Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 6, Day 5, Session 3 — 44 minutes

Summary: Standing, Russell steps away from the week's theme for a side-bending lesson. Four-phase breathing, a midline, and a midplane organize the movement. On the floor, pelvis turns open space in the ribs and spine, and bending flows into rotation and a spiral. They stand, feel the axis, and go to a silent lunch.

Standing

So we'll start standing and — going to step away from our theme and come back to it tomorrow.

We want to do a little something different today, just to vary it a little bit.

So, begin feeling your standing.

You have a spot? You're gonna stay standing. You're gonna observe. That's great. No, that's not enough. That's not long enough for Carl.

How did this — we can bend, getting larger. Okay, okay, then I can go here. Okay, that's good. There we go, we're good. Oh, there we go. That's super.

Well, that's — okay, stand here. We'll figure it out.

And feel your breath, and notice if you can sense your breath down towards the bottom of your pelvis. Maybe not. How low can you sense the breath?

And then intentionally have a four-phase breathing, with a clear — not a long, but a clear pause between each of the phases.

Notice if you can have a feeling of the exhale going up instead of dropping down with the exhale. See if there can be a kind of filling downward with the inhale, following the movement of the diaphragm down and a kind of fullness downward, and then exhaling up, pausing in the in-between.

You had a feeling for that midline through yourself. Imagine it uplifting through the top of your head and some kind of draw downward through the bottom of your pelvis and through your legs and feet into the earth.

Going from the line to the plane going through you, front to back, extending in space, showing you right and left, and middle.

Sensing the torso on each side. Is there a difference in size, a difference in your sense of each side of the torso when you find that plane going through you and you bring your attention to each side?

And then just gently let yourself bend, bringing the right arm downward towards the floor, feeling how those ribs bend. Have the head hang. Come back just a number of times.

So you've got the midline when you've come back. You have the midplane when you've come back. And then there's this bending of the right side. Of course, the left side lengthens, and likely the left shoulder gets closer to touching that plane.

And you follow all that — that you're still tracking the plane, and you're bending. And the plane doesn't bend. The plane does not bend, right. But can you have it as kind of a reference?

Just pause with your right arm hanging. Feel the shape of the ribs, the lengthening of the left, the pressure into the right heel, and come back to neutral, the fresh stance.

Feel how your sense of the midline shifts when you're standing. Is it true that your sense of that plane in the middle shifts, that the size of the right side and left side are different in your appreciation of them?

And then let's come down to the left. Bill, sensing — so it's, again, as with all of these, it's about your attention. You use attention to grow awareness, and you're bending and you're imagining that plane, and how your whole body relates to the plane when you do that bending movement.

Breathing.

Come to standing again. Come.

And again, create that image of the plane through you, and sensing. Imagine your right eye being a little more interested in the right side and the left side, the left, as if they widen just the slightest bit you can imagine. If the right eye wants to see slightly right of center and the left eye slightly left. And there's still this plane in the middle.

And just the next few times, the breath sweeps down on the inhale, there's a pause, and up on the exhale, and a pause.

To the right

Please interlace your hands under your head, the elbows out to the sides.

And picture that midplane going through you, the elbows equal distance from that plane, and project your attention out.

Just gently begin to slide your head and arms to the right and a bit downward, letting the ribs bend. So the left elbow is kind of arcing a little bit upward and your whole torso is bending down to the right. The nose stays towards the ceiling.

Exhaling with that movement's a good idea. The hands can slide along the floor.

Feel how you can let the bending occur further down your back, that it's not trying to bend the neck by itself or even the upper chest, but it goes down your back, and even the length of your legs might be effective, possible.

Go slow and smooth. Nice. Good.

And then pause in a comfortable place you can stay, down to the right, and rest your head on the floor, your hands on the floor and your head on your hands, and bend your right leg to standing.

And without letting the head turn, rotate your pelvis towards the left, inhaling, pause. Exhaling as you come back and pause. Do that a number of times where your belly button begins to point leftward and then back.

And the right side of the pelvis really comes away from the floor. So it's not the right side of the pelvis towards the right shoulder, it's turning. The pelvis comes off the floor.

And notice when the pelvis turns, you might be able to slide your head and arms a bit more down to the right. See if that's true when the pelvis turns. Some space opens, and then notice if you can stay in that new space or some of it without strain.

And so we're navigating the space, bending into it. With the help of the pelvis turning.

Then you lower the pelvis. We'll see if you can stay in some of that new territory.

Good, and then slowly slide back to neutral and pause. Let your arms rest if you like.

[Silence 40 seconds]

Interlace your hands under your head. Slide down to the right. Feel, Hal. Maybe that's opening a bit. Maybe the bending's getting a little easier. Maybe the left side gets long a little easier.

And pause in a place you can stay a bit, with the backs of your hands on the floor. Bend the right leg once again.

