

## Reflections On Running The Marathon (With Direction)

By Kim Jessor

As I ran around the corner into Central Park for the final stretch of the race, I realized that I would actually finish the New York City Marathon! Despite the fact that I had been running for more than 4 and 1/2 hours, this knowledge filled me with energy, and I began to sprint. Buoyed by blaring disco music and the yells of the spectators, I seemed to fly along, exhilarated and triumphant.

Crossing the finish line was a goal I had set exactly a year before. At last year's race, when I watched people of all ages, shapes, and physical conditions finish (my father among them), I was moved and fascinated. "What does it take to do this," I wondered? And then: "If they can do it, I can."

But at that point I had never run more than 5 miles, and had no concept, let alone kinesthetic experience of what it would mean to run 26.2. In fact, I was a relatively recent convert to the sport. For years I had looked on running with disdain, as an excruciatingly boring, masochistic activity for people intent on destroying their joints! Well, I had changed, and had come to discover the pleasure in it, the sense of joy, energy, power.

I began to train, and found that the Alexander Technique supported me in several specific ways. First of all, I would never have approached such a challenge without the experience of going into unknown territory that the Technique provides. Secondly, it was a reminder to stay in the present. Contemplating 26 miles was so daunting, so bordering on insanity that it was essential to constantly keep coming back to the moment, to the next step. It was literally a step by step process.

The Technique helped make the process interesting. There was much to discover about my use in those long hours of running. My ongoing internal dialogue went something like this: "What is that strange sensation in my left arch? Try releasing the ankle joint. More knee forward. Now back to neck free, head forward and up."

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## An End-Year Musing On The Alexander Technique

By Samuel S. Reiser

As we approach the year's end, it seems to be a common human disposition to survey it in a somewhat philosophical frame of mind. In my case, involvement with the Alexander Technique as well as the Alexander Community, has led me to articulate ideas of a theoretical, speculative nature. They relate in some fashion to the nature of our profession as Alexander Teachers. Hopefully, they do not violate the scientific basis of the work, including the experimental underpinning (Sherrington, Magnus, et al) nor the reasoning, implicit in our 'hands-on' teaching, validated in practice by many gifted teachers over the years. This article will present a holistic approach to personal growth utilizing the philosophy of the Technique, as I see it.

My initial introduction to Alexander's ideas was through the essays and novels of Aldous Huxley. He viewed Alexander's discoveries as having immediate application to the solution of problems in education, philosophy and religion. Although others, like John Dewey, saw similar connections, it was Huxley who excited me and led me to study and ultimately to begin lessons in the Technique. The character of Dr. Miller in "Eyeless in Gaza", loosely based on F.M., was, for me, a paragon among men who embodied the wisdom of science, a broad humane outlook and spirituality made most attractive, being free of all sectarian rigidities. In short, these ideas consoled and sustained me through the extended periods of mood swings, which characterize the transition from adolescence to early adulthood. In college, I began to look a little more critically at my infatuation with these ideas -- and encountered an intellectual and emotional impasse. I had innocently accepted the implicit assumption in these ideas that the transition of psychological development through its various stages into spiritual maturation, was a natural development, akin to ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. This was simply not so for most of the great innovators in psychology. With the exception of Jung, they did not make the leap from a personal to a transpersonal realm, nor did they hold out hope for the possibility of being

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## Notes From The TCP

By Kim Jessor

After one term in the position of Director, things seem to be going quite well at ACAT. It's been a time of a lot of growth and learning.

We've had several visitors from England this fall; John Nichols who gave a very stimulating workshop for the candidates, Adam Nott and John Hunter, the Chairman of STAT, who visited our classes and did some hands on work.

This term, we began a once a term "Processing and Discussion" time for the candidates. Each term this will be co-facilitated by two different faculty members. It is an opportunity for candidates to share emotional or intellectual ideas coming up in their training. The first one was facilitated by myself and Joan Frost.

For winter term 1992, we will have four new candidates. They are Shelley Senter, Sally Sullivan, Urs Sauer from Switzerland and Kaori Yoshino from Japan.

During winter term several faculty will take time off from teacher training. They are Pamela Anderson, Pearl Ausubel, Cynthia Knapp, Lorna Faraldi, Melanie Nevis, Joan Arnold and Becca Flannery. Judith Lakin will become a senior teacher for this term. I'd like to welcome Brooke Lieb as our newest associate faculty member.

The faculty has decided to go on a weekend retreat. This will take place in June in upstate New York. It will be an opportunity for us to do hands-on together, to review our curriculum and to work to deepen our skills and communication with each other. I look forward to it.

