

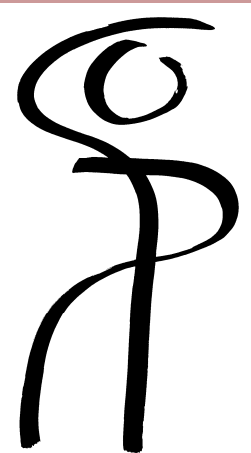


RDTC Founder's Newsletter

Summer 2010 No 4

Special points of interest:

- Dates for Autumn 2010
- Article - Just do it!
- School News
- RDTC Soul Moves Weekend
- Swans at Poulstone
- RDTC Releases



Practise when you feel like it and practise when you don't!

I know that I wrote a year or so about practice from a more "Essence" point of view, so I thought, since this is a very important topic, that another angle might be worthwhile.

The art of practice is a key skill in learning to grow the muscle of being Tai Chi. Whether we are learning the Form of Tai Chi or whether we are using say Shibashi, we need to have some time to remember what it is we are learning or growing. Practice is a greenhouse, the place where we grow our RDTC. In this article I want to explore some of the things which can help us to practise and some of the common excuses that we use to not give ourselves this huge gift.

MOTIVATION. As some of you know I began my journey with practising in 1977 when I joined my first Tai Chi class. Up until that time, all I really practised was having a good time and avoiding things that didn't work for me.

My motivation for beginning my Tai Chi journey was to help heal myself from an emotionally damaging time. I needed it to work and the only way I would know if it did was to give it 100% for the first ten week term. If there was some improvement or sign

of healing then I would continue, and if not I would stop and find something else.

So you can imagine my surprise that I actually got up in the morning in time to practise! I would stand next to the scrubby vegetable patch of the shared house I lived in in London, and for the first time, do something that was actually good for me. I was surprised by that, that I could enjoy something that was good for me! So I guess the first thing that I want you to remind yourself of, and this is whether you are a beginner or an advanced student of RDTC, is why you are doing this. What is your motivation for engaging in this path?

Of course what motivated me by the vegetable patch and what motivated me say ten years later, as I meditated for an hour or so before breakfast and played hours of forms before lunch, was very different. My first teacher had said that if you are going to teach and receive money for teaching, then what the students are paying for is not the Tai Chi but your practice. I remember it being quite an insight because, like you, I assumed that someone would pay me to teach them Tai Chi. But no. By being a professional Tai Chi Teacher, what

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they were paying for enabled me to give quality time to my art, which I then passed on in the classes.

Lack of motivation for practice can be because we have not caught up with our present position and focus. And sometimes that lack of motivation is a sign that change is happening, so it is important to pay attention and from time to time, to re-assess why we are doing something.

Here are some common issues:

"I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME" We do need to give time to our practice, but how much time do you need? If you are a professional RDTc Teacher then you have nothing else to do really, but if you are a professional administrator then of course most of your time is going to go on that. After all, that is what you are paid for. So practice is something which is fitted in around work and our personal life. What makes for a good practice session? Is more time better? Well no not always. It is the level of presence and attention I bring to the time I have. You know that time when it all clicked, when the magic happened? That happened not because I knew more, or practised for longer, but because I fell into a place of relaxed and personal attention.

Take today for example. Whilst I was waiting to have breakfast with my wife, I gently stretched my back and Achilles tendons, moved through "Rowing a Boat" and "Opening the Sky" and then as I heard her footsteps I finished with the final Shibashi move. Now there would have been a

time when a judgemental voice would have said, "That is not enough". It would have left me with a feeling of frustration and being unmet. But I know that the Richard who sat down to breakfast had been opened and touched by what I had done. I had experienced those moves and let them touch me. The choice of those moves had come out of listening to my current needs and my current time restriction.

I now know that it is not quantity but quality that counts. It's not about getting through things. It's not about forcing, because whilst that can be satisfying to the one who is keeping score in me, the energy that is being created is not healthy. It's not appropriate. It's not balanced. It has no heart, only a "should do", "ought to", "must do". And in the long run this is not helpful.

So the excuse that you don't have time to practise just is not true. You have 30 seconds! If you allow yourself to be touched in those 30 seconds you will be transformed. And what's, more the muscle of being Tai Chi, which is what RDTc is all about, will have been strengthened.

