

In 1976 when the time came for myself and a fellow trainee to begin teaching, Dilys Carrington said to us: "I have a couple of nice new students lined up for you to take. They'll come in next week to start with you."

We were panicked. While we were capable of giving a reasonable turn to other trainees, we felt we had very little idea how to handle the practicality of giving a whole lesson to someone who was totally new to this. So we pestered Dilys with questions and requests for help, and she responded wonderfully. In impromptu extra hands-on groups she showed us a wider variety of ways of using our hands than we had thus far learned, and in response to our anxieties about taking a new student, she allowed us to observe several times as she gave first lessons to new students. Later she would sometimes have us assist her giving lessons, which was enormously helpful. Dilys did all this with grace, good humor, and an outpouring of her own enthusiasm for the work.

This seemed to be a time when she was coming into her own maturity as an Alexander teacher, excited by the work and keen to communicate her own discoveries. Walter Carrington had trained us in the basic principles of how to use our hands as Alexander teachers, but Dilys, perhaps because she still clearly remembered her own early days as a teacher, was more able to relate to our difficulties as beginners and help us in that transition from trainee to teacher. Soon she was regularly taking hands-on groups for all trainees.

A few years later, the training course at Lansdowne Road expanded to include a separate program for the first year trainees, and Dilys took charge of that. At this point she was able to bring her analytical intelligence into the practical process of training by developing a structured, step-by-step approach to building up the skill of hands-on work. I'm not aware of this having been done before with the level of detail that Dilys developed, and certainly not within those training courses based on the Carrington approach to teaching. Dilys Carrington soon had a first year curriculum of hands-on groups in which each week built on the preceding weeks' work in an elegant, systematic fashion. Her program provided trainees with a solid foundation from which they could continue developing their hands-on skills with confidence. It was, as she said, an education in thinking, designed to build up your "teaching muscle," which clearly meant keeping your hands connected to a continually lengthening and widening back.

This program, documented by Carolyn Nicholls, after a year of studying closely with Dilys, which resulted in their joint paper: *Notes Towards a Method of Training Alexander Technique Teachers, 1986*. A later reprint in 2001 contains comments by other teacher trainers who had taken Dilys's program and incorporated it into their own trainings, and there were more teachers in addition to those mentioned in the reprint.*

In the years since then, many Alexander teacher training courses have been inspired by the example Dilys gave us, using her program as a starting point and evolving and adapting it--as she herself evolved and adapted it. Those of us trained and training in this way owe a great debt to her skill, intelligence, enthusiasm, and generosity. I myself owe an enormous personal debt to her for all her help and encouragement over many years for which I am deeply grateful. I hope that her great contribution to the teacher training process will be widely recognized and remembered as well as her teaching skills, delightful charm, and infectious enthusiasm.

John Nicholls

*2013: A newer version is now available. See <http://blur.by/19pH2dv>