Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 3, Day 4, Session 4 — 50 minutes

Summary: With eyes open, then blindfolded, the lesson moves from standing into sensing the body and the space around it, including the back. On the floor, rolling and twisting bring kinesthetic feeling and attention outward together, eyes and limbs sometimes going opposite ways, before coming to sitting and standing.

Sensing left and right

Okay, so, begin getting a sense of your standing, and your eyes open to start.

Sense into the ground. Project attention down. Sense into your height upward.

Sense the right side of your body, your eyes open, the right side of your body, anything you can sense about the right side of your body. And then project attention out to your right, into space.

Notice how you do that. And then notice how you take the direction, sense the left side of your body, how you manifest that movement of attention.

Then how you open it to include the space to your left.

And then slowly let your arms open out to the side, thinking, sensing your arms and thinking left and right. Notice if that's possible.

And one way to find out is to intentionally go back and forth, left then right, left then right, and then notice, could you have left and right? Could you have both directions?

Let your eyes be open.

Back space

Pause for a moment. Sense the back of your body, how you know your back is there, what you do with your attention to have the back of your body come forward on the screen of your attention.

And then, if you project into your back space, if you include the space behind you as part of your world, come to something like the middle of your mat, and put on your blindfold.

And I'll say it once more. Anytime if you find you're not satisfied with your blindfold, or it's cumbersome or uncomfortable, you can experiment with mine. And I also have cotton pads you can put on your eyes, if that would be helpful for you.

And just get a sense of the back of your body, and the back space, the space behind you.

Put your palms open backward. You might actually be able to sense into the back space. You might notice, maybe, if something comes through your palms that gives you a sense of space behind you.

It's kind of interesting, the way our brain is used to, from infancy, touching the world to know it.

And go backwards a few steps, so you can feel the edge of your mat, or near there.

And let yourself, from your back space, from being in the back, just let yourself take a few steps forward, freely if possible, light and free. So you go a few steps forward, towards what you imagine to be the front of your mat, or in the direction of the front of you.

And then just let your hands kind of rest, and feel space behind you, space to your right, space to your left.

Turning

And begin to turn from your golden ball. Let your knees soften, turn your pelvis, keep your feet basically where they are. The heel can lift, but you're not moving your feet so that your toes are facing a different direction. You're just turning.

As if you're orienting to the space right behind you. You're bringing your nose, and your chest turns, and your pelvis turns, and you're projecting attention into the directions that you're facing, and including, from the feeling of your body, out into space.

Ground to be here, and the breath sometimes goes more quickly.

Let your arms swing, but not too far out if you think someone might be close by. They can swing. You probably have enough room for them to swing a bit and to feel into space.

And notice, as you continue going, what it's like to bring attention to where your back is pointing, so that your back space becomes your interest, where your back is oriented toward.

That's possible. Nice.

Pause in standing.

Opening the arms

Put your arms straight out in front of your chest, with the palms facing toward each other, approximately shoulder distance apart, and begin to move your right arm right, left arm left, slowly.

And imagine that you're orienting to each hand, and the direction the hands are pointing in, so that you're including the space, the front space into the side space.

And you're letting your eyes, even though they're not seeing, widen as they open out, as if the eyes are tracking the hands. And then let them come together, widen out. And in the widening, there's a sense of the face widening, chest widening.

And when your arms are way out to the sides, let them just rest for a moment. Come down.

And feel the width. Feel the width of your space.

Your arms just hanging, turn from your center, left into that space, as if from your chest out you can include that whole world. And then you come around to front, and then rightward, projecting out.

And continue with the same movement, but thinking out your back, as if you could see there were eyes on your shoulder blades. That there was a presence coming out of your back, and you were interested in the world behind you.

On your back

And please come onto your mat. Come onto your back. The feet are towards the windows.

Sense yourself here, how you orient, what it is to be in this position.

