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The Natural State

Our mental and physical health and vitality is largely controlled by the deep levels of our brain, the levels below the cortex. The cortex controls thought, speech, complex perception and voluntary movement. The sub-cortical regions control basic health and well-being. They do this automatically and effortlessly-- unless we interfere with them! So what we need to do to restore health and vitality is to stop our habitual interference; in other words, to leave ourselves in what we call "the Natural State". This is a state of effortless openness, natural well-being, and present-centered awareness. It is the aim of all Meditative Movement practice.

The main method for returning to the Natural State is letting go, or releasing. This means letting go of tension and interference, and also letting go of 'trying to relax'. In other words, no tensing, no floppiness. This state is resilient, elastic, free, adaptable, and strong. It is the best state to be in while meeting life's challenges as well as savoring its joys.

Returning to the Natural State is practiced lying, sitting, standing, moving, and interacting; in other words, all the time!

Since the Natural State is sub-cortical, it is not something one can "do" voluntarily, but something that has to be allowed. We can't think or effort it into existence; but we can encourage it by working with our posture, muscle tone, breathing, feelings, bodily sensations, and how we pay attention. In this course, you will learn how to do this.

Here is a little imaginary exercise to help you get a sense of this state.

Imagine a small beach ball floating in the water, gently moving with the ripples and waves.

Imagine reaching out and putting your hand on it. What happens? Probably you will notice that the pressure of your hand interferes with the ball moving freely in response to the waves; your hand interferes with the ball's motion.

Now imagine that, without losing contact with the ball, you start to interfere less and less. Your touch gets lighter and lighter, freer and freer, less and less fixed and heavy. Can you feel the sense of openness, lightness, spaciousness? Can you imagine the ball moving freely, and your hand effortlessly being carried by the ball's every motion?

This is what it is like to interfere less, to allow **The Natural State**.

The most basic, and most important, exercises are: Lying Down, Dropping the Weight, Basic Standing, Basic Sitting, and Basic Breathing. Initially, **practice them in this order**. The single most important is Basic Standing.