Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 2, Day 1, Session 2 — 19 minutes

Summary: On the floor, the lesson rests in the earth's support and spinal length, then a gentle hold of each knee. Attention opens to the present moment and to what wants to come next. Standing, ground and upwardness are cultivated together, and inner images are named as what can shape the body from the inside.

Support and length

Okay, so first it's just to enjoy the support of the earth. To take a few moments and really appreciate this great gift of something willing to receive your weight and give you this rest from self-support, or what feels more like self-support. We're always carried by something.

But to feel this contact and to just be with it for a few moments, just to be with that sense of where you touch the ground and different kinds of weightedness, contact places.

Some sense of the length of your spine, top of your head, all the way through your skull and neck. Beginning in your neck is the spine, down through your upper back, mid, lower back and pelvis. Actually to pull your mind all the way through and then even beyond your pelvis, just extending your mind beyond — the actual bottom of your vertebral column, and so extend the attention through space.

And you have that sense of the length upward, and the length downward.

So we want both of these, the sense of weightedness, contact with the support, and something like length, something like a space all the way above you, through you, below you, feeling of that long line.

We extend our attention beyond. We know where the boundaries of the body are, and we can extend beyond those boundaries in our attention. And that's important to do.

Your brain is always mapping the world around you, as well as mapping you and integrating those maps, and our consciousness can do that same action.

The right knee

Bend your legs.

And just take a few moments to interlace your hands, bring your right foot off the floor, and just get hold of, just below the front of your kneecap.

Just gently let the weight go. Let the position — so you're holding your right knee.

And you're just resting, letting gravity, just as you feel the hip and the lower back kind of lengthen a bit, or release a little bit. There might be a little bit more feeling of the leg coming down a bit

towards you. But you're not even really trying to pull on it. You're just letting the position work on you.

And then adding just a little bit of left-right movement. Just a little bit, and you're still letting that position itself work on you. And you feel how each moment there's a shift of weight on the ground. That's just light, easy.

And as you feel the ground shifting, you're also including the sense of length through your whole spine, so you have that image of yourself.

Good. And let your foot come down. Pause.

Present moment

Feel the breath, hear the sounds, just inviting the orientation, the leaning toward present moment. Leaning toward. Not grasping at, but leaning toward present moment. Here on the floor.

There's tiredness there. You acknowledge tiredness is there.

If there is something inside that's struggling to be here, wanting to be home or wanting to be elsewhere, leaving behind difficult things, just acknowledge that. Don't need to push that away and say, "Oh, I've got to be here." Because here can include where you've been, where you're going. It's big. Here is big. It's not narrow.

So, acknowledge what comes in your here-ness, and you find that there's space for it. The only time there's not space for it is when you say there's not space.

And maybe there's some joy or excitement to be here. There can be space for all that. Just welcoming what's living.

The left knee

And then if your legs aren't bent, bend them again, and interlace your hands non-habitually. Where your legs are bent, hands are interlaced non-habitually around your left knee. Take your time.

Those legs deep in, and just let the position kind of work on you. So there's nothing you really need to do. You're just letting gravity and the position and your consciousness interact.

And breathing, you're not doing a lot, but you just want to create space for the subtlety of the moment to come.

And then very gradually you can begin to let the knee move a bit, left and right, and really just letting — it's really a sense of letting. More than doing.

Something in you that effortlessly is awake to everything that's happening. It's a little bit behind any intentional attending. It's not separate from the intentional thing, just a little bit behind it. It's a wider light of which the intentional attending is a narrow beam of this wider light, which is really an effortless presence that's here.

You sometimes can get a sniff of a sense.

Keep your legs bent for now. Lower your leg, foot to the floor.

An inner opening

And just briefly — we'll come back to this bit tomorrow, but just briefly — just invite your inner sense, and kind of go into your inner life, and just invite a sense of what's known right now, or what's kind of sensed right now about what's next in your learning. What wants to be coming?

