

KLEIN TECHNIQUE™
SUSAN KLEIN SCHOOL OF MOVEMENT AND DANCE



SUSAN KLEIN HARKNESS SPEECH

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I'm Susan Klein and director of the Susan Klein School of Movement and Dance where I have been teaching classes and developing my work, Klein Technique™, since 1972. Over the last 40 years we have served as a resource for the dance community offering affordable, year round classes both in New York and giving workshops throughout the world. Students of ours have included Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and many of her students, as well as choreographers and their company members such as Sasha Waltz, Trisha Brown, Stephen Petronio, Bebe Miller, Ralph Lemon, Phoebe Neville, Yvonne Rainer, Neil Greenberg, Roz Newman, Barbara Mahler, David Roussev, Jeremy Nelson, and members of the Finnish Ballet, the Twyla Tharp Dance Company, Lucinda Childs Dance Company, David Gordon Pick Up Company and Douglas Dunn and Dancers, as well as many independent choreographers and performers.

Klein Technique™ was developed as a result of my personal journey and serves as a way for people to work through individual injuries, to understand the workings of their own bodies, and to heal themselves. It is a technique of hope. It is a technique of vision, of wellness, of power, and of individuality. The aim of my work is to put people back into their bodies, for each person to get a body-felt understand of who they are, what their injury means, and how to access the innate intelligence of their body rather than to ignore it. For the healthy dancer it is a technique of discovery, of essence, of learning who they are as movers, and how their body functions as individuals. It's a way to learn to dance and move from an internal knowing rather than an external shaping. It's an opportunity to let go of all imposed limitations, and ideas of restrictions. It's a technique of choice, of options, of expansion. Klein Technique™ is a process. It is a process of learning and healing. It is a process of change.

I began this work in response to a knee injury that I received in 1969 when I was 19. I began dancing when I was 5. I did German Modern Dance and Graham. They were pretty demanding and rough techniques, very physical techniques. The first time I hurt myself I went to an orthopedist. I got a shot of cortisone and was told not to dance again for 3 months. And that was really a very big hardship for me as a 19 year old, not to be able to move for 3 months. But I did it. Then I went back to dancing. When I went back to class it was as if I had never danced before. Everything hurt. It was like I was a beginner. I felt like I lost all my technique and all my

ability. It was like starting again, and it was very emotionally difficult as well as physically difficult, very demoralizing to have to start again. I was in a position when I hurt myself of being on the edge of entering a professional modern dance company and then I felt like I had to start again. So I went back to class and built back up and lo and behold I hurt myself again. And finally a year or two later I had a skiing accident in Switzerland and that was the end. It was just a freak accident. Somebody ran into me, spun me around, I went down backwards, both my knees went in, and I heard a snap. Both knees did the exact same thing but only the left one got damaged. That was the one that I hurt originally. It swelled up and the swelling never went down. I went to the emergency room, right after it happened, got an x-ray, nothing was broken. But the swelling never went down for months and months and months. I just barely got around. Then I started seeing orthopedists in New York City and I was essentially diagnosed as having everything wrong with a knee that could be wrong. I was told I would never walk again without a limp. Several orthopedists wanted to operate, each with a different diagnosis and procedure. The last orthopedist I saw was the man who had developed the latest surgical techniques for knees. He was an old and cranky man who was frustrated and impatient with dancers. He had removed all four of Hanya Holmes cartilages and felt it was useless to treat dancers. Ultimately he knew he couldn't help me. He knew I would go back to dancing and to what I was doing and would injure myself again. He told me I should get married and have children and give up dancing. At the time I was incensed and devastated by him, but in retrospect I can see that his treatment and his words were pivotal in my development, and to this day I thank him. He understood that there is an underlying cause to a symptom, and that this is the level on which the healing must take place. I had a Bakers Cyst in the back of my knee, in addition to the damaged cartilage and ligaments. I begged him to remove the cyst. He was reluctant, saying that something was causing it, and if that wasn't corrected, the cyst would return. He understood that he couldn't help dancers by surgically treating their symptom. I don't think he understood that there was a way to treat the cause of the injury, a cause to be found in the movement pattern of dancers, and that movement patterns can be analyzed, understood and corrected and that healing can then take place on this crucial and fundamental level. All this understanding came to me years later. I have healed completely, have danced and skied fully and don't walk with a limp. I am very grateful to this man for his insistent and stubborn unwillingness to operate on me.