"I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO PRACTISE OR I DON'T WANT TO PRACTISE MISTAKES." This is something that I often hear and it is an understandable concern, but in my view unfounded. The student is concerned about getting into bad habits. This can be true when someone practises on their own over a long period of time— it is always good to have someone to refer to from

time to time and most students who are studying with RDTC will have some form of contact with a teacher.

The main thing to bear in mind here is the relationship with a posture. If you do not engage with a new posture or with an exercise or gesture, then no relationship will be built with it. Even if you get it "wrong" as long as you explore with a sense of presence, of being in the present, and with a sense of being at ease in your body, usually the body's wisdom will let you know if it is not right. If it feels wrong it usually is.

By being in relationship to the movement you can explore what feels right. When you are next with your teacher, because you have engaged with it, you know what to ask about and to check your findings. AND, because you are in relationship to it, there is some experience that receives the advice. As a teacher I am more than happy to hear where students have a problem. I do not expect, once an answer has been given, for there then to be no further problem. I know that often there are many layers of learning. A student may need to hear the same advice again and again, not because they didn't get it the first time, but because a new place in them gets it. Bit by bit, together we travel the path.

"I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPACE TO PRACTISE." How much space we need depends on what we are going to do. If we are practising a Tai Chi Form, we think we need a certain amount of space. In the long run this is true but what happens if we are somewhere that temporarily

compromises our space? I knew one student who did wonderful practice in an L shaped room. I have had time in places where I would rearrange the furniture to get the space, tipping up my bed for example. I have also really enjoyed taking much smaller steps to fit into a smaller space and learned a lot in the process.

Also, we don't have to do the whole Form all the time. Sometimes it's great just to play with a few movements or different exercises that we would like to explore. Shibashi or most Chi Kung sets don't take up much room. Simply put, this is just an excuse of the one who doesn't want to practise!

HOW TO GET PAST THE ONE WHO DOESN'T WANT TO PRACTISE? You must have heard that one, or said to yourself "I just don't want to." But if you listen closely, before you said that to yourself, there was, often, another part, much quieter that said, "It's time, now". Understanding the psychology of practice is important - why is change so difficult?

Old patterns do not give up that easily. Whilst there is a part of us that wants to change, there is equally another part that doesn't. If this part is not made conscious it will give you a thousand reasons why just now is not a good time. It's never a good time! Some of these reasons are reasonable but when you understand who is saying them you will see that it is not a good idea to listen.

The art is in learning to find the heart invitation. To find a way of listening



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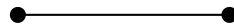


Then, because of that commitment, finding the language and understanding that revealed the deeper place in me that simply is.



to the excuse, perhaps even honouring it or acknowledging it, but then listening to a deeper engagement. Perhaps by remembering your motivation. Perhaps understanding who is giving you this advice to not engage. Perhaps just finding something which honours rather than dishonours your wish to deepen yourself through RDTC and then to engage with that.

What eventually healed the rift between these two voices in me was first saying to myself, "Practise when you feel like it and practise when you don't". Then, because of that commitment, finding the language and understanding that revealed the deeper place in me that simply is.



In RDTC our main aim is to use practice as a way of developing the Being of Tai Chi. This means that it is a natural way of being. It means that eventually the choice between the one who does want to change and the one who doesn't is not an issue. The dialogue may still happen but the negative obstruction does not rule you. Where this important work is done is in the daily exploration of allowing yourself to be touched by your RDTC, whether this is in the form of Shibashi or a meditation or a Tai Chi Form, it doesn't matter. What matters is making the choice.

Do you have enough resources both inside and outside yourself to practise every day? Yes! It only takes a moment of your life and yet in that moment a whole day can be lived differently.

RDTC News



CONGRATULATIONS!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Vince Millband, a long time student of mine, as an RDTC Teacher working in Swansea.

After a long gap of some 10 or more years Vince reacquainted himself with me and the RDTC School. To have continued to inspire himself through this teacher-less period required great strength, inner inspiration and commitment and Vince has all of these.

For Vince's inspirations and his contact details you can connect with him through the website www.rdtc.co.uk

A PILOT STUDY FOR TCMWB

Recently I have been exploring a sequence of movements I call "Tai Chi Movement for Well Being". It is a sequence of gestures and chi kung movements taken from different sources, that can be done sitting or standing. And because of the wonderful principles of Soft Limit and Mirroring it can be done by just

about anybody. Not only that but it takes only 10 minutes!

