

THE ALEXANDER PRINCIPLE

By Leon Poole (aged 11)

A Brief Biography of Alexander:

F.M. Alexander was born in 1869 on the north-west coast of Tasmania. When he was 20 he moved to Melbourne and learnt to recite, he was going to become a professional, but was troubled by hoarseness. He went to a doctor, but the doctor could not help. So he made his own investigation, the hoarseness did not effect his normal speech so he tried to find out the difference between reciting and normal speech.

In front of a mirror Alexander discovered that when reciting his head was pulled back and his larynx depressed but not so when talking normally. It was then he made his discovery, that people misused their bodies. Then after more research into the correct use and the mis-use of the self he began to write books. Then he taught the Alexander Technique until his death in 1955.

The discovery of Alexander:

The main place of mis-use is the spine and conscious control is necessary at all times for the correct use of the self. The head is pulled in various directions by the neck, where there is no joint, also people flex the spine when they are bending over. The head should be kept in a forward and upward position relative to the body. The head should only to move to look around and then only bend at the atlanto-occipital joint. This is known as the first and primary joint in Alexander's work and is located a couple of inches into the head. Movement including bending over should use the joints such as the hips, knees and ankles.

The problem is that people feel they are in a different position to the position they are in.

A lot of today's technology creates stress which is a major cause of mis-use, modern day people tend to do things directly rather than indirectly. Indirect action shows you all the consequences and side effects of that action. Direct actions is a case of unreasoned, unconscious, instinctive trial and error with feeling dominant which upsets the primary control, but indirect action is constructive, reasoned step-by-step choices with intelligence dominant.

Alexander's procedure works like a traffic light:

STOP - stop and think

GET READY - look at all the choices/side effects/consequences

GO - decide from a) go on b) do nothing c) do something different

This makes the Alexander Principle even more important and relevant today than when it was discovered.