Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 7, Day 4, Session 3 — 31 minutes

Summary: Russell guides a movement lesson in coming to sit from the deep pelvis and hip joints. Students hang from one leg and erect, lengthen a leg to rise, lower toward an elbow, and find a teetering balance where the chest can soften. They differentiate hip from pelvis, then sit and sense a quieter, more front-centered lower back.

Over the hip

[Russell:] All right. It would be interesting.

Back up. Bring your left leg back, right leg in front, and feel how you could arch your back to make yourself tall.

How you could, coming forward over your hip, you could get shorter, or you could come out, bending over that hip joint. That you come to your right, bend over that right hip joint, as if you're coming out of your pelvis.

And take your fingertips. Feel into that space where your leg bends, front of that hip joint. You'll feel the edge of your ilium, the anterior ilium. You're just slightly under that.

Good.

Hanging from the leg

Then bring your legs out, and just interlace your hands around your right knee, and just begin to come back like you're hanging from your leg, and then erect yourself.

And then let your sacrum come towards the floor and erect yourself. And then come a little further back. Erect yourself.

And you erect yourself — make sure your head is free, look around — and then you're kind of hanging from your leg. As your sacrum comes to the ground, then you — so, your pelvis.

Then you come further back, and you may even be coming toward the floor, and you can reach out with your leg and erect yourself.

Not looking up. Seeing to the horizon. Smile sometimes.

And then come onto your back. Slow again. Back.

Feel your breathing.

Lengthening toward sitting

Bend your right leg. Interlace your hands behind your right thigh near the knee.

And begin to sense how you can lengthen your leg — not so much towards the ceiling, a little towards the ceiling, but mostly towards the wall in a footward direction. Find the angle that will pull your shoulders.

And eventually, at first your head kind of drops back, but then lift your head to look where your foot is going. And just feel what gets active in your middle.

You're kind of hanging from your arms a little bit. Your thumbs are with the other fingers behind your knee.

And you're seeing, what would it mean? I mean, if somebody took your foot and kept pulling it, you would just come up to sitting, wouldn't you?

What stops that in a completely free way, where you're breathing, you're not gripping in your belly? Your belly's a little active, but it's not like trembling.

And there's a feeling of harmony as you come toward sitting. And coming up, really erecting yourself, coming to length as soon as you can.

And you're aiming from your arms, and you're ready to look in any direction, and changing at any moment — that you could change direction.

Good.

And let that pause for a moment. Rest.

Lowering to the elbow

Come to sitting, and legs kind of soft in front of you, and your right hand on the floor. And you're just feeling the connection to your middle, for you to lower down toward your right elbow. You're kind of hanging out here.

And then feel, how can you activate coming back up?

Feel your legs. Feel, connected to your hip joint and deep in your pelvis. And when you lower down, the feeling is that you could talk. You're not holding your breath. You can have length in your spine. And the moment of coming up isn't sudden — it's a smooth activation deep in your pelvis.

Smooth activation deep in your pelvis.

And gradually feeling, what would it mean to just come down? And not so much that you're collapsing into that arm, but you're just kind of rolling over.

And this is, again, a whole movement that you could spend a year experimenting with, for a few minutes each day, activating deeply.

So see if you can find — if we can get to silent tone, then we'll end up getting the center of it. So if you can find all that and be easy, you can also go down to your left side.

The opposite hand can have a feeling like your grasp, and it's just easy.

And this is one of the best activators of deep energy in the body.

But again, I want to listen any time I grab here. You know, it's not like you get it and it's done. It's like, okay, is there any way — I want this hand to be free, I want my neck to be free, I want my thighs to be free, I want my legs to be free.

And when that's true, your back and front get in such a balance that your flexors and extensors are kind of ideally coordinated.

Let's make it a little easy. Come onto your back and rest.

[Silence 57 seconds]

Coming up over the arm

Okay, bend both legs. Bend both legs to standing.

Bring your right arm out to your side at something like a 45-degree angle, and then you'll adjust it as you hear what we're doing.

And with your left hand, reach across your torso above your right hip, so as if someone's pulling your arm at a diagonal.

And you begin to come towards sitting, leaning on your right elbow, leaning on your right forearm. Listen to how your legs can shift over.

Listen well — it's not just simple. Feel where you want that right arm.

Feel how your legs — at first, to get the feeling of it, you could even lift your feet off the floor and get the momentum of your feet to help you up, the momentum of your legs. And your head has to come over that arm.

Maybe you can experiment. Bring your weight over to the right, and then listen to that moment where there's a — and it goes. That's where you want to slow down and find out, how can I listen to what needs activation deep inside so I don't have to —

What you're going to do is, we're going to put weight on it as you come up, but you want to have the feeling like you're coming over it, like you're not planting it. You're kind of coming over it.

So if that was somebody that you were leaning on, they wouldn't get hurt. They would feel you, for sure. But you're kind of passing over. The weight's passing over. It's not sticking to one point.

And you're listening for that moment of sudden contraction, and seeing — hang out there. Let's hang out here. Hang out here.

And one of the boys we worked with every day in India — Mother Teresa — we called him Hangout Boy. He could walk, couldn't crawl, but this is the way he would be in his crib. And he'd stay all day.

And he's the cutest there, so everybody would come over and feed him and everything. But we had to stop doing that, because he never was motivated to do anything — he would just hang out and smile.

So from here, see — what's the beginning?

So now we're activating the sides, the deep sides connected to these ribs.

And another way we can do this is left hand around the right knee.

Feel how you can get lighter. It's all in this, deep.

