**Term 02**

**Lesson 02**

Would anyone like to talk about how your week with your sternum was?

Some answers:

* it was very intense and it was like a key moment that opened things…
* I found out that I needed to ground much more in the pelvis.
* I felt that it was a minimal movement and it made my pelvis rotate….
* It opened a space in my body but also in my life…it made my mind more free and I was more clear about what I want. And I observe during life and it really works for me, I know more about what I want…
* there was more clarity, I felt more supported by the centre area, and I felt rivers flowing in me and space opening and cracking
* talking about it, I start to feel that area..I have to go a bit more down in the sternum.. I realized that I should locate the point in the lower part of the sternum
* moving the sternum gave me access to the whole space and I felt the 3 dimensional space, before I was used that working with the chest meant that I have to open the chest in the front..but I now feel the depth and the space and even when I am in the kitchen, I feel it all the time actually
* I was usually feeling that I was moving with the chest out from the sternum… and when I connect with the point in the middle and lower part, I was feeling the volume and the elasticity between the chest and the pelvis, and more grounded I could feel the vertical space, much more space between those centres.
* I felt a huge resistance to go there, in my mind, thoughts that would drift me away, but insisting I managed to reach it, and an amazing sensation of space happened, the space expanded from within, and it stayed on. And I also relate to the grounding and I feel the weight really going down.

We will work the belly and the pelvis. It is connected to the lower point of the sternum, it is the next border. Before we go to that area I would like to invite you to do a little meditation. You can either meditate in stillness or do the surface caressing.

“What do you feel when you connect to the notion of touch”

Improvisation-meditation

Now you have time to write down some things, or to continue a little more to meditate.

Let’s see what came out from your short meditation. This question about touch merits long hours of meditation and years of experience, which you will have but we have to start from somewhere.

I would like us to listen to each other, and while listening stay connected to the sensation, try to feel what you hear from the other person. This is a practise that you will do with our clients. Rather than understanding what is said try to feel what you hear:

Pedro: Softness, feeling of surrendering, flow of energy, and information, there is a healing aspect toit, consciousness enlargement, vibration, exchange, wind.

Buse: touch is my issue, like my problem, my emptiness and my medicine, my solution, a little chaotic for me. Softness, too much softness makes me feel like I am not touching enough, I feel some chaotic situation for today.

Pavla: safety, borders, confirmation, colab for living, kind of communication connected with curiosity… then I was thinking about different kinds of touches.

Tomas: heat, care, communication, opening, relation to oneself to the space, something is working, acting, doing, I feel being in touch with something constantly, deepening structures, life itself being alive.

Eugenia: vulnerability, I have to learn to be soft with myself, nostalgia, the more I touch myself the body starts to be soft and warm, and I can explore more in the emotions and the sensations.

Lina: I feel met, my cells are firing, starting to dance and sing, my body reaches into the touch and the touch sinks to me, more space within, the perception is wider, bigger, my whole body is breathing, expanding and sinking and merging with the touch, I am merging into the tissues of my body, sense of fullness in my fingers, feet and body, I am sinking dropping and into sensing, an expansion of space and time, love , union, melting. liberation.

Katrin: goosebumps, softening, enjoying, confidence, as if all over my skin all sensors were opening, tenderness, I felt very female, very clear presence.

Steffen: touching the present moment, deeper awareness of the body, feeling connected to the other or to myself in the touch, softening, melting, flowing and opening to the sensations, crossing borders, dissolving borders, exchange and dialogue, took a long time to allow to get touched or touch myself.

Yigit: Touch as a reminder to release heavy burdens with tender support, I felt the warmth of it, and I could trust this warmth, by hiding I am closing, therefore I cannot receive, it is opening to receive and not close.

Eliska: I can be closer and closer to myself, I feel more safe, when I hold some emotions I feel during the touching I let it go, and emotions can go out, exploring and I can give love to myself.

Nisan: When I touch myself I feel the opposite movement which safely leads me, when I feel the opposition, I feel safer to go in my direction and let the direction change by itself. I feel the different parts that need different kinds of touch and touch makes me realise how much more space there is.

Elif: it is so intense even within few moments came to me so many things, first I felt like the longing for an embrace, the present warm embrace, then within this it was connected to some sadness, but it was alongside with the happiness of being there, the longing is the idealisation of what is missing but the present I was feeling the warmth and I could give it to myself, so there was this union beautiful. So these oppositions, what is idea, what is reality, what is presence, where is the mind and where is the body, so it all came together.

Beliz: touch is like the magic that we grow accustomed to , metaphor, the depth and the variety it has, it is like this fan with endless layers and it keeps opening up through time.

Katerina: There are a lot of things, I just want to share that it is for me communication, communication and communication.

