



The Pause

Markus G. Scott-Alexander

I am sitting on the balcony of my apartment in Saas-Fee, my home away from home for 12 of the 18 years that I have been with EGS, my international family. I am having a cup of verbena tea. There is a small plate of assorted treats. I gaze at the jagged mountain-tops and relax. I have enjoyed teaching this morning and feel content. I doze for a bit and awaken with enough time for a short walk.

This lovely time between classes holds it all. It is the time in which I feel the effect of my work with the students and the depth of tenderness with which I hold the community and the material of our learning. It is a time to be touched by how nourishing it all is.

Soon it is time for the afternoon session. There, in my classes, the pauses between explorations are also essential. Like the pause on the balcony, the time between activities is fundamental to the learning. We get to feel the effect of what we have done. These *pauses* help to set the tone for our dropping into the work. They create the frames for the work that occurs within them, something meaningful, purposeful and deeply playful.

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After a good “workout,” we are on to dinner. Again, here is a time to bracket what is occurring, a time to relax and look around at what we are creating. There is a space for collegiality



and some time to enjoy the impact of our work before we move on. We get to look at these faces that reflect a vast array of feelings in the midst of intense learning. During this dinner hour, ease and challenge are woven together by our actual experiences and show in our eyes. In what we see and how we see, we actively weave what is occurring in these intensive summers, making our gathering cohesive. With quiet, kind consideration for what might seem disjointed and chaotic, divergent meanings and purposes fall into a larger context than individual experience and, in this way, my quiet gaze on my balcony continues throughout the day.

In the evening classes, as energies wane a bit, I sometimes *open the door* to something potentially inviting, and I step aside, watch and listen. I invite taking time to experience the nurture in learning. I court the stillness and silences that come, particularly in the dance-oriented classes I teach where the rhythm of action and rest is essential: movement and dynamic pause. For a short while, silence offers an opportunity for this rich, complex and challenging gathering of learners to appreciate the abundance that exists within us and between us.

I am back on the balcony. It is close to 11 p.m. and the day is done. I take a long pause before going to sleep so that I can experience one of the loveliest times of day, a time when one day's efforts come to a close and thoughts of tomorrow open.

Idyllic? In many ways, yes. Yet the experience continues afterwards as I live the effect of the work here and now, pausing to write about what I love.



Markus G. Scott-Alexander came out of the 1960s New York City experimental theatre movement as a dance-theatre artist and is currently the Director of World Arts Organization (worldartsorg.com) in Edmonton, Canada, a cooperating training institute with EGS where he is senior faculty. Markus has been in private practice, teaching and facilitating dance-theatre-based expressive arts workshops through EXA Symposia and at EGS affiliate institutes since 1986.