Okay, so a couple of indications. Your pelvis is moving. It's not primarily an arching in the back. You're finding the length in your spine. Come to the other side as well.

Just kind of play with it. Don't expect it to feel wonderful immediately, so you need to get a little curious about what the heck would it mean not to fall back, and to be smoothly activated, in deep and steady.

And if the opposite leg begins to get stiff, feel how you can let this soften, lightly.

The edge of balance

Okay, now sit up and interlace your hands around your left leg, and begin to come back. You kind of hang on here. Get tall. Come back a little more. Tall.

Then right in here, right here, somewhere around an angle like this, you'll find that there's an edge where the other leg starts getting really stiff.

Want to feel how you can fall back and then get up, and how you can find a balance, where you can think yourself either direction, up or down.

[Silence 30 seconds]

The best way to find this balance that I know is to go from sitting back toward lying, and gradually increase where you can go, where you can keep the other leg not so tight, and get taller.

And then you'll find that there's a place — to me, it's right in here — where a thought of back will bring me back. A thought of forward — it's a teeter. It's like you're right at the edge.

And make sure your neck is straight. Yeah.

[Student:] Right in that place, Russell — is there still some trying to keep length, or really it's okay to let the chest soften?

[Russell:] You can let the chest soften there, and then as soon as you rock the weight up off the floor, you lengthen it out. But yeah, there'll be a softening in the chest.

And right in here, if you start getting to this place of real balance, it's a tremendous relief in the superficial musculature. But it's like, just soften.

And breathing, and the jaw is at ease.

Yeah, take a little pause.

Differentiating the hip

I want to just remind us of that differentiated hip joint.

So lying on your back, bend your legs, interlace your hands around your right knee.

Come beneath the front of your right knee, and feel how you can arch your back and pull your knee towards you. So you're beneath the front of the kneecap now. The hands are on the other side, like we did yesterday.

And then the lower back comes forward as you pull the knee a little bit, and you're doing that at different angles. So sometimes the knee will go more to the right, sometimes more to the left, but you're letting your pelvis differentiate from the hip, and the hip differentiate from the pelvis.

And your breathing, and your jaw, be at ease.

Maybe most important is your presence is inside, deep in your pelvis, deep around your hip. You learn to sense in there.

Sometimes go quite far out towards the right side. You can have the left leg bent — it's probably easier. And the knee goes quite leftward, even to the point where the right elbow may be coming to touch the floor. You might be that far out.

And you're seeing, could I actually find a way to extend a little bit away from there?

And then you find, bringing the knee to the left of midline, and what that's like to run into that edge of your big pelvic bone.

And again, mostly just letting these kind of unfamiliar places that are usually undifferentiated — just letting any sense of that area come alive, where consciousness and sensation meet deep in your pelvis.

And then switch over your legs. Maybe actually pause, so you can enjoy that, the potency of that differentiation.

I'm guessing that it could bring some sense of your hip that's a little weak.

And let's go with the left leg. Get hold of your left knee and experiment with that differentiation.

I recommend from underneath the front of the kneecap. And unless you find it easier, I recommend bending your right leg, because the left hip will bend easier.

And then go really out to the outside, feeling that outer edge, and how you can find some extension, even when you're on that outer edge, and then way in the inner.

A small movement.

If it's unclear to you, what you can do is you can separate them. So you could extend your lower back, roll your pelvis forward, and then pull the knee, keeping the pelvis forward. Or you could pull the knee and then extend. But what we're looking eventually for is the simultaneous movement.

Okay, and leave that. Pause for a moment.

Erecting over the sit bone

Just come up to sitting. I'll do one more time, and then we'll have a good way to get to this. Next step tomorrow.

So interlace your hands around your right knee, and just coming back behind the hip joint, behind the sit bone a little bit, but still tall, and then erecting over that sit bone.

Let your head be — your eyes to the horizon. So not up, but down.

And then come back. Feel how you can erect, staying as long as you can, and erect, and come a little bit over to the right, and to the left, and erect, and kind of a little to the right, and erect, a little to the left.

And then come back a little bit, and erect, and then come back a little further, and erect.

Now a little further. Reach out with your legs. You might start feeling that the deep tonus begins to grow.

I mean, everybody asks me — let's go a little further from where you were.

Yeah, let's come around your left leg. Let's do a little here and there, a little bit faster. And let's get in deep in your pelvis. Soften the mouth, soften the neck.

And if you go on the outer edge, you'll feel wonderful, as the lower back comes just above your pelvis, and then you can reach out.

And then just come to sitting, and feel how you sit right now, how your back is organized for sitting.

Were you high? Were you —

[Silence 55 seconds]

What you sense

What do you sense in your lower back?

[Student:] Great there.

[Student:] Smooth.

[Russell:] Say again.

[Student:] Quiet.

[Student:] Easy.

[Student:] Feel a lot more of the back of the golden ball.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Student:] So it tends to be much more front-centered, right? To really feel that, like, from the perspective.

[Russell:] Yeah. Yeah. Listen to a really good example.

In my experience — I'm not saying that everyone has this — but when Moshe was talking about, as a judo teacher, realizing you need to teach people how to fight. You need to teach them how to move from center.

When I grew up in this kind of work, I feel like I can handle myself. It's really an energy in the center, in this power center.

[Student:] Right, yeah, there's a lot of weight here, kind of holding.

[Russell:] Right, right.

All right, good step, good step.

You've got helpers — it's time to help. We have today a few gluten-free pizzas. And some have — it's probably written down — but some have just goat cheese and mozzarella, and some have pesto and regular cheese. I think that's the way they divide it up.

And then there's a salad, and there's — well, it'll be out. I think they're ready.