

What is called the motor nerve does, in fact, exist as a physical unit, but it does not serve to instigate the motion. It serves only to enable us to perceive the motion ourselves, to check up on it, to bring our own movement to consciousness.

Anthroposophy, Psychosophy, Pneumatosophy
Aka: Wisdom of Man, of the Soul and of the Spirit (GA/CW 115)

Ten years later, for teachers of the starting Waldorf School Rudolf Steiner in lecture 2 of his course puts it this way:

*All talk about a differentiation into sensory and motor nerves is, as I have often mentioned, nonsense. [...] **In perception and willing it is not so that something is led from a sensory to a motor nerve, but, rather, a spark jumps from one nerve to another in the brain and spinal cord and thereby touches our souls.** [...] Physiologists believe that they are on to something when they speak of sensory and motor nerves, but they are actually only playing with words. They speak of motor nerves because people cannot walk when certain nerves are damaged, for instance those in the legs. They say someone cannot walk because the nerves that set the legs in motion, the motor nerves, are paralyzed. In truth, that person cannot walk because he or she really cannot perceive his or her own legs.*

And he then adds an important message:

Our age has of necessity become lost in a series of errors so that we can have the opportunity to work our way through these errors and become free human beings.

The Foundations of Human Experience (GA/CW 293)
Stuttgart, August 22, 1919

In that same lecture Steiner indicates that the human being carries two Soul Forces: antipathy and sympathy.

We are not directly conscious of these two things, sympathy and antipathy, but they live in us unconsciously. They represent our feeling, which exists as a continuous rhythm of the interplay

between sympathy and antipathy. {...] Antipathy, goes in one direction, continuously transforming our soul life into a life of ideas. Sympathy goes in the other, transforming our soul life into what we know as our deeds of will.

When considering human movement we must not limit our gaze to the physical body, but must turn to the human will, to the calling forth of spatial movements by purely magical means.

Deeper insights into education (in: GA/CW 302a)
Stuttgart, October 16, 1923, evening

The other side of the breathing process is, of course, widely known: Inhaled oxygen combines with carbon in the body, after which carbon dioxide is exhaled. After the foregoing Rudolf Steiner explains how teachers can balance the cyanide processes of movement in their pedagogical practice.

Carbon has the tendency to form nitrogen compounds downward, but upward it has the tendency to form oxygen compounds.

Early alchemists called carbon the “stone of the wise,” which is nothing other than carbon fully understood.

*Upward it has the tendency to form oxygen compounds, acids, or oxides. These stimulate the thoughts, and whenever we vitally occupy a child we stimulate the formation of carbon compounds and therewith the activity of thinking. Whenever we guide children into some form of **action while they are thinking**, we call forth a state of balance between the formation of carbonic and cyanic acids. In human life everything actually depends upon producing symmetry between these two things.*

With this, Steiner indicates how pedagogical work can be compared to a healing process: the task of the teacher alongside the supporting role of the school physician. The upper human being (nervous-sensory system) balances the toxic effect of the lower human being (metabolic-limb system). Just having a class of children moving around is unhealthy. A thinking exercise, a sensory task, an image

that accompanies—in support of focusing on the movement exercise —all of this has a healing effect on the child and brings balance. Consider, for example, the unhealthy habit of having the class jump (a large rope turned by two) before the main lesson begins—most students stand around socializing as they wait for their turn to jump.

And with that, Rudolf Steiner refers to the words from his very first lecture to teachers on the task of pedagogy, to harmonize the relation between the upper human being and the lower human being:

The task of education, understood in a spiritual sense, is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the temporal body. They must be brought into harmony and they must be tuned to one another because when the child is born into the physical world they do not yet properly fit each other. The task of the teacher is to harmonize these two parts to one another.

The Foundations of Human Experience (GA/CW 293)
Lecture One - Stuttgart, August 21, 1919

Whereas the doctor brings into operation the therapeutic forces in the unconscious, in the rhythmic system of the blood circulation or the breathing, as teachers we must bring the next higher stage into operation: that which is connected with the activity in the nerves, in the senses. This is the next metamorphosis of the remedy.

Deeper insights into education (in: GA/CW 302a)
Stuttgart. October 16, 1923, afternoon
Forces Leading to Health and Illness in Education