

Balancing to Resolve the Moro Reflex

and its Effects on Learning, Behavior and Performance

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In a previous article I included information on how many academic and behavior issues have at their core the incomplete progression of childhood reflexes, and how effectively they can be resolved using Brain Gym, making huge shifts in the quality of life for people. Here is a story that illustrates one of the shifts that I experienced with a recent client.

Christine had always been awkward at sports, and was particularly afraid of catching balls, even ones tossed gently to her. As a child, this was a tremendous hindrance in school PE classes. She said she felt awkward and was often ridiculed by her peers. Now an adult, she had a group of friends who loved to spend time at the park playing Frisbee, but she always created excuses not to participate.

As Christine and I moved toward balancing for her goal of “easily and comfortably catching things” it became clear that the “Moro reflex” was still strongly “on” in her system. The Moro reflex develops in infants at 9 weeks in utero, and usually falls away somewhere between two and four months of life. The Moro reflex is a series of rapid movements made in response to sudden stimuli. When young infants are surprised, both arms swing out and upwards, opening the hands, and there is a sudden intake of breath, followed by momentary freeze and gradual return of the arms across the body into a clasp posture.

If the Moro reflex does not fall away when it should, one remains poised on the edge of “fight or flight” throughout the rest of their life. This can result in being very emotional, easily distracted,

physically timid, having low tolerance to change or stress, being either insecure or controlling (both a reaction to sense of fear), having auditory confusion, poor stamina, difficulty in reading, and much more.

I did a “cover check” of Christine’s eyes. I covered her right eye, had her look at a small object I was holding about two feet directly in front of her nose, then slowly brought the object in to a few inches from her nose. At that point I uncovered her right eye, and found that, rather than looking at the

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object, her right eye was looking out to the side, quite away from the object. The left eye behaved just the same when it was checked.

When we are in fight or flight, as those with Moro invariably are, the body’s eye muscles pull both eyes outward to the periphery of one’s vision, making it very challenging to focus on something in the center of one’s vision. People with Moro still “on” are much more likely to focus first on the blank border of a page of print, for example,

rather than on the print itself. (Needless to say, this makes reading very difficult, and tiring on the body.)

When I described this condition to Christine, she said, “That’s me! I have the hardest time remembering people I’ve met because I don’t really see their faces, I see just the outlines of their heads.” Of course she’d panic at an object coming right to the center of her field of vision, where her eyes had the hardest time seeing.

To do a quick precheck of her ability to catch an object, I gently tossed a small, soft pillow to her. Even though she told me she was ready she almost panicked, moving backward when it came her way, and nearly dropped it.

We moved forward with her balance, which included Dennison Laterality Repatterning, and several additional movements that specifically support the resolution of Moro reflex.

At the conclusion of her balance we repeated the “cover check” of her eyes, which showed considerable improvement. We also rechecked her ability to catch an object. When I gently tossed the pillow this time, Christine playfully moved toward it and easily caught it, with a big smile on her face. She said, “That was actually fun!”

That night I got a call from Christine. She said, “I’ve been having the most amazing time seeing people’s faces all day. And I can’t wait to play Frisbee with my friends!”

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