Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 2, Day 2, Session 1 — 71 minutes

Summary: Standing sensing gives way to floor work with the golden ball in the pelvis. Lifting, rolling, and head movements join four-phase breathing, on the back and on the front, with attention through the middle, the skull, and the jaw. A short walk and sharing close the session.

Standing

[Russell:] So, standing. Sensing into the earth, sensing into the ground.

Welcome.

Yeah, so, coming back to this picture of this golden ball. Really take a moment. Back of the hand on the sacrum, getting an inner picture of the space between your hands.

I encourage a little shifting of weight, so you're staying alive to the vertical forces, the ground and up.

Changing over hands whenever there's a little tension developing in the arms.

And the feeling that your whole body is moved from center — that you can shift left and right.

Start with just — not rotation yet — just the shifting.

And as your weight comes onto one leg, pause for a moment and feel the ground, sky, center.

Then from where your hands are, there's a shifting over, and you feel how there's a knowing in the leg when you come onto it.

It's a very ancient knowing. As weight comes on that leg and the pressure receptors are stimulated, there's the support from that side all the way through the top of your head.

Let the springs. Same area. Feet a little wider than your pelvis, so you can have a feeling of turning, as if the turning grows from your center, around your center, around.

Let the opposite heel lift. Go all the way through.

Even pause for a moment when you're turned, and sit down onto your standing leg, and the toes that are still on the floor, feeling through the top of your head and up.

So we have the ground, the sky, and the center.

Turn to the other side. Feel, and actually come onto the leg you're turning toward. Onto that leg. And let that feel — somehow finding your weight into that leg.

The top of your head is coming out, all the way connected to that standing leg.

Just stand. Let your arms hang, but an image, a form, of the space at the level of your sacrum and lower belly, and just noticing if there is a movement of breath. Or not.

Let there be just a little forward and back shifting as you're sensing into here.

You're not trying to stand still, just a little forward and back shift.

I'd like to continue with some movement. We'll come back to our introductions, our reintroductions, a little later.

We're in the midst of reminding people of our names, and something, a process we did this morning. We'll let you know what that's about. But for now, let's get out our mats to come down on the ground.

Okay, yeah. Thanks. Do we need somebody here? I'm not sure yet. Let's see.

We'll take up as much space as — now if we had ten people less, we'd take up the whole room also. It just seems to work like that.

Actually, you know what would be good? If you could be more parallel to that wall, and you a little more parallel, yeah, and maybe you also, turning a little. We can easily fit another person in there.

Does that give you enough height?

[Participant:] Yeah, I think so, yeah.

[Participant:] Yeah, there's at least one or two people missing.

[Russell:] Yeah, that's kind of what I mean. Is that okay? Did I confuse you with that?

And also, you can come this way more, if you like. If you need more space.

[Participant:] Yeah.

[Russell:] So there'll be a space there if someone wants.

All right, so, come down onto your back.

On the back

[Russell:] Just let the floor have you.

It's dropping in, down. And sensing the breath, thinking down toward your lower belly, thinking towards the golden ball.

And place your hands on your lower belly, both hands. Bend both legs, and just gently move your pelvis forward and back, just lightly feeling that movement go through.

So forward is, your head gets pulled down a little bit, the lumbar curve grows. Coming back, you flatten your back a bit, the head gets pushed.

Just let that movement go through you, light and easy, smoothly.

We're playing with this picture that within your pelvis right now, there's a knowing, that there's an ability to be present in there. Not just seeing it from upstairs, so to speak, but being in there, letting it be alive in itself, and feeling that movement, this image of a golden ball.

Pause for a moment with your legs bent. Stay with the legs bent for a moment.

And feeling the support. The connection of your feet with the ground, and shift them as you hear what we're doing, so that you really feel supported through your legs and feet.

And as you begin to inhale, begin to let the pelvis come up in the air, so come off the floor.

If you can find — so, inhaling, connected — and see if you can feel that the movement into the earth and the lifting are one thing.

[Participant:] Lifting of the coccyx?

[Russell:] Yeah, and the whole pelvis from there, yeah.

The whole pelvis, feeling that skeletal support through your heels, and you connect the lifting to an inhale.

Pause, even just briefly, coming down with an exhale.

And pausing, and then you can rest for a couple of breaths if you like.

There's a sense of connecting the movement to the four-phase breathing. That's what we're working with.

Just notice if there's any way that the center of you, where that ball is, can be quite active in this, quite present, we could say, in this process of lifting, inhaling, pausing, and exhaling as you come down.

If your legs feel like they're working hard, experiment with shifting the feet so that the heels are really under your knees, so you get a good support, skeletally.

