Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 7, Day 5, Session 4 — 38 minutes

Summary: Seated toward the front of a chair, Russell guides turning from the hip while differentiating shoulders, head, and eyes. Constraints keep the movement in the vertebrae rather than letting the pelvis take it. He frames the work as neurological reorganization, then closes with a non-habitual self-hug and the breath felt in the back.

Right knee forward

Feel yourself sitting in the chair, towards the front edge, feet on the floor.

I'll approach this lesson and begin a little differently.

So, bring your right knee forward and your left knee back. Feel as if you're pushing your left hip forward, and feel how your torso turns.

So, forward is — from the — Did I say right or left? I'm sorry, I thought I said left. Okay, so right forward first, then you're turning to the left.

Okay, so feel the right hip. Get an image. Hopefully that's starting to come a little more. The image of that — above the sit bone is that hip joint, and from that hip joint, pushing out to the knee, and feeling what happens to your vertebral column.

Feeling which vertebral segments have some clarity for you. Maybe many do, right? And you might actually have a different sense of — a differentiated sense of the vertebrae, maybe.

And stay with the right knee forward, and your hands are on your legs, and your shoulders are turned a bit, your chest is turned, your head and eyes are turned a bit.

And now, keep everything as it is and turn your head and eyes to the right. Just be clear that you're differentiating. Don't let your pelvis move. The differentiation is the key, so that you can't get the benefit and just go unconscious and let your pelvis move just because it wants to move. You need to keep this kind of stable lower body.

And the shoulders don't get to move right now, but your head and eyes do. And you're breathing.

And just a few times, differentiate your head and eyes, not moving anything else. So head and eyes opposite each other, but keep the smoothness of your head.

Good, and then let everything come back to neutral.

Each step of the way, you might notice during the pause the way you're reshaped by the movements.

Shoulder blades

And bring the right knee forward, let the chest turn, let the head turn.

Now, in this position, bring your right shoulder blade back, but you're not letting your head and pelvis move in response. Your chest can, but keep your hands on your legs. You need to differentiate the shoulder coming back and feel that movement.

Doesn't have to be aggressive at all. Just get that right shoulder blade coming back, and then returning to neutral. Coming back, but your head is oriented leftward and your eyes are oriented leftward. And you're breathing.

Pause for a moment. Stay over towards the left like that, and bring your left shoulder forward without letting your head turn or your pelvis turn. Your chest can respond, not your head. Your eyes are still looking leftward. You're breathing.

And these next movements have both shoulders: right shoulder back, left shoulder forward.

Breathe in. Feel which vertebrae get clearer to you. Don't let your pelvis move, don't let your neck move. Which vertebrae? Where do those forces meet? And then come back to neutral.

And just feel what it's like to turn and look around to your left for a moment. Just come to neutral.

Bring your right knee forward, let everything turn.

Bring your head to look to the right, head and eyes.

And now, keeping your pelvis as it is, just being inside your vertebral column, as you move your head to the left, move your right shoulder back and your left shoulder forward.

And then reverse that: left shoulder back, right shoulder forward, head to the right.

So you're really in. Both shoulders, those chest vertebrae, the meeting of the turning of the head and the opposite movement of your chest vertebrae. How can you sense that?

Maintaining your right knee forward.

Finally, everything looking around to the left.

In classic Feldenkrais: differentiation, reintegration.

Feel now.

Your back is different on the floor. Where in your back do you feel better?

Just lightly roll your head, just maybe two times in each direction. Feel how turning to the left might travel down your body a little differently than turning to the right.

[Silence 41 seconds]

Please roll to your side, come up to sitting.

Turning to the right

I'm sitting on a chair.

Just feel. Feel the carriage, feel the way you're — Your vertebral column lines up, the way your ribs feel.

Your left knee forward, let that go through yourself. So the right knee comes back a little bit, and you're turning towards the right. The left knee comes forward. It's like someone's pushing your hip joint forward.

Feel the right come back. Sense that turning through your spine.

And pause when you're over to the right.

Keeping your pelvis and shoulders as they are, slowly turn your head to the left, really listening to how the turning left meets the thoracic spine turned to the right. So it's being inside there, so you can feel it. And let your head come back to the right. Head and eyes. Head and eyes left.

Breathing.

It's not just a mechanical freeing up of a joint. With your awareness, it makes for new possibilities. Your brain can reorganize, even hurt areas.

Differentiate your eyes from the turning of your head, so that everything else stays the same, but your eyes are now opposite to your head.

Neutral everything.

