

Lori Schiff: On Adapting to Remote Instruction, and Learning to Teach Alexander Technique Online

Description

You might remember an episode with Alexander Technique teacher Lori Schiff back in 2019, where she described ways of integrating Alexander Technique principles into our daily lives, dispelled some myths, and helped us all better understand what this type of intentional body awareness can do to help free up our playing (you can listen to that episode [here](#) if you missed it).

One of the topics that came up was the question of whether Alexander Technique could be taught remotely – as in, via Skype or FaceTime (this was before Zoom had become a household name).

At the time, she noted that she wasn't a fan of doing Alexander Technique sessions online. Not that there weren't terrific teachers doing meaningful work online, but just that in her heart, it was difficult to replicate the in-person experience of Alexander Technique instruction remotely, so online lessons were not an option she would consider in most cases.

That made perfect sense to me at the time, but given the events of the last year, where we had to go through an entire school year of mostly remote learning, I was curious about what this meant for Alexander Technique classes. Like, what sort of adjustments had to be made, so that teaching Alexander Technique online could work in the new reality we all had to adapt to?

So, Lori and I got together for another chat (but this time via Zoom, of course), and she described the various challenges she faced, the ways in which she modified her approach to teaching, a couple valuable tech and production-related hacks she learned, and some of the specific ways in which this challenge has enabled her to become a better teacher, even after 40+ years in the business. And ultimately, why her perspective on online teaching had changed.

Some of what we explored is specific to Alexander Technique of course, but some of what she learned applies more broadly to other teaching too, I think. And it certainly applies to those who want to learn more about Alexander Technique, but don't have easy access to an Alexander Technique teacher in the area too.

And beyond all of the insights and practical nuts and bolts, I think it's also a story about the journey that all of us had to take this past year. Where we had to adapt and evolve in unexpected ways, both as teachers and learners.

In this episode, we'll explore...

- Some of the most immediate technical hurdles she encountered, and some of the solutions she

learned about, and how she organized her classes logistically. (4:13)

- The best way to position yourself relative to the camera, when you videotape yourself. (7:56)
- The specific reason why teaching online has made her a better Alexander Technique teacher. (12:18)
- Is reviewing video helpful in learning Alexander Technique? (15:40)
- How something could *look* right, but still be wrong for a particular person. (20:20)
- What are the primary technology needs for teaching Alexander Technique effectively online? (25:27)
- A few thoughts on Zoom fatigue... (39:44)

Notes

- Lori notes that she has set up her teaching space so that she can stand far enough away from the camera that students are able to see more of her body (24:59). Here's an interview she did recently, which shows her setup and what students see when she's teaching: [Alexander at The Juilliard School - Lori Schiff](#)

More info

In addition to the video interview above, you can also hear an audio interview with Lori here: [Lori Schiff: The Alexander Technique – At Home with Yourself](#)

You can also learn more about Lori and contact her for questions or sessions here: lorischiff.com

And learn more about group workshops here: [Flight Feather Productions](#)

Looking for a summer project?

I don't know if there's any data on this yet, but anecdotally, I've heard from some folks that as wonderful as it has been to perform with colleagues again, it's also been a bit of an adjustment to have to deal with nerves again after many months away.

So if you've been looking for a fun summer project, and would be interested in adding a few new practice and performance preparation tools to your teaching toolbox in advance of the fall semester, you may be interested in the upcoming series of live workshops, specifically for educators, that I'm running in June and July. Specifically, on Wednesdays – June 16, 23, 30, and July 14 and 21.

I'll show you how I present effective practice skills and strategies for managing nerves and getting into the zone to my own students. And there will be worksheets and activities you can "steal," small-group mastermind sessions, Q&A's, and perhaps a few random cat videos too. But all spread out in a manageable sort of way, so it doesn't get too overwhelming.

Teachers who have participated in this workshop series have reported seeing some pretty cool changes in

their students. Not just in terms of the level of their playing, but in their ability to experience a wee bit more joy and satisfaction in daily practice sessions as well.

If you're a tiny bit intrigued, you can see what they're saying, and get all the details here: [Performance Psych Essentials for Educators](#)

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