

Thanksgiving weekend workshop intentions and explorations

Karl Frost

I always maintain that I give myself a lot of leeway for improvisation during this weekend workshop, so I hate to make commitments about what I am going to be teaching. I do, however, have some pretty clear curiosities about what I want to be working with, material that I don't usually bring explicitly into workshops, even if the material is often tacitly there. I'm excited and really interested to see where this material will go.

One of the things I really want to spend some time with is about applying force through joints in a way that aligns with 'working range' in conjunction with how we and our partners are using our bodies. There is an art to both maintaining the health of one's own joints in motion and avoiding complicity in someone else's physical choices that may (long term) injure their joints. I feel a dance should leave the joints feeling more healthy, not more distressed. This involves cultivating finer moment to moment awareness, willingness to engage and disengage force and effort based less on our anticipated than on our actual trajectories through space. This relates to the [passive sequencing work](#) in both the attention to sequencing and the cultivation of calm in the context of dynamic motion. Following the Taoists, we acknowledge that we are never in control of our movement and thereby open the doorway for more real and fine influence over our fluid motion through space. These are just words, however. We'll explore physically.

Another thing that I have been thinking about for the last years is about the pathways of the body that open up as we decline to move on subtle impulses based on sexuality or intimacy. Sex and contact is a perpetually charged space, and people respond to that often through a combination of either suppression or seeking. Both of these responses inhibit some profound and beautiful potential explorations of bodies in contact. Here, I use the word 'suppression' in the sense used by FM Alexander (Alexander technique), where he differentiates 'suppression' from 'inhibition'. As we suppress a process, the process is still 'trying to happen', but we are blocking it with a resistance process. Quite literally, as a process involves subtle (or not so subtle) use of muscle, we block that muscle use with antagonistic muscle use. This relates to Freudian ideas of suppression as well as Arnie Mindel's ideas of blocked processes or 'sub-voices'. This classically causes all sorts of dysfunction and holding. A response to this pervasive problem of 'suppression' of sexuality is to 'allow' the seeking. With regards sexuality and intimacy, while for many the explicit exploration of such in CI can be very rewarding, this can also lead to another kind of confinement with reflexive overt-intimacy-seeking. A third way is what Alexander would call 'inhibition': instead of either allowing or blocking the process, we simple choose to stop initiating the process. In the context of sexuality and intimacy via a vi contact improvisation, this inhibition (vs suppression) of intimacy-seeking allows us to open up an amazing palette of explorations. It expands the range of people we can have enjoyable dances with, and allows released pathways of proprioceptively sensitive and physically nourishing movement together that is impossible with either the subtle tension of suppression or the steering of intimacy-seeking. I want to explore this a lot in a feedback process between dancing and conversations, looking at this sometimes as a purely mechanical task and sometimes as an experiential one. I suspect that the dances that will emerge will have a unique freedom and vibrancy. I'm excited to explore!

Of course, we'll also likely take a few detours into other kinds of material over the weekend, including some fun and quirky physical tricks and lifts and maybe going down rabbit holes where fundamental explorations become advanced practices.

Hope to see you there!

Karl