



*Alexander
Technique*

INTERNATIONAL

— *ExChange* —

2020

| NUMBER 1

Alexander Technique International *ExChange*

2020 No. 1

Contents

From the Editors	3
Introducing Our New Co-Chairs Rosa Luisa Rossi and Marya Spring Cordes	4
Offering Information Carol Levin	12
Choreographic Research Informed by the Alexander Technique Suzanne Liska	14
Alexander Technique and Our Digital World Sarah Barker	25
I Watch People Walk the Streets Deborah Brinkhoff	37
Connecting Virtual and Dimensional Space Kathleen Juhl	39
Book Review: Reflections on <i>Touching Presence</i> Eliza Malouk	43
App Review: <i>Allez-Up!</i> Corinne Cassini	45

From the Editors

Dear All,

We hope that this issue finds you safe and healthy. We hope that you have found creative ways to teach and keep your students engaged during these unprecedented recent months. Our hearts are with you as we all navigate this difficult time in our lives. We hope you are finding ways to thrive.

This issue of the *ExChange* is late getting to press, and for this, we apologize. We both have had to reinvent ourselves in myriad ways in our “other lives,” and kept you waiting far too long! We are planning to establish a fall-spring publication schedule, so the next issue should follow in relatively short order. If you would like to write for us, please consider submitting a proposal for our consideration!

You will find within an article about the Alexander Technique and contact improvisation. Juhl’s thoughts on navigating virtual and dimensional spaces in our new online reality. Sarah Barker’s prescient 2019 ATI conference keynote on bringing technology into our work. A meditation on the freedom the Alexander Technique provides all of us. A beautiful poem by Carol Levin. And our new Co-Chairs Rosa Luisa Rossi and Marya Cordes introduce themselves in four languages! As always, it has been our privilege to edit this issue.

We also acknowledge and lament the tragic and needless death of George Floyd. Of Breonna Taylor. Of Ahmaud Arbery. And many others. Our world is suffering. We need to grapple, in the AT community, with our lack of diversity. We must address this issue. Together, let’s consider how we might fully commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion—in our work, in our conversations, in our writing.

Our hope is that together, all of our work in some small way may provide solace and comfort to those who know it well and those who seek it out.

We wish you health, we wish you hope.

Juhl and Matt

Kathleen Juhl and Matt Goodrich

Introducing Our New Co-Chairs

A warm hello to you all!

From Rosa Luisa Rossi & Marya Spring Cordes, your newly elected ATI Co-Chairs for at least the next two years.

From Rosa Luisa Rossi

I am Rosa Luisa Rossi. I live in Rheinfelden, Switzerland, and I am a longstanding member of ATI. Also, I am a member of SBAT (Swiss Alexander Technique Affiliated Society). I don't need to be a member of ATI for my professional support and development, but since the beginning of my ATI membership and during my participation in almost every ATI AGM, I have only experienced a great deal of support, friendship, and cheerfulness from ATI members. I would not be the person I am today without these experiences.

Since my last ATI ACGM experience in 2019 in Ennis, Ireland, I am also very impressed and pleased with how intelligently ATI business meetings are led nowadays by its members through the Formal Consensus process, and I see the great professional potential in the membership of ATI.

I wish to give my best in good as well as in challenging circumstances, to support ATI's professional development, and to foster the trust for this organization from the larger AT community worldwide and from the public.

As English is not my first language, I might not always use the right word to explain myself in the given circumstance. I would like to apologize beforehand for any misunderstandings I might create in speech and writing. I never wish to do harm to anybody in any way.

I am looking forward to ATI's development with curiosity and commitment!

And I wish you all good health, prosperity, and personal growth.

Rosa Luisa Rossi

From Marya Spring Cordes

I am Marya Spring Cordes. I live in Dayton, Ohio, and have been a teaching member of ATI since 2006. My professional background is as a performing artist and teaching artist. I continue this now as Head of Acting for Wright State University's Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures, where I bring Alexander

Technique to the BFA curriculum. I continue to perform, direct, and write on the professional level.

I was delighted to join the ATI Board two years ago, where a dedicated board was working through organizational changes in the attempt to further ATI as an inclusive, professional organization with much support and many benefits for its international membership. This was my deepest desire when I joined ATI—to connect with a support system of members sharing the fundamental teachings of F.M. Alexander. It continues to be my deepest desire as Co-Chair of the Board of ATI. I want to collaborate with Rosa Luisa Rossi and our dedicated board to connect with you and continue to grow ATI's members and support their interests.

Let's connect and collaborate in 2020.

Warmest regards, Marya Spring Cordes

Vorstellung der ATI Co-Vorsitzenden

Ein herzliches Hallo an euch alle!

Von Rosa Luisa Rossi & Marya Spring Cordes, Euren neu gewählten ATI Co-Vorsitzenden für zunächst zwei Jahre.

Von Rosa Luisa Rossi

Ich bin Rosa Luisa Rossi. Ich wohne in Rheinfelden in der Schweiz und bin langjähriges Mitglied von ATI. Ausserdem bin ich Mitglied des SBAT (Swiss Alexander Technique Affiliated Society). Für mich ist es nicht notwendig Mitglied von ATI zu sein, um professionell unterstützt zu sein und mich beruflich weiterzuentwickeln. Aber seit Beginn meiner ATI Mitgliedschaft und während meiner Teilnahme an fast jeder ATI Jahreshauptversammlung und -Konferenz habe ich eben dies erlebt, viel Unterstützung, Freundschaft und Fröhlichkeit von ATI Mitgliedern. Ohne diese Erfahrungen wäre ich nicht die Person, die ich heute bin.

Seit meiner letzten Erfahrung auf der ATI Jahreskonferenz im Jahr 2019 in Ennis/Irland bin ich auch sehr beeindruckt und erfreut, wie intelligent die Mitglieder ATI Mitgliederversammlungen unter Verwendung des Formalen Konsens-Entscheidungsfindungsprozess abhalten und ich sehe das große berufliche Potential in der Mitgliedschaft von ATI.

Ich möchte sowohl in guten als auch in herausfordernden Situationen mein Bestes geben, um die berufliche Entwicklung von ATI und seiner Mitglieder zu unterstützen und das Vertrauen der größeren AT-Gemeinschaft weltweit und der Öffentlichkeit in diese Organisation weiter auszubauen.

Da Englisch nicht meine Muttersprache ist, kann es sein, dass ich nicht immer das richtige Wort benutze, um mich unter den gegebenen Umständen zu erklären. Ich möchte mich im Voraus für eventuelle Missverständnisse entschuldigen, die ich in Wort und Schrift verursachen könnte. Ich möchte niemals jemandem in irgendeiner Weise schaden.

Ich sehe der Entwicklung von ATI mit Neugierde und Engagement entgegen!

Und ich wünsche Euch allen gute Gesundheit, Wohlstand und persönliches Wachstum.

Rosa Luisa Rossi

Von Marya Spring Cordes

Ich bin Marya Spring Cordes. Ich lebe in Dayton, Ohio, und bin seit 2006 ein Lehrer*innen-Mitglied von ATI. Mein beruflicher Hintergrund liegt in der darstellenden Kunst sowie dessen Weitergabe. Ich setze dies nun als Leiterin der Schauspiel Abteilung der Wright State University für Theater, Tanz und Film fort, wo ich die Alexander-Technik in den Lehrplan der BFA einbringe. Ausserdem bin ich weiterhin tätig als Schauspielerin, Regisseurin und Autorin.

Ich war sehr erfreut, vor zwei Jahren dem Vorstand von ATI beizutreten, wo ein engagierter Vorstand organisatorische Veränderungen durchführte, um ATI als eine inklusive, professionelle Organisation auszubauen und Unterstützung und viele Vorteilen für die internationale Mitgliedschaft zu fördern. Dies war mein tiefster Wunsch, als ich ATI beirat —mit einem Unterstützungssystem für Mitglieder, die die grundlegenden Lehren von F.M. Alexander teilen, in Verbindung zu treten. Dies ist weiterhin mein tiefster Wunsch als Co-Vorsitzende des Vorstandes von ATI. Ich möchte mit Rosa Luisa Rossi und unserem engagierten Vorstand zusammenarbeiten, um mit Euch in Verbindung zu treten und Mitglieder von ATI zu mehren und ihre Interessen zu unterstützen.

Lasst uns im Jahr 2020 miteinander in Kontakt treten und zusammenarbeiten.

Herzliche Grüße, Marya Spring Cordes

Introduction des Coprésidentes d'ATI

Un bonjour chaleureux à vous tous!

De la part de Rosa Luisa Rossi & Marya Spring Cordes, vos nouvelles coprésidentes ATI élues pour au moins les deux années prochaines.

De Rosa Luisa Rossi

Je suis Rosa Luisa Rossi. Je vis à Rheinfelden en Suisse et je suis membre de longue date d'ATI. Je suis aussi membre de SBAT (Swiss Alexander Technique Affiliated Society). Je n'ai pas besoin d'être membre ATI en tant que soutien ou développement professionnel. Mais depuis le début de mon adhésion à ATI et ma participation à presque chaque AGM d'ATI, je n'ai connu que beaucoup de soutien, d'amitié.

Depuis ma dernière expérience lors de l'ACGM 2019 d'ATI à Ennis/Irlande, je suis également très impressionnée et satisfaite de la façon dont les réunions de travail ATI sont dirigées de manière intelligente par ses membres à travers le processus de Consensus Formel et je vois le grand potentiel professionnel dans l'adhésion à ATI.

Je souhaite donner le meilleur de moi-même dans de bonnes circonstances comme dans des circonstances difficiles, soutenir le développement professionnel d'ATI pour favoriser la confiance pour cette organisation auprès de la communauté AT dans le monde entier et auprès du public.

L'anglais n'étant pas ma langue maternelle, je n'utiliserai pas toujours le mot exact pour m'expliquer suivant les circonstances. J'aimerais m'excuser d'avance pour tout malentendu que je pourrais créer oralement ou par écrit. Je ne souhaite en aucun cas faire de mal à quiconque.

Je me réjouis du développement d'ATI avec de la curiosité et de l'engagement!

