**Term 3**

**Lesson 4**

**13.10.2021**

Way back in the beginning of the training, we had touched the themes of addressing, approaching our client, or someone…even ourselves… Remember we talked about the different ways of approaching, even while talking: from the above way, then the direct way and from the under…We all somehow have this underlying desire to come closer to something, or someone, it is really something that all of us have, or to get closer. And we cannot really name what this really is, what we are getting closer to. But when it happens, we feel it. So there is this sensation that we are closer to something, or someone. And maybe it is not necessary to name it and leave it in mystery.

Let’s connect to the idea of ‘approaching’ while doing a couple of exercises. It is quite a theme in itself, and it has got something to do with touching.

While we will do this improvisation we will also focus on the idea of approaching.

Improv: The sliding principle: sliding on our body, sliding on the floor, now remaining in the horizontal position.

Thank you. We will do it one more time. Just pay attention to certain things now: try to keep as close as you can to the floor, because if you lift off you cannot slide on the floor. The sliding is like enabling you to lift your weight in such a way so that the sliding can happen, and then it activates the connective tissues and the muscles. You  may have sensed this: while you are lying on your back and sliding your legs on the floor, it will activate your core muscles. So the sliding is a good method to prepare the body for work.

I said also to think about the Approaching: we approach in order to accompany. So when you are doing something by yourself, you have to accompany what you are doing, in this case the sliding. When you need to stay close to the floor and when you need to slide and activate the tissues, and when you all the while accompany these actions, very strange transitions happen, transfer of weights are happening, certain joints will give you the impression that they open. Now if you stay within the accompaniment, you will notice that in these moments of transition, things liberate from your body. You may not notice it but it is visible. Accompany your movements, whatever you do, be there, do not move automatically.

So let’s do it again: slide wherever you can, on the surface of your body.

Thank you. Very good.

While we were watching you, we had some comments. Beliz commented that this is a good way for some of us to get closer to the floor, to deepen the relation with the floor. And also it is a good way to find this melting. Now you  must feel activated and melted right now. And it helps to find this active softness, which is the basic quality we would like to be in while doing this practise. Also I find that the sliding is a good alternative to the Caressing because it has a different emotional charge. You may find it useful for extremely shy people. For some clients to caress can be intimidating, but the sliding may be like an invitation to a game. And the sliding quality comes from the Laban system. It is one of the main qualities in Laban, and if you are interested in movement qualities, I advise you to read about them, and do them. It is a lot of fun. Sliding is important for us.

Because it helps us to keep the connection with the floor and it creates the space in us which is necessary so that we can follow the impact of the Touch, so that we follow what is happening during the exchange of the touching. Because if we don’t have this groundedness, but not in the sense of being strong, but this capacity to flow, and to work the flow needs many different qualities. And sliding is one of them.

Beliz: *One of the things that I really saw and that worked was the repetition. Because you were doing it for some time, and it was visible that rather than the surface feeling it was more melting from the core, and it was for some of you that your psoas was relaxing, so it was getting closer to the floor, and it was very visible. And I think it is about repetition and time, taking your time to arrive there.*

Yes I agree, at the beginning of the exercise your energy, while lying on the floor was curved upwards. And then slowly the curves melted and you came closer to the floor. And You can feel it now also, you are much closer to yourself right now, so you have approached your body.

Katerina: *to me it seems quite difficult this exercise, because it is the sensing of the touch and the letting go at the same time, it is really important to deal with it, and for me when I do it and I am successful, it is like the way we are feeling ourselves in the movement. It is this balance.*

Yes, this is a good point, this letting go and letting the sliding happen. So the sliding also brings the direction, whereas the caressing can remain local, the sliding is already some kind of a journey, it starts somewhere and takes us somewhere, thus the flow can happen in another way. Also because of the presence.

I would like to go more into the sliding experiment, but we will do this in the workshop. But you can already start preparing mentally: How can you slide from the floor into the space? And how can you slide from the horizontal to the vertical, and back again, using the sliding principle. Prepare yourself mentally for it.

I would like to hear from you some outcomes of your search and meditation of the two questions I have asked.

