

What are we teaching? Part 2

John Nicholls, July 27, 2017

Student : When you're talking about feeling I think that there is there is a hesitation to use that word a lot.

JN: Yes

Student: And you've progressed to describing why it's okay after a point to say "feel".

JN: Yes, absolutely. You know if you go through FM's books and the transcripts of those talks and that collection that Ethel Webb put together that are known as teaching aphorisms, when she wrote down what she heard him say to people in lessons, you'll find that it's said over and over again that an important aspect and purpose of the lessons is to reeducate the kinesthesia or sensory appreciation. First generation teachers in London told me that FM used sometimes, as well as sensory appreciation, the term sensory register. And I remember some of them, Peggy Williams for example, saying about whether you should notice what her hands were doing during a lesson. She said, "I don't want you to try to feel what my hands are doing. However, if the effect of what my hands are doing comes to your consciousness allow your consciousness to register it, because that's how you learn." So that was a subtle distinction between trying to feel what the teacher's hands are doing – oh, what does he want there, what's he trying to do, does he want my shoulder to go this way, that way? We don't want any of that. But as you're sitting there with quiet open expansive attention, you may find that within your overall field that you can notice what's that out there, a siren, an ambulance, distant traffic sounds, the light in the room. You may also notice some sensations coming through your shoulders and rib cage as I'm working like this. Allow your consciousness to register them. You'll learn from that.

That's why I recommend people to after a lesson to take a little walk. Don't just get on the subway, don't just jump in your car, unless it's a terrible weather day. If you possibly can, take a little walk because the simple natural rhythmic movement of walking is a great opportunity again to just let your consciousness notice or register anything that seems different from when you walked into the lesson. That's part of how you re-educate and develop a discriminatory sensory register. A sensory register that allows you to use the elements of the technique to know what habits of movement, habits of breathing, habits of postural attitude, habits of life and behavior are going to help you facilitate this basic opening up response that we're constantly helping you to get in lessons. FM also near the beginning of his final book, *The Universal Constant*, tells us that the primary control is a criterion for assessing whether something you are doing is good for your use or bad for your use. So you think to yourself, now wait a minute, so he's talking about you and me as students of the technique, not someone in the middle of a lesson, but in life, using our understanding of the primary control as a criterion for assessing whether something we are doing is good for us or not. Now how do we go about that? Do we have to set up the mirrors like he did? Do we have to get someone to video us? No, I think we just need a more reliable feeling. As he said in various ways, particularly in CCCI, you cannot put this work into practice without a reliable sensory register. And he also wrote quite clearly that lessons happen in such a way that the student mentally rehearses the guiding orders while the

teacher with his hands supplies the appropriate sensory experiences. The point of doing that over and over again in a lesson is that you the student become more and more familiar with the appropriate sensory experiences so you've got that stored away in your sensory register as a guide for working on yourself.

(See the collection of FM Quotes on Developing a Reliable Sensory Appreciation in the Articles and podcasts section of this website: www.johnnichollsat.com/about-the-technique/articles/)