Et je vous souhaite à tous bonne santé, prospérité et développement personnel

Rosa Luisa Rossi

De Marya Spring Cordes

Je suis Marya Spring Cordes. Je vis à Dayton, dans l'Ohio, et je suis membre enseignante d'ATI depuis 2006. Mon parcours professionnel est artiste interprète et enseignante artistique. Je continue maintenant en tant que Responsable de Acting for Wright State University's Department of Theater, Dance, and Motion Pictures où j'apporte la Technique Alexander au programme du BFA. Je continue à jouer, diriger et écrire au niveau professionnel.

J'ai été ravie de rejoindre le Conseil d'Administration d'ATI il y a deux ans, où un conseil dédié travaillait sur les changements organisationnels dans le but de promouvoir ATI en

tant qu'organisation professionnelle inclusive avec beaucoup de soutien et de nombreux avantages pour ses membres internationaux. C'était mon désir le plus profond lorsque j'ai rejoint ATI—pour me connecter avec un système de soutien de membres partageant les enseignements fondamentaux de F.M. Alexander. C'est toujours mon désir le plus profond en tant que Coprésidente du Conseil d'Administration d'ATI. Je veux collaborer avec Rosa Luisa Rossi et notre conseil d'administration dévoué pour communiquer avec vous et continuer à faire grandir les membres d'ATI et à soutenir leurs intérêts.

Connectons-nous et collaborons en 2020.

Chaleureuses salutations, Marya Spring Cordes

今後 2 年間 ATI の共同理事長として活動させていただきます Rosa Luisa Rossi と Marya Spring Cordes よりご挨拶を申し上げます。

Rosa Luisa Rossi からのご挨拶

スイスのラインフェルデン在住の Rosa Luisa Rossi です。昔からの ATI の会員です。また、SBAT (Swiss Alexander Technique Affiliated Society) の会員でもあります。ATI の会員でなくても仕事上のサポートや専門能力の開発は実現できますが、ATI の会員になった当初からほぼ毎年参加している ATI AGM において他の会員の皆様から多大なサポート、友情、明るさをいただきました。その経験なくしては今の私はありません。

昨年アイルランドで開催された ATI ACGM 以来、ATI のビジネスミーティングが Formal Consensus プロセスを通じてインテリジェントに運営されていることに感銘を受けました。ATI のメンバーシップの専門能力のポテンシャルが高いこともわかりました。

私が希望している点は以下の通りです。

- 良い状況でも困難な状況にあってもベストを尽くすこと
- ATI の専門能力開発をサポートし、世界中の AT コミュニティおよび公衆からの信用を育むこと

英語は私の母国語ではありません。そのため、状況によっては私の立場が正しく説明できない場合もあるかも知れません。話し言葉、書き言葉で誤解を生む可能性があることをあらかじめご了承ください。ご迷惑をおかけすることは私の本意ではけしてございません。

ATI の発展に好奇心と責任をもって取り組んでいけることを楽しみにしております！

今後ともよろしく願いいたします。

Marya Spring Cordes からのご挨拶

オハイオ州デイトン在住の Marya Spring Cordes です。2006 年以来、ATI の認定教師メンバーとして活動してまいりました。パフォーマー、教師として築いたキャリアを、現在は Wright State University の Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures の Head of Acting として継続し、BFA のカリキュラムにアレクサンダー・テクニークを導入しております。また、現在もパフォーマー、監督、脚本家としての活動も続けております。

2年前、世界中のメンバーに対するサポート、支援を行えるようにATIをより開放的な組織にするために組織変更の中たゆまぬ努力を続けていた理事会のメンバーになる幸運に恵まれました。FM Alexanderの根本的な教えを共有する会員たちのサポートシステムとつながること、それこそが私がATIの会員になった当初からの最大の希望でした。それはATIの共同理事長になった今でも変わりません。Rosa Luisa Rossi、そして献身的な理事会のメンバーと協業し、会員の皆様とつながり、会員数を増やし、会員の皆様の利益をサポートしていきたいと考えております。2020年、是非つながり、一緒に頑張りましょう。

今後ともよろしく願いいたします。

Offering Information

CAROL LEVIN

*Christopher Hitchens says,
"We don't have a body,
we are a body."*

Mama robin intends
her best but pokes
with force
fresh rain's worms
into gullets:
her approach
to compassion & nurture.

Opting for compassion
intending my best
I nurture, I educate.
Never poke,
delicate & spare
when I use my hands
to teach.

Reminds you
how wind teaches
wildflowers
to dance
& warmth
teaches comfort.
Subtle as being
touched by lightness
of laughter.

My touch
offers choice
as guide
to the integrated
nexus of our mortally
humanoid existence.
A lesson of living.

Carol Levin is the author of three full poetry volumes: An Undercurrent of Jitters, Confident Music Would Fly Us to Paradise (MoonPath Press), and Stunned by the Velocity (Pecan Grove Press). She teaches Integrative Alexander Technique in Seattle, and has served on the ATI Board, on the Certification Coordinating Committee, and as Ethics Advisory Committee Chair.

Choreographic Research Informed by the Alexander Technique

SUZANNE LISKA

In this article, I analyze how Contact Improvisation (CI) informed by Alexander Technique (AT) principles facilitates the multi-awareness necessary for an embodied creative process.

My personal movement history with dance and Japanese art forms (physically dynamic partnering, improvisation, Alexander Technique, Laban, taiko, butoh) are linked together through emotional, cultural, and social embodiment. Together with my identities (Japanese, Slovakian, Canadian, dancer, teacher, mother), they have shaped my life and inform my creative work. I create using emotion-based imagery, the dialogue between tension and release, and character development through sensory impulses.

Using an embodied choreographic process means developing physical movement in dialogue with my mind, emotions, environment, and history. I combine embodied practices to discover new movement vocabularies and ideas while choreographing and dancing. Having multi-awareness of our thoughts, sensations, emotions, and environment is known in the Alexander Technique as having “psychophysical awareness.” I access this multi-awareness to source fresh material, awaken intimacy and surprise in myself and in the audience, and ultimately, to uncover varied and unexpected material by tapping into my desire and my dancers’ desires moment to moment.

Overview of Alexander Technique and Contact Improvisation

My research is informed by my experience as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer with CI since 1998 and as a student and teacher of AT since 2006.¹ This article aims to outline how working with CI informed by AT inspires new choreographic thought and practice.

AT is a somatic educational theory and method developed by F.M. Alexander in the 1890s. F.M. Alexander suffered from ongoing respiratory and vocal problems from his birth in 1869, continuing into his life as an actor in the 1880s. (Gelb) He sought medical advice, receiving some temporary relief, but his recurring vocal problems would immediately return during performances. (F.M. Alexander) Frustration, determination, and curiosity led him on a journey of self-observation to gain awareness of his movement habits and in doing so, develop a systematic method to invite possibilities to change the habit. AT supports students in accessing their underlying support so they can experience more

¹My research in Contact Improvisation started in 1998 and continues to develop in my roles as a teacher in a post-secondary institution, dancer/choreographer, and regular participant in CI jams. After suffering from a debilitating back injury in 2006 when I could not walk for three weeks, I began studying AT to reduce injuries. I continued to pursue my studies in AT, and in 2010 I began to co-teach a workshop for dancers with Susan Sinclair. In 2018, I became a Certified AT Teacher through Sinclair’s program in Toronto, Canada.

effortless, efficient, and coordinated movement in daily activities (i.e., walking, computer work, chores) and/or performance (i.e., music, dance, acting, sports).

CI is a contemporary dance form that draws on an embodied connection among two or more dancers who spontaneously interact, efficiently and effortlessly engaging with weight, momentum, gravity, and intuition. CI was developed by Steve Paxton in 1972, alongside students such as Nancy Stark Smith, Danny Lepkoff, and Nita Little. (Novack 52) The initial development of CI was rebelliously in contrast to the hierarchical choreographic process common in ballet and modern dance pieces, and more in line with experimental dance/theatre performance.



Photo demonstrating the CI aesthetic using torso-to-torso connection with momentum. Suzanne Liska rolls in toward the floor while connected to Takako Segawa's torso. Photo by Francesca Chudnoff from Liska and Segawa's choreography "Yume-Iro" ("Dream Colour") for CanAsian KickStart 2018.

Overview of Choreographic Fieldwork

In this article, I discuss a selection of my research supporting the process of creating *Woven* from June 2016 and March 2017². To expand my research, I actively included my dancers in the creative process while continually renewing my intentions as a choreographer. Understanding and analyzing what my dancers were thinking through interviews, open discussions, and written feedback during rehearsals helped me to direct my research. Through writing, discussion, and movement, I explored the theme of fear and the pleasure of interdependency within community, examining what it means for an individual to be a part of generating something more than any one person could create on their own. Throughout, I describe some of the improvisational scores and preset phrases in *Woven*

²The dancers and projects included Madison Burgess, Tori Kelly, and Amanda Torres (October–November 2015); Pam Johnson, Susan Lee, Mika Lior, Zita Nyarady, Madison Burgess and mentorship from Karen Kaeja (June 2016); Susan Lee, Louis Barbier, and Mateo Galindo Torres with Susan Cash and Patrick Alcedo as mentors (February–March 2017); and videographers Farivash Babanorouzi, Olya Glotka, and Hannah Schallert.

where the underlying motivation was driven by the AT principles “field of attention” and “means-whereby.”

Compositional Awareness Using the Alexander Technique

The principle of expanding the field of attention can enhance and diversify movement choices. Dance scholar Susan Foster says that when performing using CI, the predominant focus of the dancer is on physical sensation and less on the intellectual and/or sociocultural potential in their performance. Focusing only on physical sensation limits the potential to use CI in choreography. As a professional dancer, I’ve noticed that when I focus solely on physical sensation, the result is a less nuanced performance. I regularly incorporated CI into my rehearsals; as soon as we moved the CI duet into a performance setting, however, our kinesthetic experience did not have a similar level of attention and engagement as it had in rehearsal. My research confirms that helping dancers tap into multi-awareness of their kinesthetic, intellectual, and emotional experiences improves their performance as well as my creative satisfaction. To expand the dancers’ attention, they can oscillate between sensing themselves, each other, and the space around, leading to improved coordination and increased creative options.