[Silence 34 seconds]

The left knee forward, turn to the right. Your shoulders and head turned, hands on your legs, on your thighs, and feel how you could bring the left shoulder back in space without letting your head and pelvis turn.

Left shoulder comes back, and then returns to neutral. Back, and then — neutral, of course, is turned to the right.

See, just let the left shoulder — see if you can differentiate that left shoulder. See, the right shoulder doesn't move very much right now. Let the left shoulder be differentiated.

Okay, the hands won't be sliding. Okay, so you're really bringing that shoulder, but you're not letting your pelvis move. It's not going all the way through you.

We need the constraint in order to bring the movement to the specific vertebrae. If you let it go in your pelvis, it'll not ask for movement in places that are more difficult to move.

And stay turned to the right. Now let the right shoulder come forward. And returning, right shoulder forward.

On both shoulders: left back, right forward. Your eyes are still wanting to look to the right. Your left knee is still forward.

Turn and look around yourself to the right. Turn and look around yourself to the left.

And then pause for a moment. You can rest. If you want to rest sitting in your chair, you can. If you'd like to lie down for a minute, you can. It's up to you.

[Silence 46 seconds]

Up and down

Come back to sitting, and forward in the chair.

Bring your right knee forward, turn to your left, stay there, some place you can stay without strain.

And, keeping your pelvis as it is, lower your head and eyes to look towards the floor. Your chest can have some movement. Your pelvis, though —

And then raise your head and eyes to look at the ceiling. Can your chest lift a bit?

Again, eyes to the floor. And differentiate. Eyes down, head up. Head down, eyes up. See if you can find that.

You still have the right knee forward. Need to stay present, that you're not letting that go.

Breathe in. Feel all through your back.

Back into neutral. Bring your pelvis back, your head back. And feel what happens when you go to look around to your left. Feel how the turning was influenced by that, looking around to your left.

I'm hoping you get the sense of how it's much more neurological than orthopedic.

It's not just getting more movement in the vertebrae. It's adding the complexity, for your nervous system, of those differentiations. It allows new patterns to form.

So you're adding — you say, intelligence — or accessing the intelligence aspect. And then there's more potential.

And that's why people with long-term scoliosis can get a real shift. It's not because we can move the vertebrae so much more mechanically. It's that it reorganizes neurologically.

Bring the left knee forward, look around yourself to the right. Staying to the right, lower your head and eyes to the floor. Keeping that left knee forward, head and eyes to the ceiling.

Breathing. Head and eyes to the floor. Eyes to the ceiling.

And then differentiate, so down to the floor with your eyes, and then raise your eyes, lower your head. Lower your eyes, raise your head.

Smoother, lighter.

Then look forward, and turn back to neutral.

Feel what's supporting your head right now. Just turn around yourself. Look around to the right, around to the left.

Shoulders with the head

Bring your right knee forward, turn to your left.

Now bring your right shoulder forward as you turn your head to the right. Right shoulder forward as you turn your head to the right.

Yeah. And now, as your right shoulder is rounded forward and your chin gets near that right shoulder, let the left shoulder blade go back a little more.

And now slowly, keep your pelvis as it is, bring the right shoulder back, the left shoulder forward, and turn your head towards your left. Don't let your pelvis pick up the movement.

Now the right shoulder forward, left back, turn your head to the right.

Breathe in. Feel which vertebrae are getting clearer, which ribs.

Turn your head left, left shoulder forward, right shoulder back.

Go, keep going, a little bit faster, and see if you can let the eyes go with the shoulders. So opposite to your head, keeping your pelvis as it is.

Stay light. You're not letting — the right knee stays forward. Right knee stays forward.

Good, come back to neutral, and just one time turn, look around to your left.

Pause. And land warmer. The rest here lets your —

During the rests is when the integrations can occur. The new differentiations can be integrated without your effort. That's what the intelligence of the system does. If allowed to, given the time.

[Silence 34 seconds]

Can you come to sitting, please, in the chair, front of the chair?

Bring your left knee forward. Turn over. Feel how you can bring the left shoulder a bit more forward.

Neutral, a bit more forward. And then as you bring it forward, let your head turn towards that left shoulder, so the chin gets closer to the shoulder. And then you look back to the right and let the shoulder come back a little bit.

And then the shoulder blade comes forward, you turn your chin towards it. Feel where that goes through your vertebral column. Let the shoulder come back and you turn your head back.

And then bring your right shoulder forward and turn your chin toward it.

And bring your left shoulder forward and turn your chin toward it.

