
mind, often drowning beneath waves of anxiety or depression, fear or numbing, which as "symptoms" have taken over the hub of the mind."

Daniel J. Siegel, *The Mindful Brain* p. 279

"The answer to exhaustion is not necessarily rest. The answer to exhaustion is whole-heartedness."

Brother David Stendl-Rast

Native American Proverbs:

"Listen to the voice of nature, for it holds treasures for you."

Huron

"Strive to be a person who is never missing from an important act."

Osage

"If we wonder often, the gift of knowledge will come."

Arapaho

"It is no longer good enough to cry peace we must act peace, live peace and live in peace."

Shenandoah

Gravity, Energy and the Support of the Ground

By Charlotte Selver

I would like to speak about the main natural forces we are exposed to as we live on this planet. There is this force of gravity. Gravity is a very attractive force, and everybody is constantly exposed to its influence. The pull of this force makes us all stay on the ground. It even tries to pull us under the ground. But fortunately there is another force in us which does not permit that. That is energy.

Each of us is able to allow energy to counteract the pull of gravity. So this would be the second very, very important force there is, to which we are constantly exposed.

And then, of course, this energy manifests as breathing too. The possibility of constantly getting new air - can you feel it right now as you are reading? Are you open for this possibility of the energy source of breathing to go through you or are you collapsing? Are you open to this coming and going of air and the possibility whether we sit, or stand, or lie to allow this exchange of air through us?

The third very important force, which we constantly are exposed to, is the support of the ground. That means, as you are sitting right now; there is something under you which supports you. Can you feel it? It is very solid and reliable; it is there at all times supporting us - the support underneath your feet, underneath your whole self when you are lying, underneath your behind when you are sitting. You cannot go wrong trusting this support. Are you enjoying it? How wonderful that is!

Gravity, the support which the ground gives you, and energy ...can you really experience these three forces?

- Can you feel that there is always something which invites you down?
- Can you feel something going through you which gives you the strength to stay upright?
- Is there really something which offers itself under you?

You may feel how easy it would be for gravity to become overwhelming, pulling you down to the ground and how the earth even wants to swallow you. But no, there is something under you which supports you and something inside you which reconditions you from moment to moment.

Could you be open in your bones and other tissues for that which supports you? Be grateful for that support - grateful in every cell, grateful in your skin, and in your bones!

Can you feel the air which goes through you? Can you feel how it comes into you and how it goes out of you? Could you become sensitive in your muscles and skin and all tissues for the air which goes through you and leaves you? Are your tissues awake enough to let the air through and receive what is needed and let out what needs to go out? Can more and more of you be open for this wonderful process? We call it breathing,

To talk about these forces is quite dangerous. We have to be very careful not to follow ideas about

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gravity, energy, and the support of the floor. In German the word for "learning by heart" is "auswendig lernen." The literal translation is something like "learning from the outside." But to learn by feeling from inside is completely different. [Unlike the German, the English expression "learning by heart" seems to encourage that. -Editors.]

It is important that we give this learning from inside a chance. When you feel what is, what occurs, what calls on you, your sensations, then you are in touch with life, which is always better, always deeper, always new. Wanting to know something is usually outside. Real experience is always surprising, is nothing which you know beforehand. And there is a difference between talking it – speaking from direct experience – and talking about it. When we speak about something we are not in it. It is important to feel what we say. Very much of our daily living is not experiencing, it is not this warm-blooded being there for what we are doing.

From
Reclaiming Vitality and Presence, P. 43 -45

**Love Letters as Diary
News about the Charlotte Selver
Oral History and Book Project**

by Stefan Laeng-Gilliatt



“Dear Heinrich, all these episodes, all these experiences I deposit with you. Some day I will get them and copy them. I will then have an overview of my days in Munich. You will not throw them away, yes?” Heinrich Selver didn’t and the letters to her first husband eventually found their way back to Charlotte. When and how we don’t know but Charlotte must have read them systematically because many that were originally not dated received a date later and they were carefully archived and preserved for many decades. Thanks to this care we too have now an idea not only of her days in Munich in 1921 but of much of her life in the 20s and early 30s.

Charlotte was a prolific writer. I am currently working my way through 1925. Of that year alone over 150 letters are preserved. By then Charlotte and Heinrich had been a couple for about five years but were not married yet. They had also never lived

together but nevertheless maintained a passionate relationship. Though the letters are certainly love letters in the first place, they read like a diary. At times Charlotte goes into much detail about her daily life, such as when she gives Heinrich her weekly, sometimes even daily, schedule.

By 1925 Charlotte was very busy teaching Body Gymnastik (or Expression-Gymnastics, as dubbed in the English translation of a book by founder Rudolf Bode). She was working for the Bode School for Physical Education in Berlin under Hinrich Medau. On most days she did not teach in Berlin, though. In the course of a week she gave lessons in a number of cities around Berlin, staying in a different place almost every night, traveling by train and sometimes using that time to write letters. Longer workshops in beautiful sea resorts were



Charlotte as a young woman

given in the summer. One is very much reminded of her later life, when Charlotte and Charles Brooks together went on teaching tours through the Americas and Europe.

In early 1925 one of the cities where Charlotte gave weekly classes was Potsdam, historically the military center of Prussia and home of its royalty. From there Charlotte writes: “We laughed so hard