Photo demonstrating the CI aesthetic of multi-awareness with spatial intention, using 360-degree awareness. Suzanne Liska and Mark Young. Photo by Michael Barker 2019.

The above photograph demonstrates that expanding multi-awareness while performing CI can diversify partnering options. Mark is turning his head, looking toward my head, while suspending me on his left shoulder. He has a softness in his gaze, demonstrating effortlessness in his role as a support. The quiet readiness in his arms and legs provides him with options. He is ready to catch me with his arms if I descend toward my hands, or

change to a lower level if I descend toward my feet. Mark's right shoulder is also reaching toward my upper leg, providing a further option for me to continue to spiral around his right shoulder. I continue the dynamic flow of movement by expanding my limbs in space while sensing my backspace. By curving my torso into Mark, I maximize the amount of physical surface to support me on Mark's shoulder. I extend my limbs in space in order to counterbalance my weight, giving myself the options to descend to the ground, moving toward my feet or hands, or to continue to spiral on his shoulders.

My work while choreographing with CI was to identify my dancers' and my own habitual choices physically, emotionally, and socially. Knowing that the preferred choice of my dancers was often physical sensation, I worked to change this default setting by using AT principles to increase their emotional awareness to each other, both real and imagined. I continued to investigate the dancers' underlying emotional motivation behind their movement impulses. To do this, I clarified what I wanted them to think about as we worked. Reflecting on and documenting the process became as important as focusing on the final product. Alexander discovered that our conscious thinking correlates with our actions. AT acting teacher and writer Cathy Madden explains, "If we ignore our desires, we go out of coordination. As we use the Alexander Technique, respecting our intentions, we maximize our possibilities." (18) Madden concludes that associating ourselves with our goals and desires while performing any activity results in better coordination and improves performance. She outlines two simple self-reflective steps: First, identify a particular situation (i.e., warm-up, rehearsal, performance) for which you want to include AT principles and second, reflect on how the situation supports your larger goals/desires in life.

I interpret Madden's steps to constitute the AT principle known as "means-whereby." This is a step-by-step process first to notice, then to make a choice to continue the activity, and from there to use the AT principles to continue with the chosen activity, which may mean choosing not to continue. Using the means-whereby, performers can educate and coordinate themselves in order to reaffirm their personal desires and needs prior to rehearsals, during rehearsals, before stepping on stage, and during performance.

Inspired by Madden, I asked preliminary questions at each *Woven* rehearsal to help the dancers identify their intentions and current feelings about the project. I asked them to answer the following questions: Why did you choose to come to rehearsal today? What part of the piece makes you feel excited, bored, anxious, and/or confused? Is there anything you need from me, yourself, and/or the group? Reflecting on the dancers' written interpretations of our process, I often changed the movement I had choreographed, finding another way to convey my ideas. The pre- and post-reflections with the dancers deepened my investigation of our process and improved our collaboration. My examining the dancers' personal intentions and desires throughout the process of creating the piece resulted in more coordinated movement choices. As we worked, I had the dancers write in their journals, which helped them examine and come to understand the intentions of those choices, enhancing their overall engagement in the process.

Expanding Awareness

The dancers' conscious reflections in discussions and journal notes became an invaluable resource to guide and enrich my step-by-step somatic choreographic process. The final presentation of *Woven* included a mix of improvisational scores and preset sequences. One of the improvisational scores I created for *Woven* is called "Tensegrity." To develop "Tensegrity," I asked the dancers simply to stand and notice the ongoing subtle shifts of weight occurring. Then I experimented with having them try to make themselves completely still, not allowing any movement. They noticed an increased effort and a holding of breath. We discussed how the ongoing flow of movement is inherent in all activities, and our experiment with holding ourselves "still" required a lot of work. Because we are alive, we are always in a flow of movement. The final step I used to choreograph "Tensegrity" was introducing a CI exercise I called push-hands, inspired by tai chi. The exercise is illustrated in the photograph below. Push-hands requires the dancers to push and pull each other in a continual state of off-balance, by transferring their weight slowly and sequentially toward and away from each other. Dancers use their hands and contact with the floor to push their partner away or invite them to lean into their torso. This encourages them to use various parts of their body to accomplish the pushing and pulling dynamics. I allowed the dancers to make in-the-moment decisions to more readily attend to the shifts of weight and pressure in push-hands. Reducing holding and tension facilitates letting go of preconceived ideas of where a dancer anticipates going in order to make new choices moment to moment. Through push-hands, the dancers were able to access increased strength and freedom and, in following the momentum of movement, generate surprise in the process. Integrating CI and AT-inspired exercises led me to the creation of "Tensegrity," in which the dancers embodied my overall theme of *Woven* by literally experiencing interdependence.



"Tensegrity" score with push-hands, Mika Lior, Madison Burgess, Susan Lee, and Zita Nyarady. Photo by Karen Kaeja, June 22, 2016.

AT is an embodied methodology to alter habitual pathways for expanding our way of seeing, thinking, and hearing. Working with the various improvisation scores, I used the AT

principle of multi-awareness to expand the dancers' perspective to include themselves, their partners, and the space around them. Senior AT Teacher and Director of Toronto's teacher training program Susan Sinclair³ says that while dancing CI you can use AT principles to organize yourself in relation to another person without losing your own support. She has observed that dancers typically "tense-up, over-effort, and push through" both muscularly and mentally when encountering an unfamiliar movement. Including the AT principle of expanding the field of attention, Sinclair explains that dancers show more "ongoing flow of support in movement."

AT enables me to reconsider how to guide the dancers through a sequential learning process. For "Tensegrity," I also drew on dance terminology from my previous research with choreographer Rebecca Bryant. Drawing on Bryant's work, I used the term "mobile bases" (moving support), which requires dancers to avoid being completely stationary even in supporting roles. During our work on mobile bases, dancer Susan Lee asked me to clarify the term. She said, "Some terms like 'mobile bases' were repeated to us a number of times, which makes me think that you need to have a different way of conveying the idea to us." In a subsequent rehearsal, inspired by Lee's suggestion—and because three out of the five dancers were new to the material—I decided to re-teach mobile bases through somatic experiences rather than just as an intellectual idea.



Lior accessing inner and outer focus to support Burgess. Photo by Karen Kaeja, June 22, 2016.

I reviewed the AT principle of expanding the field of attention, which involves including internal support with sensory awareness of the environment. The above photograph shows Mika Lior accessing multi-focus while dancing. She made subtle shifts of weight, creating a mobile base by pushing into the floor with her hands and lower legs. Madison Burgess used

³Susan Sinclair is an ATI certified teacher and sponsor. She has taught the Pilates Method for 26 years and AT for 22 years, and has directed the Sinclair Studio AT Teacher Training Program since 2003. www.sinclairstudio.com

momentum to fly over Lior's back on the side of her torso. Burgess pivoted on her upper torso leaning into Lior as Burgess pushed her feet from the floor, pivoting on her left hip while tossing her legs over Lior. With external focus, Lior looked to the side and forward while pressing more into her right side, responding to Burgess's transfer of weight. Lior then shifted her weight as a mobile base, lowering her torso to eventually help Burgess descend smoothly to the floor.

I discovered that using an intellectual approach to teaching the concept of mobile bases only by repeating the basic physical instructions of the score ("push and pull each other while having a mobile base") was not as effective as including a somatic approach. From a somatic perspective, I instructed the dancers to avoid controlling their breath while recalling the improv score, instead allowing their involuntary breathing to organize according to the physical pressure on their bodies. I asked the dancers to bring their arms in front of them and experiment with seeing their hands while also using their peripheral vision to see the space around them. I proposed questions such as "Is it possible for you to sense your feet on the ground while also seeing the space around you? Can you access a fluid inner and outer awareness? What are you noticing about your emotional response in the moment?" By accessing more multi-awareness, the dancers and I became more responsive to a wider variety of kinesthetic and compositional choices. The dancers subsequently spoke supportively of the step-by-step kinesthetic building of knowledge together.

Desire Within Choreographic Process

For another section in *Woven*, I created a score I named "Tree/Leaf/Wind." I asked the dancers to notice their emotional responses while they interacted with each other. I told them, "Consider when and why in your life you resist, meet, or follow someone. When and how can resisting someone be both a fear response and also a way to support another?" I wanted to express both fear and support. I explained to the dancers that when someone pushes against you, you can show fear by tensing and contracting your body inward and downward while pulling away from a partner. Or you can show support by sensing the floor and your head-to-tail connection while leaning into your partner instead of pulling away. I asked them to notice the different emotional responses that arose from their varied physical responses to being pushed. Raising consciousness around their emotional experiences deepened the dancers' total movement expression.

I connected an AT exercise, Layers of Awareness, developed by Sakiko Ishitsubo⁴, to the score "Tree/Leaf/Wind." I asked the dancers first to feel their clothes and their partner's clothes, then their skin and their partner's skin, then their muscles and their partner's muscles while making contact. I chose to pause and take several minutes of repeating the instructions for people to fully integrate the material. Slowing down at first fostered a more

⁴Sakiko Ishitsubo is an Alexander Technique teacher, physiotherapist, and director of the Tokyo AT teacher training school, as well as adjunct teacher for Sinclair's program in Toronto. www.sakiko-alexander.com

embodied experience. Next, I asked them to feel and imagine their partner's bones, organs, and fluids, and their own movement as well as the experience of being moved by partners. The last layer was to become conscious of what Ishitsubo calls "heart" or as I interpreted it, "desire." As I layered desire into their consciousness, the dancers commented on feeling stronger emotional connections to their physical experience of resisting and allowing. The dancers shared their responses in a group discussion. Lee said, "There were many choices of how to respond...I felt like dancing more." Burgess noticed that her "touch was longer." Lior explained that her "perception was different, less compartmentalized" once I introduced desire. Johnson said that the final layer helped her "step into personal space" as opposed to just repeating a technical exercise. Including desire while moving, rather than narrowing movement awareness to just physical technique, facilitated an embodied response to the activity.



Example of multi-awareness, Mika Lior and Madison Burgess layering desire into "Tensegrity" score. Snapshot from Dance Video, November 2016.

