

**The Alexander Alliance Post Graduate Training  
USA**



With  
Bruce Fertman and Robyn Avalon

## Alexander Alliance Post Graduate Training Program

In Europe, Asia, and America, classically trained Alexander teachers are asking me to teach them how I work. They seem especially intrigued with how I use my hands, while also expressing their appreciation for my simple way of articulating complex Alexandrian principles without the need for jargon. They seem to like how I see people in their entirety, seeing through the body into a world of being and becoming.

As an apprentice, and later assistant to Marjorie L. Barstow, with whom I trained for 16 years, and as a person with 55 years of experience as a movement educator and artist, I have learned how to teach Alexander's work effectively in groups, how to teach others how to work effectively in groups, how to apply Alexander's work to the physical demands of everyday life as well as to the emotionally trying situations all of us encounter along the way. Having also studied intensively with four other first generation teachers; Elisabeth Walker, Erika Whittaker, Catherine Wielopolska, and Richard M. Gummere, Jr., I have gained a deep respect for Alexander's classical procedures as well.

Many of my post-graduate students became curious about my training program, the Alexander Alliance Germany, and began visiting. They found a rigorous, demanding, disciplined training that at the same time was warm, friendly, lighthearted, and fun.

While at the Alliance Germany many of my post-graduate students encountered the teaching of Robyn Avalon. Like virtually everyone, myself included, they fell in love with her work, its depth, its clarity, its effectiveness, and perhaps above all, its joyfulness.

Robyn and I have been working together for 30 years. We are two teachers who have figured out how to be successful and effective AT teachers in the world at large. We will share our practical, hard earned wisdom with you so that you can do the same.

Our Post Graduate Training Program USA will be composed of four 7-day retreats, two taught by Robyn Avalon and two taught by me. These four retreats will take place over a two-year period, totaling 200 hours of study. This Post Graduate Training Program is open to all certified teachers of the Alexander Technique.



*Bruce and Robyn*

We are excited to be co-teaching this Post Graduate Training Program, and we hope you are too.

## *ABOUT Bruce & Robyn*

*Robyn is by far the most down to earth visionary I know. Fearlessly and lovingly she constantly pushes borders within herself and others. Her teaching is based on seemingly infinite knowledge and driven by sharp instincts. She creates exceptionally safe playgrounds in which limiting belief systems drop away like worn out clothes. With her everything becomes easy, exciting, meaningful, and definitely more fun. Magically, the impossible becomes possible.*

*Margarete Tueshaus - Alexander Teacher, ATVD, Tango Teacher, Equestrian*

*Gone is the straight-lined striving, the stopping and oughting. Instead curiosity, inquisitiveness, and permission to experiment, to play, to open boxes and to climb out of them into a world of possibility – a world both soft and strong. And all this through a quiet power, an exquisite touch, a clarity of speech, and a wealth of wisdom. For me, Bruce's work is more than exciting; it is important, both to the world and to anyone involved in any way with Alexander's Technique.*

*Annie Turner – Alexander Technique Teacher, STAT, England.*

Here's the material we'll be covering.

## **The Physics and Metaphysics of Touch**



*To receive everything one must open one's hands, and give.  
Taisen Deshimaru*

Hands close and open, grasp, cling, clench, and release. Hands express. They welcome, warn and inform, and in our case, hands educate. Educative hands lead out that which lies within. Together we will increase our tactual palette, become more tactually literate and learn how to access the whole person through myriad networks: skeletal, muscular, fascial, cellular, organ, and nervous systems.

We understand well the paramount importance of personal use while teaching, and the direct impact our use has on our quality of touch. As important as good use is, additional knowledge into the hand's inherent design can help us acquire hands that are, at once, soft and powerful, light and deep, stabilizing and mobilizing, quieting and energizing. As there are primary colors, so too there are primary touches: push, pull, slide, spin, and roll. In other words, physics.

We will also consider the metaphysics of touch. It's a disservice to reduce a person to their body. We never really only touch a person's body. We touch a person. Our goal is to touch a person's being through their body. But to touch a person's being through their body we first have to be able to see a person's being through their body, which means knowing how to see beyond posture, beyond body mechanics, beyond use.

## How To Teach An Engaging Introductory Workshop



We offer a template, a simple framework, evolved over 40 years of teaching AT, for clearly and effectively introducing Alexander's work within a group setting. It's easy to learn. It leaves you free to choose the content you wish to impart to others. Introducing the technique to a group of students can be intimidating for Alexander teachers. Knowing this simple structure makes it much easier.

Knowing lots of group explorations, movement etudes, and games are important tools when it comes to teaching AT in groups. We will share some of our favorites with you – games we have crafted and taught to literally thousands of beginners over decades of teaching. Learn how to create your own etudes and games, which impart important AT principles and skills.

