

San Francisco Training

Now, I will draw your attention to the fact that it's impossible to think of the body lying, contacting, without seeing that there is something that that goes on in it, and that the abdomen and chest move and we breathe. And therefore, if you don't take into consideration the feeling of breathing and what moves and changes on the floor and actually take notice, what moves first, what moves last in breathing in and out—and is actually the whole chest moving, or only part of it? Is the whole abdomen moving? Are both sides, right and left, moving the same amount? With the same sensation of effort. And while you think of that, can you still think where your head is and how long the legs are? And has anybody visited the lower part of the chin? There where people like myself have something that does not exist when you are very young? (18 June 1975, morning)

Most people learn breathing make 1-2-3 sniff—all sort of things, and some will yawn, all sorts of tricks, but while you do the trick, you do it. But you have to breathe all your life, from the moment you see the world until the moment you are buried not to see it any more. You have to breathe all the time—whether you copulate or you don't whether you swim or whether you sink or you don't. In a car accident, and being arrested by the police, or being not arrested. And you stand on the head or you don't. Therefore, breathing is such a versatile sort of thing, can you say that you breathe correctly, which would be good for all these occasions? How can it be? It's just like saying, "Now this is the most intelligent phrase. You can use all the time"—and you get a phrase like that—can it be used all the time?

How do we do with the function of speaking? Do we learn what is correct speaking and keep to that, or we learn to speak and think and then adjust it to the occasion, and on each occasion, we speak differently? It depends on my state. When I am angry I speak differently, and I breathe differently. When I laugh, I certainly breathe differently. So what is good breathing? Surely there is not one breathing that can fit all these situations.

Therefore, to teach correct breathing is like teaching correct thinking. Or correct speaking, you can talk about the diction, but not what you say—the content of the speaking is up to you. You are trained, you learn until you feel you are master of your way of speaking, that you can go wherever you go and speak. But nobody tells you how and what to speak. If that were so, you would be a complete automaton, and then you would have no say, and your speaking would be of no consequence. You could just as well shut up, because anybody else could say for you the same thing. A machine could say it for you.

Now, the breathing is exactly the same thing. And therefore, just like you can't talk while you eat, or drink and talk at the same time, you can't use your arm and at the same time, demand your muscles do another thing. You can't do it.

Therefore, anybody who sits up like that without leaning on the hand can do the exercise we will do, and there will be no change. Because a nervous system is cleverer than what it looks; it's as clever as mine and as yours, because for all of us, we only use 10%.

Therefore we have something that has evolved from the beginning of our culture, and long before that, because our culture is only 40,000 years old. What we know about humanity, about conscious life, is only 40,000 years old. We don't know a city older than that. In fact, all the cities are 10,000, 12,000 years old. Jericho is one of the oldest known—about 10,000 years. There is nothing known before that. But I read in a journal someplace that they found a place which might be older.

But the mammals—or the entire thing of the origin of man, is 60 million years, we are evolved. And now this nervous system has evolved all the time under certain conditions. And therefore, it works and improvement is also in a certain direction. And it's useful in that system that we can't use a muscle for two purposes at the same time.

But if you look at it, you will find that there is no organ in our body that is not used for two purposes—at least. For instance, the mouth, we can talk sing, swallow, eat, masticate, all out

of the same mouth, and that's originally so. I mean the production of noise and consumption is done through the mouth.

Now we have sexual organs. In all animals it's done for reproduction and elimination of uric acid. The same organ does both.

If you take the nose—for breathing and feeling; the ear, for hearing and for keeping balance—the semicircular canal—the ear is made out of the vestibular and the cochlear, and the same nerves there. It's all in the same little thing and [if] you take that out, destroy that, both the hearing and the balance are destroyed.

So all organs work doubly. Yet when we are engaged in an action, we can't do another one at the same time, even such a simple thing as think “yes” and “no.”