Step-by-Step Somatic Process

While preparing for the final showing of *Woven* in March 2017, I had to resist my own habit of "end-gaining." In AT terms, end-gaining means to fixate on the final goal and, as a result, lose awareness of what is happening in the moment. I was jumping ahead of myself and already imagining my piece in full production mode. During the second rehearsal, I wanted to create the preset sequences right away so that the dancers (including myself) would have enough time to embody the movement, then planned to rehearse the improvised scores of the piece. We rehearsed one of these sequences, the Big Lift section, but this time, I taught the lifts outside the context of the original improvised score. I felt disconnected from the movement, defaulting into a more instructional role rather than a choreographic and performance role. Mateo Galindo Torres reflected on learning the Big Lift: "I am not sure about the content relating to the physicality." By rushing toward my desired goal, I missed the essential step-by-step somatic process that had inspired this section. In his book, *Body Learning*, Michael Gelb defines end-gaining: "Alexander found that most of us let

our immediate goals dominate our field of attention; he called this ‘end-gaining’ or the ‘one brain track’ method.” (80) Instead of end-gaining, we worked with the AT principle means-whereby to help recover a whole-body response to an activity and in doing so, improve our overall use while engaging in an activity.

In the process of working with the AT principles to inhibit my desire to end-gain, I reminded myself of the importance of recognizing that I had only five rehearsals with this group of dancers. For the third rehearsal, I chose to return to the somatically driven improvised scores (“Tensegrity” and “Leaf/Tree/Wind”) before working on the Big Lift section. In so doing, I was able to recover the depth behind the opening score. I worked with the CI score I called “reaching up and out,” in which the over-dancer (flier) was physically above the under-dancer (support). The over-dancer slowly lifted their torso away from the under-dancer, directing both into the physical space around them. The under-dancer’s task was to rise up to physically maintain contact with the over-dancer. Both dancers were to maintain relative torso-torso connection while rising and descending from low- to mid-level kinespheres in space. I also added on Ishitsubo’s layers of awareness exercise (awareness of skin-muscle...desire) to expand their field of attention. The dancers commented that the multiple physical and emotional layers of the scores enabled them to dive deeper into the material.



Big Lift section, Mateo Galindo Torres, Louise Barbier, and Susan Lee elevating Suzanne Liska. Snapshot of video documentation by Hannah Schallert, March 2017.

Including Preshow Inhibition

Another way that I incorporated AT principles into our creative and performance process was during preshow warmups. Steve Paxton observes the continual challenge in CI to shift away from familiar pathways, deeply ingrained in the nervous system, requiring conscious discipline. (2001, 425) I learned that the quality of the warm-up I led my dancers through had a considerable impact on their performance, especially during the improvised sections. Preceding the show, I led an extended warm-up inspired by the AT principle of “inhibition” using the practice of “active rest.” I had the dancers lie on the floor. I asked them to consciously notice where they had any excess tension in their muscles and to invite a softening and “undoing” of muscular effort. I asked them to notice what they were thinking about, then rather than pre-judge or habitually follow their thoughts, simply notice their thoughts without having to respond in any particular way. Their only task was to notice their breathing, their physical contact with the floor, and the sounds they heard around them. The dancers embraced the warm-up and all commented on how refreshed and ready they were to dive into the physically demanding lift sequences that followed. They noted that their performance was more physically and emotionally engaged than previous nights, demonstrating the AT theory that constructive inhibitory thinking coordinates physical movement. Conversely, reduced consciousness manifests as excess physical tension, restriction of breath, anxiety, or claims of boredom. I witnessed in my dancers that heightened awareness of desire, manifest through an overall physical fluidity, ease of breathing, and a feeling of satisfaction while dancing.



Final Duet, Susan Lee sitting, Mateo Galindo Torres flying legs in the air, supported by Louis Barbier. Snapshot from presentation, March 2017.

Lessons Learned in Choreographic Research

Combining AT and CI expands my thinking, sensing, and being in order to facilitate multi-awareness necessary in choreographic research. Having specific questions to guide my inquiries and recognizing my limitations by exposing contradictions rather than a polished final truth is essential for deepening my investigations. My work emphasizes the importance of searching and re-searching with desire. Desire is key—a reminder that my research cannot be about passionless investigations. Continually clarifying my intention with attention, using the step-by-step somatic process of AT, was pertinent in conducting meaningful and ethical dance research for the researcher, collaborators, and perceived or actual audience. Conducting embodied research means finding the balance between aiming for a final goal while attending to the moment-to-moment process.

Works Cited

Alexander, F. Matthias. *The Use of the Self*. London, Chaterson, 2001 ed (1932).

Buckwalter, Melinda. *Composing While Dancing: An Improviser's Companion*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

Foster, Susan Leigh. "Choreographing History." *Carter, Alexandra* 2010: 291-302.

Gelb, Michael. *Body Learning: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. Macmillan, 1995.

Madden, Cathy. *Integrative Alexander Technique Practice for Performing Artists: Onstage Synergy*. Intellect Ltd, 2014.

Novack, Cynthia Jean. *Sharing the Dance: CI Improvisation and American Culture*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Paxton, Steve. "Drafting Interior Techniques." *CI Quarterly* 18.1, 1993, 61-66.

Suzanne Liska is a Certified Alexander Technique Teacher and a teaching member of ATI with a B.A., B.Ed, and MFA in Choreography. Receiving grants and awards through York University, the Toronto Arts Council and Ontario Arts Council, she has choreographed and danced in works presented by CanAsian KickStart, DanceWorks CoWorks, Dusk Dances, and Dance Matters. She has originated in roles and co-created with choreographers Maxine Heppner, Pam Johnson, Karen Kaeja, Susan Lee, Kathleen Rea, and Takako Segawa. Suzanne has taught workshops for Collective Gulp in Ottawa, CCDC in Calgary, CINN in Tokyo, and Leviathan Studio in BC, and in Toronto for Randolph Performing Arts College, Ryerson University, George Brown University, and Humber College. She is contract faculty in York University's Dance department in Toronto. At the Dance Science and Somatics Conference in August 2018, she presented her SSHRC funded MFA choreographic research combining Contact Improv and the Alexander Technique. www.suzanneliska.com

Alexander Technique and Our Digital World

SARAH BARKER

2019 ATI Annual Conference Keynote
Ennis, County Clare, Ireland

In this talk, I plan to explore our 21st-century presence in the world and look at the challenges and opportunities the Technological Age gives us as Alexander Technique teachers. I will explore the dangers of and the solutions to living in the modern world based on F.M. Alexander's point of view or philosophy, if you will. I want to talk about the opportunities for us, as a field, if we can embrace the digital world. I believe, like many of you, that we could change the world—if we could just reach enough of this globe's population.

Who Are We? What Is Our Field?

I think we need to identify a large worldwide field of practices within which the Alexander Technique belongs. In doing so, we can create conversations with many disciplines in that field on a far larger scale than any individual discipline can generate. Without this broader community, asserting our uniqueness can isolate us unnecessarily. Megan Macedo's session "Finding Your Authentic Voice" earlier today gave us a wonderful guide to how we can effectively tell our personal stories. Telling our stories within a larger community gives us more people to talk to.

In order to identify our field of practice, I looked to Edward Maisel for our origin story. Not F.M.'s story, but rather how the Alexander Technique emerged on the contemporary scene, let's say, beginning in the 1960s. Maisel contributed immensely to its recognition with the 1969 publication of the first book about the technique written for laypersons: *The Resurrection of the Body: The Essential Writings of F. Matthais Alexander*. I still have my copy that I bought after meeting Ed at Marjorie Barstow's home in Lincoln, Nebraska, and finishing my graduate degree in theatre and teacher training with Marjorie in 1974.

According to Maisel, "the work" of F.M. had a remarkable influence on the emerging and revolutionary approach to the physical enlightenment movement that became the Human Potential Movement. When Maisel was writing in the 1960s, the Alexander Technique attracted eager students and was especially important to musicians, dancers, and actors. It was taught in Europe, Israel, Australia, and South Africa. (Maisel viii) The Human Potential Movement, developed in the United States, with its focus on unifying the mind and body, welcomed and highlighted F.M.'s work and the investigation of psychophysical education that he had already opened up.

Today the Human Potential Movement has become *somatics* and includes hundreds of techniques. Thomas Hannah describes the *soma* as the human experience as perceived from the inside. (Hannah 20) The field of somatics emphasizes the education and development of internal physical perception and experience. Look up *somatics* on Wikipedia and you find Alexander Technique centrally featured.

My career development has paralleled the path of the Human Potential Movement, and now, somatics. Within that, the Alexander Technique uniquely offers the prospect of conscious and rational control of our behavior. I have at least 45 somatic practices under my belt and many more that I've experienced. I am able to draw on many of these techniques to enhance my practice in teaching the unity of the human organism and a conscious way of living for happiness and satisfaction. The Alexander Technique is the perfect center of my practice, and I find it helpful to place it in the context of the field of somatics. This alignment also gives me a broad and yet specific audience when I am trying to reach people on the Web who could be interested in my work.

Somatics now has an important and recognized place in our culture. Notably, *Time* magazine created a series of special issues focused on somatics. Their version of somatic practices is mindfulness. The 2013 issue, "Alternative Medicine," said about the new mindfulness, "It really is all in your head: Redirecting the neural pathways in the brain through meditation and other activities can decrease the likelihood of disease." The issue featured Mayo Clinic's offerings of bedside yoga and healing touch through acupressure. The 2016 issue, "Mindfulness," devoted entire sections to yoga, tai chi, and meditation. In the 2017 issue, "New Mindfulness," the Alexander Technique finally gets a small mention under "physical mindfulness." The tech industry company Google has also clearly influenced widespread adoption of mindfulness and stress-release techniques through its Internet publications (YouTube in particular) of employee trainings since 2007. (*The Guardian*) Of course, we know that the Alexander Technique is much more than mindfulness, though Peter Nobes has taken a wise approach, calling it "Mindfulness in 3D." By aligning ourselves with the mindfulness movement and claiming a position within somatics, we can expand our conversation more easily and learn by observing what other somatic practices are doing to successfully increase their visibility.