Occasionally, we will be giving one-day introductory workshops inside of a seven-day training retreat. Each of these one-day workshops will introduce Alexander's work from a different point of view. These introductory workshops are part of the Post Graduate Training Program. It's the best way to learn how to introduce the work to people in groups. We encourage each graduate trainee to bring at least one person who really wants to take an introductory workshop in the Alexander Technique.

## Systems Of Support



Alexander teachers excel in creating what I refer to as “tensegral support.” It's the support system that creates the hallmark experience of kinesthetic lightness, the sense of suspension. But there are other essential systems of support, complimentary systems that most Alexander teachers do not excel at accessing, such as ground support, organ support, and spatial support. When these complimentary systems of support integrate with tensegral support the side effect of postural stiffness, so prevalent in our work, subsides.

Finally, and perhaps most important to self-support, is how we think; how we think about our bodies, ourselves, others, and the world at large. Distorted and/or untrue thoughts and beliefs are self-sabotaging. Knowing how to observe, question, and defuse 'internal stimuli', - thoughts, emotions, and sensations - may be more important than how we respond to external stimuli. *Knowing how to use our mind to come to our senses sets us free.*

## Walking as an Alexandrian Procedure



*It's no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.*  
*Francis of Assisi*

Walking, when understood, is the Alexandrian procedure that most naturally integrates rotational and spiraling motions into our upright structure, motions that are conspicuously absent in Alexander's other procedures, as wonderful as those procedures are. Walking, when taught dynamically, helps dissipate postural holdings, often resulting in a profound sense of freedom and power.

When Erika Whittaker was asked what she felt like after working with Alexander, she said, "When the lesson was over, I could have said thank you, and walked out the door, or I could have said thank you, and walked through the wall."

We'll spend time learning about the mechanics of walking, as well as how to use our hands to help our students walk naturally, freely, and powerfully.

## Working in Activity



Ironically, working in activity is not about activity. As Alexander teachers we are more than movement efficiency and effectiveness experts. Alexander work is not about how we do what we do. Alexander's work is about how we are being when we do what we do. As T.S. Eliot expresses so profoundly, our work is about... the still point of the turning world...

We bring people in touch with the still point. Activities are the turning world. We cannot work on the still point without the turning world. Working in activity is the most straightforward way to work on the integration of being and doing.

## Life Work



Have you noticed it's relatively easy to make good use of Alexander's work when we are doing well, but nearly impossible when confronted with something truly challenging or threatening? How can we practice sticking to principle under emotionally charged circumstances, when relating to family members, when encountering problems at work, while coping with physical injury and pain, when overwhelmed by stressful thoughts and emotions?

Life Work is a contemporary Alexander procedure, a way of proceeding to teach people how to employ Alexander's work when under trying conditions and faced with harsh realities. Being able to work with people this way is enormously beneficial. It brings the Work to life and life into the Work.

## Understanding Human Directionality



Collectively, Robyn and I have been joyfully obsessing over human directionality for 85 years! That's true. Robyn will approach human directionality via her Living in a Body™ material. My approach will be through the body mapping work

developed by Bill and Barbara Conable, through the teaching of my *Salmon Rising/Water Falling Patterns*, and through an in depth look into the Albinus Copperplate Engravings.

Living in a Body™, a course in body mapping designed by Robyn over 25 years ago has been translated into 5 languages and is now taught worldwide. Living in a Body™ teaches us how to see when a person's Map does not match their inherent design. It offers a multitude of etudes and games for helping them change the beliefs that interfere with their ability to live and work in accordance with their inherent design. In this training, Robyn will offer the essential highlights of the LIAB™ material.

*Salmon Rising/Water Falling* is an Alexander etude developed by me over many years, which helps make our invisible directional weave of support visible. Everyone seems to love learning these patterns. These oppositional yet complimentary kinesthetic pathways course their way through us and, when awakened, integrate us, allowing our bodies and beings to become light and substantial, soft and strong, firm and flexible, calm and clear, articulate and unified.

## Constructive Conscious Surrender



In our work we know trying to make something happen and allowing something to happen are worlds apart. One is done alone, one in partnership. Allowing happens when we are in partnership with our nature, with what is natural within us, with our original design, with our innate coordination. Our job as AT teachers is to bring our students in touch with their inherent support, power, and ease. Gradually, our students begin to trust their innate coordination, and learn to live in partnership with it. Life becomes less of an effort and more of a dance.

When we lose touch with our partner, we lose support, and again we begin doing everything by ourselves. Trying and forcing return.

If we are to allow life to freely unfold, we must learn how to willfully and joyfully surrender, to 'give up going it alone.' We learn to ask for how we want to be. We learn how to send clear directives to naturally governing forces deep within us. Paradoxically, learning to surrender to these deep governing forces gives us the control we always wanted.