With a fellow student of Tai Chi, Dr David Quinn, we have held a study group using these movements with patients who have acquired brain injury. This ran as a weekly class over 8 weeks and it was documented to assess how effective it was.

Out of 13 original members we ended up in week 8 with 7. It is always unfortunate when drop outs happen but for the 7 it was fantastic. - emotionally, physically and mentally too. One participant whose permanent pain is so huge that his body has been locked for 8 years started to loosen up! They all reported feeling more relaxed, at ease and they had a lot more energy and focus. At the beginning they would space out after 10 minutes, yawning and feeling totally wiped out. By class 7, I gave them a very focused 40 minute class at the end of which they were all totally present and vital! This all happened as a result of them practising 5 times a week using the 3 breath cycle— 10 minutes a day! Awesome and very inspiring! Dr Quinn said if we could do this with this group who were so diverse and severe in their problems, we could do it with anyone! Brilliant.

In addition as some of you know, we

sent out questionnaires for people with long term health conditions who have found Tai Chi healthy. Thank you for filling them in. Watch this space for developments.

SOUL MOVES 2010

If you want to do the Deepening or you would like a friend, colleague, or partner to be part of RDTC, there is no need for them to play Tai Chi, they just need to touch base with me through a residential seminar such as the up-and-coming Soul Moves retreat in October.

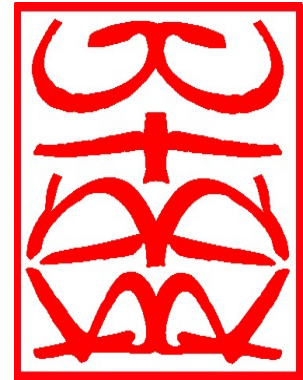
Soul Moves provides an opportunity to be introduced to the RDTC Principles and to the wonders of movement through some gentle Chi Kung and simple meditation. A haven of rest, nourishment, support and deep inspiration.

You might consider it yourself - why not?

22nd - 24th October 2010 - details enclosed

AN INVITATION

It is always possible to come and have a session with me. This can take a number of forms. It could be a Tai Chi session. It could be that there is some aspect of practice or Life which you would like to have



In the article on Practice I talk about the voice in us that does not want to grow. These voices are often fuelled by emotional knots, created by karmic and historical family voices in our system. Vortex is completely wonderful for healing and clearing these.





supported and listened to whilst you explore it. Or it could take the form of a healing session. I work with a number of healing tools, the most powerful being Vortex Healing which I have been training in for a number of years.



In the article on Practice I talk about the voice in us that does not want to grow. These voices are often fuelled by emotional knots, created by karmic and historical family voices in our system. Vortex is completely wonderful for healing and clearing these. I have a number of RDTc students who use me in this way. If you live far away from me, once we have done the initial session we can work at a distance. A one-to-one session can go a long way, so get in touch if it twinkles at you!

Contact Richard on: **01989 740 590**
or email: **richard@risingdragon.co.uk**

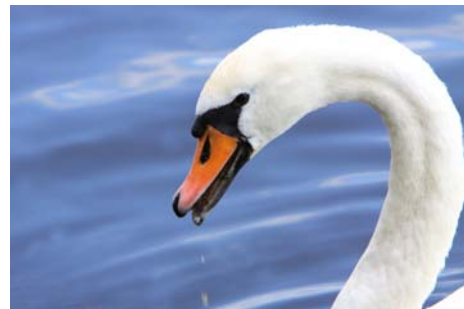
FINALLY

I hope you have had a great summer and that we meet really soon - best wishes



Richard Farmer

SWANS AT POULSTONE



Cocooned in our own mysteries
We were rocking and swinging in
the Barn
Early one Qigong morning
The sky was dull and the tree
skeletons
Rubbed dryly against the clouds.

When, on a sudden, a flash
seared the sky
Painted a white streak in our
eyes
And swept behind the house.
The swans landed on the smooth
field
Where the fresh green barley had
been knifed.

