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THE BABY KOALA BEAR

An original ATM lesson to improve your vision (and more), created by Daniela Picard
(Parts of this lesson may resemble other known ATMs, of course.)

Test Movements:

Please stand. Feel your overall comfort in standing.

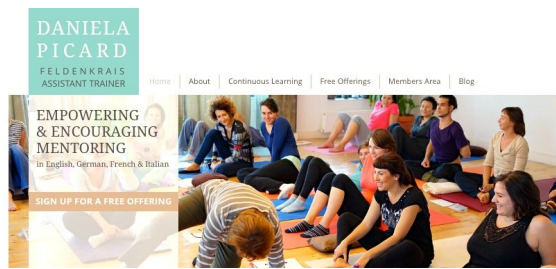
Shift your weight slowly onto one leg and then the other. How do you experience the movement of transitioning from one leg onto the other? How are you shifting the weight?

How comfortable do you feel on the right leg? On the left leg?

Turn to see the surrounding space on one side of you and then the other. Which side of the space that surrounds you is easier to bring into view?

Turn to see the right side of the space you are in *while bringing weight onto right leg*. Feel the movement in all of your 206 bones and related joints as you make this movement. What is the quality of that movement?

In this movement and those that follow, notice what you do with your feet as you shift your weight and turn. Do the soles of the feet remain completely on the floor or do you perhaps lift part of the foot as you move? Do the toes always point in the same direction or do you pivot



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one or both of your feet in some way? *Take note of this so that you can do the same thing at the end of the lesson in order to have a useful comparison.*

Again, investigate the quality of movement in turning to see the space to your right *while bringing your weight onto the right leg.*

Turn to see the right side of the space again, but this time bring your weight onto the left leg.

Turn to see the left side of the space, while bringing your weight onto the left leg.

Turn to see the left side of the space, but this time bring your weight onto the right leg.

As you try each of these variations, do you feel that sometimes you come closer to involving all 206 bones and sometimes not so much? What is the functional difference between bringing your weight onto one leg or the other when turning in the same direction?

What is the functional intention of each of these movements, what is the difference in what is expressed in each of the two variants?

Is it easier for you to see the space to the right when you bring your weight to the right leg or the left leg? Is it easier for you to see the space to the left when you bring your weight to the left leg or the right leg?

Scan:

Lie on your back.

Feel the overall sensation of your body. Which places in you seem closest to the surface of your attention, bolder and more present than the other places? Where is the image of yourself more blurry and unclear? Do some places feel as if they have more volume, as if they are a more reliable part of yourself? Are there other places that seem to have less volume, that feel less alive?

Bring your attention to your skull. Get a sense of its weight, shape and volume. Notice the jaw, the cavities of the mouth and the two eyes. Imagine for a moment that the interior of the skull is not what is described in anatomy books, but instead a hollow container of a single substance. Judging by your sense of the weight and density, would you be more likely to imagine that the



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head was filled with gravel, whip cream, honey, or open air? If it is not any of these, what substance would it be? How do you imagine the texture of the inside of the skull?

Roll your head left and right. On each side, notice if the head seems to want to look a little down towards the feet or a little up overhead. In other words, does the chin get closer to the chest or does it move further away? And, does it do the same thing on each side or two different things?

Rest your head in the middle. Pause.

Movements:

In this lesson, your eyes will have the opportunity to be refreshed by observing the joyful and playful movements of a miniature koala bear who has just discovered you lying here and mistakes your body for a jungle gym. He is a tiny Baby-Koala, only three inches long.

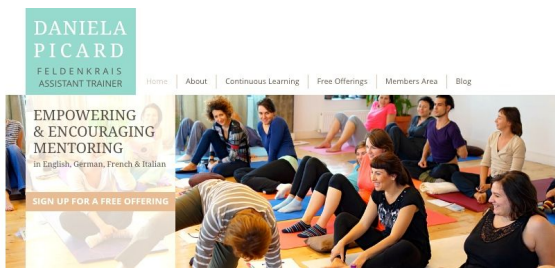
*You will watch the koala with **closed eyes**.*

Perhaps he looks something like this:



Do you like him?!

