

Thoughts for a new millennium

Can you connect the three statements quoted below?

'Truth is a pathless land'
(*Krishnamurti 1929*)

'The first principle of Feldenkrais is that there are no principles'
(*Feldenkrais 1977*)

'Often when a competent practitioner recognizes in a maze of symptoms a particular pattern, and constructs the basis for coherent design in dealing with it, or discerns an understandable pattern in a jumble of information, something is being done which cannot easily be described. Practitioners/therapists make judgements of quality for which they cannot state adequate criteria. They display skills for which they cannot describe procedures or rules'.

(*Schon 1984*)

I believe that what they all are saying is that specialists of any kind need to find their information wherever it exists; learn their skills solidly; understand their territory in depth; and then integrate the knowledge and the skills — and start to work intuitively. In the first issue of JBMT I wrote on this theme, suggesting that the skilled bodyworker, of whatever persuasion, when working on the body operates in much the same way as a jazz musician who is improvising. Not all would agree, but it is a vision that I for one find

attractive. The reason for returning to this proposition lies in a desire to introduce a series which, in many ways, will itself be improvised but is based on very solid foundations.

Long-term readers will recall that we have, over the past three years, covered some important topics in depth by running a number of series which explored areas of widespread interest, too complex to deal with in single review papers. Tom Myers surveyed fascial networks and also kinesthetic dystonia; Philip Latey delved into mind-body issues, in his 'Themes for Therapists' series; Jim Oschman offered a wide-range investigation of energy medicine; and Chris Gilbert covered many of the less understood issues relating to breathing function and dysfunction. I am pleased to report that all of these authors will periodically take the themes they investigated further, with papers for JBMT, and in this issue the first of two papers by Jim Oschman are to be found on page 56.

After much consideration and consultation it was decided that the next area of interest which JBMT would cover in this way (i.e. a series), would be what can loosely be described by the phrase 'posture, use and balance'. This issue of JBMT carries a short introductory article by John Hannon, chiropractor and Certified Feldenkrais[®] practitioner, which sets out the agenda he will pursue over the next four or five issues, in his series on 'posture, acture, balance and the physics of Feldenkrais'.[®]

We did not want a series that simply focused on well-understood basics regarding the biomechanics of posture and function, but wished to evaluate these themes from a perspective that incorporated the values and ideas of systems that are active in the reintegration of dysfunctional states, involving postural misuse, overuse and abuse — such as the Feldenkrais[®] approach.

I am delighted that John Hannon has agreed to produce this important series. He brings to a complex topic his scientific training as well as intensely inquiring mind, as well as a delicacy of expression that at times borders on the poetic. This will not be a didactic series, but will offer the opportunity to explore, absorb, and quite literally feel out many novel ideas and methods (hence the quotes at the start of this editorial). Hopefully, out of the excitement that this exercise will generate, some readers will feel compelled to explore these topics and methods in greater depth, in the only meaningful way that this is possible, by undertaking a training programme in Feldenkrais,[®] Alexander, Rolfing, Heller work, Aston patterning — or in any of the other variations on this theme.

The future of bodywork might well lie in approaches that synthesize and integrate, rather than remaining 'specialist'. This is a statement open to debate and certainly not everyone would agree it. For example, that physiotherapists should explore and absorb methods from osteopathy, chiropractic and other forms of

manual therapy; or that members of each of these professions should have at least a basic understanding of the methods used in Alexander technique or Feldenkrais®. This theme has been previously explored on these editorial pages, and doubtless will again. It is JBMT's belief, and one of its major aims, that just such cross fertilisation be encouraged, and insofar as it is possible the content of the journal will reflect this objective. John Hannon's series will carry that objective forward.

A variety of papers are in development at present, which

mirror these 'cross-fertilisation' thoughts. For example: a paper that examines the 'close environment' — in this instance chair design, from an Alexander perspective, written by a professor of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, Galen Crazz; research and review papers on Pilates — one by Australian physiotherapists and the other by researchers at the University of San Francisco; and a paper by Rolfer and Deborah Stucker, who found that her practice methods changed when she studied the concepts of microgenesis.

Welcome to the 4th volume of JBMT.

Leon Chaitow
Editor

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