I'd like to thank Pamela Anderson for her guidance this term and wish her well for the birth of her new son.

## Notes From The Chair

By Lori Schiff

During the ninth term of training, my class had to write a paper about the Alexander Technique. Any aspect of the Technique was a possible topic and any approach to the topic was acceptable. I found that the Alexander Technique had effected me in so many ways that writing anything at all seemed impossible. How could I begin to put any of my experiences into words? All I could do then was to try to explain what I was beginning to understand in the form of some fictional letters.

As I think about these nine months as ACAT's Chairwoman, I feel that so much has happened that a letter is again, the best means for me to express myself.

Dear Judy,

I am writing to tell you of all that has gone on at ACAT since you left.

When I saw you leaving last year on December 30th, I made a promise to myself that I would do whatever I could to help the continuation and growth of your dreams.

Since March of 1991, I have been working as ACAT's Chairperson. Bill Connington stepped down and I was voted into his place by the Board of Directors. Bill was terrific as Chairman. I try to keep in mind his graceful, efficient approach to conducting the business of the Board. Now he is busy teaching and writing.

As I moved into Bill's position, a new Director was needed for the Board. We appointed Ruth Belding-

Nardini. She is a welcome presence on the Board with good ideas and a willingness to work.

The year has been full of change, particularly in the Training Course. A lot of it has been difficult as you might have guessed. All of it has been an expression of growth. Pamela Anderson requested a leave of absence from her job as training course director. This request created the space to temporarily redefine the job of Director of the TCP. After much thought and discussion, the job was divided into two positions, Director of TCP and Dean of Students and Admissions. Kim Jessor and Joan Frost are filling these roles currently. Pamela trained them and helped them get started during the summer. Kim and Joan have been working through some challenging situations in the training course in a way that exemplifies working through the means to achieve the ends.

There was a graduation in June. True to ACAT form, the 5 graduates displayed unusual creativity with true poise. They may have set a new record for speedy graduations ceremonies, too!

During August, the 3rd International Congress was held in Switzerland. I wish you could have been there. I remember that you had been planning to attend. Michael Frederick did a great job organizing the event. He said that originally, you were to be the keynote speaker. In fact, he said that your support energized the early stages of Congress planning and organizing.

One special evening was devoted to you in Switzerland. Most of the Congress participants attended, including many who had not had the pleasure of meeting you. Debbie Caplan and Eleanor Rosenthal shared memories of your presence in their lives. Walter Carrington also spoke

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## Thoughts On Energy And Creativity

By Sao Nunes

LET my Energy BE.

Use it explore it, open up the channels so it can flow, so the initial habits and mannerisms can drop away.

What I want is for the Energy to flow more and more through open channels in the body, ALL 'the body'.

The bones, the flesh, the veins, the soft masses of organs, the brain in its complexity, the heart, the psyche, the spirit, all IS body. To go deeper and deeper into each of these textures, into their individuality as well as into their inter-relationships will make for a more complete, integrated whole self which is creative.

Creativity is a part of our whole self, just like breathing, everyone is creative, we don't have to "make it", we just have to find it. Which cavity or which container, which fold guards or protects or secures or holds the potential for a particular expression of a part of ourselves? LET IT FLY.

Relating to this moment in my life, Saturday, the heat in the room, the sounds in the street, the contents of my heart, my last meal, my thoughts; it all producing my state of being, state of mind, I write out of my own experience in "creating," of my self in that "creating," and I shape my words into this text so that others will relate to the text from their own selves and their own experience.

That for me, is creating, linking my energy, my "content" into a particular form of expression, exterior to myself, which others will relate to. I do not make my creativity, I merely choose how to express the energy that is already there.

Therefore, the more open I can be to experiences, both conscious and unconscious; the more material I will have for my creativity. My body is an optimum vehicle for working on that openness, reaching and integrating all levels of my self.

Creativity exists as a potential; the more I can accept the dark and light shades of myself, my past, my present and

my future and the more I can uncover the blocks that might hold it back, it is there.

It was the poet Rilke who said, "We can only find what is already in us." This text, when I was born and held and I cried out my first cry, this text was already "there". The text was there as a potentiality in me, as a possibility, which the shape of my life, which is the shape of my energy, which is the VERY SHAPE OF ME, shaping my body, finally has brought into being, in this manner, in this moment.

Our potentials are there, but it is our awareness and the daily work on ourselves, that will bring forth the flexibility and articulation that each of us can bring into this world.

