

## JOHN NICHOLLS' TEACHER REFRESHER COURSE

*"In his annual teacher refresher course, John Nicholls offers a wealth of theoretical knowledge and detailed hands-on experience to the Alexander Technique teacher in search of further depth and direction in their teaching practice. With his long history of training and teaching experience with Walter Carrington, powerful insights into Alexander's principles and discoveries, detailed group and individual exploration of the core principles of the work, plus his generous and welcoming instruction of each participant, John weaves together a compelling and enriching study of the Alexander Technique. Having completed the course, I find that my teaching skills have improved enormously, my professional confidence has soared, and my love for the work and delight in presenting the principles to my students has dramatically increased."---Meade Andrews*

January, 2012

John Nicholls is offering a post graduate refresher course for the academic year 2012-2013 based on the acclaimed weekend program: The Carrington Way of Working. In the course, essential features of John's teacher training are encapsulated and taught in a way that can be assimilated and used by teachers trained outside of that tradition. Now distilled into six two day weekends (between mid- September 2012 and late April 2013), the course presents John's synthesis of the fundamental elements of Walter Carrington's approach to teaching. The weekends can also be used as a valuable refresher for those already familiar with The Carrington Way of Working and/or John's structured approach to teacher training.

Within the Alexander world, different styles or "lineages" often use similar words and phrases to describe what they are doing, and yet the hands-on experience can seem at times surprisingly different. While this program cannot attempt to address directly what these hands-on differences might be, we will consider and discuss key writings by FM and leading figures such as Marjory Barlow, Patrick Macdonald, and Margaret Goldie, as well as Walter Carrington. This broad conceptual basis will combine with a solid grounding in John's systematic approach to hands-on work and practical teaching. Past participants have found this to be a very enriching and nourishing environment for their individual growth as Alexander teachers.

### Historical Background

John Nicholls worked for eleven years as assistant to Walter and Dilys Carrington, teaching daily alongside them. FM Alexander, in the last years of his life, entrusted to Walter Carrington the running of his teacher training course. Walter (later together with his wife Dilys) went on to train over 300 teachers. His annual summer refresher courses were filled to capacity many months in advance and for decades had been attended by teachers from all over the world. This style of teaching has had a huge influence on Alexander teaching worldwide.

John was a founder and initial coordinator of the separate first year program introduced into the Carrington training course in 1981. He subsequently directed large training courses in England and Australia for fifteen years, while also leading postgraduate classes for teachers in many different countries, and now directs a training course in New York City. This experience has led him to develop innovative ways to communicate the most important factors in the Carrington approach to teaching.

*"I truly felt it was one of the most valuable learning experiences I've ever had. I have studied the AT for many years and with many fine teachers, but felt that your explanation and presentation of Alexander's work gave me the piece I'd been missing - the 'missing link' if you will, that allowed me to activate the A.T. principles in myself and my students more fully, more often, and more successfully than I ever had before."---Judy Barnett*

### The Course

The course will address questions such as:

- How do we give clear experiences of improved use combined with clear understanding of how such experiences have been brought about - ensuring that our students will have both the necessary experience and the understanding to consciously facilitate these changes themselves.
- How do we communicate quickly and easily that at the heart of our work lies the primary coordination of postural support, breathing and movement.
- How do we ensure that in using our hands and voice to encourage expansion in a student, we are not squeezing ourselves and thereby creating disharmony between the message and the messenger? Using contact to stimulate elastic expansion in the teacher as the means to stimulate the same integrated, elastic openness in the student

### Weekend Structure

The program will comprise six two day weekends over a seven month period. Each weekend will have a theme, forming a structured progression through the months. The group will explore this theme with a combination of theory and practice. (See the course syllabus.) There will be suggested readings from major Alexander literature, and some consideration of relevant scientific findings. The practical work will make use of demonstration, group activities and supervised hands on exchanges.

### Private Lessons

There will be a discount on lessons with John for those participating in the weekend program. Up to six lessons can be taken at a reduced fee of \$65 per 45 minute lesson. These can be taken as individual lessons, or as the program progresses some could be shared by two participating teachers working together with John's supervision (and paying half the lesson fee each). The later lessons can alternatively be used as an opportunity for a participating teacher to give a private (or volunteer) student lessons under supervision, putting into practice what they have been learning, or to put hands on John and get feedback to refine the skills learned.

While it is advisable that the majority of the lessons be taken during the period of the course, some lessons could be taken up to two months before the course begins as useful preparation, and some could be carried over for a nine month period after the course ends as a useful refresher.