Under the silver sun they posed,
sugar-plump.
Artists in the crystallised
landscape
All day they softly fed, and
paddled
Between the short wet shoots
Whispering secrets, staying in
love

Then, at dusk, they were gone.

Sue Bayliss



The RDTTC Releases

by Andrew Binnie

The releases talked about by Andrew are a sequence of yoga-like movements that I have put together over the past 20 years. They are taken from a number of different sources and offer something not available in the standing Chi Kung sequences generally on offer in the system of Tai Chi. When they are taken together with the fundamental principles of RDTTC they are a beautiful and powerful tool, but let Andrew share his experiences.

I have been absolutely amazed at the increase in my flexibility and other benefits I have felt since practising the RDTTC Releases regularly over the last two or three months. And I think I'm beginning to understand what's been going on.

You see, it's not because I have been forcing and pushing and stretching to get a better result each time. On the contrary, it's because I have been trying and thinking about the outcomes less, in fact not at all. A brilliant practical demonstration and proof of "less is more".

It takes a little while to get your head around it and three or four painful and somewhat disappointing initial practice sessions. First attempts had lots of mental noise and measuring and evaluation going on like, "this is sore", "I should be able to reach further than this" and "be careful with your bad back" etc. My thoughts were setting up expectations and limitations about what my body could or couldn't do.

Gradually, I transferred my attention to

other things – breathing, listening, smiling and waiting, with no expectations and hey presto, my forehead is lying on my knee or my knees are gently resting against my ears – how on earth did that happen? I didn't "think" I could do that! And all without pain, struggle or force – amazing, unbelievable! In fact, sometimes, I even feel like I could drift off for a little nap and that's in a posture that would have been painful or unreachable just a few weeks back.

Benefits go far beyond just being more bendy during practice of the postures. I feel I walk taller, my spirit is lighter, my energy is up and long car journeys or computer work give me no ill effects.

You do need to put in the time, though. Certainly 45 minutes to an hour for a session with no sense of rush. Just breathing, allowing and enjoying. But the eventual benefits will outweigh the investment 100 times, if you stick at it.

My practice has now become a quiet, still, breathing meditation and it just so happens that my body gets into some rather interesting contortions along the way.

Posture 11 is aptly named "Yes and Thank You" and I always finish up smiling with gratitude after enjoying my Releases.

So, when I can soften and still my mind, my body can go to extraordinary places and when I can relax and release my body, my mind finds blissful places too...simple and magical!!

The RDTTC releases will be out on DVD in time for Christmas!

A few examples..



Thank you - Yes!

Some important dates

Most, if not every participant who comes to one of these courses, walks away with something that adds to their understanding of the meaning of their life. This is because of the richness that RDTC members bring and because of where you listen from. Please look at the options open to you and if you want to come, book your place straight away, as space is usually limited. We look forward to seeing you!



Open Courses

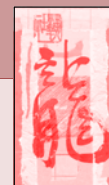
The Heart of it - contact Richard on 01989 740 590 or email richard@risingdragon.co.uk

- 22nd - 24th October 2010: RDTC Soul Moves retreat at Poulstone Court, South Herefordshire

Residential Courses

Deeper Community Circle 2011 Poulstone Court

- 7th - 11th July



New Deepening Series III 2010/2011 Poulstone Court

- Meet 2 3rd - 6th September 2010
- Meet 3 4th - 7th March 2011
- Meet 4 9th - 12th September 2011

Next Step Series Group 1 Poulstone Court

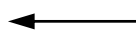
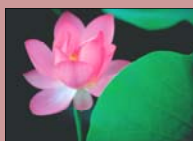
- Meet 2 3rd - 6th December 2010
- Meet 3 20th - 23rd May 2011
- Meet 4 25th - 28th November 2011

Next Step Series Group 2 Poulstone Court

- Meet 2 10th - 13th December 2010
- Meet 3 10th - 13th June 2011
- Meet 4 2nd - 5th December

RDTC Facilitators Training

- Meet 2 16th - 17th October 2010
- Meet 3 8th - 9th January 2011
- Meet 4 2nd - 3rd April 2011
- Meet 5 25th - 26th June 2011
- Meet 6 15th - 16th October 2011
- Meet 7 7th - 8th January 2012
- Meet 8 April 2012



RDTC's webpage is at: www.risingdragontaichi.com