Turn your head just to the right and back to neutral. And you're experimenting with sensing the changes in your body, just to the right and back to neutral, the changes in your body, as you're also experimenting with projecting attention out into the space you're turning toward.

And we're wanting to move in the direction of having both of those maps. There seems to be a neurological mapping that we do of the inner space and the outer space. And these maps are worked with together, combined. They're a way of orienting ourselves in space.

So just feel. Can you feel your body? I'm here. I feel my head rolling. I can feel my neck and shoulders, just going right and back to neutral. And I'm projecting out into space.

That's good.

Arms to the right

And then put your hands together. Lengthen your arms above your chest.

Let's feel that movement. Hands touching, keeping the elbows long, and bringing the arms and head to the right.

Explore that, and again, feeling the shift in your body, the kinesthesia. The hands stay touching, so you only go as far as you can comfortably.

Start with the legs long, and feel that movement in your chest, in your shoulders. The elbows stay long. Even if you only move a couple of inches, that's fine.

And it's an experiment in attention, from the kinesthetic feeling of your body, and projecting in the direction your hands are pointing.

And then bend your left leg. And push off the leg, turn your pelvis, and of course the arms will likely come down a little further.

Let your golden ball turn. Let the knee stay towards the vertical as much as it can, but let your head, let your eyes, let your pelvis all go rightward.

And feel that go all through you. And let your eyes go all the way rightward.

And when you get as far as you can comfortably, maybe resting on the floor with your right arm, maybe not, stay there to the right, and lengthen your left leg.

And then come just a little bit back with your arms, just enough that the right arm lifts off the floor, the right elbow, then go back to the right.

And then come a bit more, but listen deep in your torso, how you stabilize, how you keep from rolling or tightening, how you can distribute the efforts.

Your hands are together. Keep your hands together. Your left heel is on the floor. Your legs are long, but your left foot is not resting on your right foot. The left foot's on the floor. That's it.

And you just lift both arms together off the floor, so you're still more or less on your right side, but you're coming a little bit towards your back. The legs are long right now. The left leg is long as well. That's it.

And you're feeling, you might not be able to come back very far. You might be able to come all the way to your back. We don't know. It might be just a couple of inches. But feel your breathing.

That's good. And come to your back and pause once again. Come to your back. Lower your arms.

And just get a sense of the world to your right, the right side of yourself.

[Silence 43 seconds]

Knees to the right

Bend both legs, and cross your right leg over the left leg at the knee. You can move your left foot more towards neutral if you like.

And slowly, slowly lower the knees a bit to the right, and then back up, and a bit more. Your arms are just resting on the floor comfortably, and you're just experimenting, not forcing.

So it's not the ankle on the knee, but the leg is crossed all the way over. That's it.

And you're lowering the knees a bit right, and sensing how that changes the weight on the ground, how the right side gets more present on the ground, and the left side lifts more.

And slowly let your head turn with the legs, so that your nose and your knees are at approximately the same angle. Your nose and knees follow each other. Your awareness, your attention, needs to move throughout your whole body. You're tracking your head and your knees.

And if you have a sense that you can track that through your body, also open the attention into the space that your knees and nose are pointing toward, that space to the right of you.

So we're growing our capacity to attend. And if that's too much, then bring it back to where you're focusing in, into your bodily sensation.

That's good.

And could you do all that and have the eyes go to the left? Everything else stays the same. You're moving your eyes leftward.

Okay, and then uncross your legs, pause for a moment, and just rest here.

[Silence 48 seconds]

Arms and legs to the right

Bend your legs, cross the right leg over the left, extend the arms towards the ceiling with the hands touching, and slowly, only as much as you can do without falling, lower the arms and the legs towards the right.

But listen to the balance. Listen to the balance.

So you only go as far as you can do without falling. It's possible you'll feel, oh, I can lower really down to the right, the right arm can even come to the floor, and I don't fall. Or it could be you go three inches and you feel like you're going to fall. You listen. Keep breathing.

