Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 6, Day 2, Session 6 — 44 minutes

Summary: Sitting, Russell guides a sensing of the midline from sit bones through the spine, then differentiates the hands, wrists, and elbows while keeping the palms together. On the back, finger tapping, pelvis lifts, and arm reaches link to that same central line, and breath carries attention through the body before a brief standing close.

Midline

Just sitting comfortably.

Sense the space between your sit bones.

Sense what feels like the middle connecting to the earth.

And then coming up, picturing being in front of your sacrum. Start with your tailbone, then sacrum. Picture the midline in front of there through your lumbar spine. Down through your chest, vertebrae, up to the upper back and through your neck.

And picture being in front of those vertebral bodies, up through your skull, back of your palate, through the upper skull, through the top of your head.

And can you just imagine for a moment from the top of your head a kind of gentle invitation upward, almost like you're suspended, pulled up.

Think of it in two ways. One is that picture, a frequent picture people use, of a helium balloon up — what that would bring through your whole spine.

Or if you could imagine it being comfortable, you could be hanging down.

And with your eyes closed, sense — does it seem, if you look forward, does it seem like your eyes are slightly left, slightly right, or neither?

When you tune into your right eye, does it seem directly forward?

Your left eye.

The two eyes.

Can you feel how you could slightly inwardly move both eyes by imagining focusing on something between your eyes? And then letting them diverge, imagining you're seeing wide.

Hands

And with your eyes closed, bring your hands lightly together in front of you on the midline, looking upward towards the ceiling. Now the elbows are bent and the fingers are towards the ceiling.

And just feel the hands touching each other.

Just very lightly slide the right hand up and down on the left and feel along the midline.

Rest. On the other hand, feel how you could lift your right hand away from the left, but keep the base of the palms touching.

Feel how you could leave the base of the palms touching and move the whole hand, the palm and fingers, away and back. Feel that movement of your wrist.

Sense what happens in your forearm and wrist.

Now, leave the palms touching and just move the fingers of the right hand away from the left. So let the palms touch and the fingers move. Can you find that movement?

Let the palms — so the metacarpals, this area here below your fingers, the metacarpals — maintain contact, and the fingers. The left fingers still point upward, and the right go out and back.

And then move the fingers away, and then the palm away, then the palm back, and then the fingers back. Do that a few times, feeling those differentiations.

Breathing.

Lower your hands.

Put your hands together. Feel how you can move the left palm up and down on the right. Feel that movement all through your shoulder, what happens through your back, just up and down, sliding the hand up and down along that midline.

Pause for a moment. The hands rest during the pause.

Bring the palms together. Move the fingers and palm of the left hand away. Keep the base touching. Do that a few times, keeping the right hand pointing upward.

Just the fingers move away.

Breathing, sensing the length of yourself as you do this. It's just the fingers. The metacarpals are staying together.

Good.

Lower down for a moment.

Let the backs of your hands rest on your legs somewhere, or someplace comfortable. Palms kind of open.

Just very lightly, let the fingers lengthen and release. Just a very light, very light opening. Feeling that gentle opening, that stretch along the inside of the hand, and then releasing.

Think of your length, and just a few times connect that opening of the hands with the breath coming down with an inhale, and releasing the hands, the breath going up with an exhale.

If you can be alive in your arms and hands, even as you sense this central axis.

So, among other things, we are working with the movement of attention right now. We are working with how to attend to different things at the same time. This is kind of building the muscle of attention that then gets applied in other realms.

Elbows

Put hands together.

Feel how you could lift your right elbow, keeping the fingers pointing towards the ceiling, and lower it. So you're not pushing the fingers over as you lift the elbow. You're differentiating. Fingers stay in the midline.

Also, can you lift the right without the left lifting?

Feel what goes on in your shoulder, what goes on in your arm.

And often these kind of subtle movements, for people with shoulder injuries, elbow injuries, forearm difficulties, allow an even firing, and even an activation of places that have gone sleepy.

So just the right side for now.

And feel how you could then go down with the —

[Silence 2 minutes]

Feel the influence through your whole right side, doing a non-habitual movement like that. The inner sense of size, volume, shape.

Palms together. And the left, just first go up and back to neutral a few times. The left.

If you can differentiate that you're not also lifting the right arm, you're not pushing the hands out of the middle.

And then add the downward movement.