(If you do not, you must make a decision now to find a different creature or object that is capable of dynamic and interesting movement because your relationship to the image you visualize will impact your experience of this lesson. Another useful image might be a soft and



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magical paint brush that is capable of brushing any colors you wish over your body. The colors will only remain for a few seconds in each place where they are painted.

Since the directions will continue to describe a little koala - who sometimes carries a paint brush! - perhaps you will find that your relationship to this furry, little creature will evolve as the lesson unfolds . . . whatever ideas you may have about koalas, you can rest assured that this particular furry little creature wishes you no harm at all. He only wishes to be happy and play!).

The koala will be moving over the surface of your body. You will be able to feel him moving.

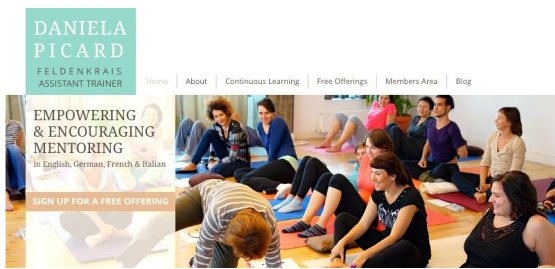
Now his tiny baby koala is perched on top of your right foot. Watch him with your **closed eyes**. Watch as he begins to investigate your right leg, slowly moving up your shin to your knee, then moves across the thigh to your hip joint. Notice how he sometimes pauses to sniff the air or peer down at the floor to the inside or outside of your leg.

Or if you haven't yet befriended our koala, perhaps you imagine a friend of yours is painting your leg with that soft and magical paint brush. Your friend paints all along your leg from your right foot up to the right hip joint, sometimes using long continuous strokes, sometimes adding a little extra dab in a place that that was missed. Each time that the brush reaches your hip joint, the color vanishes. Then your friend picks a new color and paints from the hip joint back to the foot. Again the color vanishes and your friend continues to paint up and down your leg, always experimenting with new colors.

The koala and your painter friend are both here to help you, so they both take care to adjust the speed of their movement to the comfort of your eyes - not too fast, not too slow, but just the speed that your eyes can follow along in a soft and easy way. Because you know this, your breath remains restful and peaceful at all times.

After the length of your leg has been visited three or four times by a koala or a paintbrush, allow yourself to rest and return to the sensation of how you relate to the surface you are resting on. Does something feel different?

After some time of resting, you notice a sensation near your right hip joint. What is it? Look with your **closed eyes**, so that you can see the tiny koala. He is glad you didn't fall asleep and begins to make faces as he softly pushes his paws into your low belly while making mischievous faces. He jumps onto your belly button and, finding it soft and springy, decides he will use it as his trampoline for a few joyful jumps. Then, turning his body sideways, he begins to roll from his



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back to his belly and onto his back again, moving diagonally up in the direction of your left shoulder. Obviously, he is showing off because he knows you are watching him!

(And if you aren't watching him, your friend with the paintbrush is playing similar games...)

Now that he has your attention, he turns again, and begins a new dance, heading back down in the direction of your right hip joint and then all the way down your leg to the foot. All the while he hops, rolls, shakes his head or stops to investigate a smell or an interesting wrinkle in your clothes that catches his eye. Sometime he loses his balance and takes a tumble onto the floor, but he always climbs back onto you and continues parade himself back and forth between your right foot and your left shoulder, playing like all babies do, and never getting tired.

Please rest. Perhaps you can still feel the path he has been following over the surface of your body, enlivened by the stimulation of his silly escapades.

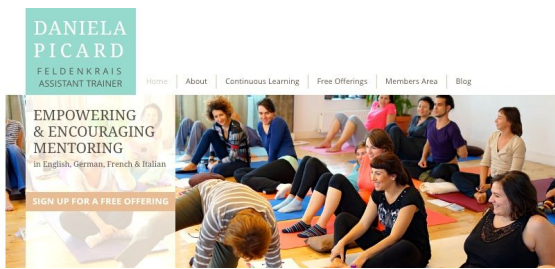
What is the sensation now in your skull? Do you remember the internal texture of the skull that you identified at the beginning of the lesson? Is the texture the same now as it was, or is it different?

