

FAREWELL, RON THANKS FOR THE DIRECTION!

Ronald Dennis served in many capacities during his 14 year association with ACAT. So this January when his resignation as Executive Director was submitted to the Board, it was with mixed emotions that it was accepted.

There is strong support for Ron's new endeavors and genuine confidence that he will succeed in his southern professional practice. He is already associated with two universities and publishing the *athens/atlanta alexander news*. We hear that his private practice is flourishing and his new brochure "Your Posture and Health" is evidence of his growing marketing and sales techniques. Exciting, isn't it?

Well here's the mixed part. Ron Dennis gave ACAT the look and feel of a professional institution of higher learning. Now he didn't take it all away when he left. We still have our accreditation with ACCET and our participation in Federal Student Aid Programs and status with the Immigration and Naturalization Services to accept foreign students and our computerized office system and many other administrative processes that Ron either established or improved. AND we still have Ron. He continues to be active as a member of ACAT's Board of Advisors. BUT we don't have his presence and the on-going accessibility to his wit, his faith in the Alexander process, and his broad prospective on the concepts and theories within the Alexander literature. We will certainly miss Ron.

So in this farewell, Ron, we take the opportunity to thank you heartily for your directions toward professionalism. ACAT lengthened and widened under your hands.

Thoughts and Thanks for Judy's Memorial Service

by Roz Glatter

Saturday, February 2, was a most memorable and moving afternoon. I joined many people from the Alexander community to honor the memory of a beloved teacher and friend, Judith Leibowitz. In this unique moment, we shared thoughts, feelings, prayers, music, remembrances and love for this remarkable person. The palpable outpouring of affection for Judy and support for each other created an atmosphere that was electric, yet exquisitely calm.

I left Beret Arcaya's loft that day feeling honored and grateful to be associated with this family of Alexander teachers and students.

Many thanks to Pamela Anderson and all those who contributed to this beautiful occasion.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

Call to Order - Bill Connington

The Annual Meeting of The American Center for the Alexander Technique, Inc. was held on March 3, 1991 at the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center (formerly the Hebrew Arts School), New York, NY. The meeting was called to order at 3:08 by Chairman Bill Connington. A quorum of nineteen members in person and eleven by proxy was present.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Judy Leibowitz.

Reading of the Minutes - Kathy Miranda

The minutes of the February Board of Directors meeting were approved as read.

Treasurer's Report - Kathy Miranda

Current account balances are: Petty Cash, \$80; Checking, \$1,044; Savings \$30,684; Operating Reserve, \$24,577; Judith Leibowitz Fund, \$8,184; Barbara Kent Fund, \$4,236. The accountant's review for the fiscal year ended 8/31/90 showed a change in fund balance of \$7,396. This represents \$1,750 from contributions and the rest from operations. For the current fiscal year, the projected change in fund balance is \$8,552.

Executive Director's Report - Kathy Miranda

1. Current membership stands at 45, with 31 members as yet not renewed for 1991. 2. The ACCET re-

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COMPETITION AND SELF-WORTH

By Karla Booth

Recently in reading Alfie Kohn's *No Contest: The Case Against Competition*, I found myself thinking about competition and self-worth. I realize that for me these have often been issues, especially in the training program and as I begin to teach. My thoughts are not connected as much with the Alexander process of inhibition and direction as with teaching and having confidence as a teacher. However, I find that separating them is a little like separating mind and body, my learning process and self-esteem are very connected to my Alexander process.

Competition

Competition is considered by many people to be inevitable and in our "nature" as human beings. There is also a belief that competition is "healthy" when displayed in the right setting, i.e. games, contests, politics, etc. Mr. Kohn challenges these statements and makes a very strong argument against competition. Gathering material from studies on competition he shows how it negatively affects performance, creativity, and learning. He refutes the statement that it is in our "nature" to compete and shows how competition as well as cooperation are learned at an early age. The degree to which we compete is based on social structure - some cultures being more competitive than others. There are in fact societies which experience no competition. As one might guess, Americans tend to be the most competitive and the least likely to cooperate amongst themselves. It has been found that once people experience cooperative efforts they prefer it to competitive structures.