The United States National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognizes the effectiveness of somatics in an important new category: Complementary and Integrative Health. (NCCIH) The NIH has now developed a robust research agenda for testing and verifying some of these alternatives. They include the Alexander Technique along with yoga, tai chi, and Feldenkrais. As AT is included in that list, it allows us to pursue NIH funding for research in the efficacy of the Alexander Technique in affecting health issues. As our research becomes more robust, our visibility will increase, just as research and publication concerning the efficacy of yoga, mindfulness, and the like has increased their visibility.

Would it be fair to say that more people know and practice yoga, pilates, tai chi, mindfulness, maybe even Feldenkrais than who know what the Alexander Technique is? I think yes. Thus, the importance of our perennial question: **How do we get more people to know about the Alexander Technique?**

I want to acknowledge all of the creative tactics the AT community *has* used to enhance its visibility before the advent of social media. There were public introduction events, presentations for special interest groups, and research publications designed to entice medical practitioners. There were magazine articles, books, educational videos, and of course, word of mouth. I propose that technology and particularly social media could give us a huge platform for letting the world know what AT is and how to find resources and teachers.

The world of technology has exploded since I bought my first personal computer in 1982. Now, most of us are walking around with a mini-computer in our pockets or even on our wrists. The phenomenon of social media has grown with amazing speed into a tremendous force affecting every aspect of our lives. Facebook became a public application in 2006. In 2004 it had 1 million users. By 2006 there were 50 million users. Today, it has 2.7 billion users. It bought Instagram in 2012. Google started in 1998 and Twitter in 2006, both growing in the same exponential way. By 2012, Twitter had 100 million users.

Depending on our objectives, these social media applications can be used for different purposes. If we focus on generally spreading the word about the power of the Alexander Technique, excellent resources are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and our websites. If we want to continue to expand and develop the technique amongst ourselves, we can use Facebook groups, Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Google Drive, and e-mail groups like Mailchimp and Constant Contact. Great tools for teaching online and supporting our person-to-person teaching include Facebook live feeds, web-based online courses, podcasts, YouTube, video streaming or downloads, and last but not least, smartphone apps.

I see all of these platforms as opportunities and possibilities. At the same time, they can be overwhelming. And I suspect this barrage of lists is affecting at least a few of you in negative ways. This seems to be the nature of the digital age. We can be easily overwhelmed with the variety of new tools to learn and the speed at which they continue to change and replicate.

Please take a moment and notice how your body is responding to these lists of all that we could be doing. This will give you a good indication of how your mind and imagination are responding. Even if your response is positive, please notice if you have begun to engage in a plan for **doing** something! Just to up the stakes, let me utter one of the most frightening words today: **password**. Do you know your password? I personally have two full pages of passwords! What if I lost that list?! How about you? Are you afraid of losing yours?

Let's take a mini AT break. Continue to observe yourself. What thoughts are taking place? What habits do you observe? Now, notice the room, the light, the ambient sounds. Take three deep breaths. At any time, you can free your neck and allow a lengthening and widening through whatever directions you like to use. [Pause]

To Be or Not to Be Techno Savvy

Throughout my career, I have leapt at opportunities that may have been controversial but seemed to me to have potential for breakthroughs in the teaching of the Alexander Technique. Over the years, I have been on the vanguard of innovations in the AT world. I wrote the first how-to book on the Alexander Technique in 1978. (Ed Maisel was the architect of that project.) Next, I videotaped my students to help them observe their own use. Then, I produced a how-to DVD called *Moving with Ease* that has video of skeletal images superimposed on people moving. It has become a sort of practical textbook for many university courses on the Alexander Technique. CD-ROMs are disappearing, so now the video is streamable or downloadable from my website. And I've just launched a new 21st-century website I'm very excited about. I have a Facebook page for my business. I have a Twitter account and Mailchimp, but I have not yet learned to use them as extensively as my colleagues do. Finally I have produced an app called *Allez-Up!* for exploration and practice. It is available in both iOS and Android. Soon it will launch in a French version as well.

I have indeed taken the techno plunge. I have let technology interweave with all of my life. I consider myself still a neophyte expert, however. I learn something new every day.

How Technology Has Challenged Me

Through all of this activity, I have daily opportunities to examine my habits, good and bad. Daily, I can experiment with using the Alexander Technique and other somatic practices to cultivate good use in myself when using my computer, iPad, and phone. In the past few years, I have engaged in a particularly fruitful exercise. As some of you may know, four years ago I had traumatic brain injury. My progress in healing continues encouragingly, but in the first year I had drastic impairment in vision and hearing. I was overstimulated far too easily. I could not look at a screen or search the Web. I couldn't deal with the level of sound in movies or video advertising. Even just typing and editing an article was extremely taxing and led to excruciating head and body aches, disorientation, and fatigue. As a result, I have had four years of intensive practice in encountering the negative effects of technology on my human system. The moment I began to misuse myself, my vulnerable state made it immensely clear: I could either stop what I was doing (which actually is never a bad idea) or I could observe myself in the moment and find new ways to work with my computer or phone. As of today, I am nearly normal. But if I get on a roll, becoming hyper-focused, I will be debilitated the next day. I am thus motivated to be

alert to the early signs that I am misusing myself at the computer or on the phone. I work in shorter stints and also practice what I preach.

Having made a study of good use with all of my devices (computer, iPad, smartphone), I have begun to see beyond the physical habits and discover some significant psychological attitudes that also lead to poor use. Whenever the flow of my work is interrupted by a technological glitch (lots of examples here!), I really resent it. I would really like to begin shouting at the machine! But I don't. I hold my breath, tighten my eyes and neck, and think, "Technology was supposed to make my life easier! They lied! I'm sitting here watching the spinning wheel of doom. I don't have time for this! And now they won't accept my password. **That is the right password!**" But I have also learned to catch that inner dialogue just as it begins and I **stop**. I release and redirect my body and my thoughts. My point here is that it is not the ergonomics of the thing so much as the attitude I have. They go hand in hand. Through the Alexander Technique, I have expanded my field of attention, examined my beliefs, and adjusted my intentions positively through my encounter with technological tools. This is my own journey.

Cultural Awareness of the Cost of Technology

Culturally, there is a dawning of awareness of the somewhat terrifying aspects of social media and the digital world. It's addictive. Smartphone users check their phones every few seconds looking for that next ping indicating a text or Instagram post. In universities, we have all sorts of coping strategies to get the students to listen to the professor at the front of the room rather than constantly check their Twitter feeds. Walking on the street in New York City or on any university campus, no one makes eye contact any more.

Silicon Valley leaders are painfully aware that their utopian goals of a free Internet leading us to miraculous solutions for humanity hasn't exactly turned out that way, especially in the realm of social media. Congressional hearings and innumerable lawsuits point to Facebook, Twitter, and Google's contribution to unwanted interventions into our political process.

Whatever the motivation, many of the creative thinkers and leaders in this high-tech realm have begun serious soul searching. An article in the August 26, 2019, *New Yorker* called "Trouble in Paradise (Big Tech Searches for Its Soul)" by Andrew Marantz addresses this phenomenon at length. "There is a dawning consciousness emerging in Silicon Valley as people recognize that their conventional success isn't necessarily making the world a better place." (62) New organizations such as the Center for Humane Technology and Mobious (its mission to put our well-being at the center of technology) are at the forefront of Ethical Technology or Responsible Tech. New policies and designs aim to "reduce the addictive nature of social media." Facebook users may have noted the recent changes in emphasis on supporting and deepening our relationships and friendships. Instagram (also now owned by

Facebook) recently publically declared its new emphasis: "We want your followers to focus on what you share, not how many likes your post gets." (Marantz 67) In a new policy, it has stopped displaying the tally of "likes."

These companies are going much deeper within their ranks to address this disembodiment and disconnection. Executives and developers in the top echelons of the tech industry attend special seminars and workshops offered by Esalen, a center founded in the 1960s for the Human Potential Movement and still operating today. They reconnect to themselves through somatic practices, hoping to find ways to transform their inventions for the good of all. (Marantz 62)

The Opportunity

This is all to say that the time is ripe for the revolutionary approach the Alexander Technique provides through constructive consciousness. It can serve the high-tech industry and, more importantly, all of the people who are using it, suffering with it, and struggling to find a new way with it. I think that along with me, you wish the Alexander Technique could become as ubiquitous as any of the more well-known life hacks I mentioned earlier. How do we do that?

First of all, keep doing everything that you have already been doing (I listed many of them at the beginning of this talk). Second of all, explore some of the possibilities available to us through technology.

I encourage all of you to bring technology and social media into your lives. If you still use a flip phone, don't like e-mail, have never been on a video conference call, don't have a Twitter account or a website or a Facebook account, just put your toe in and explore one thing to see what you can open up creatively in your thinking. Use encounters with technology for self-study. We AT teachers continuously learn through observing our own behavior. This should be true on the computer and your cell phone, as well.

In the tradition of F.M. himself, you can share your discoveries with your students. How many of you have given a lesson about using your cell phone? Peter Nobes has some fine points in chapter 8 "Rediscovering Your Up..." in his new book. (60-63) The digital world, the world of devices is our new civilization. By introducing your students to ways the Alexander Technique can interface with technology, you can help them in important ways because technology is in every aspect of their lives now. You can explore with them how they are using their bodies, positions of mechanical advantage, ease in positions and actions as they use technology. But beyond that, technology affects them deeply, in the way they see themselves, the way their imaginations work. As early as 2002, Cathy Madden wrote about the changes she was seeing in her acting students because of screen use. (58-59) Cathy has continued to explore and discover all the ways in which we can positively affect our ways of seeing ourselves and thinking through technology.

When I teach movement at the university, I talk a lot about how being conscious of the body can lead to unity of mind and body. I ask students to go deep into a search on their smart phones. After two minutes of searching, I stop them and ask, "What happened to your awareness of your body while you were using your phone?" The answer: "It was gone, my body didn't matter." They understand that this is not good. They are curious about how they can integrate body awareness into all of their activities for much greater ease and pleasure.

