

MLC Scotland

**Written by Jennifer Tingle, case study with Retained
Reflexes. With thanks to Ian McGowan**

MLC Scotland

The Movement and Learning Centre Scotland use specific exercises to get rid of Retained Reflexes that should have disappeared in early childhood.

I went to the Scottish Movement and Learning Centre in Bo’Ness from May 2010 until June 2011, so I was fifteen at the time.

I expected it to be a large, clinical building like a school or hospital, with lots of kids, staff and doctors. I was completely wrong. After briefly getting lost in the town of Bo’Ness, my mum parked in front of the local business centre. On the first floor were a few large office rooms. In the reception/waiting room the walls were hung with art and children’s drawings and two decorated ceramic plates with handprints and Thank-you messages painted on them.

On the back of the door was a big poster with a picture of an iceberg. Above the waves there was a small snowy triangle, but underneath the water was a massive chunk of ice, at least ten times bigger than the top. The slogan read: “Symptoms are misleading. We find the hidden cause”.

Ideally, this life-changing therapy could be paid for by the NHS. The problem is, few of them know about it yet. The solution is to tell as many people about it as possible, so please share this FREE download with anyone who you think could benefit from reading it!

The first time I saw Ian McGowan was in the MLC waiting room. He walked in with two giggling kids he'd just been working with. He was showing them a magic trick with a paper bag. He held it at arm's length and as they threw invisible balls, he made the bag snap as if real balls had landed inside it. They were delighted.

After showing them out with their parents, he introduced himself and took us next door to a large, carpeted room with a sofa, desk, computer and some windows. I liked Ian already, but he was a new person (something I found scary back then) so I sat quietly on the sofa and smiled politely, but probably didn't look like I wanted to be there. My mum did most of the talking.

Ian explained to us about Retained Reflexes and demonstrated what movements he wanted me to do to test for them. These were simple things like crawling, star jumps and moving your arms and legs in sequence while counting. I didn't do very well. The movement tests confirmed to him, as he said to my mum, (asking her to excuse his language) that I had a Cluster rhymes-with-duck of Retained Reflexes including a fully retained Moro Reflex. No wonder I was struggling with school and life in general!

Over the next few sessions Ian tested my fine motor control by getting me to copy a page of simple shapes and lines. I also did some basic intelligence tests on his computer to make sure I had no brain damage that could prevent the exercises he gave me from working.

When he saw my drawing, he jokingly asked "Did you photocopy that?" My motor control shouldn't have been that good with the Retained Reflexes I had. For the intelligence tests I scored above average for the first test, and for the second test I was in the 95th percentile for my age. Ian said that I probably have a powerful frontal cortex part of my brain, which is why, like the drawing I did, I could keep my balance if I really put my mind to it, but there were a lot of retained reflexes for my brain to override.

"You're an enigma inside of an enigma" Ian said.

He told me that a huge part of why I was always so tired was the sheer effort of working around my Retained Reflexes. Things that were automatic for

most people, like the coordination required for walking, were something I had to put thought into. That left very little energy for me to use at school.

Ian once likened MLC therapy to rearranging a messy room full of boxes. You had to take them all down off the shelves before putting them in the right order.

During MLC therapy, things got worse before they got better, particularly with the Moro Reflex. I was almost diving for cover when the toaster popped in the morning and having some of the scariest nightmares I can remember. On top of my fear of life, the universe and everything, school felt impossible to cope with.

But it was absolutely worth it.

After a few months something changed and I started sleeping through the night. The tables were turned on my nightmares. I still got bad dreams with monsters and scary people, but I always survived. If I had a dream where I fought for my life, I won. My subconscious wasn't working against me anymore. I stopped feeling scared at night. Sleeping wasn't scary anymore and I started my sixth and last year at school with a bit more energy.

Without the adrenaline of the Moro Reflex, and more constant energy levels, I didn't have nearly as many hyperactive spells. Nowadays I sometimes laugh hysterically, but only for a minute or so at a time. And it has to be because of something really funny.

After the Moro reflex, Ian got me doing exercises for the reflexes affecting my coordination and balance. Without the fear and anxiety of the Moro reflex, this transition wasn't so bad. Things seemed to stay the same until one day I realised that I was walking home from school without looking at my feet. Walking felt different. It was easy! Instead of having to think of every step separately, my body seemed to know what to do as if by magic. It was amazingly effortless. I just thought "I'll go over there", and my legs did it

without any conscious help from me. For the first time in my life I felt like I was properly inside of my body and it wanted to work with me.

Next came stairs.

One Saturday morning I went downstairs to get a snack. When I reached the kitchen, I realised that I hadn't needed to look at my feet or hold onto the banister. I'd gone down the stairs without even thinking about it!

I forgot about my snack and walked back up the stairs. It was amazingly easy. I walked back down, deliberately not looking at my feet. It was a little worrying at first, but I could feel where my feet were without having to see them, and I knew where they were in relation to the steps. This was amazing! I spent the next ten minutes walking then running up and down the stairs without looking at my feet or using the banisters and wall for balance. Like walking, my body just knew what to do!