Mr. Kohn describes competition as "mutually exclusive goal attainment". This means that one person's success is attainable only through another's failure. He further divides competition into structural and intentional. Structural competition is that which by its nature is competitive. Games, contests, auditions, are all set up so that one person or one team wins. It's called a zero-sum game. Intentional competition is based on a person's tendency, need, or habit to compete.

In relation to teaching and self-worth, I have become interested in intentional competition. Mr. Kohn spends some time discussing why we compete and how it affects our self-esteem. He says specifically, "I would offer the proposition that we compete to overcome fundamental doubts about our capabilities and finally, to compensate for low self-esteem."

I had never given a lot of thought to my competitiveness. There are certain things that I have generally felt insecure about, and I knew that my fears perpetuated my feelings of insecurity as well as my "failures" at these tasks. I knew that I was always setting

myself up for failure by wanting to write the best paper or make the most insightful comment. However, I had never looked at my communication skills in terms of competitiveness.

I believe that using Alexander's principles and addressing my whole self makes it much easier to communicate without fear and anxiety, but I need to approach it in several ways. The problem is not so much a fear of speaking but that my self-worth is on the line when I speak. This led me to view communication as a competitive situation.

I believe it's possible to be objective in comparing our skills but it can also be competitive. I think of this in terms of end-gaining. When we are teaching and a student gets "it", we may have a feeling similar to that of winning. In our excitement to recreate the experience, we become anxious and try to do "it" again. It rarely works when this is my attitude. Competing whether with ourselves or with each other, is non-productive and self-defeating.

Alfie Kohn states, "The desire to be better than others feels quite different from the desire to do well."

Self-Worth

"It is rare to find people who, without false pride or conceit, have a sense of their own self-worth and a legitimate and real pride in themselves and their lives."
Dr. John Diamond

"It suggests a respect for and faith in ourselves that is not easily shaken, an abiding and deep-seated acceptance of our own worth. Ideally, self-esteem is not only high but unconditional; it does not crumble even when we do things that we later regret."

Alfie Kohn

I believe that self-esteem is the most important psychological aspect one can address, for without confidence and belief in ourselves, we must continually look for situations in which we can validate our self-worth. As teachers, I see this to be very important. If we doubt our skills or teaching abilities, it would be easy to seek to assuage our fears by soliciting comments from our students to validate our self-worth. This, it seems, would provide a precarious and temporary sense of well being.

There are many ways in which we can support our growth and self-esteem as teachers. One possibility is to work with Alexander's principles. However, I find that there is the potential in the way the technique is taught to cause anxiety and self-doubt. We may remember

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THE PROCESS CONTINUES

by Rebecca Flannery

In the past few years I have studied another type of work called Body Harmony. In the process of becoming a practitioner and a teacher of Body Harmony, I have noticed that it has influenced and deepened my work in the Alexander Technique which has inspired me to share a glimpse of that work with you.

My first experience of Body Harmony was in a hotel in Cairo. I had been suffering from a severe case of Pharaoh's Revenge and was waiting to tell my friends that I couldn't join them for a dinner of Indian cuisine. Body Harmony practitioner and teacher, Frank Bronson was the first to arrive and the person to whom I explained my dilemma. He asked me if I wanted to go. I said yes but expressed my fear of becoming more sick. He then asked permission to put his hands on my stomach which I allowed. He proceeded to talk about movement and possibilities. Wasn't I fine in this moment? Could I make the choice to be fine in another moment? I felt my body shift into a state of ease and softness as he spoke and my mind seemed open. All this happened in about five minutes. I went to dinner with the assurance that he would sit next to me and assist me if necessary. The result was that I ate a full Indian dinner, tasting everything, and had no further trouble with the Pharaohs!