Now why did I connect breathing with that? Because the way you stand, the way you lie, the position or situation in which you are, the mood in which you are, will fix which part of the apparatus that can breathe and the way it will breathe. And therefore, the learning may be used for some other purposes, so you can breathe in order to induce trance in yourself, you can breathe in order to fall asleep, you can breathe in order to get hyper-ventilated, and get all sorts of phenomena that esoteric people use.

But as far [as the function of] breathing is concerned, that means consumption of oxygen and elimination of carbon dioxide, that function is done in a peculiar, physiological way. It has nothing to do with all the teachings and moreover, what is said about it in the books is mostly wrong, and you will prove it on yourself. If not exactly the opposite, it's not the whole truth. But you know in court, you have to say “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” And there it isn't so; it's a partial truth in the book and we will show you that it is (mike noise)... of being the real truth, all the truth, and that all the truth is different, and considerably different.

So now you see what happens, to show you an example. If I stand like this, then you see the muscles of the stomach, the flexors, hold my body from falling back, the upper part of the body. Therefore, this is not antigravity muscles, but muscles which are supposed to do something else, are misused to hold the body in the standing position, and therefore these ribs here cannot move. I can say anything I like, breathe any [way] you like, there will be no movement in [those] lower ribs whatsoever, but this part of the breathing is the most important, because it is there that the ribs are weak, not connected to the front, so you can move them apart with the greatest ease. Moreover, the lungs at that point are the largest part, the one that takes in air at the slightest movement. Here look what sort of work you have to do before you can move here a quarter of an inch. You have to destroy it. And look how strong that is, and how strong the muscle is. And the bones are here. Therefore, to breathe here, it's organized that you can breathe a little bit here, but for that, you must run a marathon distance and exhaust yourself, and instead of dying, you will do some breathing here, too.

And therefore, it's the nature, evolution has provided to save the animal from death, even when he has to run to death. Like it happens if sometimes if you run after rabbits for fun, hunting; and you run with twenty horses and 200 dogs, hounds go out, and the poor rabbit runs and runs and then it won't move until it breaks down—either they catch it or it dies. So at that time, he runs and breathes for his life. And so if it couldn't move here and breathe, he would have been destroyed long ago. Like that, he has a chance of escape.

We have the same, but this is the most important part of breathing—the other is not used by most people, because they stand so the back muscles are under strain. Remember when we worked so hard until we could literally let them free and make them long as they should be so they can shorten? Therefore, partially, we remain that way anyway. If it's not completely, that's what it should be and not that. If you stay like that, you can't breathe here.

Therefore, if you don't have your head in front of the body, as we are built to, you will never breathe, whatever you do. You can kill yourself, you won't breathe. You see, look, if you put your head where it should be, now if you breathe only there, you see from miles away that you can't breathe anywhere else. And that breathing is easy and comfortable and does not interfere with your talking. Well, if you stayed like that, then look, here, I must make an

intentional breath, otherwise I end up—actually [as] you hear mostly in people who have not learned to speak in public. They do what you will do now—sit and hold their bodies nicely, presentable, then they must do this, “Yes, um, yes, sir,”—gasp—“yes, yah that’s correct,”—gasp—and you can hear that—that’s asthmatic breathing. That is incorrect.

Now that’s all to show you that if you don’t know, you just don’t know. You can be yourself. That’s why some of the greatest philosophers have said that the most important knowledge is “Know thyself.” What did they mean by that? Everybody says it. But I find that from what I have learned, only somewhere in the Freudian schools and in the derivatives some sort of knowledge of thyself is intended. But on the least important thing, because it’s done on things acquired—which are of social importance. For one person, it’s of no importance, it’s only in the society. Therefore it’s of social importance or the importance of the person as a member of society. But before he can be a member of a society...

