

Movement for Intelligence, Longevity, Creativity and Communication

by Paula Oleska

In this paper we are going to explore four crucial aspects of movement in our life. The subject is vast and this presentation will be brief (in order to keep you interested). It may however inspire you to pursue this subject creatively on your own.

1. Intelligence

“Movement is the door to learning! To live is to move.... We are all learning blocked to the extent that we mastered the art of not moving,” says Paul Dennison, Ph.D., the creator of Brain Gym.®. (ref. 3)

Movement is one of the key intelligences described by Howard Gardner in his pioneering book. Obviously, movement intelligence is more primary than the verbal one. In some African tribes the intelligence of a man, especially of the chief, is measured by his ability to dance. Wouldn't it be fun to have our leaders go through that test? And how about you? Would you pass? Is it not interesting that one can be a kinesiologist (specialist in movement) and not move?

When we look at infants or small children, they move so easily, wholeheartedly and vigorously. They climb, fall, slide, run; they love to be picked up and swirled around; they love to be upside down. We were like that at some point. What happened? Let's look at school. What command do you remember hearing frequently? If your experience was like most people's, the words were “sit still.” We all have had at least 12 years of that training.

Some educators have remarked that children entering school draw like geniuses, but when leaving school, most cannot draw at all. Could there be a connection? Keith Johnstone, a writer and an acting teacher, describes his epiphany watching a poetic image in an old movie, where a man transformed by ecstasy begins to dance.

“The dust swirls around his feet, so that he is like an Indian God, like Siva — and with the man dancing alone in the clouds of dust

something unlocked in me. In one moment I knew that the valuing of men by their intelligence is crazy, that the peasants watching the night sky might feel more than I feel, that the man who dances might be superior to myself — word-bound and unable to dance. From then on I noticed how warped many people of great intelligence are, and I began to value people for their actions, rather than their thoughts.” (ref 4)

New scientific research indicates that there are receptor sites for neurotransmitters in all the muscles and joints — practically in all tissues. Our body is truly a thinking body emphasis — it just thinks non-verbally. To stimulate that thinking we need movement, both internal and external. Internal movement is provided by such experiences as the Touch for Health muscle balancing cycle. TFH restores the communication between the brain and the muscles — helps the body use information more efficiently. It also restores proprioception, the ability of the body to be aware of its parts by feeling. Certainly important for dancing. Many kinesiological procedures stimulate this internal movement.

External movement can be provided by exercises such as Brain Gym® or cross crawl, which coordinate different parts of the brain so our potential is better utilized. Emilie Conrad Da'oud, a movement teacher and innovator, however, warns that repetitive movements, such as most of the current exercise systems, actually extinguish intelligence.(ref 2) They limit the body's ability to respond and to create new neurological connections. She therefore created a new system, called Continuum, which induces micro-movements and a wave-like pattern throughout the whole body. Using these principles she was able to help quadriplegic patients regain movement.

2. Longevity

If movement can restore life in a paralyzed person, how about its ability to extend life in a healthy person?

As people age, they often assume a characteristic posture. What makes them look old is:

(a) **stiffness in their ankles.** They start to shuffle. Now, you do some foot exercises. How are you doing in this department? Feet and ankles need to be flexible to properly support the weight of the body. If they are not, we will stiffen up somewhere to maintain balance; we may lock our knees and thrust the pelvis back. That will eventually create

(b) **inflexible neck.** Turning of the head is crucial for hearing and memory (an early reflex called "tonic"), as it activates the ear that turns toward a sound. The connection between the ear and the brain is so important that the ear specialist and musician Don Campbell says it is "the ear that builds the brain." (ref 1) Let us help our ears do that throughout our lifetime — let us do the auricular exercise from Touch for Health or Elephant from Brain Gym® and other neck exercises.

Another important factor in longevity is a flexible spine, as it allows the flow of the nerve impulses through the spinal cord. Use your favorite method of achieving that flexibility.

3. Creativity

Each culture moves in a specific pattern and therefore creates a definite postural tendency in its members. European culture moves upward and so does its American descendent. In all folk dances in Europe the torso and the head are upright, pelvis held in line with the shoulders and there is a lot of footwork and jumps. Just think of a waltz, a jig, a tarantella or Balkan circle to see that those are the common features. All dancing is beautiful by itself. However, this unmitigated tendency to go upward has created a situation where it is easier for the government to fund space programs than to take care of the Earth. This tendency also limits our personal ability to express creatively through the body — if there is only one choice, there is no choice. The white culture needs to learn from other cultures: African, Latin, Middle Eastern, Oriental in order to transcend our cultural limitations. To become fully creative we need to feel our hips, shoulders, heads to move

spontaneously and fluidly. You can use your favorite form of balancing to achieve this end.

4. Creativity

Finally, movement is our first communication skill. A baby expresses everything through body language, facial expression and sound. Body language still accounts for 70% of the first impression, specialists say. And yet, we are so disconnected from that form of expression we have to read books to understand it. A child's face is transparent — it expresses all its thoughts and feelings. We do not want to be so vulnerable, so we learn mastery.

Make a sad face. Make a happy face. Make a childish face. How does that feel? How often do you do that? Tell someone you love them without using words. Say "I'm sorry" with your little finger. Use your toes to tell a friend that you care. It will probably make you both laugh. It will also make you both feel closer. Communicating with the body creates intimacy. It helps resolve conflicts. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a gesture is worth a few pictures. It provides the language for the times when there are no words.

Movement is the key to being alive, creative and expressive. Shall we dance?

References

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4. Johnstone, Keith, *Impro*, Routledge, 1991, p. 18.

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