This experience of opening to possibilities and allowing them to become reality spurred me to learn more about Body Harmony. How could something so simple yet gentle, work and last? It seemed like the practitioner did nothing yet so much changed! He had worked with my belief system, guided me to see my self-imposed limitations and led me to an experience I had thought impossible a moment before!

As a practitioner of Body Harmony you 'listen' with every level of your being. Even in your approach to the client you must be aware of how you are affecting them and respond accordingly. Keeping your own body soft and open, you follow the direction, speed and exact contact dictated by the tissue, allowing it to be as it wants to be. The safety created by this support gives the client the freedom to release traumas. The tissue then reawakens to its inherent movement and pulsing.

The less the practitioner does, the more will happen in a session. As in Alexander Technique, 'doing' interferes with the process. It is also considered an imposition on the tissue. Since the message in Body Harmony comes from the client's tissue and the practitioner may keep their hands in one place for some time, there is somewhat less of a tendency to 'do' than in Alexander. As a result of this non-doing it is possible to have very profound experiences of resonance with another person, a feeling of being in touch with their spirit.

The approach of Body Harmony has given me new insights into the world of habit. Many times I have noticed that a person may have great difficulty observing a habit, and once familiar with it, may have equal difficulty inhibiting that habit. I now see habit as more than unconscious repetitive behaviour. I see that it may be caused by the locking into the tissue of an experience with attendant emotions and thoughts about that experience, which may then turn into a belief framework. New experiences may tend to be seen within the limits of that old framework and the person will become a prisoner to a habitual response. To release a habit fully requires awareness, allowing the emotions and thoughts to surface, and changing those thoughts.

In Body Harmony the practitioner may take negative thoughts that come up and change them to positive affirmations for the client to take into their body. A clear experience of the possibility of a new reality helps the client claim that new reality and release the old on a physical level in the session. It is the linking of all the parts, mind, emotions, and body, and the physical release in the body, that seem to be the important keys to rapid and lasting change.

Hands-on contact in Body Harmony is somewhat different than in Alexander Technique, sometimes requiring the practitioner to maintain skin-to-skin contact for a long time in one placement. This is anything but static although the observer may see little. Both people may begin to lose the sense of skin boundary.

I often experience my hands 'inside' the client's body. It feels like my hands have merged with the client's tissue and I can feel a lot of pulsing and movement. The mixing is similar to what results from pouring hot chocolate sauce over ice cream. As the ice cream melts, the two gradually mix so that there are no clear edges.

Sometimes the client's body may have a release that looks like a graceful dance of unwinding which requires the practitioner to follow suit in order to stay with the client. The amount tissue can spiral when it is perfectly supported is astonishing and this has taught me a tremendous amount about spirals in direction.

Because we move our hands less and speak less during the hands-on portion of the session, there is a lot of opportunity for your intuition to open. You may 'see' images or blocks in the body, 'hear' information, and sense feelings or ages in different parts of the body. You can feel holding and compression in specific portions of the viscera. All of this has crept into my work in Alexander and I employ it when appropriate.

From such intense exploration of human tissue in Body Harmony, my conception of direction in Alexander has

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evolved to include a broader spectrum - from straight lines (a more skeletal approach) to a clear, filled-in picture of spiraling musculature.

As I was learning Body Harmony, I would compare the two types of work and swing back and forth in preferring one over the other. Then I began to realize all of the ways in which they were similar and this became quite a long list. By hearing the same thing from different approaches and in different language, it has reaffirmed the importance of saying things to people in a variety of ways and has expanded my repertoire in working with the body. I am constantly realizing how important it is for practitioners and teachers to continue learning, searching and living their own work.