We cannot force freedom upon ourselves or anyone else. Ultimately, the work does itself.

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If you have any questions whatsoever and you'd like to talk to us personally, we'd be happy to talk to you. Write to me at [bf@brucefertman.com](mailto:bf@brucefertman.com) and Robyn at [robyn@contemporaryalexander.com](mailto:robyn@contemporaryalexander.com) and we can arrange a time to talk.

We look forward to working with you,

Bruce Fertman & Robyn Avalon

## About Robyn Avalon



Robyn has been studying Alexander's work for over 40 years, being first introduced to it as a young performing artist. She has worked with members of renowned opera companies, symphony orchestras, music ensembles, music conservatories, dance companies, and circuses including the American Ballet Theater, NYC Ballet, Joffery Ballet, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Maria Benitez, Meredith Monk, Orpheus, the Juilliard School, the Meadowmount School of Music, Cirque de Soleil, and Ringling Bros/Barnum & Bailey. Robyn has also taught for the US Olympic Dressage Team, the Ladies Professional Golf Association, and the Texas "Aggies" Football Team. She offers continuing education workshops at National Conventions for Osteopathic Physicians, Dentistry, Fiber Arts, National Opera Association, NATS, Suzuki, and Centered Riding.

Robyn is a professional director, choreographer, and dancer. She was a founding member of two rhythm tap companies, and has done international and national tours, Off-Broadway, film and television. Her work has been seen in venues as diverse as NYC's Blue Note Jazz Club, Carnegie Hall, and The White House.

In addition to her love for the performing arts, Robyn enjoys the healing arts, and is a certified practitioner of Cranial Sacral, Visceral Unwinding, Deep Imagery®, and Matrix Energetics®.

Robyn is the founding director of the Contemporary Alexander School, and co-director of the Alexander Alliance International, and is on the core faculty of all Alexander Alliance Schools.

*Incredibly broad knowledge, clear, to the point and exact, incredible energy, incredibly kind and loving, profound and playful - that's Robyn.*

*Knowing Robyn has changed my life, given me more freedom and joy. Robyn has opened a whole new world of possibilities for me. She's the Queen of Group teaching. If you want to learn to enjoy what you do, she is the one you want to meet. Robyn teaches ease, grace, high performance, curiosity and freedom. Her enthusiasm is contagious.*

*Marieke Klemm, MD, Alexander Technique Teacher*

## About Bruce Fertman



Bruce trained with five, first generation Alexander teachers: Catherine Merrick Wielopolska, Marjorie L. Barstow, Richard M. Gummere Jr., Elisabeth Walker, and Erika Whittaker. He brings a lifetime of training as a movement artist and educator to his work as an Alexander teacher having trained in Gymnastics, Modern Dance, Ballet, Contact Improvisation, Tai Chi Chu'an, Aikido, Japanese Tea Ceremony, Argentine Tango, and Kyudo.

He has worked with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, Radio France, The National Symphony in Washington DC, the Honolulu Symphony, for the Curtis Institute of Music, and most recently for Jeong Ga Ak Hoe, a traditional Korean Music Ensemble in Seoul, Korea. Bruce taught for the Five College Dance Program in Amherst, Massachusetts for 13 years, and for the Tango community in Buenos Aires. For 6 years, he taught movement for actors at Temple and Rutgers University.

For ten years Bruce taught annually for the College of Physiotherapy in Gottingen, Germany.

In 1982, Bruce co-founded the Alexander Alliance with Martha Hansen Fertman, an intergenerational, multicultural community/school, the first Alexander teacher training program inspired primarily by the work of Marjorie Barstow. Currently, director of education and senior teacher for the Alexander Alliance Germany, Bruce also teaches annually for Alexander Alliance training programs in Japan, Korea, England, Switzerland, and America.

Bruce's heart centered approach as a teacher rests upon extensive study in psychology and theology, specifically, the work of Eric Berne, (Transactional Analysis), Carl Rogers, (Person Centered Therapy), Frederick Perls, (Gestalt Therapy), Albert Ellis, (Rational-Emotive Therapy), Carl Jung, (Analytical Psychology), and Byron Katie (Inquiry). Having also studied with Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist scholars, Bruce's work centers around body and being, movement and meaning, and the relationship between physical and spiritual grace.

Bruce has been using his hands to help people for 55 years.

*In Bruce's class you feel as if you are sitting by a deep, soft lake. His pace and patience, his quiet confidence allows people to unfold and open layer by layer. The superfluous falls away leaving only life's inner vitality effortlessly expressing itself through you.*

*He is the embodiment of his work. His touch is like a butterfly settling down on the very turning point of your soul. And then you know, "That's who I am, that is who I could be."*

*M. Tueshaus - Alexander Teacher, ATVD/ Tango Teacher/ Equestrian*