(18 June 1975 - afternoon)

In theory you could, if you improved your breathing, and deal only with that and make your breathing nearer the perfection of what the human body should do, then that should improve everything else. But you will find that, of course, at the first beginning, you learn and improve in fact everything. But then if you want to improve by breathing, your tennis, then you will have to waste a hundred years before the last little bit of improvement will come. With each thing you improve so much, and then if you want to insist to get more out of it, you begin to waste time. It’s long and useless. It can be done better. Now, try to do something similar, but on the back. (23 June 1975 - afternoon)

Our breathing depends on gravity, believe it or not. It’s like anything else—opening the eyes depends on gravity, otherwise you wouldn’t need the eyelids. You have to lift them, they are like shutters. You close them, you open them. So, the lungs, if you put them lying, then the breathing of the lungs is general, all over the surface. If you hold them in the standing position, then [the] weight of the lungs is not negligible, it extends them, and actually, if you take a lung like that, lying, and then lift it, it will be pushed out because of the weight, stretching and reducing the bag. Now in the body when we stand, obviously the lungs hang from the inside—there are attachments from the pleura to the thoracic cage; the lung itself is only moved; the lungs have no muscles.

And therefore, the breathing in is done either by moving the ribs apart, which pull the ligaments, which pull the pleura, which pull the lung and open it. And then when you let go, it’s the elasticity of the tissues, and the weight of the lungs that will expel the air. And of course, the diaphragm is also a muscle [and when] it doesn’t do anything, it sags, and the air is gone. And therefore, also, you can’t expel the residual air, because there is nothing in the lung to squeeze the lung. Therefore, you see, the breathing is done in a funny sort of way. It’s done actively by doing something with the ribs or the diaphragm pushing up and therefore changing the volume of the lungs, and the rest—the breathing out, is mostly done by the elasticity of the tissues involved. Therefore, in the standing position, the lung and the breathing apparatus works... try differently— for instance, the breathing in is extremely short, practically instantaneous.

We’ll have some breathing lessons that the people who breathe in and make the breathing in and the breathing out equal contradict the structure of the human nervous system and the lungs and the breathing function all together. If breathing in—no, listen. You see, the obvious thing to which you are used, you will never detect, you will need somebody to help you detect. And that is now, listen to me, am I alive or dead? Obviously alive and kicking. Now, I talk to you. Now, look now, I talk long phrases without taking air. Now, I took air, and again I talk. So how long is the breathing in, compared with the breathing out? Well the good people can breathe really well, can tell you in *Hamlet* or in *Caesar*, a whole paragraph,

half a page, say it in one breath. John Gielgud does it and Rovenna, a woman of 85, she also tells you a long thing like that. You would never be able to believe it's possible to [say it] in one breath. Because the breathing in is extremely short, instantaneous. In fact, when it's really perfect, you don't know anything about it.

A good singer—sing Figaro in Figaro out Figaro in, you don't—ever heard what a good singer does with Figaro, how long he holds it on one breath? That passage? And does he stop and breathe in s-n-i-f-f—does he do it? Does anybody do it? Now this is possible only in the standing position, because as soon as you let all muscles stop doing work then the weight of the lung and the diaphragm will open the widest part of the lung, and air will come in. It is not full, but it's full enough to give you all that is necessary for doing anything.

Only in exceptional cases does the body breathe differently... like in swimming, like in making love, like in being frightened, like things like that. But otherwise, that's the kind of breathing it does, during the day.

Suppose now, you put the chap upside down, he stands on his head. Then you find that the breathing out is now short, because the weight of the lung is there to chase the air. The diaphragm is now doing the opposite. If you want to breathe in, you have to move and pull the lung by all these attachments, to open it. Therefore the breathing in now is very long, because it's a very active thing. You have actually to lift a weight, and open it, so that the air comes in, and as soon as you let go, it's the weight now that chases the air. And therefore, you will see that when you go on and standing on the head, or the knees on the head, even, it makes a complete change in the breathing—inverts it in a certain way.

Therefore, when we put somebody on the bed, you actually relieve the breathing from being this way or that way it's also in your... Therefore, you relieve the body of the gravitational effect with the minimum effort possible when you put somebody on the bed.