Contact John by phone or email to book lesson times. Those with easy access to New York can take the lessons anytime before, after, or between the weekends (within the above time limits). Those traveling

further distances who want to combine a weekend with a lesson will need to take the lessons on the Friday before the weekend. I will give priority to those people for bookings on the Friday afternoon/evening before each of our weekends, and will give lessons up to 8.00pm that Friday evening.

### Requirements

- Participants must be teachers certified by any of the current certifying organizations regardless of affiliation.
- The course is open to a maximum of 10 participants.

### Dates

Saturday and Sunday 10:30am to 4:30pm the following weekends:

Sept. 15-16, 2012, \* Oct. 27-28, 2012, \* Dec. 8-9, 2012, \* Jan. 19-20, 2013,  
Mar. 9-10, 2013, \* April 27-28, 2013

### Application deadline

The closing date for application is August 18, 2012. However booking early is advisable as the program is limited to ten participants.

### Cost of Training

The tuition for the program is \$2160 due in the following payments

- \$260 due with application. Full refund given to applications withdrawn before the closing date.
- \$400 due at the first weekend, Sept. 15, 2012.
- \$500 due December 8, 2012
- \$500 due January 19, 2013
- \$500 due April 27, 2013

### Location

- Weekends at : 330 W. 38th Street #805, New York, NY 10018 (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues)
- Lessons at: 310 Riverside Drive #815, New York, NY 10025

For further information, please contact John Nicholls at the address at the foot of each page.

What people are saying about it:

"The post certification course, and your teaching approach, have transformed my daily practice in the Alexander Technique. I have a new understanding for how all AT practice inherently contains 'hands on the back on the chair'. I have a renewed commitment to 'hands on the back on the chair' as a daily 'warm up' before my private practice students. In addition, you created an environment of validation for each teaching member while encouraging each of us to develop a deeper integrity for the means whereby in learning new skills. I appreciated the ease in which you encourage teachers at all levels to continue to investigate and explore AT principles. These weekends have encouraged me to recommit to Alexander's work in deeper ways. It was through these weekends that I really decided to begin an AT training program in Baltimore.

Many thanks."

*---Nancy Romita, enrolled in the 2008-2009 course*

"Many thanks again for your valuable course. I've become a better Alexander teacher – doing less and directing more. My students have noticed the difference in me and in their own better use."

*---Anne Macdonald, enrolled in the 2007-2008 course*

"We are so grateful to have had this opportunity and we honestly believe that any and every AT teacher no matter where they are in their learning, could immensely benefit from training with you. We hope that you keep offering this course and we also hope that AT teachers find this valuable treasure and take advantage of learning with one of the most experienced and congenial teachers in the world of the Alexander Technique."

*---Mona Al-Kazemi and Faisal Al-Matrouk, enrolled in the 2007-2008 course*

"I truly felt it was one of the most valuable learning experiences I've ever had. I have studied the AT for many years and with many fine teachers, but felt that your explanation and presentation of Alexander's work gave me the piece I'd been missing - the 'missing link' if you will, that allowed me to activate the A.T. principles in myself and my students more fully, more often, and more successfully than I ever had before.

"The link I'm referring to is this one: learning to receive weight/information/sensation through my hands, and then directing myself to maintain an 'open channel' through my arms/shoulders/back, to let it travel through my legs to my feet, then into the floor-while my hands maintain their connection. Not terribly eloquently stated, but I think you know what I mean? This was a totally new experience for me, and frustratingly difficult to learn to do without bracing somewhere or other! But I continue to practice it, mostly through hands on back of chair, and continue to improve. And my back feels stronger and stronger."

*---Judy Barnett, enrolled in the 2006-2007 course*

"Thank you for a fantastic learning experience. It's worth every penny!"

*---Diane Gaary, enrolled in the 2006-2007 course*

“Teachers wanting to enhance or simply refresh their skills will find this learning experience invaluable. John provides a welcoming environment where everyone's level of knowledge and experience is valued and contributes to an ever-growing body of investigation into the Alexander Technique. You won't get a better theoretical or experiential compilation of FM's work from anywhere!!”

*---Glenna Batson, enrolled in the 2005-2006 course*

“John Nicholls’ post-graduate course has offered insights and explorations which will enrich my understanding and teaching of the Technique for years to come. With each session my own use and teaching have improved and I have a more sophisticated framework for integrating knowledge about the Technique.

“This is a unique opportunity to share in the fruits of John’s own penetrating explorations and raise oneself to a higher professional level. I have benefited from his unique combination of strengths—hands-on work showing John’s high level of mastery and extensive teaching experience, and clear and concise presentation of material reflecting John’s knowledge of first generation teachers and especially of Walter Carrington’s work.”

