The Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique is a method for learning better balance and functioning of the body as a dynamic organism. It teaches the student to observe and bring into consciousness their own movement habits and then how to make choices that create more ease and freedom of movement. Students learn how this method can enhance their everyday and work activities and also be applied to specific tasks.

When one is moving with a good dynamic balance throughout the body, even difficult or otherwise stressful movements can be performed with ease and a sense of lightness. Ordinary activities like walking, speaking or going up the stairs can be free and simple.

Alexander Concepts:

* Your body is in a state of dynamic balance.
* The movement of your body is effected by the relationship of the head neck and back.
* You can learn to exchange your inefficient habits for better ones by stopping your normal response to a stimulus and directing yourself to a better balance and flow of movement.

Main Concepts for flute players:

* Flute playing is a whole body activity.
* Your alignment/postural habits (how you use your body) greatly influence your sound and expression.
* The freer your body, the freer the sound.
* Your everyday habitual movement affects your flute playing.

F.M. Alexander (1869-1955)

F.M. Alexander developed the Alexander Technique through self observation. F.M. was an Australian actor who discovered that his loss of voice while he was reciting, was due to the manner in which he was using his body. He realized that he was causing himself his problems through this habitual misuse of his body starting with the head, neck and back. By retraining himself to move with freedom and ease he was able to eliminate his vocal problems.

It is quite extraordinary that he persevered with self observation to arrive at the core of his technique. That is, that the head, neck and back are the primary control for movement and the way they are used effects the entire body.

Suggested Readings:

Body Leaning by Michael Gelb
The Use of the Self F. M. Alexander

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