Both come up, both elbows up, both elbows down. Keep the palms together also. They may want to come apart as the elbows lift.

Feel that midline, lighter.

Soften your face and jaw.

Pause. Feel what happens across your chest and shoulders.

Palms be upward, just resting, and just inhaling a slight opening.

[Silence 33 seconds]

Eyes and breath

Bring your palms together. One more movement in sitting, then you'll get to lie down.

And bringing the fingers and palms towards the ceiling, looking forward, lengthening up. The palms stay together. Listen to what happens in your shoulders. And come back to neutral.

Keep your head, neck long. Let your eyes look up with the hands, but notice if your head starts inclining upward. This is not easy to differentiate the eyes and the neck. So really pay attention.

Pause. Finish that.

Think of your length. Let the palms be upward. A slight lengthening with the fingers with the inhale. And imagine the breath coming down through your skull and streaming through your arms and out your hands and fingers with this opening.

Then the exhale, the hands soften as if the exhale goes up the fingers, arms, shoulders, out your neck and head, with a slight lengthening upward with the exhale.

Good. Bring the hands together lightly, kind of rub them up and down on each other, very light. Like there's a kind of silk between. And with the lightest, almost like a non-material something that you could sense.

Then lift the arms and lift the head and the eyes, with the fingers going up towards the ceiling. And then keep your head up as the hands and eyes come down.

Breathing.

This time, the head and eyes and hands come back to neutral. Pause here with a sense of length through your spine. The elbows be out a little bit.

And please come onto your back.

[Silence 48 seconds]

On your back

Bring your palms together over your chest in the same orientation, so the fingers towards the head, in a headward direction.

So they're not lengthened toward the ceiling. They're in the same. Bent elbows, fingers toward your — and then move. The palms stay together. The fingers are in a headward direction, the direction the top of the head is pointing.

And just let the arms go up, upward, lengthening the elbows up in the direction your head is pointing. So they lengthen upward. Feel that through your whole spine, and coming back.

And let, as the arms go upward, they can even go towards the floor as the elbows get long, if that's comfortable.

So as the arms go upward — remember, upward is headward, not ceiling. Ceiling is forward. So upward is headward, and as the arms lengthen, if it feels comfortable, you can let the thumb side of the hand come towards the floor.

You feel that lengthening?

Good. Good. And let the elbows bend, the arms and hands come over the chest, and just let the arms come to the ground.

Fingers

And let your legs bend to standing.

Let your hands be on the floor next to your body. And let the palms be downward for now.

And notice if you can tap both little fingers. Tap, tap, tap, tap, just the little fingers.

And then notice if you can tap both thumbs.

And then notice if you can tap both middle fingers.

And then both index fingers, both ring fingers.

Alternate your thumb and pinky on each hand, alternate back and forth, thumb and pinky, tap, tap, tap, tap.

And alternate your ring finger and your index finger. That's so simple.

Alternate your thumb and your middle finger. See if you can find your middle finger. So you're alternating your middle finger and your thumb on each hand. So each hand does both alternately.

So your left hand goes thumb, middle finger, thumb, middle finger. Your right hand goes thumb, middle finger, thumb, and both hands are doing it, but you're not lifting the other fingers.

Okay. Pause with that for a moment.

Let your palms turn over.

And as you inhale and imagine this air coming down through your central axis, some of it also goes down your arms, opens the fingers, a feeling of filling the arms, very conscious, present in your consciousness, as the fingers open with the inhale. They get long with the inhale, and then release with the exhale.

The fingers get long with the inhale, and you're picturing that air traveling down your spine and down your arms, and then back up on the exhale.

Pelvis

The arms just rest comfortably, and slowly organize your legs so you can lift your pelvis in the air. Bend your legs comfortably so you can lift the pelvis. Feel that movement.

Now, the thing here is to think of that central axis. Think of where is the middle of your sacrum? Where is the middle of your lumbar spine?

Think of that midline. All the way up. That's it. Link through the top of your head.

That's good.

And then please put your hands — keep your legs bent — put your hands over your chest, fingers pointing headward. Let the pelvis come to the ground.

And as you lengthen your arms along the midline upward, you're lifting your pelvis along that same midline, and you're tracking that all the way through. From the bottom of your pelvis through your hands.

Okay, so as you lift your pelvis, the hands go overhead. They might go towards the floor, depending. They might be able to touch the floor, maybe not, but they lengthen overhead, palms touching.