It doesn't matter how far you go. It's attending throughout your body and into space that we're working with.

Let the left foot have contact with the floor.

Good. Okay.

And the next couple of times, everything's the same except the eyes go leftward. The eyes go leftward.

Good.

And as you come back this time, pause, and rest. Just rest there.

Sense how your body on the right and left side are different, maybe, and how the space to your right and left may be sensed a little differently.

[Silence 45 seconds]

Where things are

Let your image come. Where is the door that's near the tea room, in relation to your body right now? How far would you suspect it is?

Where is the elevator?

Notice how you can project your mind into space. Your brain is mapping your world always.

Think of the door near the stairs.

How high is the ceiling?

Where is the fireplace?

Can you sense where your golden ball is?

Go to the center of the universe right there. Center of your universe.

Interesting. You know, the universe is truly infinite and expanding. The center of your universe is right there.

Everything else is equal direction.

To the left

Lengthen your arms towards the ceiling.

Think of the space to your left. Think out to your left.

Let your hands touch, with your arms long, so your hands are in contact.

And imagine lowering your arms to the left. Just imagine it. Imagine what that will feel like, what will happen to the right shoulder, how that will go through your back, how far you'll go before you'll start having to push yourself. And you don't want to push yourself.

And then go ahead and do it. Experiment with going leftward, sensing your body and the space.

So the hands are above your chest, long, lowering leftward. Let your head go with the arms.

Sense how your whole chest turns.

And if this idea of projecting attention into space feels very obscure, only do it a little bit. Focus more on your physical sensations, and just nibble a little bit at opening space as a place you can actually attend to.

It's a progression, between being able to feel from yourself out into space, and then turning the light around, sensing yourself from that larger place. It's a practice.

And then please bend your right leg and push off your right leg, keeping the knee vertical, so you can feel how the pelvis turning helps your arms and chest and head, and your eyes can turn, and you can enter that whole world out to your left.

So bend your right leg, and lower the arms to the left, turning your pelvis, pushing off that foot so the pelvis, the golden ball, turns, and your arms grow out from there.

And then when your arms are as far as is comfortable to the left, maybe the left arm is resting on the floor, maybe it's just near the floor, lengthen your right leg so the heel is on the floor. And you're experimenting.

This is wonderful for core support, really physically deep in your body.

So begin where your arms are all the way leftward. You bent your right leg, you turned to the left, lowered your arms as far as is comfortable, then you lengthen your right leg, but the right side of your pelvis will still be in the air. And you lower yourself back a little bit towards your back, and then return to your left side.

And then a little bit more. Both legs are long, and you're navigating the territory.

When you have a sense of your physical body, you're then opening out into the spatial body, the sense of space around your body.

Okay, and as you come back, pause once again, please. Lower your arms, and feel how your image of space and the sense of your body changes. Grows.

[Silence 51 seconds]

Legs to the left

And bend your legs. Bend both legs. Cross the left leg over the right leg, and first just think for a moment that you'll be lowering your legs leftward. Just think it, and imagine that sense through your back, how it will feel, left over the right, and imagine what that will feel like.

Imagine how that will shift in your back, how the weight will change on the floor. And when you're imagining that, also imagine that you're turning your head to the left.

And then once you have an imagination of that, go ahead and do that. Legs left, head left.

Your arms are just resting. It's just head and legs.

Your eyes are left. Everything is left, and it's like you're opening into that space as well as into that side of yourself.

Projecting your attention out, you're rippling into that space.

And then, can you let your eyes experiment with going right while everything else goes left?

[Silence 32 seconds]

That's it. And then just the last couple of times, let the eyes go with the movement, just a couple more times, and then you take a pause.

Sense your back on the ground. Sense how much of your back is on the ground.

Can you imagine that your back space can be awake to the texture of the ground?

So let your legs be long and just rest now, and sense into the ground. Feel the texture of your mat and the carpet, and projecting attention deeper.

