Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 1, Day 3, Session 6 — 36 minutes

Summary: Lying on the back, the class slides one hand across the chest while the pelvis, head, and eyes turn together. Russell invites a listening quality of touch, rotation through the spine, a brief recall of a resource image, and the fluidity of attention, then closes the afternoon in sitting.

Turning left

Now, so you're here. You're lying on your back. Your right hand is sliding across your chest, left hand at your side.

And just feeling the quality of touch.

You can feel the cloth and the skin, and something alive underneath the skin.

You might touch all the way to the left arm, you might not. You might go over the left arm towards the floor, you might not.

Let your head turn leftward.

Feel as if you're bringing your attention to the left side of the world, and then back to neutral.

And really letting your inner life receive this gentle touch, this caring movement across yourself.

And then lower the arm. Pause for a moment.

Bring your right leg to standing, and turn your pelvis to the left, keeping your right knee vertical.

So you're letting the pelvis turn to the left.

You feel the contact of the right foot in the floor, and you sense how the weight goes over to the left side of the pelvis. Your knee is vertical. Your foot has good contact with the floor.

And let your head roll to the left as well.

Let there be a kind of harmony of the head rolling left. They come back to neutral at the same moment, and they get to their comfortable limit at the same moment.

So there's a kind of dance between the pelvis and the head rolling leftward.

Let there be a soft quality, a listening quality.

Your arms are just resting. You're just turning your pelvis and your head. Your arms are at your side.

Let your eyes go left. Notice how the left eye can go to the outer corner and your right eye to the inner corner.

And a beautiful example of creating a lot of distinctions, a lot of differentiation — the eyes, the head, the pelvis — and then sensing the whole thing together, going leftward, and you have the sense of your whole self moving in that direction.

This is good. And then pause for a moment.

[Silence 55 seconds]

The pelvis grows with the hand

Bend your right leg. Put your right hand on your chest.

Just take a moment to feel through the hand, and then begin sliding your hand leftward.

And when you feel like you're coming toward a limit, notice if turning the pelvis begins to help the hand to keep sliding leftward, maybe even onto the floor to the left of yourself.

You can come over the left arm. So let the left arm be near you. You come over the left arm.

But let that grow from a sense of harmony, not from a sense of, oh, I'm going to turn my pelvis, but that the turning of the pelvis grows in connection to the sliding of the arm.

And let the hand slide on the floor leftward.

Let the knee stay vertical for now. So we're listening to a certain use of our back where the knee doesn't collapse.

The head turns, the eyes turn. Let the eyes help the turning function.

Again, it's neurologically very interesting how the eyes support the movements of the skeleton.

The eyes really help the rotation of the spine.

That's it.

Feel that connection from your pelvis through your hand.

That's it.

Feel that right shoulder come away from the spine and away from the floor.

And pause for a few moments. Come back.

Just sense the quality of yourself. Sense, as you're lying here, the inner quality.

You know, it's a little cool. Be warm in a few moments. I just turned up the heat.

Please bring your left arm upward on the floor, to some comfortable place, so that the arm is long upward. Left arm. Find a comfortable place for it to rest.

If it's not comfortable upward, go a little more to the side so you can find a comfortable resting place.

And put your right hand on your chest.

Slide the hand, really feeling a quality of touch that you can appreciate.

The right leg is bent. Sorry, I didn't tell you that. Right leg is bent.

And as you slide, listen for when the pelvis turns. First the knee is vertical, and then you can begin to let the knee come a bit leftward. It's not flopping down, but it can come a few inches, and your head might roll over your left arm, depending on where it is.

So we're inviting a rotation in that shoulder in this position.

The knee still tends towards the vertical, but it doesn't have to stay completely vertical.

So helpful for those ribs under the armpit, those upper back vertebrae, to get this kind of rotation through your whole spine connected to your pelvis.

Let the head really turn. The eyes might orient to the floor, some of you even behind you a little bit.

But don't force it. Just keep inviting the turning, and the knee can go a few inches leftward.

So let the hand keep sliding on the floor out to the left, so your head keeps turning.

That's it. And that's great.

And as you come back, pause. Rest once again.

[Silence 44 seconds]

A key image

And just very lightly, not with too much intention, just lightly, recall a key image from your resource process. A key moment. Maybe it was seeing something, maybe looking in someone's eyes, or a key moment that can bring that bodily memory.

Notice if you can invite, through just a brief visiting.

Recalling the sensations. Maybe there was a sound in the air.

Just notice if you can find it, just through a gentle invitation, through those key words or sensations.

Good. And let that be in the background.

Out at shoulder height

Bring your left arm out at shoulder height, meaning the same height as your shoulder, and the palm forward towards the ceiling.

That's another organization of your left arm.

Okay, so the hand is shoulder height, the palm towards the ceiling, the arm is long out to the left.

Right leg is bent. Right hand is on your chest.

And as you slide the hand, you begin sliding towards the left arm.

And you might find you can slide quite a bit further without your pelvis turning immediately, and then when you find that the pelvis is helpful, let it turn.

Slide along your arm. Maybe you'll even come to your hand.

Some of you, it looks like, are even going a bit beyond your hand, but don't force, don't try too hard.

The knee begins vertical and then can come a little bit down leftward, but it doesn't flop to the floor. It has some tone in it.

As you slide the hand, really feel how the shoulder blade can come away from the spine, how that whole back can rotate.

And it might even feel nice to do that.

That's it.

Let your head turn. Feel your eyes going all the way.

Notice if you're moving in a quality that you enjoy and appreciate — a quality of listening, a quality of care. Even a sensuality, perhaps.