Recently I have been compelled to travel to other places and explore new work, partly motivated by the excitement of learning and discovery and partly as a search to become better at what I do. The more I look, the clearer the realization becomes that I have been searching for something inside myself - the state of being, knowing, and loving which I experience as truth and is expressed through my work.

As I embark on a new adventure, starting the Body Harmony Institute with my colleague, Arne Rantzen, I am faced with the responsibility of shaping a course to train practitioners. I am grateful for the wealth of information and experience I have received and continue to receive from the Alexander community.

(Competition and Self-Worth continued from page 2)

when we began taking Alexander lessons how anxious we were to please and be "good" students. Alexander's process was one of discovery, and as teachers we need to encourage the student to be interested in his/her habits while retaining a feeling of self-worth. That's asking a lot because our identity is wrapped up in our use, and often our very mis-use comes from dealing with feelings of inadequacy. It does not make a person "bad" if their use is poor, although it may make their life more difficult or painful. The technique should not only give the student a sense of ease in their life but raise their confidence in their abilities.

Dr. John Diamond in his lecture on Self-Worth, discusses how precarious our self-esteem is. A person whose self-esteem is low, will often take any comment to be judgmental. Even when someone does something loving for us we may actually feel worse. He calls this the "lump of shit" syndrome because that is how people in this state will describe themselves. We feel bad because the other person has been so good to us, therefore they must be "better" than we are. From this state, he takes us through several more (often unconscious) stages which follow the "lump of shit" state. The cycle ends in anger

and often a "violent destructive act" either toward the other person (envy) or toward the self (depression). I was at this lecture many years ago but it wasn't until recently when I was listening to the tapes that I understood the implications. Besides the fact that someone's love and generosity can affect our self-esteem negatively, there is this unconscious dance of trying to validate ones worth. It has led me to realize once again how important it is to devote time to work on ourselves as well as consider how we would like to teach.

Self Work

We cannot change what we do not know. Alexander's process began with observation, so must ours. To understand "what" we do does not necessitate knowing "why" we do it. As we begin to acknowledge and change our behavior, we may come to understand the "why". What is important is to stay in the moment and observe our habits as well as change them. These may be the traditional ones we address as Alexander teachers or personal ones.

Dualism comes before the state in which one feels low self-esteem. It is the state in which we view the world as "good" and "bad". We see everything in terms of its "goodness" and "badness".

Dr. Diamond suggests doing the "tea ceremony". Take and object in your hands and begin to look at it. See all of its beauty and all of its imperfections. Then begin to notice its texture, temperature, weight, and color. Feel what he calls its "thusness". It is neither good or bad, it just is. As we take time to see the object as it is, we can feel its "thusness", and that feeling spills over into the way we view the world and to our relationships. It's a beautiful meditation that can be done with an object or even with a hand. This brings non-judgment to our work and to our relationships.

Affirmations are another powerful tool, both as a visualization or in a written and verbal form. It brings to our awareness the negative thoughts we have of ourselves. We can then turn our negative thoughts into positive ones. My favorite are from Life Energy by Dr. Diamond: I am basically clean and good; and I am worthy of being loved. (These are specifically for the Large Intestine Meridian and relate to self-worth.)

Conclusion

In dealing with intentional competition, Mr. Kohn suggests addressing the issue of self-worth. In bringing this back to the Alexander Technique and teaching, I would say the Technique means more than freeing our head and neck or staying with ourselves. It also means renewing our faith and belief in ourselves and the process of change.

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accreditation is progressing favorably. The Analytic Self-Evaluation Review, a 22 page questionnaire, was completed by the joint efforts of all Directors. ACCET reviewed it favorably and are making plans for an on-site review this term. 3. There has been a big increase in the volume of public inquiries, mostly due to the NY Times article. Over 1,000 inquiries in 1990.

