

On Artifice

A Delicate and Discerning Surrender

We humans have an uncanny knack for turning things into their opposite. Enthusiastically, with good intentions, we often try too hard, take things too far. Learning and teaching the Alexander Technique is no exception. The line between naturalness and artifice is a narrow one. As we learn to identify "Alexandrian artifice" in ourselves, we can learn to let it go, revealing our inherent naturalness. Quite possibly, we may have to overdo it, to try to hold onto it, before we can let it go.

Freedom, by definition, cannot be held. It is only through a most delicate and discerning surrendering, over and over again, that freedom can be lived and enjoyed.

Remember.

Good technique never shows.

Beware

of

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Unchanging Uprightness

however dignified

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Stiffness

however proper

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Posturing

however subtle

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Symmetry at the expense of expressivity

however beautiful and peaceful

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Neutrality

however calm and relaxed

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Squareness

however neat and tidy

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Unsuality

however pure

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There's more.

Watch out

for

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Static Ideas and Images of Balance

however centered

Correct Alignment

however efficient

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Self-conscious, mannered actions

however sophisticated

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Lack of Contact with the Ground

however light and suspended

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Preoccupation with efficiency and function

however fascinating

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Preoccupation with your neck, your body, or yourself

however apparently significant

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Take these words, by James Baldwin, to heart.

Identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self: in which case, it is best that the garment be loose, a little like the robes of the desert, through which one's nakedness can always be felt, and, sometimes, discerned.