Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 4, Day 5, Session 6 — 29 minutes

Summary: Lying on the back, the lesson joins breath pauses with very light movement: lifting the head and a foot, rolling the head, side-bending, and letting the pelvis, head, and arms turn as if a wind were moving them. Effort is reduced until action comes from thought, and the quality is carried into sitting and a silent dinner.

Lifting with the breath

Lie on your back. Actually, leave it open.

[Silence 37 seconds]

Bend your legs. Put your right ankle on your left thigh near the knee and interlace your hands under your head.

And just very lightly, as you softly come to your inhale and feel a moment's pause, and softly come to your exhale, lift your head and your left foot from the floor.

But listen to it in conjunction with that subtle feeling of the breath pausing like a whisper.

Both up and down, so up — maybe you exhale coming up, you see.

And try it a few times, exhaling and then inhaling down, but whichever way that you're feeling that presence of the end of the exhale, pause, beginning inhale, or end of the inhale, pause, beginning exhale.

And then reverse your legs and continue.

Take the next little bit to find out what's different on each side. What about this? So you can go back and forth as you want, but the breath is consistent — that it's an interest in the completion of each phase, a pause, the beginning of each phase.

So it means you really need to listen to the quality of how you initiate your movement, and keep fine slicing the movement, fine feeling the moment of lifting connected to where you are in your breath.

The moment of lowering, an exit to where you are with your breath.

If you jump up quickly, you'll miss it.

Lower down and pause.

Rolling the head

Slightly roll your head. Very light, with as little power as you can.

Can you back off the muscular power and begin to think your head rolling, so that you're really minimizing the effort, just enough to get it moving, which is probably way below the effort that you use when you normally just think of rolling your head.

Even though the head rolls, it's amazing how much more effort we put into ordinary action. We can be so much lighter.

And then pause. Let your legs bend.

Bending side to side

Interlace your hands under your head, and slide down to the left, feel the bending. Feel that through your torso, through your chest, and then go down to the right.

But again, you're listening to that breathing. So this, you really need to go a little bit slow to really get — can you track the bending and your breathing, and really listening for the end of each phase of breath, the pause, the beginning of the phase.

It's like the diaphragm is whispering as it changes direction. And it's so light inside, that light permeates the movement of the bending.

Take your time.

How can the chest bend with infinite lightness?

Good. Okay, come back to neutral, pause, lower your arms and legs.

[Silence 48 seconds]

Pelvis to the right

Bend your right knee out to the side. Bend your left leg to standing.

And roll your pelvis slowly to the right. And again, let the breathing guide you.

So there's some sort of harmony, and you're listening, so it could be, for example, inhaling as you go to the right, listening for how the movement and the breath kind of eases to a pause.

Enjoying that pause, and then entering the exhale with the same quality that you enter the movement back.

Could the pelvis actually move as lightly as the breath?

You continue and you let the head go to the left, but again, it's not the usual I'm turning my head. It's like a wind is blowing, and something moves the head.

With the same quality as the pausing in the breath, the coming to the end of a phase where there's no sudden stop, it's almost — hard to tell where that last moment of movement is and where the stop is. It's so light and continuous.

Then, just let your left arm be downward and your right arm upward, but again, really not a normal reaching, but as if there is a movement of that left foot and left hand of the same atmosphere as the breath.

So your whole body is guided. So it's the left arm down and the right up, and your whole body is guided.

You can let your head bend to the left, and let everything bend so the left side can shorten with that same quality.

And then the pelvis lifts, the head rolls left, the left hand is near the left foot or maybe even surrounding the ankle. But again, it's not a sudden jump. It's like the wind is blowing all these movements through you.

Listen to that infinite lightness as the breath becomes a model for your whole self.

And you keep wondering, or I invite you to keep wondering, could this movement happen with even less doing?

What's the minimal needed for this mobilization of self?

Can I think myself into action and let the body unfold in that direction?

And then slowly pause and lengthen your legs and let your arms come down and linger in this, in this space.

From an image

You just let the thought come of the left knee out and the right leg bent, and let that minimal action come from an image, come from a thought.

It's not a placing of your legs. It happens. It moves, and it breathes, and you're giving direction and witnessing this unfolding.

And so the left knee comes out to the left, and the right leg comes to standing, and you're in there — it's a surprising kind of intimacy.

And as you breathe, the pelvis comes leftward with the same quality as the breath, and the head goes rightward.

And the pausing is coming to such a smooth end that you can't even notice quite — doesn't stand out as a point in either the breath or the movement of the pelvis and head. The head goes right.

The real interest is this — can consciousness permeate my body and move? With this infinite light.

And then bring your right arm downward and your left arm upward, and staying with the same quality, the foot and the hand move. There's no aggression to it, there's no ambition to it. It's a fulfillment of its own self.

It emerges from within, and the breath gives the quality, gives the kind of metronome for the inner life.

And the movement of the pelvis left and the head right, all that occurs in that — from this quality.

The wind moves you.

And even let the fingers come out a bit, so light, as part of that rotating. All ten fingers want to participate in this opening.

Please very lightly come back. Rest in neutral.

[Silence 59 seconds]

Being breathed

Let yourself be breathed, and you're just here, and you're there for it.

There's not a doing, there's not even an effortful attending.

[Silence 53 seconds]

Opening one knee

Bend your legs, feel the feet connecting to the floor, and interlace your hands under your head.

And slight feeling.

As you slide your head and arms down to the left, let your right leg open out to the right.

See if you can find — you might need to shift the foot a little bit, but the left knee stays vertical, and the right one opens as you're bending leftward.

So your upper body is bending and that right leg is opening, and then you come back to neutral and let that knee lift.

Find a way for even the leg to have this lightness so that you keep minimizing the amount of effort, enough that it works, but it's mostly from thought, imagination, and being, and consciousness permeating through.

So, much less the sense that you're up there and moving it, but there's a direction given, and it comes up and down in its own inner vitality.

And your breath is still modeling as you slide leftward, and that right knee opens, the chest bends.

Yes.

And as you come up — reverse that, go down to the right, letting the left knee open.

Really stay with the quality. There's that habit of force or ambition or control. We want to keep minimizing that, and it's like letting it occur.

It's a feel. Your chest at this point really knows how to bend. Quite different than a few days ago.

Let the standing knee really be standing as the opening leg opens, and the torso — the upper back, that's it — really folds.

And you could go from side to side a few times, meeting in the middle with the standing legs, and then going through the middle to opening and bending.

Still with a pause in the breath.

And pause as you come back to neutral, lower the arms and legs. Get your feeling for this quality of self.

Feel the sense of your chest, the inner sense.

Sitting

Please roll slowly to your side and feel yourself sitting.

You need to listen to the quality all through.

Listen to what it's like inside your chest, inside yourself.

[Silence 2 minutes]

Something that happens when the quality of movement becomes a quality of self, and a quality of — the consciousness within and around.

And it's time for a silent dinner. And of course, you don't need to jump. You can carry some of this into your dinner.