TCP Director's Report - Pamela Anderson

1. Currently, the TCP has 34 enrollees, 10 in their 3rd year, 12 in their 2nd and 12 in their 1st. With this number of enrollees, the school is in much better financial health. 2. ACAT has budgeted money to hire a psychotherapist as consultant for the training program. Initially, the consultant will assist the faculty in dealing with the psychological issues that arise in the training process. 3. A Faculty Committee wrote a Supervision Procedures Policy which includes the Director's on-site evaluation, Self-Evaluation and Peer Evaluation. After visiting 5 classes so far, I am impressed again by the level of skill, quality and commitment of the faculty to the training. 4. Since last year's meeting, we graduated 8 candidates and Jeanne Barrett, who joined our training as a special student, received her NASTAT certification. 5. Last Fall, as most of you know Judy Leibowitz resigned from our teaching staff. Then in December she died after a long struggle with cancer. Judy was able to see the completion of her book with Bill, celebrate her 70th birthday with Pearl and continue teaching at the Julliard until her last days. About a month ago now ACAT held a memorial service for Judy, we shared memories and feelings of Judy. 6. The administrative staff has been in transition, with the resignation of Ron Dennis; Kathy Miranda is now the Executive Director, Melanie Nevis is the TCP Coordinator working on administrative duties for both membership and training, Kim Jessor took over part of my job and her title is Dean of Students. Kim is responsible for Candidate evaluations, grades and absences, the Independent Study program, student meetings and is available to candidates for consultations.

Chairman's Report - Bill Connington

Bill introduced the current Board members -- Pamela Anderson Ex-Officio as Director of the TCP, Rebecca Flannery, Kim Jessor Ex-Officio as Dean of Students, Kathy Miranda Ex-Officio as Executive Director, Melanie Nevis (by appointment replacing Jaye Miller who resigned), Lori Schiff, Connie Serchuk (by appointment replacing Marta Friedland who resigned). There will be no election of Directors at this meeting as no terms are finished at this time. 1. We protected ACAT's copyright on quotes used in the ACAT brochure. The Board decided that only members with written permission would be allowed use of ACAT material. 2. The re-accreditation has been a big job for Pamela, Kathy and Melanie. Board members Lori, Kim and myself also

assisted in meeting a very tight deadline. 3. The change in logo was put on hold. Even after Jaye Miller put a lot of work into the refinement of designs. The requirements for a logo were not sufficient to continue the work. 4. Fundraising efforts continue, an assessment of needs is underway and options for proceeding are being investigated. 5. We are looking to expand our Board of Advisors, Ron Dennis was appointed as an Advisor. 6. Judy left ACAT a legacy of \$25,000. 7. The search for space continues. More about this from Lori Schiff. 8. I have resigned as Chairman of the Board. Lori Schiff was appointed to finish my term of office.

Space Committee Report - Lori Schiff

We have been looking for 2 years. Although present situation is adequate, ACAT needs to be a CENTER for the Alexander Technique. We are also outgrowing the office and classrooms. We have been looking with another non-profit - SUBUD. They are interested in us as a tenant and although the price seems right, we are uncertain about the logistics. We would be lacking the independence that is desirable for a true CENTER. Basically, we need 3-5,000 square feet with a professional entrance, good natural light, good floors, security, preferably a west-side location near the subway, 4 classrooms and 1 office for \$9-12 per square foot. We could afford @ \$2,500 a month now. To go any higher we would have to raise the balance through renting the rooms to teachers during non-training hours and other income generating activities, e.g. seminars, group classes. This would be great if we had the start-up capital necessary. Because even at \$3,000 - \$3,500 per month rent the only space available is "raw space". So now the problem becomes one of raising capital. So we are looking into that now.

