Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 4, Day 3, Session 5 — 54 minutes

Summary: A caring self-touch on the legs, then floor work: a passive head, hands receiving the skull, and movement from the golden ball through pelvis and spine. Thought is followed into action. Stroking the legs, playing with the feet, and rising to side sitting let the whole body move as one.

On your feet

And standing, feeling your center, and feeling — letting your ankles have some give, your knees have some give.

Very helpful for that reptilian brain, as well as the rest of ourselves, to get that really good grounded sense over and over and over.

And let's just use our hands on our legs.

Get one here. It's a gentle, caring touch. You know, that we can actually, with our own touch, give care to ourselves.

It's interesting to notice — are you more identified with the toucher, the one being touched, or kind of equally identified?

And then continue on. Take your time also.

From people that I've worked with, the self-touching was a real breakthrough in terms of working with historical trauma.

Many of us, we don't, you know, except in very perfunctory ways — the shampoo or whatever — we don't really take in the blessing of our own touch. You know, we're taught that that's somehow weird.

And that's your whole body.

Okay, just feel. Just feel.

Now, how does our brain process our own touch?

The urge of the hands, as we've said before, and as you felt before, to go to our chest or to go to our belly — that's, we could say, in terms of the brain, what I was talking about for the mammalian. But these are our feeling places.

To touch our whole body in this kind of affirming way is lower, actually. It's connected to: I can have a sense of my body and it's not on alert, that I can help it to settle down.

And so I'd like to — yeah, I'd like to do some movement first, just kind of settling the whole system and then getting active. So kind of going from a quiet thing to an activity, and it would be, hopefully, a sense of smoothness.

So let's start on our backs.

[Silence 39 seconds]

A passive head

And just take a moment to sense yourself here. Sense your breathing. Sense the ground.

And put your right hand on your forehead and turn your head to the left and back to neutral, but really find out — can you let your head be passive?

I'm very interested in how allowing our head to be moved is a certain letting go of control that has important consequence.

Feldenkrais would spend a lot of time just turning people's heads. Said he could feel more about a person turning their head than anything.

I once saw him give a half hour lesson, and 25 minutes was spent turning the person's head.

First, see, for us right now is: can we allow the functioning of the head and neck to be passive to another force, and allow us to be moved?

The eyes soften and the jaw soften.

And can the arm rest for a moment?

And let yourself rest here on the floor.

Let your left hand come to your forehead and just gently push to the right, neutral.

It doesn't have to be far. It can be in a small range where it's very smooth and light. The key is that you're letting the head be passive. Letting the eyes soften and the jaw soften.

A certain deep safety, when we can let the eyes and jaw soften and let the head be moved, means we're not vigilantly watching — a sense of inner safety.

And let that pause, and bend both legs.

Hands on the skull

Place both hands on your skull somewhere, and just feel — through the hair, through the scalp, through the bone.

Sense your breath. You're receiving the touch, letting it permeate through you.

Find another place on your skull. Place your hands, and the feeling of receiving.

Letting those cells absorb, letting the tissues absorb the presence of your own touch. Letting that go all the way through.

And one more place that you can touch and really have this receptive feeling. Inviting the scalp, any unnecessary tensions, to go. Letting the jaw, letting the fingers and hands rest there.

When our eyes, jaw, and hands can be at ease, there's a real deep rest in the whole nervous system.

How we grasp at the world with our hands, with our mouths, with our eyes. Those feel at ease. There's a deep rest that occurs.

Lower your arms.

Being rolled

Come onto your front.

[Silence 32 seconds]

Put your forehead on the ground and put your hands to the sides, your elbows in the air, so you can lean on your hands.

You can find out: can your head be passive to your arms and shoulders?

So the elbows are in the air if possible, the hands are on the floor, and you're pushing off of one arm and then the other, and letting the head roll — but not from the neck. It's like it's being rolled.

And let that go through, slow and smooth.

Feel the change of pressure in your hands. Feel the movement across your shoulder blades. Your forehead is on the ground, and the head is being rolled.

And you're really inviting a receptiveness in the head and neck, letting the eyes hang and soften, letting the jaw be at ease.

And feel how far down your body this goes. Remember our work from yesterday. Feel how the chest receives the movement, the lower back receives it or not.