Just in short, briefly. If you have a long essay, send it to me by mail and give us a summary…

Tomas: *I would like to share shortly: the experience which brought me here where I am right now, to the dance and the physical theatre.. But before I recognized the lack of touch and from certain experience, and during my childhood, because I lost my mother very soon. She died when I was seven, and later on I realized the absence of that certain kind of touch, because then  I had my stepmother. But she was not able to touch me or hug me the way my mother does, or she was not even able to physically approach me simply. But this I realised only when I started to get involved into the arts and the dance. Because somehow it activated me to work with other people and the body and the touch, and it made me more alive and more present and open. And looking  back I can understand this absence, which is a very strong topic for me in general: absence and disappearing. So I think this is my context, it is very much present, and it is interesting now to realise how I like to receive and give touch in whatever way, it makes a lot of sense, but I didn't know this when I was younger, and could connect it to the simple wellbeing, how important the touch was. So this is something what I am thinking about.*

Buse: *It depends who is touching and how you are touched. With touch I feel safe, peaceful and more healthy. And my hormones and emotions start to activate with Touch, I connect with the other and by the other to myself. And I generally melt into touch, I become soft and even more cute, and I feel warm. And in the absence of Touch I feel so melancholic, and even I feel headaches, because my mind starts to run away, my mind starts working so fast, planning sharply, and I feel lonely. I actually don’t realise the absence of the touch easily but I can read it from my reactions, for example, I become more strategic, and my nervous system gets tense. So I am aware of the tension generally.*

Pedro: *I couldn’t do it. Every time I tried, I couldn’t write anything. I had the topics but I couldn’t. Maybe it touches something deep that is not open yet, or it is just starting opening and therefore it is difficult, and it also touched me what Tomas said at the beginning, and what Buse said. It has a lot to do with the quality of touch, especially at a young age, how this touch can… Tomas spoke about the absence of the touch, and I would like to speak about the other kind of touch, the touch you don;t want to be in, a touch that can take you away from you, or put you in a place of sadness where you don’t want to go, there is a different kind of energy that is formed though the touch and you don’t want to go through. And I think it is a theme for me, I could actually go through it rationally, write about everything I know also through my work, but I decided to accept that when I talk through my emotions, at the moment I cannot write or talk about it. That’s it. and I think it is something I continue to work on.*

Katerina: *I would like to continue, because of what these two men said…to me the last couple of weeks were very hard and we were all sick and it was dangerous somehow, and I was afraid of my daughters. And I am still not ok with it because some very deep things came out. And when I started to do this exercise, I realised that I cannot touch myself. It never happened to me before. And when I connected to this fear that was in me, the essential fear, I couldn’t touch myself. And while I was moving it was not happening and I was stuck but I just couldn’t touch myself. It has never happened like this before. So I think it is connected to this kind of really basic, something.. I don’t know really… And today it was a little bit better.*

Yigit: *This week I did my practise irregularly, and I think that I had mostly the outer focus rather than the inner focus, because my sister got engaged and preparation and whole drama. But when I started to feel the tension and the finding myself in that drama of how I behave, I realised that : hey I am missing the presence of this touch. That I am being away from myself. So I got aware of the presence of the touch through the absence of the touch. I recognised that something was missing. Until I recognised it it remained just a sensation, and when I recognized it, I went to a place where I could just be a bit with myself and touch myself, to lay down..and I became softer, and even giggling, like kind of inside, and also I realised that the contact touch between me and my skin, and my body and the floor, I give in. And the more I give in, my spine becomes softer, and when I push then it becomes harder. So and more I give in to the floor and am melting, Istarted also to comprehend the situation that I am in and started to get the essence of what I am in. What kind of thing I am in. So my practise is actually manifested in the events of my life. Not through the practise but when I am outside of the practise and in the situation I am in mostly.*

Steffen: *I didn’t have many opportunities to touch someone else, this week, so I was mostly with myself, and I found out about the touch, that it is very much about being aware, if I am really in the moment, and when I move I feel where I touch the ground, the touch of the air on the skin, even before I touch myself, I can be touched with something that is open, and I realised that there is no moment without touch, but it happens only, and I am not aware of every touch, and I am aware of the absence only when I am absent minded, otherwise there is always something touching. And also when I move somewhere, in the inside there is something that is touch each other, and it is getting more soft, if I really do this caressing, the touch of the arm, or leg is already making me softer, and as I mentioned already before last week, it is breaking some patterns of what I do. So this is really how to stay in contact with my self, especially away from the mind, this is the most crucial point for me, in the case of touch. And of course it is good to touch someone else, but it was not so easy this week.*