During this entire time I was teaching, and I started having to teach differently. I couldn't really move, so I had to use my eyes and I had to use my voice. I had to talk to my students about what I thought was wrong. I had to be able to see. I couldn't use my hands as much as I was used to and I couldn't demonstrate. This led to my first really big revelation. Why should I demonstrate? Am I perfect? No. Do I want everybody coming out with movement like mine? No. Is my body the same as everybody else? No. So maybe this whole tradition in the dance world of demonstrating to teach dancing isn't such a great idea. This led me to the idea of student self-discovery. Each student must find their own connections, on their own body, in their own way, at their own time. A dancer must own his or her own body. Class is designed to place people in an environment of thoughtful, slow exploration of possibility and potential. Analyzing and integrating the body at its deep functional core over and over again. Understanding how the body works and then learning to apply it to dancing. Class is about each person's discovery of new material, of deep connection, about each person working with the issues of their own

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body. Class is about respect for the dancer as a human being, which is also not in the tradition of dance training. That was the beginning of a lot of change in my thinking.

The second major thing that started to occur to me was that in this injury, caused by a symmetrical skiing accident, only one knee got hurt, my "bad" knee. It began to occur to me that this might not have been an accident. That actually I might have caused it. This was a tremendous idea to me. A very powerful and exciting thought, that I did it, that I did this to myself. And if I did this to myself I could undo it. I could change. I began to realize that it was a result of who I was, what was going on with me in total, not just in my body, not just as a dancer. And this was very important.

Oh. I need to back track just for a second. My original injury took place on a tennis court, not in dance class. I had been going to dance class, two classes a day, all summer. I was only 19. I was playing tennis this particular afternoon and I walked to the net to pick up a ball, and as I walked back I started to limp. By the time I got home that night my knee was swollen. So this was another piece of the puzzle. This was something I looked back at years later to realize, based on this idea that this was not an accident, that this was something I had done to myself over time. The basic concept here is stress builds up over time. There's not always an accident that causes an injury. I was very lucky that I had this experience because it allowed me to eventually understand that my movement patterns, established over a long period of time, caused the injury rather than any one specific incident or accident. When you have an accident it's very easy to believe that all you had was an accident. That you actually had nothing to do with it. But in reality, if we all had an accident, even if we had the same accident, it would be different. So if this whole front row got hit by a car, the same way, and you got thrown up in the air, because of who you are - you're body, mind, spirit, structure, what's on your mind that day, if you got into a fight with somebody - because of all that, you would fall differently. And you would get your own injury. You would have your own unique injury. An injury that's yours. The injury would seat itself in your area of weakness in your area of vulnerability. And that's what's important to understand. So yes, you can have an accident and we all have accidents and we all will get hurt, dancing or not. But the issue is, what is the injury and what does it mean to you and how can you take care and learn from it.

I'm also an Acupuncturist, a Zero Balancer, and I have a private practice as a movement therapist. One of my acupuncture teachers whose name is Dianne Connelly always talks about an injury as being a "call home". An injury is a way your body-mind-spirit says to you something is wrong, you need to listen, you need to try and figure out what happened, what's wrong. And it's an opportunity. In the Chinese language crisis has two meanings, one is the crisis and the other side is the opportunity. An injury actually comes as a call to yourself. It is a way of turning a disadvantage into an advantage, a way to really learn something, to become better, and to improve from it.