That's good.

Great, okay. And then pause. Lower your legs.

[Silence 47 seconds]

Notice if there's space in your mouth between your teeth. Your tongue is free in your mouth.

You can bend your legs.

And lift your pelvis a little bit. Place one hand on top of the other, the palms down, and place the hands underneath your sacrum. So behind your sacrum, and see if you can find a comfortable way to organize your hands, so that you can rest the weight on your sacrum.

Okay, so it's not on your tailbone, not on your lower back. You're finding a way to see if you can rest on the sacrum.

And sense the breath down through the lower belly, and this time, as you inhale, roll the pelvis away from the head, pause, and as you exhale, roll the pelvis back towards the head, and pause.

If you can find that, you don't actually have to lift the pelvis in the air when you roll back towards the head. So you're rolling away, and you've got this configuration under your sacrum.

Notice if one side lifts differently than the other. Wonder if you sense any differences.

Smooth. Let it go through your spine.

Change over your hands, so that you're resting the weight, and letting your whole pelvis and spine, particularly your lumbar spine, adjust to this invitation to sit.

And listen if somehow there's an asymmetry that gets more obvious to you with your hands there.

Good.

First, okay, and then let your hands come out. Pause. Rest your legs.

Let's take a moment and sense your whole self, and particularly that space in front of your sacrum.

[Silence 33 seconds]

Four-phase breathing

[Russell:] Bend your legs. Interlace your hands behind your head, and attention in the golden ball. Feel what it might be like to exhale, lifting your head, looking between your legs, as if it's connected all the way down through you.

And you pause for a moment, holding your breath, or pausing in your breath, and then lowering down, you're inhaling, and then pausing. And you can take a few breaths on the ground, so you're not feeling rushed.

And then the pattern is exhaling as you lift, letting the elbows come toward each other, really present in your middle. Having that pause.

And what we want to start growing, as we do these four-phase lessons, is the different inner sense of when you're paused with full breath, or when you're paused without breath, and the transitions — how you stop your breathing coming up. How you stop your breathing going down.

We want to get much more intimate with that stopping process, a smoothness to that.

Really get some indicators. As we'll see in a lesson that we're going to do tomorrow, how we hold our breath has got a lot of good information in it. It's not just a question of don't hold your breath. It's a question of how, and learning from it.

And notice if you can lengthen the pauses a little bit. Not so that you're straining, but that you can allow a little bit more time for the inner felt sense of what it's like to be without air, and resting there, or with a lot of air.

And then let the movement stop, but stay with the inquiry a little bit longer, exaggerating the pauses.

Just without the movement, stay with the inquiry. Let the arms rest. Just stay with the inquiry.

Not trying to make it as long as you can. But listening to the stopping, listening to the inner quality during the pauses, how the breath comes to an end when you're exhaling.

Of course, you could push out more air, but where it feels like a natural end, and how that indication comes.

Let the movement rest for now, just the breathing.

Okay, and even let that go. Done with that.

Let your legs be comfortable, arms be comfortable, and feel the influence on your inner rhythm.

[Silence 53 seconds]

The skull

[Russell:] Bend your legs.

Sense your skull here on the floor. Sense the qualities of your skull, the weightedness. The different sensations that you can notice in your skull.

You bring attention to your scalp. Sense what comes. Bringing attention into your eyes, and the resting of your eyes, or the non-resting of your eyes. Listening to your eyes, and how they're there in your sensing, the space they're resting in.

Notice if there's a little space in your TMJ, near your ears, and actually put a finger just in front of your ear hole on each side. Just put a finger, and just lightly open and close your mouth a little bit, so you feel clearly the articulation.

Place a finger near the ear hole on each side. Open and close your mouth.

You feel that place, and then sense, just allowing a little bit of space between the jaws. Feel towards the back of your throat.

When working with the pelvis, working with the golden ball, often the spaces in the skull and face can be responsive, can be influenced.

So, just feel. As you're breathing, feel the space in your mouth, behind your throat.

Okay, now, inhaling, begin to lift your pelvis. Lifting your pelvis in the air, inhaling, and as you're with your golden ball, you're also sensing the influence through your skull, through the spaces in your skull.

Okay, so we're expanding the attention now. The pelvis is lifting. Hopefully you're using your legs well, so that you have good skeletal support.

And you're connecting the inhale to lifting your pelvis, and sensing all the way up through, lifting it as high as is comfortable for you to lift, and feel as the weight travels up.

Feel the spaces in your skull, in your mouth, your tongue, your nostrils, deep to your ears.

The pelvis comes high in the air, if that's comfortable. You listen.

That doesn't feel right.

Sensing — you're lifting the pelvis, inhaling, and sensing all the way through your skull. Sensing the space. Notice if your jaws start grasping a bit.

Maybe a kind of freedom through your skull, listening to your pelvis.

Just let the head stay down for now, but just sensing through the skull as you lift your pelvis.

And then, just a couple of times, lighter and quicker. Forget the breath as an intentional breath. It's just light and easy, feeling the feet into the floor, the pelvis lifting, as if you had a beach ball on the golden ball, and you were pushing it toward the ceiling.

You had a beach ball sitting in front of the golden ball, and you were pushing it to the ceiling. So just go light and easy.

It's helpful to think all the way into the ground. Think that the pressure into the earth helps your pelvis to lift.

That's kind of light and quick. That's it.

Okay, leave it. Lower down your legs. Pause.

[Silence 43 seconds]

Bend your legs.

Place your hands on your skull. Someplace on your hair, perhaps the top of your head, someplace.

And just feel through the scalp, through the hair to the scalp. Through the scalp, to the bone. Let the palms be really sensing, if possible. The elbows can be in the air to make it easier.

And sensing through the bone, any signs of life, any pulse.

And just let, as you're breathing, you're letting your attention really go into the space of your skull.

Shift to another place whenever you like.

And there's the four-phase breathing as you're sensing into your skull. And listen during the pauses.

Feel the pulse.

When all the air lets out, just rest in your skull. If you can find a resting. Before the next breath comes.

And then let your hands be behind your head, so your head is resting on your hands, and you're just sensing through the hair, to the scalp, to the bone, to the signs of life within.

If your fingers interlace, interlace your fingers. Exhale, lifting your head, gazing between your legs. Pause. As you bring the head back towards the floor now, you're going to lift your pelvis with an inhale.

And you'll find that the head doesn't go completely to the floor before the pelvis starts lifting. So there's a timing.

So you're going to have four-phase breathing, connected. Lifting the pelvis with an inhale, the head's going down, there's a pause, lifting the head with an exhale, pausing, and listening to that.

Organize your feet so that they have a good, supportive location.

Let there be space in your jaws. Space for your tongue. Letting your skull have all the room it needs.

Can all this be going on with the sense that the golden ball is present in your middle?

That's great.

Okay, leave that. Please rest lying on your front. Rest lying on your front.

[Silence 33 seconds]

On the front

[Russell:] Just allowing the contact with the floor, its weightedness, bringing attention into the golden ball, sensing the breath in the direction of the golden ball. Without force, but see, does it easily go in that direction.

Rest with your forehead on your hands, and let attention come through your skull. A feeling of letting the eyeballs hang forward. Some space in your jaws.

Four-phase breathing, and particularly at the end of the exhale, see if you can allow a deepening of rest. Still staying present, staying alive, staying conscious, pausing.

Letting that pause end.

Opening to the space inside your body.

Breath comes, goes through the golden ball.

Exhaling, sense a loop. Resting the skull, resting the eyes, resting the jaw, resting your mind.

Feel, letting go into the support of the earth.

And inhaling, let your eyes and head lift.

Inhaling, feel how that goes through you, all the way, as if the lifting begins in the golden ball. It doesn't begin with your head. It actually begins, something in your middle.

Can you sense that there's something that can happen in your pelvis that facilitates, supports the lifting of the head.

Pause, and then you'd lower the head down.

It's just inhaling as you lift, pausing with the head in the air, exhaling as you lower down, pausing.

There's a movement of consciousness where the golden ball is very present with the lifting. And then it goes kind of in the background, and your head becomes very present during the pause after the exhale.

So it's like you're traveling from the center through the skull, these balls.

Good, and then pause comfortably on your front, please. If you want to turn your head, if you want to bend your leg. If you need to come off your front to be comfortable, do that.

But pause in a comfortable way. Whatever that is for your legs, for your arms, for your head.

[Silence 54 seconds]

If you've left your front, return to your front.

And you can have your head as you like for right now. As you hear what we're doing, you might want to shift it.

And if it can be comfortable to have your arms near your head somewhere, bent upward, either under your head or to the sides, do that. If that's not comfortable, see if one can be like that, and if neither is comfortable, then you can have them long.

And let your right leg bend so the foot is in the air.

And just very, very lightly feel how, with an inhale, in connection to your golden ball, you can free that right knee just a bit from the floor.

So just the right knee is bent, just the right leg. The right foot is towards the ceiling, the knee is on the floor. And so the leg is bent, left leg is long, and you're experimenting with inhaling, feeling how the ground can support you.

And what happens in the golden ball? Get a feeling for that.