How is your breathing now? Even when you turn your attention back to the little creature, take care that your breath retains the quality of resting.

The painter and the koala were taking a short nap also, but they have awoken again and have become interested in new corridors and pathways of your body as you continue to rest on the floor. The koala has even more energy now and would like to show you how high he can jump. He jumps now, as he celebrates the joy of movement in a bouncy, curvy and swirly line: from the right foot to the left foot, from the left foot to the right knee, from the right knee to the right foot, from the right foot to the left hip . . . from the left hip to your right hand lying near the body, from there to the left hand,, onto your nose, and back to one knee . . . just follow him as he jumps and notice how joyful he is.

Meanwhile your painter has discovered that this magical paint brush can also paint colorful strokes in the air that hang suspended there like carnival ribbon for a few moments before fading away. So sometimes these embellishments are also added to the painting, in addition to the strokes that are painted back and forth between those same places where the koala dances.

Whether it's the painter or the koala that you prefer, you follow all of these things with smiling closed, soft eyes and a relaxed breath.



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The next place they will visit is the path up and down your left arm, from your shoulder to your hand. Sometimes they touch the elbow and sometimes the air above it. As this happens, your arm is resting on the floor at your side. After some time, slide the arm up the floor so that it points straight out to the left (at shoulder height). After another brief time, move the arm somewhere comfortable above your head. The entire time continue to follow the movements of the koala or the painter.

Rest.

Are you ready? The koala wants to play again! And he has stolen your friend's paintbrush . . .

If you want to make him happy, bend your left knee and stand the left foot. Yes! Look how happy he is about something so simple! Because he is a baby, playing is the the only important thing and he immediately recognizes that you have crossed into his territory and joined in the game.

What game? He will show you!

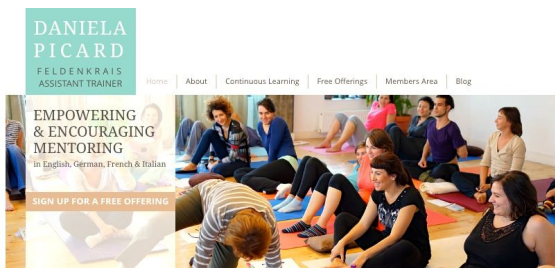
Holding the magical paintbrush in his mouth, the baby koala climbs from your left foot to the top of your knee, winks at you, then plunges forward, sliding down your thigh to the pelvis, painting the air as he goes.

Despite all the excitement, remember, your eyes are closed. Your breath is easy.

But it's too fun - he must do it again! So he scurries to the top of your knee again and looks at you expectantly. If you are willing to be infected by his complete dedication to having fun, then you will realize how delighted he will be if, each time he slides down your upper leg, you would be willing to slightly lift or lower the left side of your pelvis in order that he will land somewhere new each time. . . . sometimes near the right hip joint, sometimes near the lower ribs on the right, and eventually, propelling himself across your belly and chest all the way to the right armpit.

Take a rest and think about what life could be like if you were able to be just a little bit more like this koala, without worry, without prejudice and without the burden of being self-conscious.

Now wake up! He is ready to play again!



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The koala has discovered your right arm and crawls all over it, next to it, and even under it, nudging you until you lift the elbow, the wrist or whichever other place he wishes to go. Your arm is lying by your side -but keep him guessing: move it out to your side or up overhead, and then back down again, wherever you can place it comfortably for a few moments while the koala plays. But then change it again!

You will see, just these simple movements by you will inspire him to create new games, rolling, jumping, smiling, laughing, singing, sliding, dancing, and painting the air with the magical paintbrush!

Rest. Breathe.

Now lift the right arm just enough to create a slope that he can roll down from onto your collar bone. Change your shape again so that he will be carried up onto your right ear.

Are you still watching him? With closed eyes and a soft breath?!

Pay attention: Now he is rolling and dancing up and down your breast bone. Is your chest soft enough so he will feel that he will not be hurt if he loses his balance and falls?