Now if you just take a very structural point of view and just say, "I was dancing too much and I sprained my ankle, so I'm going to go home. I'm going to soak it. I'm going to wrap it. I'm going to ice it. I'm going to elevate it and I'm going to rest. And it'll get better. And it probably will, but you're losing the opportunity part. You're just getting the crisis part. The opportunity is to look into it to see what happened and how you can truly make it heal. It is your opportunity to really

take the time to analyze and understand what caused the injury so you can diminish the chances of it happening again. This is the time within our injuries that we become hypersensitive. We're hurt and we become very, very sensitive. It hurts. Everything hurts. And within that you have the opportunity to fine-tune yourself and to figure out how to use your body more correctly. Because in that place of pain, your body is very critical. It will only allow you to move in a precise range that is correct, a range that doesn't allow for torqueing or twisting. As you get better, however, you become more tolerant of doing things wrong. But in that place of pain, you can find more of what is correct, as a way out of the pain, instead of forgetting about it and waiting until it goes away. It is true people often compensate around the pain, but it is possible to use the pain and work with it to improve functioning.

My work is specifically aimed at getting people back into their bodies so that they can move in space. My interest is dancers, my interest is moving. I'm interested in bringing a bodywork perspective, an intelligence and understanding of the body, a perspective of individuality, into a highly functioning moving body. It is not enough to undergo therapy for an injury if awareness of how that injury relates to past and present function is not obtained and applied. Constant analysis, breaking movement down into its very essential and basic component parts, and re-integration into organized movement patterns must occur and re-occur in a constant cyclical process of learning and healing. Eventually and ultimately the dancer must function as a connected whole human being in movement and expressivity. Re-patterning and instinct must once again emerge as one.

A dancer is a whole human being who must be looked at as a complex of body, mind, and spirit. Each one of these levels can be broken down into a body, mind, and spirit as well. So you have body, mind, spirit, on the level of the body; you have body, mind, spirit on the level of the mind; and you have body, mind, spirit on the level of the spirit. If we look at this in terms of illness, illness can take place on any of these nine levels. Teaching can also take place on any of these nine levels. Let me make it clear that when I am talking about spirit I am not talking about religious or metaphysical matters. I am talking about deep and crucial qualities of a person such as consciousness, ideation, inspiration, will power, and hope. Dance, of course, focuses on the body level. Psychotherapy focuses on the mind level. Meditation, that type of work, is on the spirit level. Now in terms of dance it is important to realize that there is a body, mind and spirit on the level of the body. What people in dance get too hooked into is just the body. It becomes all body. The body level of the body. They don't realize or forget that there is a mind and a spirit connected to it. The educational aspect of my work is aimed at the mind level of the body. The dancing /performing that results is on the spirit level of the body. Right now I'm talking to your minds, but I would actually like to talk to your body, to the mind level of your body when I begin talking about movement concepts. The understanding eventually must be in your bodies. If the understanding just stays in your head then it's just intellectual ideas, and as far as I'm concerned it's not useful. It's useful but it's intellectual. It's not useful to dancers. The only way it becomes useful is if it gets into the body. Many somatic modalities teach so much intellectual information that never seems to integrate into the body, it stays in the student's mind. When I see dancers moving, that have studied this or that, I often don't really see a change on the body level. They can talk about it, there is an understanding, but there is no real change in their movement. It's important for information to get into the body. For information to be on a body felt level. This is what's important. There is a

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real difference between information being in the mind and information being in the body. In class we are trying to work with, to communicate to the mind of the body. It's important in adults to elicit the mind level of the body to create change. We have to, to quote Mabel Elsworth Todd, become a "thinking body". Our ultimate aim, however, is to go deeper so the expression of an individual dancers will eventually come from the spirit of the body. Movement that comes from who you are, from your own will, from your own creativity, from your own consciousness, from your own inspiration, from your own ideas. That's the idea of moving from your spirit. You're moving from a place of internal knowing not of an external shape. Not just from the body, but from your entire experience as a human being. I don't think that moving from the mechanics of the body is art. And I don't think healing solely from the mechanics of the body is possible.

I want to tell you a story. This is a Nietzsche story about the 3 levels of the transformation of the spirit. And the story goes like this: When you are a young person you are a camel. The camel gets down on his knees and says "Put a load on me." Now this load is obedience, receiving instruction and information society knows you must have in order to live a competent life. When the camel is well loaded, she struggles to stand on her feet and runs out into the desert where she becomes transformed into a lion. Now the heavier the load, the more powerful the lion. The function of the lion is to kill a dragon, and the name of that dragon is Thou Shalt. Now on every scale of this dragon is imprinted thou shalt, and those thou shalts are the thou shalts from 2,000 years ago, they're from yesterday's newspapers, they're from your parents and your teachers, they're from everything that society has given to you. When the dragon is killed, the lion is transformed into a child. An innocent child living out of all her dynamics. Like a wheel rolling from its center. And that is the place where you finally begin to become yourself; you finally begin your life.