Berrak: I feel how distant I am to myself, so I get closer as fast as it goes, so I move to myself during the touch, I feel warmth, welcome, safe, bigger. There is a space for my emotions to circulate whatever they may be at that very moment, I feel sensual and I feel the remains and rests of all taboos,of my history, all the shouldn'ts, must nots, all obstructing reactions, I feel consciously with every touch how I stepover them slowly.

Let’s stay in this zone and try to touch the inside. I would like you to connect again, with the lower point of your sternum. You can do it in sitting position, standing or lying position, and I would like you to interact that point with your belly muscles, starting from the diaphragm, until your pelvic floor. involving all of your abdominal muscles. Let them freely interact with the lower point of your sternum, and play with them. Observe how this influences the movement of your chest centre. Activate that area of the abdominals, move the belly muscles, try to reach into there, that part like a big egg.

Improvisation…

The belly muscles are extremely important in our work, and not only for belly dancers, but it is terribly relieving and nourishing and very healthy to activate that area, the belly muscles but also underneath and in between the organs, all that area where the visceral part is going on, where the going in and digesting and coming out is happening, and the life, and the constant movement, the part where we are in motion permanently. But most of the time we have a different relationship with our belly muscles. And most of our clients will have only one type of relation with their belly muscles: to make them strong, to shape them in order to look good. But the belly muscles have many different qualities and I believe that the real strength is strengthening but having access to the very deep ones, so that they will support us and give us strength, and softening and making more flexible the surface ones. Maybe like this they will not look beautiful, but it will make our life more pleasurable. It is important to have a soft belly, it is the complete opposite of what the society is telling us: have a flat belly, six packs…

I am talking about the softness of the tonus of the muscles. Afterwards if we put some layers of fat, is purely a matter of philosophy or aesthetics. but it is about the softness...You can be very skinny, have no fat at all and yet have very soft surface muscles. It is your relation with these muscles. or you can be more generous in tissue and have very strong internal belly muscles... I think that this is the aim. And one of the practises that I have experienced in this work, and not only because I have a belly dancer background, but also I have imported that technique to normal clients, when I work with softening the belly of my clients, their visceral life improves, they digest better, they feel better, and it has a good impact. At first it is difficult because we are not used to using them. It is not so easy to activate them, it all depends on youm because the experience of our belly is directly influenced by our history, by what we have experienced. Emotionally but also physically. When I gave birth Ihad a cesarean section, and it took me 3 years to connect to my belly, I could not relate the upper part to the lower part.

We all have a personal relationship to our belly. But we need to work on this relationship to our belly. Also it is one of the taboos, we don’t use our belly so much. A least in some cultures, and also the image taboo, is one of the strongest that influences us. And you will see in your clients als, the image that the belly has to be strong and held all the time. And from here come also problems of breathing, not being able to rest well, nestle well, merge (as Lina says) into yourself, all these things that make us feel better and also the pleasure. Remember when babies are upset, when you play with their bellies, they relax immediately, and so do we, except that we do not do it.

Would you like to share a little about how the belly influences the chest?

Pedro: I am speechless, it took me to shifting systems, it is frightening, and with the relaxing of the belly, my body is starting to trust other systems, there was so much holding. There is such a strong relationship, and how free I could move them in the chest and I was very grounded.

Yigit: physically I sense a suspension, but not two dimensional but three dimensional, I never thought that suspension can be soft. To feel the suspension…

Berrak: That area is the space from where we open to space and to the earth. The separation happened there.

Steffen: when I did the work on the chest last week, I found out that the belly was very much involved all the time, I could not move the chest without activating the belly muscles. It happens automatically, the belly supports or allows the chest movements.

Berrak: absolutely, but when we play with it more deliberately it opens to wider possibilities, but also in the sensations. So moving the belly muscles and thus moving with the whole volumes of the organs, including the lungs, the spine, should become a natural way of moving when we work on the three centres,and lso later on when we involve the arms and legs.

Eugenia: But when I do not involve the legs, because for me the legs and the hips are the base, if I don’t include everything, then I cannot work well with my belly. I feel the legs are very important. If the legs are abandoned then it is very difficult to move the body, because the legs make the connection to the earth, when I work in standing positions. When I am lying on the floor it is different but it doesn’t work if I do not activate the legs.

Berrak: That’s true but activating the legs doesn’t mean that you have to move them. ven when you are in the lying position when you work deliberately with the belly muscles, together with the lower part of the sternum, you will feel that your pelvic joint will start to move and the lges will rotate in and out and the hips will make a 8 movement. But now we need to be able to get there directly from the belly, and then the echoe goes into the legs and then on the arms. And the grounding is happening there. But the concentration of wanting to move even in the sitting positions, to have access to move your belly muscles no matter in which position you are. Because each one of us will move according to our habits. So try to do this exercise in different positions, sitting, lying, lying on your belly, on your back, and in standing position. You will see that it has a different impact. Because of the weight. But of course the legs are fundamental, because the weight falls through them.