(24 June 1975 - morning)

Body and Mature Behaviour

With every phase of ... development, the breathing mechanism is altered as different parts of the trunk become rigid, and the parts that are left free to contract and expand are different. Thus, in the lying position breathing is assured by the diaphragm movement and the lower ribs. In the sitting position the breathing is strongly affected by the tonus of the abdominal wall, and the lateral ribs expansion is more pronounced. In standing, while holding on to something for support, and before the lumbar curve is formed, the pectoral muscles and the extensors of the back make the chest rigid, preventing movement of the upper ribs almost completely. In fact, there are as many breathing mechanisms as distinct attitudes of the body. In proper development, breathing follows a definite rhythm, unhampered by the position of the body.

All effort by the limbs necessitates rigidity of the trunk. This is increased to its maximum when the ribs are fixed and the breath is held in the position of inspiration. However, in proper body mechanics, the breathing rhythm is not interrupted, even in violent efforts. When the pelvis is held properly the lower abdomen feels full and forward, the rigidity required for efficient use of the arms is obtained while diaphragmatic breathing is maintained evenly and effortlessly. In normal development of the antigravity function, no awareness is necessary to bring about such a configuration of the body segments. Correction of faulty breathing by any method fails in all sudden efforts, so long as the erect posture, and especially the pelvis position, is incorrect.

The Potent Self

Externally, the sensation of effort can be identified through hardly perceptible breaks in the **breathing rhythm**, poor performances, halting of breath, kinks in the curvature of the spine (that develop from uneven bending or twisting of the vertebrae, where some are being held rigidly in groups with only one or two bending or twisting to the possible limit of ligament stretch), and unnecessary fixation of joints in space (too abrupt transference of motion from one joint to another).

Breathing and incorrect posture. Holding the breath is the clearest observable sign of incorrect posture or acture. Many people hold their breath in one way or another. The body image they have formed is such that they have to produce a preparatory rearrangement of their throat, chest, and abdomen before they can speak or initiate any motion whatsoever. In some the disturbance is so manifest that the chest is fixed in the position of inspiration or expiration continuously. The normal ventilation is upset, with profound effects on the acid-base balance of the blood.

In conditions of extreme alkalinity of the blood, the muscles contract indiscriminately at the slightest stimulus coming from the outside, or at the initiation of any act, and tetanization takes place. In extreme acidity, as in diabetes, no muscular response can be elicited; there is a state of coma. The alkalinity of the blood can be markedly increased by excessive loss of carbon dioxide; exhaling forcibly by blowing for about two minutes brings about an increased neuromuscular excitability, which is first detectable in the region of the mouth and fingers.

The phenomenon is complex. For example, if the exhaling is done, not by blowing, but by sharp pushes forward of the lower abdominal muscles (as a dog does when barking), no inconvenience is observed even after prolonged repetition. Habitual faulty holding of the breath is normally found together with muscular excitability, and vice versa. Reciprocity seems to be necessary for any function that is a continuous process.

We ... do not teach The Correct Way to Breathe, but all possible modes of breathing.

many half-truths are taught about diaphragmatic breathing that make coordinated action quite impossible

Awareness Through Movement

Our breathing reflects every emotional or physical effort and every disturbance. It is also sensitive to the vegetative processes. Disturbances of the thyroid gland, for instance, cause a special kind of breathing that serves to diagnose this disease. Any strong sudden stimulus causes a halt in breathing. Everybody knows from his own experience how closely linked breathing is with every change of feeling or anticipation of a strong emotion.

Throughout the history of mankind we find systems and rules designed to induce a calming effect by improved breathing. The human skeleton is so constructed that it is almost impossible to organize breathing properly without also satisfactorily placing the skeleton with respect to gravity. The reorganization of breathing alone

succeeds only to the degree that we succeed indirectly in improving the organization of the skeletal muscles for better standing and better movement.

At the end of a lesson that has been properly carried out, you should feel fresh and relaxed as after a good sleep or a holiday. If this does not happen, the movements were probably made too quickly and without attention to breathing.

The speed of the exercise should always be adjusted to the breathing rhythm. As the body gains in organization, breathing will automatically adjust itself to the various movements.
