

Balancing for Movement Awareness

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Conrad is a pioneer of Kinesiology in Hong Kong. He is one of the first two Chinese Brain Gym[®] Instructors and Consultants in Greater China and is committed to spreading the technology in Chinese-speaking communities worldwide, including Hong Kong and Greater China region. His company is the only organization in Hong Kong which runs Brain Gym[®] and Touch for Health Instructor training Programmes.

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had the experience of forgetting where you have put down your pen just one minute ago? Have you ever left your purse on the restaurant cashier's table after taking it out to pay for the bill? Have you ever let your promise just dissipated into the air after saying it? Are you aware of the movements or actions in your life, consciously? At whatever awareness level, **you may live your life more fully by simply noticing more of your body movements.**

This idea was inspired by my modern dance teachers, who are also instructors of Pilates and Bartenieff Fundamentals. "There is only one key to graceful movements - move consciously and you will eventually be there!" I first applied the idea to postural awareness and adjustments. The spectacular results in just one session surprised both my clients and myself. And their health and comfort in physical bodies soared. Then, even more surprises followed when they reported continued changes they made in their lives because they were more aware of their actions consciously.

Enjoy the introductory movement awareness balance that demonstrates how I am doing it. Trust that you will choose to gain something consciously.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVEMENT

According to biology textbooks, living things can be differentiated from non-living things through the empirical observations of certain behaviors, which include:

- 1) respiration;
- 2) locomotion;
- 3) excretion;
- 4) growth
- 5) irritability
- 6) reproduction; and
- 7) nutrition

Laymen put it in simpler terms: just observe whether the thing moves on its own. And this relatively raw understanding perfectly describes the more refined defining features given above. All seven behaviors involve movement of some sort; well, at least for the more “advanced” multi-cellular organisms like humans and mammals. Even when a human being freezes to avoid being seen and heard in times of danger, body fluids must still be flowing and oxygen must still be diffusing in the body. In fact, the internal environment moves more to prepare for fight or flight. For living humans, there is always movement, no matter it is external or internal.

What happens when a living human loses their ability to move? In the extreme case, that there is absolutely none at all, they will obviously die. In the more serious cases like paralysis or loss of limbs, the quality of life is usually compromised to a certain extent. In the average cases in which ordinary people do have experience, like involuntary confinement in prison, hospital, school, guardian’s place or home, they will feel low, upset, dismal, depressed, even suicidal.

Movement in general will have an impact on the quality of life of an individual. It is not a simple straight-line relationship, i.e. more movement leads to higher quality of life and vice versa. There is a range within which the relationship is direct but beyond which more means lower. There is also a degree of specificity in the relationship. Some movements will benefit some people but not others.

Given all these, how do Conrad use movement specifically in a Kinesiology Balance?

ROLES OF MOVEMENT IN A KINESIOLOGY BALANCE

1) As a Pre- and Post-check

With an understanding of the human anatomy and a first-hand experience in how

different body parts move, a Kinesiologist can use very simple movements as checks before and after the correction step in the balancing procedure. Everyday activities like walking, ball-throwing, running, standing, sitting, tip-toe walking, breathing, can all be candidates.

With a working knowledge in neurology and its development, we can also use specific reflex movements as checks.

More specifically, Conrad has devised a system of movement classification inspired by Educational Kinesiology and Bartenieff Fundamentals. There are four categories, i.e. up-down, front-back, left-right and core movements. The former three are more limb- and whole-body-oriented. The last one is more torso- and balance-system-oriented.

Following the metaphors used in Educational Kinesiology, up-down movement problems reflect life issues around organization, i.e. how your life is organized; for front-back movement problems, focus, i.e. how your life is focused; for left-right movement problems, communication, i.e. how your life is expressed and your life experiences received. For core movement problems, the metaphor Conrad is using is balance and principle, i.e. how your life is balanced on your life principles.

Take for an example. Through certain movement checks, say walking, a client finds himself weak in the waist area and the upper and lower limbs do not coordinate too well. Doing further movement checks on the waist, like hip-circling, the client feels the waist area to both sides of the spine a bit stiff. That is the muscle called *Quadratus Lumborum*.

Using muscle metaphors inspired by Touch for Health Metaphors, Conrad will show the client the body movements caused by this muscle, or explain briefly its motor and postural functions, or pinpoint its close relationship to the Large Intestine Meridian or some other related thing. This will go on until the client comes up with an association in his mind that rings a bell. Then, an appropriate goal will be set and have it balanced.

2) As a Balancing Tool

In his experience in private practice, Conrad comes to feel that **all activities that enhance the sense of well-being in the client are possible balancing tools**. Therefore, on top of typical intervention techniques in Kinesiology like neurolymphatic points, neurovascular points, meridian massage, foods, etc., he also uses a wide variety of other “non-Kinesiology” tools like spontaneous play, music instruments, singing, drama, experiential games, structured games, and of course,

movements.