When my parents came home, they didn't get a break before I was running down the stairs to find them, then pestering them to come and watch me run back up again.

I sent Ian an email to tell him about my amazing new skills. He was thrilled for me and challenged me to a race up the Business Centre stairs the next time I came to see him.

Ian and Jenny's race up the stairs

The rules:

- **No looking at your feet**
- **No holding onto the handrail**
 - **No shoving!**

Ian tried to cheat by playfully shoving me, but I got to the top faster than him!

Now that I could feel where my body was in space, and had a good sense of balance, I didn't fall over when I closed my eyes. I no longer needed to use my eyes to know that my feet were planted firmly on the floor. I felt like gravity was pushing me straight down to the ground instead of sideways, diagonally, or any which way it felt like.

No wonder I used to be scared of the dark- when I couldn't see, I had no sense of where I was!

With a normal sense of my body I was taking more care of myself. I had the unhappy revelation that stubbing your toe or bruising your shin actually feels quite bad, and I didn't want to do it again.

The Moro Reflex was gone, and I felt much more relaxed. I was sleeping well for the first time ever, and my balance and coordination were pretty good.

My hearing was still a problem but without the Moro Reflex, the worst of my overwhelming Bad Hearing Days were over.

I finally had the energy, health and confidence to start looking after my appearance. Until then my few attempts at make-up (green eye shadow and great-aunt lipstick) were not fantastic. My very long, very bushy, and very frazzled hair was used as something to hide in. When I felt scared I used to let it go over my face like drawing a pair of curtains over a window and peeped out at the world from behind it.

Now I had the fine motor control to put on mascara without the brush nearly taking my eye out and leaving brown smears on my nose. I got into the habit of actually brushing my hair every morning, and tried to do something with

it. My long hair kept getting in the way and some of its descriptions from other people were less than complementary. With it tucked back behind my ears I had “spaniel ears” of hair. In front of my face it was “witchy”. Eventually on the last day of term I was wearing it loose again and someone stuck gum in it. I thought to hell with this, and finally got a haircut.

When I went back to school, my hair no longer looked like I’d been electrocuted, and I bothered with some make up. The clothes I wore changed too. Before I went to see Ian, any clothes made from slightly stiff material like jeans felt like they were squashing me, no matter how baggy they were. I was so hypersensitive to touch that I didn’t like being hugged- I felt like I was going to be crushed. Anything other than joggers and loose t-shirts felt uncomfortable. Now I was realising that jeans weren’t so bad after all. In fact, they looked quite nice. I cleared out my wardrobe of all the baggy, plain, dull-coloured clothes I didn’t like anymore. It wasn’t that I just had more energy and was no longer over-sensitive to touch, I also wasn’t afraid of people noticing me anymore.

Previously, my clothes were deliberately chosen to not be noticeable. My plain-coloured t-shirts had no logo or design that would make anyone give me a second glance. I didn’t have energy to deal with people and I used to hate eye contact. When someone looked in my eyes it felt like they were looking right into me and that was scary. Instead of eye contact I used to just let my eyes flick everywhere around the person chatting to me, and I can see now that this probably made me difficult to talk to.

After going to the Movement and Learning Centre, this was no longer a problem because being looked at wasn’t scary anymore. I felt more confident with people I didn’t know and when I talked to them I could look in them in the eye. School still wasn’t easy, but it didn’t feel impossible anymore.

In June 2011, a year after my first trip to MLC Scotland, I had my final session with Ian.

He said that he almost didn't recognise me with my shorter hair and new confidence. I hadn't grown an inch since my last visit, but I looked taller because I wasn't hunching or looking at the ground to see my feet. I was very happy to see him and not too nervous to show it by giving him a real smile with eye-contact, something that had become normal for me.

As usual, he did some tests and watched as I did the exercises he'd taught me. Then he cheerfully told me that this was my last visit. As far as Retained Reflexes were concerned, I had a clean bill of health. My general health was also much better, which meant less days off sick from school. I was feeling more confident, sleeping well, my balance was grounded and everyday movement such as walking had never been so effortless.

I knew that life was feeling so much easier, but when Ian said with a grin that I now had normal coordination, balance and a fully-inhibited Moro Reflex, I could hardly believe it. He gave me and my mum a hug and we promised to keep in touch. Then I walked down the Bo'Ness Buisness Centre stairs for the last time.

In the passenger seat as my mum drove us home to Glasgow, I felt stunned. That was it. No more Retained Reflexes. My balance, coordination and stress levels were normal. Now that I was feeling so much better, I had the spare energy to start thinking about what I wanted and how I felt. Life had felt like such a struggle before. Besides school, I didn't do much. I just got through the day then went home. I hadn't really thought beyond that.

Ian and the Movement and Learning Centre gave me much more than my health, coordination and balance. They gave me a stable platform for life, and the opportunity to think, "What now?"