Okay, and then pause. The arms rest.

The golden ball

Think of the golden ball — your lower belly, front of your sacrum.

Notice if the breath moves through the golden ball.

Let your forehead rest on your hands, and feel the turning of your pelvis, left and right.

And feel how that goes through your legs, like we explored yesterday — how one side lifts, and the leg can yield a little bit, and the knee can bend a little bit.

But feel also what happens through to your head, through to the space between your shoulder blades. Feel that.

You imagine that this whole movement is originating in the golden ball, radiating out through you from the golden ball.

Let the legs soften in response to the pelvis. The knee can bend out a little bit. You need space between your feet so the knees can yield a little bit.

And it's so healthy for all those joints to be functioning together in that integrated and harmonious way.

Good. Okay, and pause. Rest there for a moment.

[Silence 54 seconds]

Put your forehead on the floor, put your elbows in the air, and roll your pelvis. And as you roll your pelvis, also feel when you would push off of which arm to help your head roll, and then the other arm.

So the movement begins at the golden ball, and it continues through your legs and arms, so that you feel a rotation of the whole spine.

The forehead is on the floor, and the head is rotated from the golden ball, radiating through the space between the shoulder blades and the arms.

So again, for movement to travel through the whole body in integrated ways is healing for any of the joints that are having trouble. You don't let them move so much that they're hurting, but you let it go through your whole body.

And from your pelvis as the source of power, everything is connected to that.

Good. That's great.

Okay, pause. Look to the right.

Thought into action

Just feel the movement of bending your right knee so the foot goes in the air. Feel the bending up. Do that a number of times. Just feel how that occurs.

Up and down, but notice the movement from the thought to the activation. Go slow enough that you can actually feel the very beginning.

And get in touch with the shifting of weight that occurs at the very beginning of bending your right foot and letting it come off the ground.

So let the right foot come in the air towards the ceiling, and you're sensing how it's activated.

And let that presence, that consciousness, move through that whole leg, so you can really get to know that knee, that ankle, that foot, and how it's connected to your gluteals and the back of your thigh and your back. And you can sense how thought becomes action by following the thought into manifestation.

Ultimate creative act.

Ultimate act of self-expression is how you're going to use your attention.

Good, and then leave that for a moment. Turn your head to the left, and do that same action.

Go slow. Think of your left leg. Turn to the left, think of your left leg.

And can you actually follow the thought before you lift it? Actually sense how the thought — before the foot lifts, there's all this activity.

Can you sense the preparatory?

As the thought moves in the direction of manifesting, there's all this inner movement.

Wonder if you can follow the process of thought into action.

It's quite remarkable to be inside the manifestation of a thought. Inside the creative act — the thought, I'm going to lift my foot — and to feel it manifest as nerve impulses way before the foot lifts off the floor.

There's all this activity as thought begins to create itself into action, begins to embody itself.

Good.

And turn back once again to the right side. Your head is to the right, and let both feet come into the air.

Go slow. Feel that process.

What surprises you? What presses the ground, maybe, or what else lifts? What surprises you about the process of lifting the feet into the air?

And let your attention go all the way through, so you don't just stop at the legs, but you actually think through the body. That you actually can have attention in the space that you're moving through.

And is one leg any more present for you, or closer, or brighter, or darker, bigger, less accessible — or any distinctions you can make about the presence of each leg?

And after a little bit, turn your head to the left, because that can influence the experience of the legs.

That's good. Good.

Okay, leave that. Come onto your back for a little bit. Just get a pause on your back.

Your own touch

It extends through your legs.

Especially those of us who have injuries want to learn to stream attention through the limbs. That's streaming, where you don't just go to a hurt area, but you stream through the limbs, a fluidity through, out to the feet, feeling that you're alive in there.

How are the legs alive?

[Silence 31 seconds]

Bend your legs, and place both hands on your left thigh near the hip, the upper left thigh, and just take your time.

Stroking the leg. You can lift the foot off the floor, but have the idea that you're going to gently touch every millimeter of your leg — back, front, sides — all the way from your pelvis through your foot.

So take your time.

And the sense is that you're both in your legs and in your hands, and consciousness is meeting through the touch, into the surface. So it's like you're permeating through by extending your attention into the leg.