The wonderful thing is that my creativity, my being, will always have its own uniqueness and value and place, just as anyone else's. There is not a competition, nor and "Either me or you" situation, because I am unique, you are unique, we are all unique, and our creativity SAYS that too, based on our very individual energy, thought and life experiences. With no imposition from outside factors, I no longer view art or life as something "to do," to impress, to project, or even to please, but I see it as a way to bring out my own human and individual essence, at a level of DEPTH that makes it UNIVERSAL: true Art, TRUE LIFE.

What matters is that we have a direction that is ongoing and forward in the sense that it accompanies our life and relates the larger picture (Life process) to whatever other form we may also be involved in, such as, the energy work, learning, teaching, doing creative work, other professions or activities, and that we are able to be both in the larger picture and the the forms we choose to express to the world outside. In being in both, in relating to both, in becoming both and relating them to each other also, we are building our own PROCESS AND OUR OWN LIFE THROUGH IT. WHAT MATTERS IS TO LIVE.

**Writers Note:** Ron (Dennis), this the article I promised you long ago! Hope you enjoy it!

*(Notes from the Chair continued from page 2)*

so warmly of you, that I could not help but shed some tears. Tommy Thompson had a few words to share with all of us as well. Oh Judy, I wish you could have been there. Pearl, in a moment of incredible strength, spoke of your outstanding courage in life.

Now we are approaching the end of the fall term. Remember all those faculty meetings? There were three this term that were all business related. I missed the hands-on work we did in the past. But we needed the

time for discussions. As is the tradition at ACAT, the faculty continues to work together with integrity and a deep sense of commitment to the work, to the proper training of teachers and to the trainees.

The reaccreditation was granted by ACCET. So, we can continue the student loan program and we can accept "nonimmigrant aliens" into the training course. The amount of paperwork and the difficulty in explaining the Technique in bureaucratic language was awesome.

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*(Reflections on Running continued from page 1)*

I played with my focus, redirecting my energy. So many sensations! It was interesting to discover that an almost quadrupedal feeling came from using my arms in opposition to my legs, spiraling around my spine generated power. I was always struck by how head direction, when I was really feeling fatigued, would yield a hidden reserve of energy. When I dragged, it lighten me.

Finally, the Technique seemed to aid in a rapid recovery from the race. I had a lesson the next day, and the almost wooden stiff quality my muscles had immediately after the race moved quickly through my body. This resiliency surprised and encouraged me, as I had been led to believe it would take weeks to get there.

As I trained with colleague Lori Schiff, we shared Alexander insights. Together we ran many races. A favorite was the 7 am breakfast run in Central Park one warm July morning, after which hundreds of sweaty runners ate bagels at the elegant Tavern on the Green. Another high point was running together in Switzerland at the Alexander Congress. In the crisp early morning air, we ran through Alpine meadows, watched by grazing cows. (We also managed to take care of a lot of ACAT business at the same time!)

My own favorite regular solo run took me across the Brooklyn Bridge. In the fall, after dark, it was magical. The buildings were reflected in the dark river, and in the distance I could see the sparkling lights of the Verrazano Bridge where one day I would begin the race.

As I think back on that year of training, of gradually increasing distance and building endurance, it seems like an ongoing Alexander lesson. This was where I faced myself. During that time, I worked on myself, and learned about extending my limits. I reaffirmed the power of conscious direction and its application to vigorous activity. I was reminded daily of what it means to stay in the present. I tapped a great source of vitality.

The weather was perfect on the day of the race; sunny but cool and crisp. Lori and I started out together, and I ran the entire way with my father. The marathon went by swiftly, like a kind of dream. Although having run it is a source of pride, there is no way to hold on to the experience. All there is -- really-- is the next step.

Quotes for "The Courage to Create" by Rollo May, submitted by Sao Nunes.

"genuine creativity is characterized by an intensity of awareness, a heightened consciousness."

"Creativity is the encounter of the INTENSIVELY CONSCIOUS HUMAN BEING with his/her world."

*(End-Year Musing continued from page 1)*

happy in this life. Freud felt that the best his psychoanalytic approach could do was to change neurotic conflict to ordinary human unhappiness.

To recapitulate, the impasse is the boundary between traditional psychology and a transpersonal psychology; and, how is this boundary to be surmounted? By a leap of faith into the transpersonal or by further investigation of the nature of the boundary, so that it might be breached or dissolved? I could not make such a leap of faith. Therefore, I began to review my long years of indiscriminate reading in various fields to see if any of it could be used to answer my questions. I was led to reconsider the works of Ken Wilber, who is considered by his peers to be one of the foremost writers on consciousness and transpersonal psychology. He has established a clear connection between the various traditional schools of psychology and transpersonal psychology. The space allotted to me permits, at best, an outline of his ideas. For those wishing a deeper understanding, I have appended a bibliography.