The thou shalts are the civilizing force. They turn the human animal into a civilized human being. But then one needs to throw off the thou shalts. You're still civilized but now you are your own person and you have the innocence of a child. I think my work is about killing the dragon, killing all the thou shalts so you can finally find the uniqueness of who you are as a person and learn to move from that place. Now you still have your technique. You still have all your training but the point is to be able to use it for yourself. To be able to use it in a way that becomes instructive for you. That becomes something that's useful to you, that means something to you, so that you can communicate as a dancer and that you're not taking on an external form - an external form from your culture, an external form from your company, an external form from your choreographer, an external form from your teacher. There is a way that you can do that movement from your own individuality. And I believe that when you do that, it is healthy movement and that the chances of getting injured are much, much less.

The next major concept I want to talk to you about is the concept of energy and that the body is not just structure and matter but that is also energy. There is an energy-matter continuum. Energy I'm going to equivocate to movement and matter to structure. Energy warms, supports, and moves. Energy related to our potential, to our future, to where we are going. Energy is our life force. Matter is our form, our structure. It relates to the present. There are different forms of healing and different forms of dance techniques that really favor

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one side or the other of this continuum. On the energy side there are techniques like tai chi, aikido, some types of karate, post modern dance forms such as Contact Improvisation. Acupuncture is a healing modality that deals primarily with energy. On the matter side is much of ballet, which is a very formalized, structured, and positioned. There are many modern dance techniques that have slipped over to this held, formalized posturing. As far as exercise is concerned calisthenics, and weight lifting, things that are very physical with the body, deal mostly with matter and structure. From what I saw here yesterday, Pilates seems to deal mostly with structure. Physical therapy and orthopedics are concerned with this structural side of the continuum.

As far as my work goes, I like to look at it as being in the middle of the continuum, on the interface between energy and structure, where they are equal. As in other therapies and body awareness techniques, we spend so much time on structure and proper body mechanics, but in my work it is always within the context of function, within the context of movement. My aim is movement. Movement is the key. Dancing. We are interested in dancing, and we are interested in highly functioning, structurally correct dancing. We are working on the interface of movement and structure considering them both with equal importance. We are interested in movement within the structure, structure within the movement. I think the work of Sasha Waltz and Guests are working on this interface of energy and structure.

This exciting way of dancing will allow for expression, individuality, communication and health. Movement. Energy. Dance. Beauty. Individuality. I think what most often happens in dance education is that things are externalized when taught by imitation. When people think there is a right and a wrong, from an external source, a sense of the individual gets lost. Movement gets lost. What happens is positioning occurs. A form becomes paramount, placement becomes paramount rather than movement. What we need to allow for and teach is the interrelationship between movement and structure, to find a way to keep movement and structure both happening together all the time. It is true that there is an optimal placement of the bones but it has to be found through movement, by getting to our deepest muscles of postural support, not by holding and placing our external form.

Towards this end my work is on the level of the bone. I do not believe in building muscle strength. I don't believe there is a dancer in the world who's weak. If there is weakness I believe it's a problem of coordination, not a problem of individual muscle strength. I don't believe it is a question of strengthening one muscle, or muscle group against another. I believe that weakness comes from a deeper, more fundamental level, the level of the bone, the skeletal level. If the bones are not connected well, the muscles will be unable to coordinate properly and function optimally. It's my view that once the bones are in the proper place, the muscles will begin to work properly. Muscles are meant to work, their function is to contract and release. If you leave them alone, they will do it and they will become balanced. Actually, it seems the conscious work that needs to be done is on releasing the muscles, not strengthening them. They contract very easily and well on their own. Muscle is very easy to build up. Unless there is some organic problem this should be the case. This is a crucial concept in my work.