Come back. Pause. Lower your leg.

Just listen to the whole sense of yourself, and also your sense of space to your left, what the room seems like out to your left and out to your right.

If somehow the movement evokes a different quality in the space around you as well.

[Silence 54 seconds]

Fluidity of attention

Slightly roll your head a bit left and right, with a quality of movement.

Notice how far down your back you sense some connection to the rolling of the head.

One of the keys in the Feldenkrais work, one of the key opportunities, and also part of what helps it to work so well, is growing the mobility of attention. That one can be turning the head and sensing down the spine, sensing into the legs, sensing the breathing. That there's a fluidity to the attention throughout the self.

That's both of the means and part of the ends of the work, that fluidity of attention.

And please put your left hand — actually, place both hands on your chest, and just listen to the difference in the quality of touch.

Each hand has a somewhat different feel.

And notice, can you sense both hands at the same time?

And then notice how you can go back and forth, to the right hand touching, back to the left, right, to the left, and noticing if you can feel both hands.

Is there a way that, in a moment of attention, you can sense your whole body here on the floor — your hands, your legs, your pelvis — that it's all there?

You're just taking a moment of a big field.

The other side

Take your right hand down, and with your legs long, begin to slide your left hand across your chest and feel.

You might find that the spine is able to accommodate the movement quite a bit more than you could on the other side at first, maybe.

See?

You're not forcing, you're not efforting, but you're listening to the interconnections from your shoulder to your chest, maybe to your pelvis.

And move your arm as far as you can comfortably to the right, and pause there.

Feel your shape.

Bring your left leg to standing.

And go very slowly so you can really feel the interconnection. Just as the left side of the pelvis begins to lift, how immediately there's a connection to that left arm.

And let that grow subtly so you can really enjoy this inner connectedness that lives between your pelvis and your arm in this movement.

Letting your eyes go to the right.

[Silence 36 seconds]

Really let it unfold from the inside out, so you're not forcing from thought or aggression or ambition, but it's an unfolding through your whole spine.

And as you come back this time, pause.

Rest on your back. Feel how the shape of yourself and the world around you is influenced.

[Silence 47 seconds]

Long upward

Bring your right arm upward on the floor. Your left hand on your chest somewhere.

Once again, begin with long legs, and sliding your left hand across, so your right arm is long upward, and you're sliding across, coming over those ribs under your armpit. Your fingertips come towards the floor, and you're sensing, without the leg bent, is there a way that your pelvis and lower back on the left side begin to pick up some interest in turning?

Don't force. Don't make the leg real tight or press the heel real hard, but just notice if there's some beginnings of giving in the pelvis, of yielding. In the left leg even.

And then slowly bend the left leg, and as it becomes helpful, use it so that you can really let your head turn. Let that shoulder really open towards the floor. Let those upper ribs turn, which gets those vertebrae really in their maximal rotation.

And the hand slides on the floor.

Your head might end up over the arm, maybe not. See if that's depending on your shape.

Your eyes keep going towards the floor.

Your knee can come rightward, but it doesn't get floppy. It still has an inclination towards standing.

And let it unwind through your whole spine.

This really helpful movement for our vertebral column.

Nice.

Good, and as you come back this time, pause once again.

[Silence 47 seconds]

In imagination

Then put your right arm straight out to the side at shoulder height, palm towards the ceiling. Shoulder height.

Then bend your left leg. Put your left hand on your chest.

And just imagine for a moment. Just imagine sliding your left hand. How far will your hand be to the right when the pelvis gets the message it's part of the action?

The left leg is bent.

Just use your imagination right now. Try to get that connection.

What's it gonna feel like?

How will it feel in your chest, down your back?

Let your imagination work. It's a really helpful way of growing awareness, to imagine the movement in sensory detail.

Imagine what that's gonna feel like when the pelvis starts turning, and how the hand going down your arm will feel.

It'll be happening in your head and neck.

And then once you've thought that through, go ahead and experiment. Go ahead and slide your hand over your arm, down towards your right hand.

Feel that whole pattern.

And as you slide back, when the left elbow comes to the floor, lengthen your left leg.

Let the left arm open out to the left at shoulder height.

Bend your right leg and your right arm, and continue the movement going across your chest to the left.

Let that change of legs be harmonious with the change of the arms.

The arm bends as the leg bends.

Let your head turn. Let your eyes orient all the way towards the floor, and the lead eye to the outer socket and the second eye to the inner part of the socket.

Be still present for the quality of the touch as it travels over your chest.

And let's go a little faster, but without giving up the quality of your whole self connected, the listening quality. And you may find that your partners or your neighbors are in a different rhythm, and you might have to pause.

But a little bit quicker. See if we can have the same quality of presence, and yet add speed to it.

An awareness of your neighbors.

That's good.

Okay, and then pause. Rest on your back.

Sense the quality of your whole body here, your width, your length. Mostly the inner sense of yourself.

[Silence 51 seconds]

The feeling body

And roll to your side and just come to sitting.

Pause in sitting.

So we're so interested in these overlapping qualities of the feeling of your physical body, and then in what I call your feeling body, your inner body, how it just feels to be you.

And we're noticing all of that together.

[Silence 58 seconds]

Closing

So this is a good place to end for our afternoon. And I'd like to meet with the drivers downstairs in about five minutes, outside the dining area.

I'm gonna go get the directions. I'd like everybody to have the same directions with them so you can go the same routes.

Thank you so much.

I'll see you about seven o'clock tonight, our next adventure.