Now he has found that you have some sweets in your left hand. They look delicious, but he has decided to save them for later. One at a time, he picks up a candy and then runs, slips, falls, gets up again, slips, slides, jumps, and zig-zags until he arrives at your right foot. He buries the candy in the ground somewhere nearby, then, many times over, he returns all the way back to your left hand, always playing to find more sweets to take back to bury it with the first one.

Don't forget that you can move the arm into different positions to give him surprises. You could even lift the left hand into the air so that he must climb up your forearm to collect his prize. Don't forget that you are still watching his every move through closed eyes and without quickening your breath. Sometimes this means, to make things simpler, that you will also move your head.

As he continues playing, the koala always moves back and forth between two places, but never moving in exactly the same way because he loves to create and invent.

If you look carefully, you will notice that he has found an eye patch and covered one eye to play pirate. With the eye that remains uncovered, he winks at you, suggesting that you could join in



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the game also. How? Just continue to follow his movements with **closed eyes**, but sometimes watch him only with your right eye, sometimes watch him only with your left eye.

Next he goes back and forth between the right foot to the right hand.

After a while he changes paths and goes back and forth between the *left* foot and the right hand.

Follow him with your eyes. See where else he goes . . . Breathe easily.

Now he is moving between the left foot and the the left hand.

Now he sees that your are ready to rest, but he wants to show you one last trick: if you are not too tired, just follow him for one more minute as he runs in circles all around you, above your head and then all way around below your feet. After every two or three passes he changes direction and runs the other way. And every so often, he jumps.

Rest. And . . .

Stand up.

Take a moment in standing to feel yourself without looking for anything in particular. Continue to breathe softly.

Review test movements:

Now, return to the movements you made at the beginning to see if the experience is different in any way.

Shift your weight from one leg to the other. Do you find that you are still clearly more stable on one leg or is it easier now to go in either direction?

Turn to see the space around you on one side and the other. Do you still have a clear preference to turn right or turn left? Or is it easier now to see both sides?

Make sure that your feet can move freely in the same way as they did at the beginning of the lesson. It is not necessary to keep the entire sole of both feet on the ground as you turn.



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When you turn to each side, do it twice, once as you bear your weight on the right foot and once as you bear your weight on the left foot. Can you think of different situations in your daily life when you might prefer each of these two ways of turning to the side? Is it easier for you to turn when you put the weight on the foot on the side where you are looking or the other foot? Does one of these two movements give you a clearer sense that every bone and joint in your body is participating?

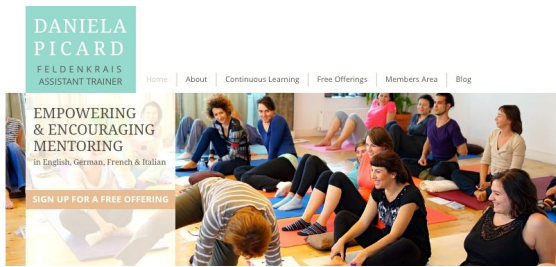
Walk around and see how you feel. Can you walk comfortably while looking up, down, left, right and any other direction?

Revisiting the lesson - variations:

If you found this lesson useful, you are invited to use the basic principles to develop further explorations that will expand your facility in moving the eyes in all possible directions. Your increased comfort with moving your eyes to look towards every corner of your environment will also make it easier for you to move all of your 206 bones and the joints that join them to move you in every possible direction.

Here are some suggestions for further variations:

- Do the ATM while lying on your front. If it helps you to be more comfortable, you can draw up one leg. You may place the arms in whatever position gives you the most comfort. The koala is just as adventurous as ever, but now he moves over the back surface of your body. With closed eyes, you will discover that it is actually possible to look backwards in many directions to follow his adventures. It is not important that he does all the same things on the left and right with perfect symmetry. It is only important that he moves in all possible directions and your eyes have the possibility to look in every direction.
- Do the ATM while lying on the side. You may lie only on one side for the entire lesson or spend half of the time on one side and half of the time on the other side. This time the koala will certainly notice some new bodily landmarks, including the side of your ribs, the outer edge of your leg from the heel to the greater trochanter, the side of the pelvis, the side of the head.
- You may do the lesson while sitting in a chair.



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This ATM was edited by Seth Dellinger,
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