This concept of coordination versus muscle strength was introduced to me personally by Irmgard Bartenieff in 1974 when I was taking a workshop with her. Irmgard was old at the time,

in her 70's or 80's. She was slight, she was tall, she had a small frame, just the opposite from my build. She was talking about this concept of strength versus coordination and said that she had just gone to a conference with orthopedists and demonstrated it to them by easily pushing a large male doctor into the wall. I'm sitting there, listening to her incredulously, I think visibly rolling my eyes. I'm sure she saw me and said, "You, come here." So there I was, I'm 24, I have a strong mesomorphic build, my knee was getting better. I was looking at this old lady thinking, "Oh my God, I hope I don't hurt her." So she says, "Push me." And I'm thinking, "I'll kill her." Then she says "O.K., now resist me." And then I just went flying, she pushed me at least 20 or 30 feet down the studio floor into the wall. I remember blinking my eyes and going "Oh." And that was pivotal, that was it. My thinking was changed. Nothing in my model of thought could explain what had happened to me. The impossible had happened. She was 3 times my age, tall, thin, with very little apparent muscle. I was young, strong, and muscular. There indeed had to be more to strength than built up muscles. Over the years, and with a lot of work, it became clear it was total body use, coordination, connection of body parts into a whole, not strength of body parts that yields strength and ability. Strength is coordination and coordination is equal to total body use. You can't analyze the parts alone. You have to consider the whole. You have to work with the whole in movement and in healing. Working muscles in isolation doesn't work, it doesn't impact on function. The body must be considered as a whole, both in relationship to its environment, to the floor, and within itself. Strength comes from the muscles being accessible, from the body's ability to access them for movement. This is why you have to go underneath, below the level of the muscle, to create change. Irmgard's work was a tremendous springboard for me and she is another person to whom I will always be eternally grateful.

My work is on the level of the bone. The bone is our densest, deepest tissue. We have soft tissue that is muscle, tendon, and ligaments and then we have the bone. The bone is underneath it all. The bone is our essential structure and it conducts the most energy. In my work we are really not working on the muscles at all. What we're doing with the muscles is trying to learn how to release them and get them out of the way. I look at the muscles, metaphorically, as 'tight pants'. Really tight pants, like jeans, that prevent us from moving so that if we go to lift our leg we can't get very far. We can't move. That's how I basically look at the muscles. I look at them as the casing that holds us in place. Most of us are not connected and our bones are not in the right place, they are not aligned properly. In that case our muscles actually serve to hold us in a place of dysfunction. There are some people that are naturally in perfect function, in perfect alignment, in perfect connection and they are the geniuses. There are brilliant dancers that are in perfect function. So they can do anything. They can build up their muscles because everything is working perfectly. For them, adding the muscle on top of their perfect connections just adds more power. But for most of us, who are not perfect, whose alignment is not perfect, our muscles are holding us in a place of disconnection, in an external shape imposed by the standards of our chosen aesthetics or technique, rather than giving us strength, support, options and flexibility in movement. Building muscles up for us further locks us in and holds us back. This is why dancers often reach a limit as to how well they can dance. There often comes a time in a dancer's life when he or she stops improving, or even starts to get worse, extensions start to get lower. This is because movement patterns get locked in by the rigid muscular demands made on the body. There is actually no avenue open for improvement. As the muscles get stronger and tighter, movement actually get inhibited and denied. Externalized limits get imposed and often

become internalized. Letting go of the muscles start to expand our physical definition of our bodies' capabilities. We have the opportunity to expand beyond all the imposed limitations and step into expansion beyond our 'known' limitations. Knowing keeps us tied to our limitations, allowing the muscles to let go, allows us to venture into the unknown and into the growing edge of our potential. It allows us to access the area of internal knowing, working from the deep tissues of the body, working from the bone and the deep muscles of postural support.