Katrin: *I had very similar observations as Buse said, and like Steffen, the touch helps me very much to be present and feel connected. When I touch myself, or someone touches me or I touch somebody, I feel less functioning intellectually , and feel more connected and  functioning emotionally, and more aware. And in the absence of touch, I lose the presence easily, and I get lost easily into intellectual ideas, as though it is kind of completely different kind of functioning of the mind. But then there is the touch and touch.. there is a touch which I perceive and I agree to, and I can melt into it, and then my body opens. But I remember also situations of touch, when I got touched for example and I didn’t wanted, or the touch didn’t feel nice, and the body is really closing up, getting stiff and tried to move away and getting tense. So it depends how one is touched. And when I touch myself I give myself the touch I need and that I like, I can give myself what I need, and with somebody else it is then possible to communicate this, by saying no, or yes, … and I am looking forward to touch Steffen again, because we didn’t have any opportunity this week…*

Beliz: *For me it is like, my mother always says that I was such a touchy baby child, and I really needed it much more than anyone else in my family. It is like water, there is this capacity that needs to be filled in me otherwise I am not functioning as me. none of the other functions happen, so it is like this holistic thing,  if that touch is not filled, then I am not able to feel the same way, I am not physically the same way, I am not able to think the same way, but then in life and in different situation, and because of this need - and this need is not only about receiving but also about giving - being in touch with someone, and others. I have come to situations where, I realise that the intentions are important, setting your intentions are important, and understanding the other is very important, because otherwise your friendly touch especially in different cultures, can be received completely differently and misunderstood, and then would make me doubt myself, and then I would research into myself, and I would see into myself, what is it?, if it is my intention, or the space between me and the other person, is it the culture, and all of these things started to be in my thoughts, and when I think about the presence and the absence it is all these things together for me. Because it is this need that needs to be constantly fed in some way.*

Sabina: *one thing I  realised about the touch while doing the exercise, that when I caress myself it's as if my attitude towards the world changes, my whole relating to the world, so it kind of changes from when I don’t do the practise my attitude unconsciously is: “what does the world need from me, what do I have to do?” and there is effort, pressure, stress. And when I start doing the practise and touch myself, there is a shift to “ what do I need, what do I want from the world” and what I focus on, what makes me feel good, healthy, blissful. And I follow and indulge in this, so it is a completely different way to relate to the world. And when I touch myself, there is the space that opens up, that  is safe and nurturing, like a cocoon, that can hold anything that I experience and that moment, the touch makes me enter into an intimate relationship with myself, there is connection, presence, and it is effortless. I realised that when I don;t have enough touch, when I don't find the time to do the practise I feel more and more disconnected, tense and stressed out, but I noticed that when I travel in the city, I always listen to t music in my headphones, and it has the same effect, because when I hear the music it is as if I am caressing myself internally everywhere. But if I don’t go anywhere and I don’t do the practise I become really disconnected.*

Eliska: *I remember when I did the self caressing, I felt like a lover of my body. Then I feel more safe and relaxed, closer to myself, and when I do the self caressing, I know where my border is, where I am. And I realised I need to be touched safely by somebody. And some years ago my mother told me that I never needed to be touched or hugged, when I was a child. And I was surprised, because I felt that I always needed it, because even now I need the touch of my husband and my friends. So it is funny, well actually not funny at all, that what my mother thought and did not. I touch my belly a lot now, and during this I feel that I am sending love to the baby. and this is touching for me now.*

Elif: *I think that I am coming from behind a bit, starting now to really enjoy the floor. And I already feel to be touched by gravity and by feeling the floor, and it reaches me through the touch. And when I did it I know that I cannot push myself into the self-caressing, I need the time, but today I was doing the practise and it came kater, and I felt really supported by the floor and touching myself I felt like a sandwich, and it felt kind, and felt in the flow, and I didn’t have to think about the touch and it just took me, and I feel this as a great moment. This experience, but I don't know how often this will be. But for now I am focusing on anchoring into the touch with the floor and I will get there slowly. The absence of touch, well in general I don’t focus on the absence so much. In life also, I don't really.. although I didn’t receive the motherly touch either, I received it from my father and it was somehow compensated. I didn’t feel the absence so much, but at some point it will come of course. But I am trying to give this to my kids now, and there are teenagers so they don;t want me to touch them, but I have a cat, so I touch him :) It helps me. I think also with doing this work I am giving myself the touch which I need. and the absence is not present, and it doesn’t matter that my partner is far away. I am giving it to myself right now and it is enough.*

Lina: *I touch my children all the time. I relate a lot to what all of you are saying, and I also missed being touched as a child. And I am the one that is mostly still touching my parents still, and I also remember touching and hugging my friends a lot as a child. Touching is close to me and a big topic. And I am enjoying touch. And through this practise I am learning to melt more, and push less. When I feel met, it is like I can feel the inside coming up to meet the outside touch, it is the merging, meeting and melting and the skin opens up, my tensions melt away, in the whole body and touching the ground it feels like I sink deeper into myself at the same time. So it is the moving out and settling inside deeper, I really have a peaceful comforting feeling. Like a real release into my own home. ANd whenI lack the touch, I feel I am losing myself and become less flexible and tense and stressed. And I resist life more, and if I allow the touch to happen, I can flow and let life move through me, even the hard touch, like the floor is hard, but if I soften it can flow through me, but it is a lot of practice I think to be in touch all the time.*