In essence, Wilber presents a schema which he terms 'the spectrum of consciousness.' It is divided into four distinct levels: the persona level, the ego level, the total organism or centaur level and finally, unity consciousness. The persona level is contained within or enveloped by the ego level and both are contained or enveloped by the centaur level. The movement of the psyche between these levels is mediated by the psycho-physical mechanisms which characterize these levels. For example, if someone presents a persona (mask) to the world as a concerned charitable individual, and, at the same time shows a strong compulsion to save odd bits of string or old newspapers, this compulsion-symptom translates into the shadow form, which may be saying, "I don't what to give anything away." If the opposition between the persona and shadow is understood by removing the subconscious barrier, then the next level of the spectrum of consciousness, which is the ego, manifests and now contains within itself both persona and shadow. In like manner, the ego and the centaur levels undergo changes mediated by the psycho-physical mechanisms inherent to their particular level. At the centaur level, for most psychologists, movement toward a more highly evolved consciousness stops. Certainly, this level is most desirable because it leads to the integration of the mind-body into a unity of a very high order. But, from Wilber's viewpoint, something is incomplete. Although this unity is experienced as an immediate datum of consciousness, which he terms 'feeling-attention', it does not lead to unity consciousness via the psychological mechanisms utilized on the lower levels of the spectrum. What is missing is a praxis, a 'means-whereby' to experience a level of being based on the Perennial Philosophy. Wilber asserts that many of us, regardless of our varied backgrounds, intuit this level. It is a distillation of the esoteric practices of the world's great

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religions. Whereas the exoteric beliefs and practices of these religions can vary greatly, their esoteric context is amazingly similar: all sentient beings share a unitary consciousness which is the ultimate enlightened state in the eternal present. It eludes all logical analysis, since it is beyond all categories of thought. It simply is.

To recapitulate: the problem to be solved is, what are the means-whereby' to gain access to unitary consciousness? The mastery of the centaur state is the highest level of individual psychological development possible; yet it cannot access the unitary state. It is true that the resolution of problems on the centaur level is an important and necessary condition for the individual health and well-being; but, it is not and cannot be a sufficient condition for unitary consciousness. Wilber feels that the great barrier to overcome is the fear of losing our identity as a cherished, self-loving mind-body. In short, there is a fear of death when we attempt the ascent to a more embracing reality. In truth, we do not want unitary consciousness. Most of us would be content to rest in the pleasant state of perfect psycho-physical equilibrium.

The ascent to a more embracing reality is traditionally accomplished through meditation. Of this, there are many types, depending upon the religious tradition involved and they all require discipline and hard work. At this point, let us consider a type of meditation of Theravadin Buddhism known as vipassana. This is a practice that leads to insight into the impermanent nature of the mind-body by observing and noting the sensations arising and passing away in rapid succession. This leads ultimately to the realization that there is no permanent self and, therefore, nothing to oppose unity consciousness. This rapidly changing mind-body configuration observed by the meditator, is another name for the self which we struggle so hard to hold on to. Because it is forever changing, it forever eludes us. There is nothing to defend. IF, at this point, we ask, "who am I, who is this observer?", a profound shift, a metanoia may occur, which manifests as unity consciousness and channels one's life in the direction of compassion and service to humanity.

How does the Alexander Technique relate to all this? By now, we recognize it to be a profound, powerful centauric activity, because it is a praxis which is based upon and demonstrates the unity of the mind-body in all activities. The primary control of use is a law of nature: as pervasive in ourselves as is gravity in the universe. Utilizing it, we become capable of ultimately achieving a state approaching perfect psycho-physical equilibrium. Wilber would argue that this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for unity consciousness. I would argue, not too aggressively, that if it is not unity consciousness, it has a 'taste', a

'perfume' of something transcendent, of liberating to a higher sphere of being. Certainly, in conjunction with meditation, the Technique could make the adventure to unity consciousness more easily attainable.

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- 4) Wilber, Ken., "Eye to Eye", Anchor Press / Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1983. 5) Hart, William., "Vipassana Meditation", Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1987. 6) Maharshi, Ramana., "Collected Works", Edited by Arthur Osborne, Rider Press, London, 1969.

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*(Notes from the Chair continued from page 3)*

Pamela Anderson and Kathy Miranda were largely responsible for the work that went into the reaccreditation. We also had help from Ron Dennis, who is doing very well in Atlanta.

We are still looking for space for ACAT. Our 67th Street location has some advantages as well as some disadvantages. Unfortunately, real estate is still expensive in Manhattan. Hopefully, we will find the right place at the right time.