New Business from the Floor

Suggestions and announcements were offered by a couple members: 1) Debby Jay suggested that we need more sets of blocks for the training program and that many tables and chairs need maintenance; she also is selling copies of her final paper on Childbirth and AT; 2) Cynthia Knapp urged ACAT members to participate on the NASTAT Board, at present ACAT is not represented on the NASTAT Board; she also urged NY participation in the upcoming NASTAT meeting as New Yorkers may have issue with the limitation on the number of proxies one member may carry. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Miranda, Secretary

News from the Center

Joan Frost, Kim Jessor, Hope Martin and Robin Schiff presented workshops on the Alexander Technique at a Wellness Day organized by SHARE, a self help organization for women with breast cancer.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICE - Books in the Library can be borrowed. New acquisitions include *The Alexander Technique* by Judith Leibowitz and Bill Connington, *Marjorie Barstow - Her Teaching and Training* edited by Barbara Conable and *Body Process* by James Kepner. Also available for lending are the Center's collection of videotapes.

Barbara Kent was invited to teach in Paris for two weeks. ACAT graduate Barbara Maloney has been teaching there for three years and she arranged for Barbara to teach private lessons, an evening workshop at a dance studio, morning classes at Micheline Charron's training program (first week) and morning classes at Marle Francoise's training program (second week). Barbara found it stimulating to teach people in another country and also found that Alexander students and teachers share a common language through the hands-on communication and the concepts of the technique.

The Judith Leibowitz Fund grew by \$3,000 from memorial contributions from Judy's colleagues, students, friends and family. Individual thanks and acknowledgement were sent to each contributor.

CARRINGTON REFRESHER COURSE - Walter Carrington is teaching a Refresher Course for Senior Teachers, M-Th, 9:30 to 1pm, August 5-8 in London. Also, Glynn MacDonald is doing a Voice Course the same dates from 2-5:30pm.

PR Idea!! "America's Diet Club," a new one-hour daily program over the Lifetime Cable Network, welcomes material for program segments that relates to physical and mental fitness. Rose Mary Henri is executive producer, Lifetime Television, 34-12 36th St. Astoria, NY 11106, 718-706-3690.

OVERHEARD from Steve Neeren, talking about his experience as a volunteer faculty member - "Working with beginners is nice but its really great to have power steering."

THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS - It's happening in August in Switzerland. If you missed an invitation, call the Center, we have extra brochures.

NASTAT Annual General Meeting will be held in New York, May 24-26. If you are a NASTAT member or an ACAT trainee, we encourage you to attend.

Sam Reiser gave a lecture on the Alexander Technique at the library in Hastings-on-Hudson.

Applications to the Teacher Certification Program are currently being accepted for the fall semester. Deadline is July 1, 1991.

SARAH BARKER RETURNS! Bantam Books, the original publisher of *The Alexander Technique, Learning to Use Your Body for Total Energy* by Sarah Barker, has publishing a new revised edition.

The Alexander Technique by Wilfred Barlow has been republished by Healing Arts Press. At the end of the book, under "Useful Addresses", NASTAT is listed with this qualification, "With the worldwide spread of the Alexander Technique, NASTAT has been set up in the United States as an affiliate of the parent body, STAT. The author cannot personally vouch for the training or skills of the members of this body." If you wish to respond to this comment, please write the publisher and/or the author. Healing Arts Press, 1 Park St, Rochester, VT 05767. Dr. Barlow can be reached c/o The Alexander Institute, 16 Balderton St, London, W1, UK.

Joan Arnold was a panel member of the recent workshop on Alternative Healing for Dancers sponsored by THE FIELD FORUM, a service organization for choreographers and dancers. In addition she was interviewed for an article which appeared in the March 14th issue of Backstage.

Brooke Lieb and Charles Turyn will be offering mini-lessons at the May 3-5 Health Expo at the Penta Hotel in NYC.

BEST WISHES!

To June Graduates!

Sheldon Berkowitz

Robert Cohen

Sally Doran

Roz Glatter

Joel Simkin

**The American Center for
the Alexander Technique, Inc.®**
129 West 67 Street
New York, NY 10023



N. Brooke Lieb
856 West End Ave #1B
New York NY 10025