*---Priscilla Hunt, enrolled in the 2005-2006 course*

“John's connection to the Alexander tradition is uncanny. Ask John a question and he will tell you the answer that several first generation teachers personally gave him. Then he will tell you what Alexander said in his books, and then give you his assessment as well. He seems to have really tried to understand the differences between the disparate lineages of the technique.”

*---Wes J. Feaster, enrolled in the 2005-2006 course*

“Every unseasoned Alexander teacher graduates knowing it's just the beginning, and that many hours of unsupervised hands-on experience lie ahead before skills can reach an advanced level. As a fairly new teacher, John Nicholls' post-grad course shepherds me so that I feel the gap is closing more rapidly. It is helping me connect the dots so I will become the teacher I want to be.”

*---Ruth Rootberg, enrolled in the 2005-2006 course*

“John combines his vast knowledge of Alexander Technique history, an extensive understanding of basic procedures and detailed hands-on teaching, and a gift for training teachers to create a useful, practical and inspiring program.”

*---Tom Vasiliades, enrolled in the 2005-2006 course*

“John's non-judgmental and open-minded attitude allows for an atmosphere of learning and a thoughtful level of discourse. It was a delight to explore new ideas with a beginner's curiosity and without the pressure of being right. I was able to immediately apply the skills in the workshops with my students and they have made a big difference. I cannot thank John enough for helping me improve my level of professionalism as a teacher of the Alexander Technique.”

*---Elizabeth Buonomo, enrolled in the 2004-2005 course*

## JOHN NICHOLLS' TEACHER REFRESHER COURSE

### Outline of Course Syllabus

1. **Defining our terms:** *The primary coordination* – integration of postural support, breathing, and movement; going up – the primary movement; inhibition/non-doing; direction/ordering; primary control; re-educating kinesthesia; a strong back – the essential support from the widening back; integration – the elastic connections; parallels with horses. Demonstration first lesson.\*\*
2. **Monkey and Hands on the Back of the Chair:** Importance of monkey; antagonistic pulls (avoiding rigidity or passivity); importance of hands on back of chair for teaching - relating the back to the limbs, freeing the thorax, freeing the hands and arms from the back.
3. **Elements of table work:** Why do we use a table; a look at different approaches to it, e.g. different heights of books under head, ways of taking head, limbs, etc. Keeping the unifying simplicity of head, neck, back whatever part of the body you are working on. Doing (as in lifting a leg) on a non-doing basis.
4. **Elements of chair work:** why do we use a chair; a look at different approaches to it, e.g. use of the legs in relation to the back; allowing alignment and movement trajectories appropriate to each student's stage of development to emerge naturally; etc. The demand of support for the head from neck muscles, support for the trunk from back muscles, and the legs integrating both support and movement functions.
5. **Breathing:** Demystifying the Whispered Ah; how it relates to *primary coordination* and to the origins of FM's work; FM's first papers on breathing; consideration of freeing the breath as a fundamental goal of teaching. Establishing support and flexibility of the respiratory processes as the essential foundation for vocal use in acting or singing. Demonstration lesson.\*\*
6. **Directed Activities:** saddle work; crawling; walking; running; how to teach a simplified version of hands on back of chair to private students to apply in daily life. This gives them the basis of application to everything from chopping vegetables to playing the violin, from typing to using exercise equipment.  
There will be time for review and summary, questions and concerns, and a look ahead.

\*\* *Teaching strategies/Approaches:* Demonstration and discussion of a lesson on the Sunday of the first and fifth weekends. Throughout the course we will consider what FM and others have said about giving lessons. We will also consider balancing the awakening of conscious control with the re-education of kinesthesia to refine subconscious processes; balancing verbal explanation with hands-on experience.

**Application for: JOHN NICHOLLS' TEACHER REFRESHER COURSE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Alexander Technique Background and Certification**

Please give a brief description of your Alexander Technique background and any other pertinent information (e.g. medical if relevant)

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Please include with this form the application deposit of \$260, **made payable to ATNYC**, and mail the completed form and check to the address at the foot of this page.

The application deadline is August 18, 2012, but there is a limit of ten places, so please apply early. You may withdraw your application with no penalty (i.e. your deposit will be refunded) until the deadline date. After August 18, 2012 there will be no refunds.

Further payment deadlines will be September 15, 2012 (\$400), December 8, 2012 (\$500), January 19, 2013 (\$500), and April 27, 2013 (\$500). **All checks should be made payable to ATNYC.**

If you have any questions about registration, course content or any other considerations please call John Nicholls at his teaching studio number (212) 706-2507, or email [john@atnyc.us](mailto:john@atnyc.us).