Nisan: *I have written some things down but I am going to remember. Touch has always been important for me too, it’s been a need, and I haven't been able to do it in the way I wanted to for a long time, and I feel grateful for this practise, because the parts that are being touched are being recognised. And I am aware of those parts, and they activate, and once they are functioning and are parts of me, then I feel more whole and safe, so this is the thing what it does, and it brings me life and nourishment. The absence of the touch is kind of like, it makes me feel more blocked. Something within me that wishes to flow cannot flow, and it makes me feel a lot of longing.*

Thank you all, that was very enriching for all of us. With each client, you will go on their journey about the presence and absence of touch and it is a fascinating one.

Now let us come back to the topic of today.

How do I approach a person in order to touch him/her?

This is one of the crucial moments, that once you have decided to touch someone. It is easy when I tell you so in the workshop, to go and touch someone’s chest you get into couples and you do so. I take that responsibility to make that decision at that moment and I lead you into it. But you will have to lead yourself into it, and you will need to know how to approach your client, in order to touch him/her.

Do you remember what goes on in that particular moment, before you touch? This is something to think about. You may need to go back to your sensational memory of the previous workshop, and we will work on this in the next workshop. But actually that moment, they way you will approach and the way you will get close to a person, that is already in a state of vulnerability, or in a state which is not usual to him or herself, and even when the client is.. well you can remember it from working with me, when I approach you it can be sometimes overwhelming, it is nice or sometimes, you are nervous. The other person will feel a lot of things, the approaching is very important, and then the way you choose to realise the contact is very important too.

And what is even more important is where you are at that very moment and what you are thinking of. Where is your attention and where is your intention?

Because, we cannot be in control of what happens, because body intelligence is still mysterious to us, at least for me it is so.. one of the best ways, that works for me, is to have a clear approach. And if I feel that the person is shy or super sensitive, I usually announce my approach, I verbalise it: ‘I am going to come now, and I am going to touch you..’ And then I make sure that I feel the floor under my feet, that my joints are relaxed, and I focus and know exactly on the area that I am going to touch, I just put my hands on it and I see what happens. ANd then according to the first reactions in the first three seconds I adjust , I tune. If the body that I am touch is adjusting itself, then I wait. And I verbalise again: ‘it’s fine, just receive the touch, I am also tuning to you, it is ok take your time.’ Whenever in past times, I was the victim of my good intentions and superpowers, I was going with an intention and it turned out to be a disaster, so I let go of my intentions. So when I touch, in a way I feel everything and in a way I don’t feel anything. So I go back to the very basic sensations: I feel the floor under my feet, my joints are relaxed, I make contact and I listen to what is happening. And from that moment onwards, I do not exist, only the sensations exist.

The touch is something sacred and powerful for me. So when there is the absence of the touch there is the absence of sacredness in life, the absence of a real power, the power of your very existence.  So, I like to experience it consciously and in a state of awareness. And for this, I have to work, and each one of you will have to work.

The touch has many shades, it has many colours, many vibrations. The touch in here is a very calm and listening one, but all the touch experiences and different qualities, contribute to your ability of staying actively calm.

Through experiencing all these shades of touches, you will fulfil this need and then you can fully be present in it. And there are many ways of fulfilling yourself, with yourself, your partner, massage, the floor, the air, going through the forest, being present while taking a shower. It is all about the nervous system, about sensing what is present in the physical body.

The times I will use the touch is really in order to be effective and to pass into another state:  The Togetherness.

Comment on the Togetherness… That’s what I wrote, but right now when I think of it, it is something that maybe I cannot really comment on, but I can wish for all of us to aspire. That this is going to be our highest wish…to reach this notion of togetherness.

It is of course, personally related to my deep scar in my emotional memory, and maybe that’s the reason why life somehow led me to create a method like this, in which I can infinitely search for this feeling of Togetherness. With every client it is a new challenge. It is maybe my deep wish to unite with myself, the deep wish to unite with parents, because they were missing when I needed to fulfill this need. We all have the voids, these voids are in our memory, in our being, and also in the body, they manifest themselves even in the body.. and these voids encourage us to search in the directions so that we can learn how to cope with them. I don’t believe that we can fill them, but we can learn to cope with them.