My work with performers has also emphasized focus on human reaction. I have seen that all of the basic work on use of the self (i.e., awareness of one's body, balance, length, oppositional forces, positions of mechanical advantage) has a miraculous effect on the psyche. Performers are able to express themselves more fully and effectively: They are able to persuade the audience and to move them more fully when the body and mind work together with coordination, length, and freedom. I vividly remember working with a vice president of a bank who was in great pain due to her job. Watching her at her computer, I was able to point out that her body disappeared from her consciousness and that was the source of much of her pain. As we worked on simple physical dynamics, a more important change occurred. She began to evaluate her attitude toward her work, the numbers on the screen, the power of the computer to command her attention, and how all of this affected her interactions with her staff and colleagues. Becoming more embodied led her to more thoughtful interactions with all aspects of her job.

So we need to address the way our students use technology and at the same time, we can use technology to teach them. That is as long as we don't lose sight of the true aim: "conscious direction...in regard to...judgment and control in human relations." (Alexander 182)

What Is Happening Now?

Over the last three or four years, I have joined several e-mail lists of AT colleagues. Their varied ways of sharing their work is inspiring and often educational (and free of charge). While I am not an innovator in the realm of social media (I still struggled with how to represent myself honestly and fruitfully on Facebook five years ago), these colleagues have refined and clarified their material in the last few years. I will briefly mention several of the ways they have adopted these tools. (You'll find the link to each one in "Web Links Cited"). If something sounds interesting to you, I encourage you to talk to that particular teacher and look at their online presence. Figure out if that's something you might like to do, and above all support their work. Help them get the word out, too. Consider that we are not competing with each other but rather multiplying our energy and our worldwide effect.

Clare Maxwell posts regularly through Mailchimp, a group e-mail service. She posts insightful lessons on many movement explorations. Right now, she is exploring the central nervous system's surface map of our bodies, called the dermatome. In

particular, last week, she talked about the feet in relationship to the pelvis. The end of that e-mail post or blog gives the reader ways to connect further with her work through a 15-minute phone conversation, signing up for private lessons at her studio, and private Mobilignment sessions online. It's elegant, simple, and accessible.

Belinda Mello can be seen in two venues online: AT Motion, a website for her private practice and, with Ann Rodiger, a series of weekend workshops for Alexander Technique teachers and specialists called the *Freedom to...* series: Freedom to Act or Move or Sing. AT Motion introduces Belinda and gives site visitors the opportunity to schedule lessons with the online scheduler, register for workshops, and contact her directly. Her Twitter account announces upcoming workshops. Every few months, she posts a blog with AT tips, articles, and resources or performance explorations.

Many of you may know Imogen Rangone because she has helped many AT teachers design their websites. Her website BodyIntelligence offers free 12-part e-mail seminars with titles like "Now! Twelve Lessons in Computer Poise" and free webinars presented online live like "Seven Tips to Reduce Stress." She's also offered the 30-day constructive rest challenge. All of these lead you back to signing up to get more opportunities through coaching, lessons, an online program, classes, events, a book club, and more.

Jennifer Roig-Francoli has online courses including "The Art of Freedom for Musicians," and she uses Facebook to post short videos of herself guiding fun explorations.

Mio Morales also uses Twitter to post pithy thoughts for the day. He uses Facebook and has done some wacky and engaging Facebook Live Streams where he leads viewers in intriguing exercises and podcasts to talk about his distance learning work, Body Learning.

Robert Rickover has developed, over many years, a rich website resource, the "Complete Guide to the Alexander Technique: The Global Online Resource for the Alexander Technique," which has lots of podcast interviews with AT teachers, links to websites and resources in research, and other publications galore. I am sure this brings him lots of traffic. He also continues to teach privately and coach online.

Tim Cacciatore has produced an extended webinar about the language and approaches to research specifically for AT teachers using video conferencing with up to 60 teachers participating.

You may have heard recently from Ted Dimon announcing his book-long course, *The Body in Action: Principles of the Alexander Technique*. That one is very academic and intensely detailed.

Peter Jacobson along with our two newly certified teaching members, Molly Kittle and Darci Balkcom, offer Total Vocal Freedom, a robust online education program with weekly online video classes using Zoom, live events, blogs, and a private Facebook group.

Another colleague several of you may have worked with is Jeremy Chance from Tokyo and his studio, BodyChance. What has impressed me about Jeremy is that he studied marketing intensively with experts in the field. He has been testing and experimenting for years with all sorts of approaches and finally has worked extensively online. He has created online, self-directed courses in Body-Thinking and Thinking-Body, which he says don't require the presence of a teacher. They are part of his intensive and beautifully developed teacher training program which happens in the BodyChance studios. He also blogs extensively.

Finally, you can search Facebook forums and find at least ten groups that focus on the Alexander Technique. These are great ways to join conversations and explore lots of AT subjects with colleagues all over the world.

I admit that I am just beginning to learn to use social media to promote the Alexander Technique. As I mentioned earlier in this talk, I've spent the last two years developing an iPhone and Android app, called *Allez-Up!* It is designed to support people with guided explorations and practice sessions. So far there are 10 eight-minute audio guides for tuning in, calming your system, and applying basic AT directions. There is one long constructive rest session and five one-minute excerpts from my DVD movement explorations. And more to come. There is one other app by Maria Vahervuo called *Awareness in Activity* that also looks very similar, and it is beautiful.

Can We Change the World?

I want to leave you with some thoughts from Mr. Alexander himself that will show you the extent to which he believed the Alexander Technique could change the world. It began in body awareness, but he was also seeing a much deeper effect on psychophysical education that would affect the very nature of our civilization. Alexander was writing at the end of WWII about the atomic bomb. In Chapter XII, "Knowing How to Stop" in *The Universal Constant in Living*, F.M. begins by saying, "The combined efforts of men and women in many parts of the world have resulted in the production of the atomic bomb." He goes on to discuss the horror (the bomb) and the contrasting hope (nuclear power) contained in that one human invention. (179) While the bomb was the most horrific of the new, unexpected, and tremendous problems F.M. saw, he also saw the introduction of other problematic inventions: the automobile, phone, radio, and finally, television. What would he say today in the face of the takeover of human activity by this new and powerful human invention called digital technology? In this chapter he suggests that "throughout his long career man has been content to make progress in acquiring control of nature in

the outside world, without making like progress in acquiring its essential accompaniment, the knowledge of *how to control nature within himself*—that is to say, how to control his own reactions to the outside world.” (179-80) He goes on to say:

Man’s basic nature has not changed as it should have done during past centuries in respect of conscious direction of his use of himself or in regard to his judgment and control in human relations. Hence on every hand he is faced with the impeding effects of “emotional gusts,” (John Dewey’s term) such as are associated with the too common and frustrating human failings which are manifested in prejudice, jealousy, greed, envy, hatred and the like. (182)

He asserts that the continually changing conditions and new discoveries in the outside world demand increasing knowledge in the control of human reaction. And this knowledge can be provided by the Alexander Technique such that relations in national and international affairs...could lead to a better understanding...and the engendering of goodwill and peace in (our) world. (182) His message is as relevant today as it was then.

Now here is my call to action. I have encouraged you to embrace technology, even in small ways, so that you can help your students, at least mechanically. How they hold their cell phone, how they sit at the computer. But I really believe the core of Mr. Alexander’s work provides access to conscious direction and attention to control human reaction and cultivate the best in humanity. That’s our true work. And with these high tech devices—in my case, the *Allez-Up!* app or my streaming video—the real goal, the thing to keep my eye on and the reason I’m offering those things, is that I believe I am bringing people steps closer to understanding how to control human reaction. I suggest that the Alexander Technique teaches the control of human reaction in regard to judgment and human relations, and that we can embrace the field of somatics, whose goal is the psychophysical education of the whole human to lead to a better world. That being so, we have the broadest field possible for sharing with each other and the world. Our community immediately becomes much larger. We can gain exposure in the larger conversation of somatics and at the same time, we can assert our unique contribution to the field. We can support hundreds of approaches to teaching the technique. We can teach through technology. We can support students teaching themselves. Let’s get out there and create ways to reach not just thousands, but millions of people.

June 2020 Postscript: I think it is truly amazing the revolution we have all witnessed over the past two months. My hopeful comments about how we might expand our sharing of the Alexander Technique in my October 2019 keynote address have been eclipsed by the profound necessity for us to stay in touch, continue to work, and be safe during the pandemic. We truly have the opportunity to reach the world immediately.

Works Cited

Alexander F. M., "Knowing How To Stop", *The Universal Constant in Living*, Ed. Jean M.O. Fischer, London: Mouritz, (1941) 2000. 179-82.

Barker, Sarah. *The Alexander Technique: the Revolutionary Way to Use Your Body for Total Energy*, Bantam Books, New York, 1978.

Barker, Sarah. *Moving with Ease*. 2007. <https://www.easyalexander.com/practice-tools/#movingwithease>, 2007.

Hanna, Thomas. *Somatics: Reawakening the Mind's Control of Movement, Flexibility and Health*, Addison-Wesley Publishing, Reading, MA, 1988.

Madden, Catherine. "The Language of Teaching Coordination: Suzuki Training Meets the Alexander Technique," *Theatre Topics* 12.1,(March 2002): 49-61.

"Introduction" from *The Resurrection of the Body: The Essential Writings of F. Matthis Alexander: Selected and Introduced by Edward Maisel*, Dell Publishing, New York, 1969. vii-ix.

Marantz, Andrew, "Trouble in Paradise (Big Tech Searches for Its Soul)," *The New Yorker*, August 26, 2019.

Nobes, Peter. *Mindfulness in 3D*, The Real Press, UK, 2018.

Park, A. "Training Your Mind to Reduce Stress," *Alternative Medicine: Your Guide to Stress Relief, Healing, Nutrition and more*. Time Inc. Specials 2013, 86-91.