Keep your pelvis as is. Right shoulder forward, turn your chin toward it. Left shoulder.

Your eyes go with the shoulder. Both shoulders are moving now. The right is coming forward as the left goes back. Eyes go left.

When your head goes left and the left shoulder goes forward, the right back, your eyes go right.

Good. There's not much movement in your hands. Your hands are staying in pretty much the same place, so it's more the shoulder blades.

Good. Come back to neutral.

Just feel as you turn around yourself.

Just feel you're sitting.

Hands on the thigh

Bring your right knee forward, put both hands on your left thigh. Actually put some weight in the hands. And, pushing on the leg a little bit, bring your left shoulder back, your right forward. Turn your head to the right.

Then the right shoulder back, the left forward, turn your head to the left. Right shoulder forward, turn your chin towards the right shoulder.

And keep your shoulders turned the way they are, and turn your head left, left, left, left, eyes looking left.

Right knee forward. Breathe in, and return to neutral.

One more time. Right knee forward, hands on the left leg, turning a little leftward, right shoulder forward, left back.

And now, keeping your right knee forward, look down to the floor, letting your head really hang down, eyes down.

Slowly leading with your eyes, lifting your head, keeping that right knee forward, letting your — eyes really go up.

Keep the eyes up and let the head drop down. The eyes are up in your head. The head really hangs with the eyes oriented upward.

The head lifts as the eyes go down.

And, head to the horizon, turn to look to your left. Reach off your leg a little bit. And come back to me.

Feel the space for your breathing. Feel the inner volume.

Left knee forward, turn to your right, put both hands on the right thigh.

Bring the left shoulder a bit more forward as the head turns left. And then the right shoulder forward as the head turns right.

Keeping your pelvis is really important. Left knee forward.

And then, with the right shoulder back and the left forward, turn your head to the right.

Stay here and lower the head towards the floor, eyes down, head down. Keep that left knee forward.

And lift your head and eyes towards the ceiling. Keep the eyes up and lower your head. Lower your eyes as you lift the head.

Look for any extra movements in your shoulder, any contractions that are not needed.

Differentiate your eyes one more time. Eyes up, head down. Eyes down, head up.

Then come back to neutral.

Standing

Stand for a moment. And a little bit more movement into the feet of your shape right now.

Feel the inner sense of your torso, and the breath.

Just come back to sitting here.

Knee and shoulder

As you move your right knee forward, move your left shoulder forward and your right shoulder back, differentiating your torso. The right knee goes forward as the left shoulder goes forward. Right knee forward, left shoulder forward, right shoulder goes back.

Then the left knee goes forward, and the right shoulder comes forward, and the left shoulder goes back.

You just let your head do whatever it wants to do for now.

And then, whichever knee is going forward, that same shoulder is going back. The opposite shoulder is going forward, not up and down. Please be aware of this level.

Now begin to turn your head towards the shoulder that's going forward.

Okay, so again: the shoulder that's going forward is the knee that's going back, and the head's going towards that shoulder.

Hands are not moving very much there. The movement is more proximal.

Just come to sitting for a moment. Feel. Much of that vertebral column might be more present here.

A self-hug

Find a way to put your hands around, kind of a self-hug. Fingertips kind of towards the shoulder blades. You may not reach them, but towards there.

Now, as you bring your right knee forward, pull your left shoulder forward. Yes, as you bring your right knee forward, with your right hand you pull your left shoulder forward.

And as you bring your left knee forward, you use your left hand to pull your right — I'm saying your right shoulder forward.

So it's non-habitual. See if you can get a smooth movement. And once you find it, see if you can go fast.

With your head, go towards the shoulder that's going forward.

The movement begins in your pelvis. Don't let it become a lifting of the pelvis. That was the last two days. This is still a forward and back movement. The lifting was kind of preparation for all this rotation.

So, left knee goes forward. As the left knee goes forward, you're pulling the right shoulder forward. Pause there for a second.

Your head turned towards the right shoulder, your left knee is forward, your right shoulder is forward, and then slowly, as you move your right knee forward, you're pulling your left shoulder forward and turning your head toward it.

And breathing. Go back and forth as fast as you can without getting sloppy, but you're still doing what we're talking about.

It's easy to start doing this with your pelvis going side to side. We need this forward and back movement. Okay.

As your arms come down, feel the shape of yourself.

And standing. Notice if you feel significant breathing in the back of your lungs, in the back, even in just standing. The ribs in back are somehow alive to the lungs.

[Silence 33 seconds]

Wow.

We can go right into this sitting on our picnic.