Feel the support through your upper body, through your arms, just a lifting with an inhale, and sense how the golden ball can be part of this lifting.

So you're just lifting for a moment and lowering, lifting for a moment and lowering.

So let your whole body support you, particularly the golden ball.

Rest the leg for a moment.

Bring your forehead to your hands. Bend your right leg in the air, same right leg, and sensing from your middle, inhaling, lift your head and your knee in the air, your head and your right knee.

Sense that, and come down.

The point — doesn't matter how much you do. The key here is that you're connected to your middle, and that it's a feeling that the whole movement of your body is coming from that connection in your middle.

And of course, you're getting support from the rest of your body. Your arms can be helpful.

Let your eyes even lift as your head lifts. That's it.

And use these next few times, four-phase breathing. Inhaling up, pausing for a moment, exhaling down, pausing as long as you like, taking a breath or two, and then coming back up.

See if you can find a rhythm like that.

Picture where your sacrum is, the space in front of your sacrum. Very empowering movement through the whole self.

Your eyes lift as your head lifts. That's great.

Okay, lower your leg. Be comfortable on your front, or if that's not possible, come off your front if need be. You can shift your arms and legs and head.

[Silence 59 seconds]

Just see if there's any way you can be comfortable, just for a few moments, with your hands underneath your lower belly, like we did with you on your back.

You'll find kids sleep like this quite a bit. It's not unusual.

And just see if you can use your hands as a guide for sensing towards the golden ball, deep to where your hands are, and feel how your pelvis and back need to organize to find comfort with your hands in that position.

And look what happens to the breathing.

[Silence 35 seconds]

Right, so, staying awake in this area, bring your hands back. Forehead onto your hands, hands under your forehead.

Bend your left leg.

Just get a picture. Before you do anything, get a picture of this golden ball being connected to the lifting of the leg. If you can have just a picture, don't do it yet.

Just inhale, and something in your middle supports the lifting.

Then go ahead and do that. Go ahead and lift, sensing your middle.

Of course, you can sense the rest of yourself on the floor. Your whole body is connected to the lifting. It's not just the golden ball. You just don't want to skip over that middle.

That's it.

And as some of you already feel inclined to do, let the head lift. So you're inhaling, the head is lifting. Pause for a moment and lower down.

Doesn't matter how big the movement is. It's that it's going through your whole self, even through your eyes lifting.

That's it.

And when you lower down, really let that go during the pause, especially at the end of the exhale. Letting the head rest, letting the skull rest.

That's good.

And then a couple of times, just a little lighter, quicker, easier, just more playful. Not straining, not forcing, not big, just easy.

That's it.

Okay, leave that. Pause.

If it's comfortable, bring your hands under your lower belly while you're resting. If that's not comfortable, I won't force it, but if you can find a way of just settling yourself with your hands under your lower belly, just breathing.

Letting yourself — it might even be an old feeling, something that is familiar somehow.

Sense what happens to your breath.

[Silence 30 seconds]

And at the end of the exhale, a sense of just letting your skull particularly rest. Letting the jaws, letting the eyes, letting the thoughts.

[Silence 41 seconds]

Bring your forehead onto your hands, being present in the lower belly, deep towards your sacrum.

Slowly let both legs bend. Feel the movement through yourself.

And inhaling, lift your head and your right leg, and then lower that, then lift your left leg. So still doing one at a time.

You're sensing through your skull, through lifting the eyes also. The eyes are important for mobilizing the old patterns of extension in your back. The eyes are very helpful for that.

And then experiment with both legs, both knees, just a little bit in the air. Doesn't need to be much, from your middle.

Getting support from your arms. Sensing, the inhale somehow connects to the golden ball, and some empowerment from your middle, and then a letting go as you come down. A pausing, a resting, and then a lifting with the inhale.

Okay, that's great.

Leave that. Come on your back.

Returning to the back

[Russell:] Come on your back. Let your legs bend.

And find a way to bring your hands, if possible, one on top of the other, under your sacrum. If that's not comfortable, you can have them next to each other. But if you can find a way to just rest so that you're on your sacrum, so your lower back can drop a little bit.

Just breathe, thinking down, in front of your hands.

[Silence 31 seconds]

And then once again, interlace your hands under your head.

Organize your feet and legs for taking weight.

Begin sensing through your jaws, and the space behind your palate, deep to your ears, your eyes.

As you exhale and lift your head, pause with your head in the air, really letting your back enjoy the ground.

Pausing, and then begin to lower the head with the pause, and you begin to lift your pelvis with the inhale. So the head begins to lower with the pause, and the inhale may begin before the head is all the way down.

See what timing feels right.

Be clear you're not pressing your skull tissues together as you lift your head.