Websites Cited

[Barker, Sarah](#)

[Cacciatore, Tim](#)

[Chance, Jeremy](#)

[Dimon, Ted](#)

[The Guardian](#)

[Jacobson, Peter](#)

[Macedo, Megan](#)

[Maxwell, Clare](#)

[Mello, Belinda](#)

[Morales, Mio](#)

[National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health](#)

[Rangone, Imogen](#)

[Roig-Francolli, Jennifer](#)

[Rickover, Rick](#)

[Vahervuo, Maria](#)

A nationally recognized leader in movement training and respected actor trainer, Sarah Barker is Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. Recognized for her innovative work teaching the Alexander Technique for actors, she is guest teacher at teacher training programs in Japan, Germany, Toronto, North Carolina, Minnesota, and Washington. Sarah's book, The Alexander Technique (translated in five languages), her video program, Moving with Ease (also in Japanese), and her new digital app, Allez Up! (also in French), are used throughout the world for learning and practicing whole mind-body integration. <https://www.easyalexander.com/>

I Watch People Walk the Streets

DEBORAH BRINKHOFF

I watch people walk the streets
collapsed—shuffling, limping, straining
or tense—bouncing, jerking
joints stiff and inflexible.

I see people standing—leaning way back off their centres
compressing down into their legs—hips, knees, ankles locked.

I look at people eating—hunched over their food, heads pulled back
distractedly shoveling food into their mouths.

I observe the pull on the jaw, the tightening of shoulders
and a twitch in a foot as people doubt themselves while they communicate.

The girl working in the cafe yanks from her shoulder to lift a lid.

I see professional workers, doctors, and even health practitioners
who have little awareness of their physicality.

I see strain creased into closed eyes and on faces
of rows of people as I walk on a plane.

*Where is the efficiency and beauty of our human design?
Where, when, and how did we go so wrong?
Why do we dis-coordinate so readily?*

It grieves and distresses me to see our compromised coordination
so much awkwardness, collapse, tension, stiffness, imbalance
so much clumsy and extraneous muscle use
so little understanding and such widespread misuse of our design.

The Alexander Technique offers a simple, elegant solution.

A way to regain fluidity in movement
to cooperate optimally with our design
and restore the poise and graceful efficient
coordination intrinsic to each of us.

We need only observe toddlers moving
to know this is our birthright.

Deborah Brinkhoff lives in the boating community of Kettering, Tasmania. She is a health practitioner, passionate about empowering people to live to their full potential through healing of both body and mind. Deborah is trained in remedial massage, lymphatic drainage, Ortho-Bionomy, and other therapies. Since 2005, she has operated a business comprising body work and movement classes. Convinced of the need to work with the causes of pain and not just the symptoms, she began Alexander Technique training to find answers. In 2019 she became accredited as an AT teacher.

Connecting Virtual and Dimensional Space: Meditations on Teaching at Home

KATHLEEN JUHL

With two weeks to reimagine my undergraduate Alexander Technique class for online teaching, and no idea how to use Zoom, I was in a state of panic. But there was no choice: I had to reinvent the class, reinvent myself as a teacher. My hands as teaching tools would be furloughed. My eyes could not fail me. My creativity would have to work overtime. And so, I began...

Following are meditations on my virtual journey with university students in my spring 2020 Alexander Technique class during the COVID-19 pandemic. I experienced this journey taking place in a kind of shimmering hybrid classroom space—the virtual and the dimensional existing simultaneously, working productively together, informing one another. What I gleaned from the experience is that online learning has lots of advantages. Home environments, rich with objects and surfaces, can serve as fabulous playgrounds for exploring activities. We can readily help each other improve coordination in virtual space because we can focus intently on one person at a time, without classroom distractions, clearly taking in the quality of one another’s movement. We can watch the beautiful coordination of YouTube artists and athletes and deeply analyze what we see—for pleasure and inspiration. For all these reasons and more, I grew to love virtual teaching and learning, and henceforth will use what I learned in all of my work going forward. I hope you will find my reflections useful.

Inspired by conversations with Cathy Madden, my guiding principle became to connect flat virtual space with three-dimensional real space as I approached students in the world of Zoom—the hilariously weird “Hollywood Squares” that we would navigate together for learning and, I hoped, pleasure. In order for students to become coordinated in activity, they would have to be aware of their dimensional bodies rather than just intently focusing on themselves through flat screens.

On the first day of class, I began our online journey by asking the students to coordinate so that their head could move so that their whole self could follow. They had done this in our school classroom, of course, but in person, my hands were always available, ready to follow and support their movement if they needed or wanted. The students were skeptical: How could they do this without my hands? They had forgotten that they could coordinate on their own. They had previously done it in class and in their lives. Why not in virtual space?

I had expected this and come up with a plan. First, I asked the students to move around their spaces and show the rest of us—via cameras and screens—the living rooms, offices, bedrooms, kitchens, and patios they inhabited. “Okay, that was

weird,” they reported. “What was the point?” I replied, “In order to explore coordination in our new ‘classroom,’ we need to inhabit virtual space and real space simultaneously. We have to maintain our sense of our dimensionality, our roundness, in order to explore coordinated movement. This will be tricky if we get too focused on our screens.” To illustrate my point, I asked them to choose a nearby object that meant something to them. I asked them to share their object and talk about its importance. At first they thought I was a bit crazy. What did this have to do with learning the Alexander Technique? Then they got into it! They turned their dimensional objects round and round so we could all see. They told stories about their objects with relish. I shared one of my own—my beloved Kermit the Frog—which they thoroughly enjoyed. After our lively show and tell, I asked them if their experience of virtual space had changed. They reported that everything seemed different—more open, more relaxed. They were aware of the dimensionality of their real space, and furthermore, that virtual space seemed more dimensional. The separation between the two seemed to disappear. And to my eyes, their coordination had changed. They were easy. Their faces were open. They were smiling.

In subsequent classes, virtual space became like a mirror. We became able to see ourselves and our environments onscreen while simultaneously living in both. In our real space, we were surrounded by objects that meant something and delighted us. By showcasing some of these objects, we made a connection between real and virtual space. And when that happened, coordination improved. Next, to demonstrate how virtual and real spaces were connected in a way that did not involve the students—I was hoping their Netflix-binging selves could relate—I showed them a [video of Yo-Yo Ma playing cello](#) while regular folks and artists moved with ease and coordination to the music. As we watched together, we were, of course, connected to the real through the virtual, where we could watch closely, could really see the coordination of the people in the video. I replayed it a number of times, then a rich discussion ensued about the movement we observed. Afterward, we walked around our real spaces, enjoying the coordination Yo-Yo Ma and friends had inspired in us.

At the beginning of the next class, I suggested that we purposely focus *very intently* to notice the details of our colleagues’ faces—hair, eyes, nose, mouth. We became rather uncoordinated as we looked hard at our screens in an attempt to closely examine each other. I suggested exploring our dimensional spaces again—walking, handling objects, finding colors, noticing sounds, smells, the temperature. When we returned to our screens, we were coordinated, easy, smiling. This happened every time! Whenever we got stuck in virtual space and then moved out into real space, we discovered ease. It was palpable. Connecting the real to the virtual was working to our advantage!

We began another class by playing “Hollywood Squares Ball Toss.” We named the person we were about to throw to, tossed an imaginary ball into that person’s Zoom square, and watched them catch it. It started feeling like that invisible ball was going

straight through the screen and into someone's hands. We got quite proficient at this, and our ball tossing accelerated as the fun we were having trumped the flatness of our screens. And the faster we went, the more everyone's coordination seemed to improve. Dimensional space seemed to disappear as our virtual play space gained in dimension. After the game, we watched videos of [Tiger Woods](#) and [Roger Federer](#) for inspiration in fabulous ball handling and coordination. We observed and discussed in detail the beauty of Woods's and Federer's movement. We walked around our real spaces, then resumed our ball toss. Everyone's coordination improved. The game transformed our flat virtual space into something almost fully dimensional. As a group, we started to believe that with a bit of coordinated imagination, together we could make this crazy online experience work.

Remembering how I would arrange and rearrange my bedroom when I was a kid, making it feel brand new, I suggested in a subsequent class that everyone rearrange the furniture and objects in our dimensional environments. Then we all left the room and reentered, as if to a new space. We pranced around rearranged furniture. We discovered familiar objects in new places. We agreed that our spaces in their new unfamiliar configurations came alive. We had to use ourselves in unfamiliar ways, changing patterns of movement—because the ordinary had become extraordinary. We reconvened in virtual space and felt more dimensional, as if we were experiencing our physical selves in more detail than before. We saw ourselves clearly. We were able to talk about our coordination and how it could be improved. We were developing keen observational skills along with improved coordination. Over the Internet!

For the first few weeks of class, as we oriented ourselves to our new reality, alternately exploring virtual and dimensional space was our primary activity. The operative question became “After experiencing yourself and your full dimensionality in real space, are you able to maintain this dimensionality in virtual space—and what do you observe about yourself as you do?” As we shifted our focus between real and virtual space, the students noticed their coordination onscreen, and I observed the same in myself. We easily shifted our focus between *movement* in *dimensional* space and *observation* in *virtual* space. I continually reminded the students to richly experience themselves in their real space while watching for improved coordination in virtual space. Time and again, through this process, we all felt lighter and easier. And our observations gained insight.

When I moved the students on to performing activities, I asked them to resituate their computers and arrange furniture and objects to accommodate their chosen activities. Their spaces became offices, stages, and gyms. They did handstands against walls. They did pushups with their legs propped up on couches. They discovered that dancing around furniture was a bit dangerous, but freeing—and a whole lot of fun. They found ways and places in their environments to explore handwriting, singing, monologues, yoga, computer sitting, tai chi, lounging on the floor watching Netflix, and plain old walking. As they performed in their real spaces and watched themselves and each other in virtual space, it became clear that virtual

space had become an observational space intimately connected to real space. As with the virtual ball-tossing game, they were connecting with one another through their screens. They observed and made insightful suggestions to each other for improving the coordination of their various activities. I could not recall discussions of activities in all my previous classes that were so rich and helpful.

We watched many more videos with delight, analyzing closely the ways outstanding performers accomplish coordinated movement. [Alvin Ailey's dancers](#), [Simone Biles](#), [a beautiful handstand guy](#), [a yoga teacher](#), [Meryl Streep](#), and [Renee Fleming](#) were our classroom guests. As we watched closely and shared insights, one advantage of virtual teaching and learning became evident: The students had become keen observers in ways that they had not been in the classroom. Watching beautifully coordinated performers in this new way inspired improved coordination in themselves.