Okay, so your palms are touching. As your pelvis lifts, your hands are going overhead on the floor, and feel a connection from your pelvis lifting to the arms being able to go higher on the floor.

If possible, the palms stay touching, and there's a connection of lowering the pelvis and having the arms, the hands, come back over your chest.

Okay, so do that a number of times. Let's see if it's possible to keep the palms together as you do that.

That's it. Feel the hands. That's nice.

And then when the arms are coming down this time, just rest, put them apart, lower your leg, lower your arms, and sense what's happening to your shape, lying here.

Turning and reaching

Two hands together over your chest, fingers pointing in a headward direction.

And so they're over your chest, just the fingers are pointing the way the head is pointing, and slowly feel what happens in your arms and shoulders, keeping the hands together but rotating so the fingers begin to point footward.

So rotating your forearms and wrists, the fingers stay together, the hands stay together.

It's not a movement in the hands. The hands stay as they are, the fingers on top of each other. It's a movement. Both hands staying as they are will point downward, but you're not lengthening the elbows. You're finding a turning of your wrists, a turning of your forearms.

So the hands stay on each other. The hands are not changing. The hands stay as one. And you're turning and feeling what happens in your chest.

Feeling what — how do you have to organize your forearms?

So there won't be a movement in your fingers on each other, or your palms won't slide on each other. They'll stay the same.

Here's the thing. Both hands will point footward. How are you going to turn?

That's it.

And then go. That's —

Oh, wait, pause for a moment.

Bend your legs. Interlace your hands under your head. Bend your legs, standing.

Just remind yourself of the central axis and hold the picture, and then slowly lift your head to feel along that central spine. Feel. All the way through your tailbone and beyond.

Chest full. Your arms lengthen. Feel how the chest folds in. Reaching down, then come back along that midline.

Let the arms bend and the fingers turn headward.

Do that a number of times, connecting this movement. Elbows bend as the arms come back up, and the thumb side of the hand is towards the chest, and then the arm and wrist turn, and the arms reach down, and the head lifts, and you feel this folding in the chest and shoulders.

You're exhaling. Would that be helpful? Softening the chest, letting the arms lengthen as the fingers — they might reach between your legs, they might reach all the way — and then the elbows bend again.

Good.

Okay, pause.

[Silence 47 seconds]

The whole line

Bend your legs. Bring your hands over your chest, elbows bent, fingers pointing headward, and as you reach up overhead, let the pelvis lift.

And the pelvis lifts, and connect the lifting of the pelvis to the arms lengthening. It's possible the thumb side of the hands will be able to touch the floor with the elbows long.

And then as you bring the hands back, lower the pelvis, turn the wrists till the fingers are pointing downward, and keep lengthening downward, lifting your head, and thinking all along that vertical line.

Okay, so you're following your hand and your back.

Okay, so you're feeling that whole vertical line through your center, all the way up above your head, and down to your pelvis.

Reaching up. Let the palms stay in contact as much as possible.

That's good. Great, okay. Leave that, please.

Pause.

Attention

Inhaling, think of the central spine, central axis, inhaling down, just sweeping through, lightly, sweeping, not a lot of detail, sweeping. Down, exhaling, up.

[Silence 33 seconds]

And then arms long at your sides, with the palms towards the ceiling, and just resting, the back of the hands resting on the floor, just long arms on the floor.

And inhaling, having this whole influx of breath down through the central spine and through your shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, fingers opening with the inhale, and letting your consciousness sweep through the central spine and the neck, shoulders, arms, hands.

As we get more and more awake, more and more subtle, it's this movement of our attention, or we could say consciousness moving through the body, often connected to breath, that is tremendously healing.

It's like bringing your presence through your neck, through your shoulders, through those places that get dense, sweeping your breath and your attention through, opening your hands, and letting them soften a bit.

Like that.

Standing

And please roll to your side, come to standing. We're just going to do a couple of standing movements.

We won't be doing more introductions before dinner, cause dinner time's just about.

But we will be — and we're going to begin the meditation in the neighborhood with a few more voices and then go into our practice.

So feel your standing, feel the height, feel the influence on your — how your arms are, your shoulders.

Paying attention to the central line. It's not just up and down. It's specific focus.

Verse again. Central spine.

[Silence 44 seconds]

It's playing.

Well, it's dinner time.

Coming back again here before we get you to fold up your mats.