Pedro: I felt that there was a difference, between activating the legs and allowing the energy to go through it, actually the thighs are not holding to keep the shape but they are relaxed, and it goes through the hamstrings, the relaxed state of the thighs allows the energy to go through. And if I relax them I can be there in my chest.

It is important to play with the belly muscles, in different qualities, breathing, contraction release, faster, slower, softer harder, expanding retracting. The capacity to allow oneself to play with the belly. I am going to show you.

Demonstration….

So we need to work with that, it is amazing, when you work like this, my pelvis is relaxed, my knees are relaxed, my legs are fully connected to the floor, they are active I feel the weight falling through my heels, I feel the pressure of the shifting that is happening in the sole of my feet, I feel a desire my pelvis to move but I know that I Will not move it and keep it still so that I will observe the chest and sternum, and also the head, which is moving slightly inside. When I do that even for a minute it creates incredible heat and you feel that you want to breathe more, or you wish to do certain things. It is liberating and it is healthy.

What contains all this is the next centre, the cradle the bassin the pelvis. This is the whole area that connects and creates possibilities of movement, that also give us a great sense of liberation of motion, emotions and lots of other things. The pelvis area. And now it is upto you to work a little bit.

**What is the pelvis for you, what is the history of your pelvis, how is it to connect to it?**

Technical question, in order to move my pelvis, if I do not do it from the belly muscles.. which part of the body needs to work in order to give motion to the pelvis?

Yigit: the knees and legs.

Knees are the first point, they give us the most flexibility in life. Blocked knees, blocked pelvis blocked everything. But also the ankles, the feet, the hip joint, the head of the femur and the rotation in the hip joint. All these parts. How you use your knees will change the way you will move your pelvis.

Improvisations: moving from the pelvis, incorporating all the experience… your new friend, the abdominals, the sternum, the chest. But this time the main character is your pelvis. your knees, your legs, your feet, the floor, the place from the solar plexus through the abdominals, widening through the pelvis to connect to the earth and the floor.  Keep the chest area alive but still, in order to give space to the pelvis… use the legs as you need but try not to travel and stay where you are.

it is a very interesting area, and I know that you all have a lot of knowledge about that area but we all have yet lots of things to let go, no matter how experienced we are, and also itis one of the biggest taboo areas, probably also to protect it, because it is a precious area, and maybe taboos were created to protect certain things, but they also prevent us to access them. So  we need to find our own access road, to get into that amazing, rich and powerful area. ifit is not connected consciously to the chest to head head to the legs, it will not work. ANd if we do not access it the rest will not work.

And it is lovely to work with it.

And the pelvis is also the centre where is our centre of gravity. Which if we just lower it one centimeter makes a whole change in our way of working. And the centre of gravity is between the pubic bone and the belly button.  inside there in the middle.

improvisation…

Obviously we will work on the pelvis this week, until the next lesson. pelvis and belly. you cannot exclude the belly. ALready now when we talk about these centres, you feel them three dimensional.

BEliz: it was wonderful to watch you, being in a playful mood it goes through your body and then being playful makes you play more, so it is a really nice loop. I think that playfulness is very important, and I think we should take playfulnes seriously. ANd one note, when we want to move the centre, the shoulders take over and just be careful not to let the shoulders lead you.

KAterina: It was very healing to watch all of you. The pelvis very often the place of our most traumas and really deep memories but also real great moments at the same time. When I work with my clients it is a very difficult area to move with and really move from there. It was great for me to see that you all are able to go there. It really is not easy and common to go there and start to move the pelvis, without working on it for months and years. I am very proud of you, that it is so easy for you.

Berrak: it is indeed very difficult work on the pelvis, because of all these traumas, you will see that when you will start working with people, but then maybe, you will understand the way how to work around the pelvis so that it will not become such an inaccessible area, you will see that a lot of the obstacles are mainly situated in the head and the memory of our body, and also the image of what we have of ourselves. so again we come back to the trust. How to make your client trust himself/herself, so that this person can really access a certain area. The pelvis and the chest are infinitely connected and they both have very precisely different feedback to give us. The sensations and feelings that your chest will give you are very different from the pelvis. And I think that you can feel that and it is visible. The good thing is if the chest is opening us to a very depth of sensation and emotion, most of the time connecting to our sadness. The pelvis, no matter our history, whenitis activated correctly will lead us to the sources of joy and relief, very basically and animally, if we allow that to happen.

So one week you and your pelvis.

Thank you very much.