Throughout the rest of the semester, I invented activities for connecting virtual and real space. We explored using the Alexander Technique in a multitude of activities. We continued to watch videos that inspired new ideas for coordination and engendered rich discussions of what we saw. As the weeks passed and our coordination (including my own) improved and observations became more detailed and insightful, I knew that we all felt at home and productive in our dynamic hybrid space.

As I think about moving back to a classroom or studio to teach, I anticipate a bit of nostalgia for this way of teaching, for dancing between virtual and real space as a way of accomplishing and understanding and observing coordination. The richness of the students' home space with unique furniture and objects was so valuable for exploring coordination in ourselves and our activities. I will miss moving through all those home spaces reflected in virtual space. Typical classrooms and studios are spare, devoid of the complexity of lived-in space. I am inspired to take elements of home into those settings.

I am imagining new ways of teaching, new ways of observing, new connections between ourselves and technology. The pandemic may have disrupted our lives and taken us away from embodied connection, but its lessons have proved useful.

Kathleen Juhl taught theatre at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, for 33 years. Her courses included Theatre for Social Justice, Feminism and Performance, and classes in acting and the Alexander Technique. She was certified as an Alexander Technique teacher in 2000. She has a small private practice in Austin, serves as Senior Editor for the ATI ExChange, and continues her social justice work.

Reflections on *Touching Presence*

ELIZA MALOUK

Touching Presence is Tommy Thompson's personal account of his perspectives on the Alexander Technique. It is an invitation into the classroom at the AT Training Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In fact, its origins come from a compilation of the class notes of Rachel Prabhakar, who trained at the center from 2010 to 2013.

Although the book is a quick read at 114 pages, it is rich in details you will want to experience again and again. It has tremendous value and depth of meaning, especially for AT teachers, teachers in training, and those familiar with AT. It will also resonate for anyone interested in an exploration of the truest meaning of the self.

Each chapter is an account of themes and principles that Tommy presents in his training. The many stories from Tommy's personal life are interesting, thoughtful, honest, and often quite moving. Within the stories, AT principles are clarified and explained. The stories speak to the depth of who we are as human beings and how AT facilitates our ability to be more fully human.

You can open to any chapter or page in *Touching Presence* and learn something useful and thought provoking. You will come away from reading the book as though you have been given a private lesson. Tommy's writings are transformative. They will resonate with who you are as a person beyond your habitual use, touching into the deeper current of your true self.

Chapter titles alone are provocative and intriguing:

- On the Beauty of the Person
- On Being and Doing
- On Compassionate Teaching
- On the Personal Narrative
- On the Moment as a Movement
- On Withholding Definition

Some chapters comprise more familiar AT themes:

- On the Primary Control
- On Directions
- On Monkey
- On Habit

There are three pages of aphorisms. You could take any individual aphorism as a thoughtful lesson to reflect on throughout your day:

“Notice when in your thinking you think you know what will happen. Then you will miss all the other possibilities.”

“You cannot *not* have an embodied experience, but you can behave as if you are not embodied.”

“If a person is tense, often the only way she will be aware of the tension is when she experiences its absence.”

Debi Adams, in her introduction to *Touching Presence*, writes, “This book is a gem. It brings to the Alexander world the language and thinking of a master teacher, one who never tires of exploring the principles of Alexander’s discoveries, and who seeks to teach them in the clearest and most honest way possible.”

Eliza Mallouk, LMT, has been a body worker, movement therapist, and educator for the past 45 years. Her primary modalities are Alexander Technique, Zero Balancing, and Self Regulation Therapy. She is a dancer and, since 2010, the producer of Across the Ages Dance Project. In 2016, Eliza joined the faculty of the Alexander Technique Teacher Training Course at Boston Conservatory at Berklee under the direction of Debi Adams. Tommy was her first AT teacher.

App Review: *Allez-Up!*

CORINNE CASSINI

As Alexander Technique teachers, we find ourselves pausing throughout the day to consider *how* we are engaging with ourselves and with the world. We ask for ease, freedom, and poise. Other times, we forget to pause, then notice ourselves narrowing into a time-sensitive task, tightening our heart, or losing our sense of connection and support. Yet, we know we have a choice! So we remind ourselves of the space around us with a delicate release of our head and spine into length, renewing our connection with the ground. We remember how this expanded sense of being and appreciation of the present moment can bring us back to ourselves, to the ease and happiness we've learned to love through the Alexander Technique. Losing poise makes finding it again all the sweeter!

Our students often ask, "Can I just take you home with me?" Or "Could you put your hands on me before I go onstage?" Imagine giving your student special reminders, as if whispering directions in their ears, while they sat at a computer. What if they could magically receive a supportive hand on their back while washing the dishes? Imagine you too getting a gentle reminder upon finding yourself in a comforting but oh-so-uncomfortable slump or caught up in reaching a goal. Well, the *Allez-Up!* app is just the thing! This is a mobile app for iOS and Android that uses the principles of the Alexander Technique to "develop your Mind/Body connection." Conceived and created by Sarah Barker, the app is designed to create, support, and enhance a daily AT practice, "improving physical well-being and mental ease."

The app includes short audio and audio/video clips, all spoken in Sarah's lovely, calming voice, gently directing you; daily reminders encouraging ease pop up randomly throughout the day. It follows you wherever you go with your phone, and you can use it as often as you like as a reminder to think constructively.

Ten Basic Sessions, designed for daily practice, assist you in renewing your "conscious physical awareness." These sessions, averaging nine minutes in length, guide you through movements and new ways of thinking. The five video lessons, generally a minute or two in length, illustrate the principles you are invited to practice in the Basic Sessions. This summer, the iOS version will be upgraded with 10 "tune-up" audios, a shorter version of each basic session, to use on the go. Reminders or notifications show up on your phone (if you choose to turn them on), keeping you thinking in your body throughout the day every day—no matter where you are or what you are doing.

The short instructional videos, drawn from Sarah's *Moving with Ease* DVD, are primarily designed for students, as teachers will be familiar with the content. However, the animations with superimposed diagrams are clear, well done, and

instructions, or “conscious directions,” and guided movements. Users learn to “coordinate balance [and] breath [...] to feel light, easy, and focused.” Teachers and students alike will appreciate and benefit from these recordings. They invite awareness in activity, expanded breathing, and overall ease.

As teachers, we are used to our own “directing” voice bringing ourselves back to poise and coordination. Hearing Sarah’s voice and letting myself be guided into her version of constructive thinking and moving in activity was new, insightful, and inspiring. I particularly enjoyed the 16-minute “Deeper Relaxation while Lying Down,” a guided constructive rest suitable for beginners and seasoned teachers alike.

I use Sarah’s reminders daily. In fact, they are my favorite part of the app. As I glance at my phone, I am reminded to “Notice the light in the room, listen to the sounds.” Or “Notice the space in front of you and beside you. Imagine what is behind you.” Or “Let your spine lengthen.” To name a few.

Allez-Up! is the second phone app on the Alexander Technique, following Maria Vahervuo’s *Awareness in Activity* (2015), currently renewing availability on both Android and iOS. *Allez-Up!* is available for Android for \$10.99/year and will remain as the initial version described. The iOS version is available for a free two-week trial period and then costs \$0.99/month. It will be upgraded to include 10 short “tune-up sessions,” corresponding to each unit. A French version is available as well!

Allez-Up! comes from the French *allez hop* meaning “Come on, let’s go” or “Let’s get moving!” It’s a clever play on words with the French “hop” sounding a lot like “up” in English. The app is designed for anyone, even beginners. It is a great tool for students to use between lessons, helping them get in the habit of thinking constructively on their own, bringing about ease and well-being. It can be used even without lessons. AT teachers will especially benefit from the reminders and sessions and find the app an invaluable teaching tool.

Corinne Cassini, a professionally trained cellist, teaches the Alexander Technique at the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University and privately in Boone, North Carolina, since 2012, guiding performing artists and many others individually, in groups, online, and in workshop settings. Her first AT lessons were over 20 years ago, and she has been practicing as a certified teacher (NeVLAT, ATI) in Boone, New York City, Boston, England, The Netherlands, and France for 10 years. In 2015, she started training AT teachers at her school, Light in Being—Alexander Teacher Training (LiBATT) in Boone.

Call for Proposals: Write for ExChange!

Deadline for submissions extended to JULY 15

Please consider writing for *ATI ExChange!*

- Practical teaching articles
- Thoughts on using the Alexander Technique
 - Academic or research pieces
- Personal discoveries or creative musings
 - Poetry

The sky's the limit!

Please submit a proposal of about 150 words to
Kathleen Juhl
juhlk1954@gmail.com

Proposed articles should appeal to a wide variety of readers and use clear and straightforward language. All proposals will be vetted by the editors and/or the Editorial Board. Submitted articles will undergo a thorough editorial process in collaboration with writers.

ATI 2020: All Together, Where We Are

The 2020 Alexander Technique International Annual Conference and General Meeting Online will offer us the opportunity to gather together from all over the world, right where we are.

In a time when we are living in relationship with physical distancing, human imagination and the magic of technology make it possible to bridge expanses. Alexander's principles teach us that to pause, waiting in uncertainty, creates a moment full of potential!

The space between us is not empty.

Let us come together and embrace change and the unknown with ease—listening with openness for something new to emerge.

Please bookmark [this page](#), as more information will be announced soon.

Meet Synergos, Our New Association Management Company (AMC)

Thank you to Synergos and Raleigh Roberson for making this issue of *ATI ExChange* finally possible. Raleigh is wonderful and helped us design the cover and get the issue through production. If you e-mail or call the new office, you will most likely connect with Raleigh.

We would like to introduce you to the folks at Synergos AMC:

Lane Velayo, Association Executive and CEO
Brett Bowman, Finance Manager
Raleigh Roberson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

New ATI e-mail address: office@alexandertechniqueinternational.org

New ATI address: PO Box 30558, Indianapolis, IN 46230 USA

New ATI Telephone Number: +1 (317) 932-3570