And is it possible that there's actually some kind of healing in your own touch, in your own presence?

And feel your breathing. Let your jaw be at ease. Let your eyes be at ease.

Touch yourself as if you're touching someone you care about.

So it's not an object. It's not just a thing down there. This is intimacy throughout oneself.

When you feel complete with your left leg, just pause for a little bit and just sense the influence.

You go deeper than the first impression if you settle in and feel how the interior of the leg has been influenced by your touch.

And it takes a little time to enter it. The door doesn't necessarily open immediately.

As you give more time, you might start sensing something like a vibration, something like a pulse.

[Silence 44 seconds]

Bend your legs, and bring your hands to your right leg, and take your time sensing through your right leg. Really take your time.

This is an experiment in consciousness more than anything. It's bringing your attention into this meeting and penetrating through the surface.

And letting your care be alive in your hands and in your intention and in your heart.

The thought that you're giving care to someone you care about.

[Silence 2 minutes]

And when you feel complete, you can pause. Still getting value, continue a little more.

And you can listen to how that's alive, how that resonates through you.

The light to be in the legs. Can one have a feeling of being in one's legs, and knowing that one's in there?

The lead eye

Please roll onto your front.

Organize your hands so the elbows are in the air. Just get that feeling of being able to roll your head a bit from side to side.

So your head is not being moved from your head. The head is being rolled from the arms. It's letting the head go. That's the main point of this.

If you're just turning your head in the usual way, it's not it.

And then, remember yesterday, as we would turn and the pelvis would bend and we'd look over a shoulder, or in that direction. See if you can find how to get support from your hands, let the knees bend to the side a little bit, and you can lift your head off the floor.

Now you get to lift your head and look over a shoulder, so you really need to get the support of your arms. Let your eyes lead you.

Your eyes can lead you, and there's a feeling all the way through that there's a connection from the golden ball to your eyes. Letting the knees bend to the side now, and let the head lift to look over the shoulder.

And again, you may not actually see, but you're looking towards that bending hip. Let the knee bend to the side.

That's it. That's it.

And feel how you can get that support from your arms and the lift. Your eyes are connected, and it's like your lead eye. When you're looking to the right, your right eye — it's almost like it's lifting the head, and it's connected.

That's it. Good.

Okay, and then just pause on your front.

A light spirit

Let both legs bend in the air — both legs long, let them come in the air. And let the knees separate so you can have your soles touch each other a little bit, kind of play footsie a little bit.

Remember the Hafiz poem with footsie? Remember that one?

So, you play. I'll give it to you.

A few lines he loves, on fear, and on living in better conditions.

Isn't that a great line?

He says the opening again. Then playfulness and love in the eyes, and once playing together, hearts that are very old friends. He says that part again.

Let your feet begin to slide down the lower leg of the other leg, so you can have not only the sole, but the back. So really let the feet actively play with the other leg.

It can have a kind of light spirit, and that is so helpful.

You know, we get to mobilize the legs, not by exercising, but by playing. Really get the joints working together and getting the brain tuned. How the pelvis needs to move.

And some kind of old feeling, or very young feeling, very long ago feeling.

That's it.

And let both feet go down to the right and both feet go down to the left. You're letting the knees go, and so when they go down to the right, the left side of the pelvis lifts a little, and when they go down to the left — so you feel that movement through you.

And then just before we rest, put your elbows in the air and find that way of looking over your shoulder, kind of towards the hip that's lifted, and the feet go down.

So when the feet go down to the right, you're kind of looking over your left shoulder.

And if there's a way you can have a sense of both elbows getting a little bit long, so you don't collapse into the back elbow — that arm also pushes some. So when you're looking over your right shoulder, your left shoulder can also lift some.

And your feet are just coming down, and there's this feeling from your pelvis, as if this empowerment from your middle kind of rolls down, your head comes up. It's like your eyes are connected to your foot or something.

When you look over your left shoulder, the left eye is looking for the left foot. And when you look over the right shoulder, the right eye is looking for the right foot. And where'd you go? It's like they're attached.

Hello there.

Good. And then a little quicker, faster, lighter, just back and forth. Easy, light. That goes through you.