And slowly turn your pelvis left and enter that — perhaps there's new territory. Your right leg is bent and you're rotating your pelvis, and then see if you can stay there with the head as the pelvis comes down, and then leave the pelvis down and lengthen the right leg, and bend the left leg.

And again, with four-phase breathing, inhale, turning the pelvis to the right. Listen to how much it wants to turn, so you don't strain your neck. The nose stays towards the ceiling. Four phases with the breath.

The left leg is bent, you're turning the pelvis to the right, which is challenging for the upper back, because you're bent to the right. So we want to see how we can work with that.

And feel what happens when — we'll see what happens after you do this. It's four phases. Good. No straining.

And then slowly lengthen your left leg and bend your right leg. And just one time, rotate your pelvis left, let the head slide a bit more. And just notice if you could stay in this place and lower the pelvis and lengthen, lengthen your leg.

Feel where you are, feel the shape. All the way through the left side of the lower back, those are invited to lengthen, all the way through the belly, way through each of the ribs. Feel the breath.

And just for two or three times, slide the head and arms back to neutral, and then back to the right. That's — feel if there's some new spaces you can enter.

That's good. And then come back and pause. Leave that for a moment. Just rest comfortably. You can lower your arms and enjoy your life on the floor.

[Silence 2 minutes]

To the left

Interlace your hands non-habitually, move all the fingers over one, and just think for a moment of sliding down to the left. Don't do it yet. Think it, imagine it.

The hands are under the head, and you're imagining sliding leftward, and letting the inner imagination, inner sense —

So you're practicing connecting thought and movement. You're connecting sensation, thought, and movement. You're imagining what that's gonna be like, and you're making predictions.

And then you'll do the movement, but slowly enough that you can check what happens with your template, your inner template, and see if you can adjust your image of the movement as you sense something that you left out or something that you put in that was erroneous.

So your hands are under your head, and you're sliding down to the left, and you're clarifying your inner appreciation of the movement. You can remember of times.

And then stay down to the left, bend your left leg to standing, and go slow enough that you can be inside your skeleton, inside your vertebral column.

Roll your pelvis to the right and feel when does space open so that the bending further of the head is not a strain. And feel how the chest vertebrae rotating influences the side bending, and space opens.

Go slow enough so that these tissues that are often bound together have an opportunity to shift. The whole right side can get longer, and the little contractions around the spine are invited to yield. You go slow enough.

So the action, although we're working with the pelvis and head, it's actually the whole spine that can get the benefits. So inside there.

And when you're lowering the pelvis, don't assume the head has to go back all the way. Really listen. If each time we can open up a comfortable new space, there can be a non-forced kind of lengthening, then your body won't contract after, from that. That's great.

And then keep the head over to the left and lengthen your left leg. Just feel this shape, feel your breath, and just a few times, the four-phase breathing here, just as you're lying here in this bent position, sensing the movement through — sensing the breath moving through you to your pelvis.

Enjoying the pauses, the pause that refreshes.

You don't have to do anything other right now. You can just be in this.

And then slowly slide back to neutral and lengthen your arms.

So, just see if you can — interlace them a little lighter, and if need be, come back, free them, and then come back again. So they're not pressing for so long.

Yeah.

Since — were they getting numb when you were interlacing habitually also, or — yeah, okay, yeah, so then it's supposed to be lighter and pause if you need to.

So non-habitual interlacing, just feel how they come together and let them be softly together, and come under your head.

In this kind of rest, let the hands rest on the floor and then head on the hands, and exhaling, slide down to the left. Feel how you bend and stay there and bend the left leg, and just a couple of times remind yourself of how that turning opens space, and see if you can enter that new space a bit and stay in some of that.

So you're staying to the left if possible, and you're rotating the pelvis to the right, and you go slide a bit more if that's comfortable when the pelvis is rotated.

And then as you lower the pelvis, bend the right leg. So shift sides. So this is — hey. Bend the right leg, lengthen the left leg and bend your right leg. Yeah. And then turn your pelvis to the left.

So now, you see, this is a more challenging position for the vertebrae, because you're already — the non-habitual way of moving, and you're already bent. It's like running into those chest vertebrae.

And, but, we want to do this so that out of the challenge, your vertebrae, your nervous system can learn — how could I let that movement go through there? And then, we usually find when you go back to the less challenging situation, the movement improves.

So take your time, go inside your vertebral column with your attention, listen between your shoulder blades where we've worked so much lately. Listen to that space in your upper back. That's it.

Good, and then keep your head to the left, lengthen your right leg, bend your left leg a couple of times, turn your pelvis, and see if you can slide a bit more. Stay in that territory.

And then lengthen your left leg, do it two or three times, and then lengthen your left leg. Just feel that whole lengthening of your right side.

And slowly come back to neutral.

This kind of working in multi-planes, bending and rotating, is very potent. And then, just as you come back to neutral, let the arms come down, and just lightly turn your head.