The bone is the only tissue that doesn't yield to gravity. It stands on its own. When we lie down and relax, our flesh will drop, but the bone doesn't, the bone will stay. The bone has its own strength. In a sense the bones are simple, and in their simplicity they hold a map to our essential selves, our underlying and most stable structure. The skeleton serves as a simple visual image the mind of the body is capable of working with. My work is aimed at working with the bones to connect the body and create clear, simple, and direct lines of movement and energetic force. The areas of the body most vulnerable to movement and stress are the joints. These are the areas of greatest energetic and structural turmoil and disconnection. We work with great care to analyze and understand the movement process across each joint and to correct the torqueing and twisting or other impediment to proper use and energy transmission. The bone is capable of change when the force through it changes. According to Wolfe's Law both the internal and external architecture of the bone can and will change when the forces through it change. As movement patterns change, the force through the bone will change allowing real and concrete structural change to occur. In order for this to happen the external musculature must be released, the old holding patterns on the bone must let go. Toward this end we do a great deal of deep long stretches. We stretch to add openness and movement potential to the joints, to add choice. This work is not done to stretch and lengthen alone. While stretching there is a dual consciousness: one on stretching and letting go, the other on connecting and sending clear, strong, structural and energetic lines through the body. This is crucial, and neither would work alone, for we wouldn't be getting to the depth needed for real change. We have to release old patterns and replace them with new ones at the same time with personal consciousness and awareness for real change to occur.

The bones cannot be changed or put into place by using the external muscles, which are so vigorously exercised and attended to in so much of dance training. Work must be done on the level of the bone. Of course as we all know, the bones don't move themselves. The muscles move the bone. The muscles that we work on hug the bone and are found deep in the body. They are the muscles of deep postural support. The primary muscles that we work with are the hamstrings, the pelvic floor muscles, the six external rotators, and the psoas. According to Gray's Anatomy these muscles are all responsible for righting the pelvis and spine upon the legs when the fixed end is taken from below as in standing. They are the muscles that take the bones into their place. It is in this capacity that they are capable and responsible for the transmission of force, the transmission of energy, rather than locomotive movement. In all three planes of movement these muscles work synergistically to bring the pelvis on top of the legs and bring the body into a position of potential power and real strength. When the spine and the pelvis are in line on top of our legs, then the force we get from the heavens, gravity, goes through our body, into the floor and we can access it from the floor through our legs to produce movement. It's all available to us. This is efficiency. Efficiency of movement comes from the skeleton being

aligned, from the joints being aligned. The transfer of energy from joint to joint being as clean, as clear as possible, so that the energy is available for movement. If the pelvis and spine were not on top of our legs a lot of the force that come through us will spin off and become un-useable to us. As the force comes back up from the ground, some more will spin off in all the areas of disconnection. The energy that's left for us to move with is greatly diminished and we become very inefficient. We then have to engage much more external muscle power to get the same effect we could get if the skeletal level of our body was connected and working properly. Moving from a connected body is what we all call ease of movement, and is what looks so beautiful to us. External strength, strength from the external muscle power can only go so far. I'm talking about accessing all the power the body has by working along with the forces of gravity and energy transmission through the joints.

These muscles, these deep muscles of postural support, that I believe are responsible for energy transmission in the body, and bridge the body's structural and energetic interface, are, for the most part, deep inside the body. They cannot easily be touched. Their use is a feeling of non-use. You can't "exercise" them. You can't go to the gym and pump them up. None of this type of activity helps in learning better function and connection of the body. I believe that these deep muscles are almost sacred muscles. That they are deep inside the body for a purpose, for the purpose that you can't easily touch them, that you shouldn't pump them, that you shouldn't abuse them. You have to use them in a respectful and subtle way.

In class we focus on the pelvis, and its relationship to the spine and the legs. We work with movement in three planes to right the pelvis upon the legs and to bring movement and breath into the sacroiliac joint. Although there is no intrinsic musculature over the sacroiliac joint and its movement is below our conscious control, it does move with the breath and it will move in response to other muscular pull. We work with the hamstrings and psoas to right the pelvis in the vertical place. We usually work on that connection first. We work with the pelvic floor muscles to initiate movement in the sagittal place from the long lever of the spine and to bring the lumbar spine out of hyperextension. We usually work on this next. And finally we work on the support from the horizontal place through the six external rotators. This work is constantly folded and blended upon each other and interwoven with deep long stretches.