He has used different kinds of movements. The more frequent ones are from Qigong exercises like Eight-Section Brocade (八段錦). He just do the movements without the conscious Qi channeling (導氣) part. Thus, strictly speaking, it is not Qigong training, just the movements. Other favourites include bodywork movements like Pilates and Bartenieff Fundamentals as well as movements designed by Conrad himself, what he calls the Whole Exercises (整體操). In rarer cases, the client will come up with his own spontaneous movements, like a modern dance, or his own favourite movement set, like a certain Kungfu style.

However, by far, Conrad observes that the most effective and so, the most frequently used by himself, is any movement set mixed with an element of play funful to the client. Play is natural to human kids, and adults as well. In Conrad's belief, how playful a person is directly affects their quality of life. In many instances, Conrad worked with the client on and on without effect until suddenly, the client spontaneously enjoyed something funny in the process. Then, right at the moment, the balance was complete.

The way Conrad will mix movement and play is to formulate a game out of the movement. For instance, the goal is "feeling his way through the issue at hand". The movement is, so, actually feeling his way through something. To add the element of play, that "something" can be set as a labyrinth and the client will be blind-folded. He would not be allowed to see the labyrinth beforehand. He would be led to a point in the labyrinth and turned around several rounds before he would start feeling his way out. He would be timed each time so that he would strive to become better than before. So on and so forth. The exact mixture will be dependent on his hunch right at the moment.

MOVEMENT AWARENESS

To put it simply but forcefully, to live is to move. To an average person, if he can or may not move, life can be very limited and miserable. To be aware of what movement a person has made and how he has made it, it is part of the awareness on how one has lived in that particular moment. Movement awareness is the door, or one of the first steps, to conscious living. In Conrad's belief, the two variables always hold a direct relationship, i.e. the higher one's movement awareness is, the more he can live consciously.

If the last paragraph sounds too distant from you, movement awareness has more direct day-to-day relevance. How have you dealt with the problem of retrieving the pen because you have forgotten where you have put it down before you took up the

phone? Or you are at a crossroad. You want to go to a certain place that you have been to quite some time ago. You remembered this crossroad in your visual memory but not afterwards. How can you find the way? Or you have been practicing hard for a sales presentation. Now you are in front of the decision-makers but your mind suddenly goes blank. How can you find the appropriate words?

Human memory is mainly stored in several forms, visually, auditorily and kinesthetically. Movement awareness is the basis of your kinesthetic memory. When you are more fully aware of your movements, your kinesthetic memory is richer and you tend to memorize and retrieve memories better.

MOVEMENT AWARENESS & KINESIOLOGY BALANCING

The higher the movement awareness the person has, the better his kinesthetic memory is and the more consciously he lives. This, in turn, will make him more aware of his issues and possible solutions, which will enable him to set powerful and accurate goals in Kinesiology balances. In this way, he will be more effective in his dealings of the issues in the real world.

PRACTICE – Balancing on Movement Awareness using Movement

1. **Getting your system ready to make a change**
 - 1.1 Drink water till you feel enough. If you feel already enough, take a sip anyway.
 - 1.2 The Touch for Health “switching-on” exercises, i.e. rubbing the K27 points; rubbing the points at the midpoints above and below your lips; and rubbing your tailbone and pubic bone simultaneously.
2. **Set a goal** – How consciously you want to live? How rich do you want your kinesthetic experiences to be? How much movement awareness you want to have?
3. **Pre-checks**
 - 3.1 Where are you in space? – Find a partner. Close your eyes and march at normal speed on the same spot for 1 minute. Where are you afterwards? **ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED?** Hear feedbacks from partner. Change roles.
 - 3.2 How do you move in space? – Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes and try walking forward heel to toes in a straight line for 20 steps. Where are you

- afterwards? **ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED?** Hear feedbacks from partner. Change roles.
- 3.3 Where are your body parts in space? – Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes and your partner will give you a little plastic doll. Feel it for one minute and replicate its posture in every minute details the best you can. **ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED** while you translate incoming tactile signals into outgoing kinesthetic instructions? Hear feedbacks from partner. Change roles.
- 3.4 How do your body parts move in space? – Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes and stand with feet at shoulder width. Raise one arm up and keep it straight right above the shoulder so that the arm and the leg form a straight line perpendicular to the floor. Then, lower the arm down and raise your knee up. Let the elbow and the knee meet at about the navel level. Do it several times to make sure the lower and upper limbs move on the same plane. Do the same movement with the limbs on the other side of the body. **ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED** while you are doing it? Hear feedbacks from partner. Change roles.
4. **Adjustments** – Just play through the process and do not care about the results.
- 4.1 Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes, both hands on your sacrum and stand on one leg. While you are maintaining balance, your partner will use a blunt little stick to lightly pin on your body 7 times. Afterwards, show your partner which 7 spots have been touched at the correct sequence. Change roles.
- 4.2 Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes and stand relaxed. Your partner will move your arms to 7 positions. Afterwards, show your partner the same movement series in the correct sequence. Change roles.
- 4.3 Stay with the same partner. Close your eyes and stand relaxed. Your partner will move your legs 7 positions. Afterwards, show your partner the same steps in the correct sequence. Change roles.
5. **Repeat all the checks** in step 3. Compare results.
6. **Celebrate** – share with your partner your learnings in the process. What are the values of these learnings?

CLOSING

Share in the large group the insights you gained about yourself. Ask questions if you want.