Imagine, let your eyes help you. As if — whether you're seeing or not doesn't matter — but your eyes are oriented to look in the space between your legs.

That helps your chest to come, helps your head to lift.

In lifting your pelvis, you can even lift your eyes up in your head. You're looking up, and see if that facilitates the pelvis lifting.

And then a couple of times, a little quicker, not connected to the breath, just simple.

See if you can find a way to have that feel smooth. Let it feel smooth, so it doesn't feel jumpy. Just only as fast as it feels smooth.

Good.

Leave it. Pause. Feel the quality of your whole back, particularly the sense of the middle.

With both legs bent, if it feels like there's any strain in the lower back, you can hold your knees for a moment. If it's not strained, don't do it. If it feels like it kind of needs that, or wants that, you can kind of lengthen your lower back that way. If not, let this just be alive in you as it is now.

And roll to your side. Come to sitting for a moment.

Feel what that's like, from your bottom, through your back, through your head.

Feel where the breath is drawn to.

[Silence 2 minutes]

And explore in whatever ways you would like. Sense yourself.

[Silence 31 seconds]

Walking and sharing

[Russell:] And begin to move, walk, if that feels right.

Any surprises, discoveries?

[Participant:] No. Kind of like I have two parallel tracks, almost like nothing in the middle —

[Russell:] The two, the sidedness.

[Participant:] Yeah, but on both sides.

[Participant:] Neck looser.

[Russell:] So I see a lot of people looking taller, coming out of your back.

[Participant:] Yeah.

[Russell:] It's a fairly challenging movement.

[Participant:] Lightness in the chest. You're really lifted.

[Russell:] Yeah. Lifted from under.

[Participant:] Connecting.

[Russell:] Yeah.

Can you — when you're — what I see with you, and actually with other people as well, when you push off the floor, feel the connection through the head, and you feel that it just goes right through you, yeah.

That feeling, just notice when you push off your toe, if there's something in that.

[Participant:] Maybe.

[Participant:] I feel my whole area, all across the ball of my foot, wide, much wider too.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] I usually feel my golden ball.

[Russell:] Oh, good, good. That's a part of why I wanted you to lie on your hands, was to not be so frontal in our picture of it.

[Participant:] Yeah. Yeah. I got the feeling that I would have imagined it much closer to the front than the back, and it's really, really in there.

[Russell:] Yeah, really, really central, really central.

[Participant:] Now it's so much easier to feel it in front.

[Russell:] It takes growing the consciousness to have it behind, but having it back is very helpful.

It's — first of all, it's closer to how it feels when it actually comes awake in there, but it also keeps us from tilting so much forward. It grounds us, puts us over our skeleton.

People are saying that, feeling the golden ball not so much in the front of the belly, but having it more in the — get that picture. Most of us tend to kind of lean forward in ourselves, and to be over ourselves, it's really helpful when your center is central.

So it puts you over your sit bones, over your — it puts you over yourself.

[Participant:] Yes, yeah, yeah.

[Russell:] Yes.

[Participant:] Nice, nice picture.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] Yeah. Right. Right now, the hips seem a little more open, even though they may not be, they feel more open. It feels like what I do when I ski. I'm sorry. It's the same, more so. Well, there's a sense of core.

[Russell:] Yeah. Core.

[Participant:] Yeah. That you need when you ski, or I need when I ski. That I don't normally do when I walk.

[Russell:] Yeah. You feel that also, something about that core.

[Participant:] Like belonging.

[Russell:] Belonging. Belonging.

And anybody feeling strained, a sense of strain?

[Participant:] Yes.

[Russell:] Yes, so.

[Participant:] I mean, just because there's the — you know, I have —

[Russell:] Right, right. Right. Yeah, and right, right.

Well, also, yeah, you didn't get to do the first lesson this morning.

[Participant:] Yeah, yeah.

[Russell:] So what you can do is just spend just a little bit of time holding your knee, bringing it to your chest, letting the back lengthen. That's what it probably wants, is something like that.

But we want to grow into this empowerment that comes when we really have this central support underneath us. It's like we can engage in a different way.

And kind of embedded in the lesson, of course, was this sense of getting more sense of your skull, spaces in your skull, which, again, when we're so frontal, as so many of us are, we tend to over — our heads tend to lead us.

And part of getting centered is not tipping forward so much, nothing quite as actively led, so that the world can come to us.

We don't, you know, we don't need to tip forward into it, unless we want to, you know, sometimes, but to have ourselves over the center.

Okay, let's take a little pause, then we'll come back. We'll bring a little more cool air in here.

And then we're going to gather close in and complete our reintroductions.