & Practice

NLP & +ve Reinforcement Sequence – Head Neck

Invite your pupil to sit with their hands on their thighs. **Thank them** for it (+ve reinforcement.)

Tell them “I am going to put my hands on your neck.” Do so in your usual way, yet without any Up.

And say “*I want you to think of your neck being soft, calm and relaxed.*” (And you think the same!)

Assuming that they thought this, even if you detect no sign, say “Good” softly.

As soon as you sense their neck responding, you say “Good!” a little more firmly.

Still with your hands on their neck, contacting the back of their head, tell them:

“While still thinking of your neck being soft, calm and relaxed—

I want you to think of the back of your head releasing away from the rest of your body.”

You can give them very gentle direction to release any holding there.

If you sense they are already released, or they release even a little, say “Good!”

If there is not detectable release, cycle round:

“Still thinking of your neck- soft calm and relaxed, and the back of your head releasing...”

Once that is established add “*And now think of the rest of your head releasing away from the rest of your body*, as if it is buoyant, like a buoy rising up on the tide, or as if it is made of anti gravity material.” Assist with upward direction, and again complement when you sense a release.

NLP & +ve Reinforcement Sequence – Inhibition & Arms

Tell your pupil “In a moment I am going to lift up your (left) hand and arm.”

Ignore any anticipatory movement.

Say “What *I* want you to do, is just let it happen without assisting.

Just ignore me and ‘Leave all the work and **weight**, for me.’ ”

(Deliberately ambiguous: “Leave all the work, and **wait** for me.”)

If they assist, stop lifting without comment. As soon as they let you lift it say “Good! Thank you!”

Repeat for the other side, saying “Again, just leave all the work and weight, for me.”

Let their arms dangle. Place your fingers below their left fingers, only just touching and say:

“I want you to think of your fingertips releasing towards the floor, away from the back of your head.”

Move your hand down as they release, maintaining only very light contact.

Praise them: “Good! - Excellent!” etc as they continue to release.

Before or if they start to lean over, tell them

“Think of the fingertips of your other hand also releasing towards the floor.”

Before/if they start leaning forward, tell them to keep thinking of their head as if it is buoyant etc.

Cycle through neck, back of head, and head buoyancy as required while releasing arms.

NLP & +ve Reinforcement Sequence – Standing

This uses an NLP ambiguity pattern, to preempt anticipation while standing a student from a chair.

Have your student sat in a chair, arranged so they can be stood.

Tell your pupil “In a moment I am going to stand you up from this chair,
Though I want you to just put that idea aside for the moment.”

“Instead, I want you to think of where your head will be when” –
At this point, stand them, while saying, “You are standing!”

The ambiguity is between the hypothetical ‘when you are standing’ and the statement ‘You are standing!’

You distract the student momentarily by telling them to think of where their head will be when –, leaving a question with them, so you can start standing them before they expect it. When you say, ‘You are standing’, it completes the sentence – and their neurology imagines their head where it will be, giving it direction.

This can be refined and coached so that with practice the pupil can stand, simply by thinking of where their head will be once they have stood.

Thank You!

David Owen.

loosenup.org