

My Testimonial

By V.H.

The imminent departure of Tasha and David to Canada has finally prompted me to write a piece for their website. I have been attending Alexander Technique lessons for almost 3 years. My reasons for attending were twofold. Firstly, my profession of speech and language therapy involves me in the assessment and management of people with a range of swallowing and communication problems, not least voice problems. It is through courses regarding the management of the latter that I became aware of, and interested in AT. Also, I have always been aware of my posture, and suffered from headaches and a feeling of being “lopsided”> I have always found it difficult to stand and in particular sit, for any period of time without suffering from some aches or indeed a headache. My job as a clinician as well as a manager of a team of speech and language therapists can be seen as a “stressful” one, especially as it is within the health service environment and all the changes and politics that involves.

I have gained a great deal from my AT lessons. For example, I now view any “therapy” or treatment concerned with health, with new eyes, looking to see if it is aimed at temporary, symptom control, or whether it has any basis in an AT type philosophy; it is usually the former. Whilst speech and language therapists (SLTs) are trained to be very holistic and eclectic in their approach to people, and to be open to any new debates or interventions, we are often forced to have a short term approach, often due to financial constraints and the demands on our poorly staffed service. AT would be valuable with the majority of our patients and I would love to see the situation one day, where SLTs and AT teachers could work together with patients, freely refer to each other or even where SLTs are dually qualified.

I know that I used to be a terrible “end-gainer”. Although I still have a long way to go, I feel this has improved a lot, and certainly during the lessons at least I am much more aware of this. Also, my approach to work and my life in general has changed. I have got to the point where, faced with a particularly stressful or difficult situation or day, I am able to “stand back” and think to myself “AT” and I realise I have a choice. In effect it has helped me to prioritise better.

My job has become more and more demanding, particularly over the last year, and I genuinely feel that I would not have coped as well as I have without AT and the teaching Tasha and David.