[Silence 44 seconds]

Bending into rotating

Then lace your hands under your head and slide to the right and downward, bend your right leg, and keep your head on top of your right hand. Lengthen your left arm upward.

Keep the nose towards the ceiling. Nose towards the ceiling. Not the arm towards the ceiling. Nose towards the ceiling. Upward is headward. Forward is towards the ceiling, in Feldenkrais speaking.

And turn your pelvis to the left and slide your head and your right arm down.

And now you're gonna begin to let your head rotate. Once it bends, it begins to rotate. So you can pull with your fingers a little bit to look up towards your right hand. To look up. If your left arm can't be up there comfortably, just imagine that it's up there. It does — you don't have to force it. Imagine that it's up there. But imagine that the arm is resting on the floor up there.

And don't force, let your head rotate. So the bending precedes the rotating. You go from the bending into the rotating. It's like a smooth transition from the bending. It's not bend, rotate. It's bending into the rotating. You get what I mean?

And we want that feeling of fluidity. It's more circular. It's not planes. It flows from one directionality into the other.

Pull with your fingers so your nose goes towards your left hand, if possible. Your chin comes away from your chest.

And Val, have your arm a little more to the side, if that's — would that be — is that okay to have it to the side or not really? No, okay.

Is it okay to have it up like that? Sort of? Okay. Okay. That's it. That's it. Good.

And then come back to neutral, pause, lower both arms and your legs.

Get a picture of that plane, where the midline is, and then interlace non-habitually.

Slide down to the left, bend your left leg, bring your right arm upward on the floor, and as you inhale, slide the head down and rotate once you've bent. That's right.

The nose goes towards the right hand, and you're inhaling, pausing, exhaling as you let the pelvis come down, and pausing.

See if you can find a way, as you turn, as you bend the head and rotate it, that your chest is part of your head — see if you can find the connection between your chest vertebrae and your head turning, so that you're not just trying to turn your neck. That's it.

It just lifts a bit as you extend. So here we had an element of extension for those interested in that. So now you're bending, rotating, and extending in that movement. And so it becomes more spiral-like. Very three-dimensional. That's good.

And then come back and pause.

Just enjoy your breathing, your resting here. Maybe turn your head a little bit just to sense how that's being influenced.

[Silence 45 seconds]

Reaching through the arc

Do one more variation on each side. Interlace your fingers under your head. Slide down to your right. Bend your right leg.

Rotate your pelvis to the left, see if there's more room you can slide into. See if it's okay to stay there as you lower your pelvis.

Keep your right leg bent. Lengthen your right arm downward and your left arm upward.

Bring your right hand around your right ankle, if that's convenient. If not, just touch the pant leg or get near the heel — but you're reaching down. There's a feeling of reaching, and your left arm is up.

And then with four-phase breathing, inhale as you turn your pelvis, look towards the hand. It's a spiraling from your right foot through your coccyx and sacrum, up through your whole spine, turning. And feeling that connection, that long line in front of you.

The top of your head to your right foot is like this big arc through your chest, through your abdomen. This big arc. That's it. And let that be connected to the four-phase breathing.

Your head is moving in, with support from the chest coming forward and up. Good.

Come back to neutral. Pause here.

And just once or twice turn your head. We wanna keep that free. It's a skeletally very powerful kind of lesson, so we wanna be free with these regular movements.

[Silence 37 seconds]

Interlace your hands non-habitually under your head. Slide down to the left. Bend your left leg and just rotate the pelvis a couple of times. So you keep encouraging that bending and the lengthening on the right side and the bending on the left. Keep letting that get smoother and smoother.

And then when the pelvis comes back to the floor and you're in the furthest left position you can comfortably stay without straining with your head, lengthen your left arm downward and your right arm upward.

And you can move your foot a little bit, move your hand so that you get hold of the ankle or the pant leg, or you get near the heel or something like that.

And then you rotate your pelvis. Now go slow with this. This can be a really delicious movement if you go easy and feel the interconnections from your left heel through your whole spine. Your head gradually rotates and extends, up to your nose going towards your hand.

The whole front of you gets longer.

Do all that inhaling, pause when you're there, exhaling as you lower the pelvis. The hand can even have a feeling of reaching or opening as you look towards it.

That's good. And come back slowly. Unwind from that. Turn your head a little bit.

Feel that volume in your torso, the length in your spine.

And then come back to that midplane, in the sense of space on each side of it.

Coming to standing

So we're back to just resting on the floor. Lengthening your arm and leg.

And then roll to your side, come on up to standing.

And feel the influence.

And take a moment to just bend to each side and also feel that central axis and central plane, moving whatever ways feels interesting to you.

And notice how, when you turn to look around yourself, how the rotation goes through you. Good thing to notice.

Okay, and it's a good thing to notice it's time for lunch, and it'll be a silent lunch. Enjoy the flavors, the complex, interesting spices that I'm guessing are awaiting.