The Board recently approved a donation to the Alexander Archives at Tufts University. They are maintaining and expanding the collection of historical letters, documents and videos about the Alexander Technique. We also want to thank you for your contribution to ACAT. As you wished, it will go to the Judith Liebowitz Fund for Research and Development of the Alexander Technique. NASTAT, IRDEAT, ATI-LA and many others also made a contribution to your fund this year.

When I saw you for the last time, I was somewhat stunned. They brought you out to the car and drove away. We were all left in tears in one another's arms. I promised myself that I would do what I could, whatever that might be, to continue the realization of your dreams. As I think of you now, a year later, I am renewing that promise.

We all miss you, Judy.

With love and respect,

Lori

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## News from the Center

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Pearl Anzabel and Dr. John Austin! Dr. Austin reports, "after a long haul of data analysis, a million rewrites, and difficulties with disbelieving medical editors, our research has finally been accepted for publication in the respected mainstream medical journal Chest." ACAT will have reprints available.

**SPECIAL HARDCOVER SALE!** For only \$12 each, we have a limited quantity of hardback copies of *The Alexander Technique* by Judith Leibowitz and Bill Connington. For requests of 5 or more the price is \$10 per book. Great gift. Great to take along to your lecture/demo for selling to those who attend.

**KEEP US INFORMED!** Let ACAT know about teachers visiting the NYC area. We will post information about their visit and their teaching schedule on the bulletin board in room 401 for faculty and trainees.

**ACAT INVITES VISITING TEACHERS TO PRESENT CLASSES:** Visiting Teachers who wish to present an ACAT sponsored workshop for trainees, faculty or members should present their proposal in writing to the ACAT Board. ACAT will provide space, equipment and will pay the teacher or speaker a fee determined by the Board.

**LIBRARY** - Recent acquisitions include: **SUMMING UP** - Brief autobiography of FM and summary of his four books, donated by Alexander Murray. Also **NOT PULLING STRINGS** by Joseph O'Connor an exploration of music and instrumental teaching using neuro-linguistic programming includes a chapter on physical habits which features the Alexander Technique. Also, **TOWARD A NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN** by Jean Baker Miller, donated by Sao Nunes.

**HIGH TOUCH HIGH TECH** -- Melanie Nevis is going to work on-site with several neuroscientists of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine on their use in the lab.

Certified American Heart Association instructor - available for infant, child and adult CPR instruction. Emphasis on cardiac care and nutrition. Call Ellen Melamed 662-7217.

Studio Sublet, up to 2 years, 103rd & RSD, available Apr 1, 92. Ron Dennis 404- 841-0386.

**AVAILABLE in 1992** - From the Alexander Technique Association of New England, *The Collected Writings of Frank Pierce Jones on the Alexander Technique*, a series of 36 publications will be reprinted for the first time in one volume. ATA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is "to foster teaching and research, and to encourage use of materials in the F. Matthias Alexander Archival Collection and The Frank Pierce Jones Collection in the archives of the Wessell Library at Tufts University." ACAT has a list of all the materials in the Alexander/Jones Collections. These materials can be viewed in person or for a small fee you can obtain copies through ATA.

*"The way of no effort is to rest in pure consciousness and let grace abound, or to rest in pure consciousness and provide an avenue through which grace can be directed by maintaining a gentle intention for desired unfoldments."* Excerpt from *Prospering Can Be Natural*, Unity School of Christianity. Submitted to the Newsletter from Marybeth Hranlotis.

**Statistical Note:** Approximately 1/3 of NASTAT members are ACAT graduates.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS** - the ACAT Annual membership meeting will be held Sunday, February 9 from 2-4 pm in Room 401 at the Kaufman Cultural Center (previously Hebrew Arts School).

**ACAT ON THE RUN** - A new world record was established by ACAT on Nov 3rd. At least, we believe this was a world record for Alexander societies. Our Training Course Director, Kim Jessor and our Chairwoman for the Board, Lori Schiff completed the NYC Marathon. These two administrative directors blazed across the finish line (displaying remarkably good use) in under 5 hours!! Kim was teaching at ACAT the following morning and Lori spent the morning after freeing head, neck and back in the whirlpool at the Paris Health Club. She worked on a new mental direction "Legs releasing into the jets" or something like that. Kim and Lori attribute their achievement to focusing on the *means* throughout training and the race itself. They both plan on running next year. Their goal will be to complete the race in the top 18,000 finishers. The "means whereby" for training includes doing less faster!

We are saddened to report the deaths of Dr. Wilford Barlow and Patrick MacDonald.

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