We always start with the pelvis, grounding the pelvis into the floor through the legs. I believe that the pelvis is the keystone to understanding the function of the body and that it must be grounded before the body is free to be expressive and open in movement. The supportive connections must be mastered first. I am committed to the concept that in order to go up you must go down first and to me this ability comes from the pelvis being on top of the legs and the legs grounded in the earth. Another teacher of mine and master acupuncturist J.R. Worsley always says if you have a question in understanding look to nature. A plant or a tree grows down first, it grows its root structure first, then the above ground growth, the growth up follows. Ground the body and then let it soar. Once this work is on its way we also work on the upper body, once again concentrating on the girdle, this time the shoulder girdle. We work to free the shoulder blade on the ribs to increase range and mobility. The upper body is supported from below, giving it the freedom to communicate with expressivity, expansion, and creativity. The upper body is freed by the support of the pelvis. Once the pelvis is righted on the legs, the spine is free to lift out of the pelvis and the upper body is free to communicate from the

support of the legs and the support of the pelvis. The pelvis is built for stability and support, the upper body is built for mobility and expression. I believe that we need to get the support first so that we can have something on which the expression can rely and be free to move. There is an ongoing thrust and counter-thrust in the body, against this down comes the inevitable up. We work on connecting the upper and the lower body halves through the diagonal and three dimensionality of movement engendered by the ball and socket joints of the pelvic and shoulder girdles. Concepts of movement that are also added and integrated into class are initiation and sequencing of movement all with conscious, awareness, and choice.

This work takes time, it is part of a process, a process of learning and growing. It's part of a process of letting go of old patterns that no longer serve, replacing them with essential knowledge on a body felt level of how the body functions and of who you are as a dancer and finally integrating the change back out into movement. When you get your pelvis on top of your legs by dropping down to the level of the bone you have access to your personal power, to your personal identity. In Chinese Medicine the bone is related to willpower. Moving from the level of the bone is moving from your own will. It's moving from your own power. Muscles, on the other hand, hold your personal history, which is why when you get deep work on the muscle level, all kinds of emotional experiences come out. That's your history, that's what's happened to you. But beneath that, is really who you are, which is the place you want to get to. Most of therapy, psychotherapy, is about working through and shedding your personal history so that it doesn't drive you, you don't live from the things that have happened to you over and over and over again. That's the muscle. Letting go of that tension, that pressure, that holding, that binding, allows you to get down to the person you really are and to have a chance to become expressive from that. That's really what I'm talking about. I have really an intense passion for the body. I have to say that it really upsets me when I see dancers that are so held and so wrapped up and so far away from themselves. Trying so hard to be correct with no life or breath in their bodies. I'm not talking about letting technique go, I'm talking about getting support underneath for it. To find who you are and come from that place and then to just let the muscles do what the muscles do. Muscles move the bones. We don't have to make them do that. Your daily practicing will.

Work on the level of the muscle doesn't hold. It's a crime to be taught in such a way that to stop for three months at 19 can mean the end to a career. Work on the level of the bones does hold. Muscles can, very easily, be built up to get back into shape when the foundation is healthy. Changing coordination is a lasting change, because it becomes integrated into your life, it doesn't just stay in the studio. It takes time to make that change but it lasts. It becomes part of you. It's work on a significant and deep level and it is integrated into your entire being, it becomes integrated into your life.

I'd like to close with a quote that hangs on my studio door from Gift of Unknown Things, by Lyall Watson. "The grammar and the goals of science are incompatible with certain kinds of truth. There are levels of reality far too mysterious from totally objective common sense. There are things that cannot be known by exercise only of the scientific method. How can we affirm the existence which does not readily lend itself to description in the precise language of technology? I think there is at least one way - I learned to dance."

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share some of my ideas with you.

Post Script: In addition to my teachers who I have mentioned. I would also like to thank my teacher, Dr. Fritz Smith, creator and developer of Zero Balancing, for all his ideas and concepts that helped me to intellectually understand and explain my work. He has enhanced my life in more ways than I can express and I will also be eternally thankful to him.

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