[Silence 41 seconds]

Arms and legs to the left

Bend your legs, cross your left over your right, extend your arms towards the ceiling, put your hands together, and lower everything leftward, only as far as is really okay, that you're not falling, that you're not straining. And you're listening to how you get the support, that you can modulate the movement, that you can move with some kind of flow, and you notice where your edge is, and what has to come awake deep in your pelvis so that you're able to move smoothly.

Good.

Okay, and then come back up. Pause for a moment. Lower down your legs and arms.

[Silence 47 seconds]

Opposite directions

Bend your legs. Cross your right leg over your left leg.

Slowly lower your legs to the right and your head to the left. Just let your arms rest at first.

Legs right, head left, and you're tracking, and you're thinking out in the direction your knees are pointing and the direction your nose is pointing. And you experiment, kind of play with opening attention from your body.

We begin in the bodily sense, and we open out into space, right and left.

It's an experiment in attention, so don't conclude, well, I just can't do that because it's challenging. Experiment. Play with it. Be playful with the movement of your body and the attention out into space.

And then extend your arms towards the ceiling, and have your arms at first go with your head, the elbows long, so it may be a small movement, to bring your knees rightward and your head and arms leftward.

With the elbows long, it may be small. That's okay.

But could you project your attention in the direction that the hands are pointing and the knees are pointing?

And just to deconstruct it a little bit more, let your eyes go with the knees.

So your head is going with the arms leftward, and your eyes are going with the knees rightward.

That's great.

Okay, come back to neutral. Just cross over your legs the other way. Rest your arms for a moment. Left leg over the right, and lower the legs left and the head right.

Let your arms just rest. Left leg on top, legs left, head right.

You're just tracking that through your whole spine, this kind of wonderful twist through your spine.

If you don't force it, it's really wonderful for your vertebrae to get a little space between them. You just listen to yourself. It's a wonderful way to lengthen the spine, this kind of counter rotations, or twisting.

That's it.

And then extend the arms towards the ceiling. Let the arms go with the head. Let the legs go opposite, so legs left, arms and head right.

Maybe very small. That's not a problem. That you're extending your attention from your body out in both directions is the practice.

And let your eyes go with the legs.

Keep both elbows long, but only go as far as you can where both elbows are long.

Somehow that shoulder has to be able to move for the arms to stay long.

That's nice. Great.

Then come back to neutral. Lower down.

Width

And just rest with your arms out at shoulder height, left and right. Just resting with that sense of width.

So there's a length to the vertical axis. Your hands are at shoulder height, out to your side. The feeling of the width of yourself, the length of yourself.

So your hands are out to the sides at shoulder height, just extending your attention in space, through your body.

[Silence 54 seconds]

Coming up

Smoothly, slightly turn your head a little bit.

Find your way up to sitting.

Take a moment as you come to sitting to feel your shape.

Sense of space around your body.

Sense of your back space. Feel what it's like. Just turn your head and look left and right, as if you could, just feel the quality of turning in yourself.

You're orienting around this whole vertical axis.

And then find your way to standing.

And just kind of give yourself a moment to relate to the space around you, that your knees and ankles can be soft. You turn around as if you're just including the whole space around your body, your back space, the side spaces.

So important for our fluidity that we are more than frontal.

Feel the quality of your back, your front.

Move forward and back on your mat. If you can move with some ease, let yourself kind of get freer in that movement.

Sense your length, and your back.

Take off your eye cover.

Just enjoy the shifting into including vision. How the visual world and your kinesthetic mapping — around a little bit, feel the influences, those spaces around you, as well as your own bodily sense.

Closing

Okay, it's time for lunch, and you don't need to take it now, but if you want to, you can.

I've got an article I don't believe I've given you in the past, a really, really nice, simple little article about attention and the bodily sense.

Now, so many people talk about the importance of sensing the body, but many work with it, and those that do, do. It's an interesting perspective on that. That was in Scientific American.

Nice.

What are you doing with this?