It's not that you'll be limited to what comes to you now, but just — it's kind of like inviting. Not so much searching or looking for the right thing, but it's more a kind of inner opening and saying, okay, all of this has been alive in my life lately, and this is what has been maybe wonderful or challenging or feels important.

Now, this has really been a stuck place. Wow. This old stuck place has really been resurrecting itself with some — to be there.

And just with some humility and some great openness, just saying, oh. That would be wonderful, if some clarity to arise around this or that.

We'll see if something comes right now. Invitation.

Just roll your head a bit. Your head be free. Your head roll just a bit. And you can still invite.

It's not so much that you're looking for, well, what's the thing I'm going to work on? Not like that at all. It's more like inviting your inner life. If there's something that would like to be acknowledged, let's move through.

Well, this has been coming lately. Maybe it hasn't even been so conscious. Maybe it has been. But it's something that feels maybe ready for some next step. Maybe.

Okay, leave that for now.

Ground and upwardness

Like you to roll yourself up, come up to standing. I want to work a little bit in standing, and then we're going to move toward setting up for our meditation.

Remember how the ground — such an important theme of our first week, and that will always be an important theme, as long as we're on this earth. So I expect to be on this earth through the end of our course, so.

It's likely the ground will be significant. This earthly body, and our body, and their attraction to each other. This earthly body, and this physical body, and their attraction to each other. That attraction is sometimes called gravity.

How beautiful to have that as this attraction, this relationship.

And feel the ground. As we feel that, let there be a little — maybe a little shifting, maybe a little — separate your feet so your knees can soften a little bit. And there can be a little feeling that you're not having to pull away.

Feeling the ground can be sensed, and through your feet, that your feet can actually be alive to the ground.

And then as you're cultivating this ground quality, the other quality that was in the foreground last time was that sense of length upward. So we want those two gravities working with us, that we are indeed attracted upward.

The whole impulse of life. Human beings, as we're growing, so come away from the floor — crawl, creep on the floor, crawl on the floor, get away from the floor, come up, come up, come up, come up, and somehow live at our highest height, yet supported underneath us.

And if we have both of those, that's — it's a wonderful part of humanity, the vitality of our upwardness and the groundedness of our downness.

So we want to see how can we, in thought and in bodily sense, cultivate this — more than any movement I know. What one can have: the inner sense of up, up, and ground, ground. I don't like down, down so much, but ground.

Feel that throughout.

And let's put our hands — just kind of lift, kind of as if you're going through water. Let the hands. And as you come up, so you're looking beyond your fingertips. Your fingertips are kind of towards this ceiling, kind of coming out of your back, out of your pelvis, but you still have your feet and your legs underneath you.

As if feeling your fingers, they can be alive, and then slowly, a little bend in your knees and come down, down. Let your head drop, let your chest come down, and just — you're not trying to stretch so much as hang.

Let your lower back hang. Let your knees have some bend so you're not straining in your back. That to be a give in your knees, and you're kind of hanging, a little simian-like, and the ground forces, so your fingertips are open towards the ground.

These fingertips are very powerful, very powerful. They have much connection in your brain, in your higher brain.

Then with a bend in the knees, come up as if you're going through water.

Upwardness that includes your down.

Shifting weight a little bit.

Let both arms come. Just feel your height. Plank from your spine.

[Silence 31 seconds]

From the inside

So important that we cultivate these inner images — space in our spines, inner images, up and the down.

More on what recent neurology is really demonstrating, what Feldenkrais saw, what —

Sure, it's great to do movements, great to do Feldenkrais and yoga, you know, stay fit and all that kind of stuff, but you can do all that, and if you're still holding the old images of yourself, your brain will conform your body to your old pictures.

As you get older, you will conform, you will shorten in certain ways.

And as you can cultivate this sense of inner space, inner lightness, and inner groundedness, you can actually shape your body from the inside.

We want that.

Let's set up for sitting. Come in a big circle. Do some practice together.