

**LETTER TO A FRIGHTENED PERFORMER:  
HOW TO FREAK OUT AND PERFORM AT THE SAME TIME**

FM Alexander: “ Knowledge of the self is fundamental to all other knowledge”

There is a difference between the heightened excitement of performing and paralyzing fear. For many of us performers, real confidence in our craft did not come no matter how hard we studied, no matter how hard we worked. For many of us our training pushed us too fast, past what we could actually understand in an embodied way. We lost our access to the balance and coordination that was once natural to us as children. We understood the techniques of acting only “conceptually,” but were not actually able to do what we wanted to do – and we knew it. It scared us to be unable to do what we wanted to do. There are many reasons that this happens to highly skilled performers. No matter what the reason is, I know of no better solution for paralyzing fear, chronic patterns of injury, or lack of confidence, than the Alexander Technique.

I don’t mean to say that you will be free of fear while performing because that would be ridiculous, and no fun. What I mean to say is that you can learn how to work with it. It wasn’t until I really accepted my extreme sensitivity and anxiety that I was able to reliably perform and freak at the same time. I learned how to ground myself in my own experience and understanding of the material, and to let the audience into my world. I learned how to teach others to do this as well, with the shockingly simple Alexander principles of awareness, non-interference, and trusting in clear intention instead of trying to control future outcomes of action.

You are an individual, and the way you “work” is therefore unique. A lot of stuff about you is the same as other folks – you are a human being, after all – but you are also one-of-a-kind. Individual attention is therefore necessary to discover the relationship between what you are thinking, and what you are doing. An Alexander Teacher is one of the few educators that can help you discover for yourself this incredible connection between your inner self (your mind, your spirit, your dynamic range of energy and emotion) – and your “outer self” - your way of moving through the world and how you connect with and affect others.

Looking for a solution to paralyzing fear outside yourself is common, but not effective. The only thing you really have control over is SOME of what goes on inside your self. The Alexander Technique gives you a reliable way to establish and maintain balance, coordination, and control in all situations. A good teacher will connect you with your own inner sense of yourself even when you are freaking out! If this speaks to you, I urge you to find an Alexander Technique teacher near you and find out more about it.

To find teachers in the USA, go to: [www.amsatonline.org](http://www.amsatonline.org)