So when the legs go down to the left, look over your right shoulder. When the legs go left, look over your right — right, right, that's it. And when your legs go down to the right, let that go through, so it's a spiraling.

Okay, leave it. Lie on your back a little bit. Enjoy your life on the floor.

You have to love Hafiz, right? He comes up with images like that.

Persian poet, Hafiz. Another one of his brilliant ones. You've probably heard me say it before, but we could hear him a thousand times.

He offers it again — simply to lie there and rest, on separation from love. He says that much again.

For your separation from life, from self, from harmony, from connectedness —

[Silence 31 seconds]

From the middle

Come over onto your front, please.

And put your legs together. Put your knees together, let your knees be together, let your ankles be together. Put your hands on the floor, the elbows in the air, the feet in the air.

So it's as if your knees are tied together and your ankles are tied together at the beginning. And so look towards your right to start.

And as you feel the golden ball, and you lower the feet towards your left, look over your right shoulder. Push off your hands. Look over your right shoulder.

So let your back arm also have some weight, and you push off. That right elbow gets kind of long. And then let the feet go down to the right and look over your left shoulder.

So feel this all through you.

So you're letting the knees and ankles at first stay together, and it's like the golden ball turns, and you want to see where your feet are going.

You want to make sure your feet aren't going into any alligator mouths or anything. You know those — those California alligators.

And then as you continue, let the upper leg go behind you. So reach back with your upper leg and look over that shoulder, and you'll find you can actually begin to come up towards sitting.

You can actually be lifted by your pelvis.

So your arms will help a little bit, but it's the leg coming back towards side sitting.

And you need to make sure you don't let the back shoulder get collapsed down. So listen to how you can follow, all the way up.

Beware of your neighbors, of course. You'll need some sense of timing with your neighbors.

But your eye wants to see. When you're looking over your right shoulder, your right eye wants to see your right foot. And where is it going? What's it going to touch back there?

And let the knee also come to the floor so that you end up in side sitting. So the knees separate as you come up. So you end up in side sitting.

And then from your center, roll down. From your center, roll down.

Let that upper leg reach back. Let the upper leg reach back.

And then you can actually let your upper leg reach back as you come up. Right. And then let the legs separate as you come up.

So you're really being carried up from your middle. The golden ball gets active. So you actually end up needing very little power from your arms. You just need your arms not to interfere. They need to support, and reach back.

And when you let your leg come back to side sitting, come back. It's like the leg keeps going. The leg will bring you up. The leg will bring you up. It's moved from your middle.

That's nice. That's it.

You guys got a harmony going here. There we go. Yeah, synchronize. Yeah, got four of them going. There we go.

Join in. Go ahead. You got it. There we go.

Let that leg come back, right? There we go. Yes, nice.

And let that leg come back as you come up, so you're side sitting.

Let the inside of your right knee come inside a lot. Yeah, as you come up. And the other leg — you just end up in side sitting.

That's good. That's good.

Okay, lie on your back.

The whole moving

Feel. You get your whole body moving together. The parts that have trouble tend to get carried by the other parts, and they can be restored.

It's like this is the family therapy notion of movement — that the healthy parts get healthier, and they can help the ones who are struggling more.

And so we don't focus on the hurt part. We get the whole movement, and the whole body moving.

See, well, what's not connected yet? How can I get that in harmony with the rest of the self?

You'll be breathing.

And bend your legs, and just take a moment with your left hand on your left leg, your right hand on your right leg, and just stroke your legs for a moment. See if you can get the legs really light, coming off the floor, just really light and easy.

Enjoying your own touch.

So we start with the same side, right to right, left to left. And then once you've stroked the whole legs, then you can do the cross. You can go over, and it's again a little more neurologically complex. We tend to go from simpler to more complex.

You feel all the way through, enjoying your own precious touch.

That's it.

This is a combination of stroking the lizard and feeding the mammals.

Good. Good, good.

Okay, and roll to your side, come on up. See how that feels when you come up.

[Silence 33 seconds]

Feel what your height is like, what your center is like, with the overall feeling of yourself, when you get your whole body moving, harmony like that.

And walk and move a little bit.

How we doing out there? Yeah.

Okay, my friends, it's dinner time.