I have found throughout my experience that to remain, or relate or wish for Togetherness is a little bit like the floor, it really teaches us directly where we are, and how we are, through the sheer feedback of the other person.

It has taught me that when I make myself available to feel and listen and be with the other person, then I find this attention space in me, in which also I liberate myself, and I transform that moment, or something transforms in me. And this transformation helps the other person to focus, and to feel, and find the courage to step into action.

And this is the accompaniment that I am talking of all the time. If we manage this, then the accompaniment helps the other person to pass into action, to make that step.

Working towards togetherness empowers us to become more independent, it fills us with a reassuring message, the body changes while tuning to the other person.

This can  however only happen when the client has a connection to himself/herself. This means the minimum: that the person is not traumatised by the touch experience. People with no such traumas will also find it overwhelming to be touched by you. Because it is a special situation, and most of the time, they don’t know you and they have an image of you. It can be overwhelming for them that you approach and touch them.

But you can by accommodating your approach and by tuning to your client, make the touch be more welcome. And before you know it, they will love to be touched by you. One should always keep it in a balance. Remember: we are supernatural, over excited loving magicians, even if we feel the love inside, it doesn’t mean that it will be well received by the other.

The touch MUST remain a meeting point between you and the client. And not something that you shower over the client, because you feel like it.

The use of the touch has to serve the development process of your client. If for example you feel that the client has difficulties reaching the chest movement, then you can start slowly by using the touch:

Example of Zuzana: Zuzana is a lovely young woman, who has this terrible need to work on herself. Which is wonderful, at a young age, she makes the time to work on herself. She is an emotionally very open person, but has not received somehow enough support in her life to have confidence in her emotionality. She feels overwhelmed by her capacity to sense the world. She has a tendency to keep lifting her chest. And she is a very high level athlete, she is very well trained but doesn’t breathe well. I have worked a lot with her on the floor, so she is able to make the spirals, roll on the floor, caress the floor and has gained a little mobility of the spine. Although I have seen her problem in the chest I didn;t choose to go and work on the chest, but first worked around the problem. Actually there is no problem, there is a manifestation in her chest. But of course it was not enough. So I decided to touch Zuzana, I approached her and said: Zuzana I will come near you and we are going to work on the chest and I am just going put my hands on the chest, is that ok? And she replied with her eyes closed holding her breath: yes. So this yes was another factor to be stressed a bit more and to hold even more. I made her sit on the floor, sat next to her and put one hand on her chest and one in between her shoulder blades, as you know. And I said to her, you can just receive this and just wait and try to breathe. So for one hour we worked like this and after one hour of working like this I made her touch me, and somehow she felt good. And then I made her repeat the floor exercise again, and her body learned that here in the chest you can move a lot, and it unblocked the movement. It doesn’t mean that she will not keep this reflex of keeping her breath and lifting her chest when she will go home or be in her regular life, but with time, the change in the physical memory will allow her to settle into it and her mind and emotional approach will change too.

The touch at that moment helped Zuzana to unblock something so that she can continue her development. I will probably not do the touch now for a long time. Until she has found her grounding, found her three centres, and has a connection with her hands and legs. The touch can help you to move things forward but you need to give it in the right moment and in the right dose.

I had said that the client should have a sense of grounding, and should have built up  some trust within himself/herself and also with his/her facilitator. I said some more things… but let’s now focus on one very basic thing: again coming back to the very beginning…

 When we are touching, of course the whole body is very important, but there are two very important parts of the body: where the touch happens and where the touch goes out:

The hands and feet… once the torso is somehow freed and has the ability to let the feelings and movement pass through.. we need to revive the hands and feet. Not only for the client but firstly for our own sake. We will mainly touch with the hands, and let out the energy/emotions/current through our feet. That’s what happens. So the connection of our hands and feet with the rest of the body and the channels which make this connection must be worked on regularly. It’s not that you have your hands and feet working well, and you are well embodied, that you will stop working on this. You have to work on yourself regularly, because in time you accumulate information, and this information cannot stay in you.

This is the difficult, or tedious part of this practise: we as facilitators have to continue working. It is easy to work on it, but you’ll have to make time to work on it.

Improv: Let’s try to connect with the hands and the feet in any position you like, on the floor, or standing or both, and let them express, touch, explore, the environment, the space that is within their reach. And don’t think about anything.

Improv: Now let us do the hands and feet on the ground improv.

Improv: Now let us do the hands/arms and feet/legs in standing position. How does it feel now?