

Here is a review of "The Dynamic Musician Series: Dynamic Stability and Breath, Volume 1" from trumpeter and composer Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson for the Swiss Feldenkrais Guild's Journal. Excerpts (translated into German by Andrea Schubert) of his text appear in Issue number 20, Fall 2006. Reprinted with permission from the Schweizerischer Feldenkrais Verband:
<http://www.feldenkrais.ch/2002/Welcome/Welcome-FS.htm>.

Mr. Nelson's web site can be found at: www.geocities.com/jalalu_kalvert_nelson

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John Tarr

THE DYNAMIC MUSICIAN SERIES VOLUME ONE

Results FROM JALALU-KALVERT NELSON, SUMMER 2006

This was the first time that I have done Feldenkrais. As a musician I was interested in how these exercises would affect me as a performer, help me to become more aware of my body and my movements, as well as the way that I move throughout my daily life.

Here are the results of these four lessons.

Lesson One:

I began by standing and shifting my weight from my left to my right leg. Each side felt different, the left side felt weaker at this point.

(Lying down)

As I was lying down I compared the two sides. The left side felt stiffer, and the right side had more contact with the floor. I then became more aware of my breathing. Sliding to the right side then back up again, then the left side, again the left side felt more restricted than the right. I then slid down to the right side with one hand behind the head- stopping, breathing in this position, and becoming aware of the breathing into the left side of the back. This was a new awareness for me! Then the left side felt longer and with more floor contact than before, and the breathing into the left side was fuller. I then slid down to the left side, still the right side felt better, there still was a difference, but I felt a more even floor contact with the full back than before.

(Standing).

While shifting the weight from one leg to the other, I had more awareness of the differences between my right and left sides however the feet felt more equal than at the start of this session. All this was a series of new realities for me.

Lesson Two:

Began by sitting. Tried the breathing and the curving sequence. Breathing fuller after the curving sequence. Felt more grounded in the chair. Breathing into the back while folded down to the left side, made it easier to breath in this position. After this, turning to the left side felt more grounded on the chair. Turning to the right was still more restricted than turning to the left, perhaps because

of my lifelong spinal problem, a bit of a spinal curve. Next, breathing into the right side of the back, which became fuller. Rolling down and up from the center position felt more grounded on the chair and floor. Circling sequence, left, and right, afterwards sitting felt more relaxed, I sat in a straighter position with more air going into the sides of the back. While standing I felt longer than before.

Lesson Three:

Today, turning to the right felt easier than before: After the first sequences, I felt more equal contact with my back to the floor.

Standing felt more equally grounded. When standing with one leg crossed over the other it was easier turning to the left than to the right, perhaps because of my back problem.

However, while standing I was more aware of my breathing and as I walked around, I tried walking in a more upright or longer position. When practicing I tried to stand more elongated than in the past (straighter).

Lesson Four:

Several days passed between each lesson so that I could notice the effects each lesson had on me. Between the third and fourth lessons I had a performance and I noticed how I stood while playing the trumpet. In the past I would sort of hunch over. Now I tried to play standing straighter with both feet fully on the floor, and I noticed how it was easier to breathe!!!!

The lesson:

At the start, lower back less contact with the floor. I might add that during these sessions I became more aware of my pelvis!!!! During this session I began to feel more contact with the floor and my lower back and breathing became easier. Wow, I discovered how to roll my pelvis!! Rolling it back and forth breathing in and out. All of these movements felt easier now. This last lesson was the easiest of the four and I was more aware of the changes. In the end the back had better contact with the floor. While sitting and rolling it felt easier to breathe and I felt more contact with the chair and floor.

From these sessions I became aware of parts of my body that I had never been aware of before. And I realized as a performer some not so helpful habits I've had for so many years!!! That I can change these habits is a big discovery for me.

I am now more aware of my daily movements, and how certain movements cause pain and stress, and how others are more natural. Awareness is my big discovery from these four lessons. More awareness of my self and of how I move. It will take time to change these life-long bad habits, but perhaps awareness is the first step!!!

Thanks!! Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson