

FELDENKRAIS AUSTRALIA

Journal of the Australian Feldenkrais Guild Inc.

2023



**TIMING
ORIENTATION
MANIPULATION**



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Shona Lee

In the Feldenkrais Method, we look at Timing, Orientation and Manipulation as key elements that make up any action. If initially the language of those terms is a tad confusing, this edition of Feldenkrais Australia, our annual digital publication for practitioners, is a rich resource to clarify and highlight just how much is contained within each of these three ideas. In particular, the word Manipulation can carry loaded connotations that are quite removed from the meaning Moshe was drawing from when he used it. Catherine Hamber and Anna Yeatman share with us the depth of where this term comes from to offer a more holistic understanding of what it encompasses. Highlighting the importance of the language we use along with the layers of tone, intonation and gesture that determine how a message is received / perceived, Margaret Kaye has an article on how we communicate with clients and an invitation to continue this conversation further. Following on the thread of connecting by bringing in the element of timing, Ralph Hadden's article on pacing illustrates just how potent a simple concept can be. I share my own musings

on time and what can arise by not rushing. We finish this edition by flipping the traditional sequence of beginning with an 'orientation', we finish off with Zoran Kovich's substantive piece on Orienting in a Human World; an inspiring case study that I'd like to leave you with as the final take away.

There's a lot in this edition. Plenty of concepts that require long format communication - not snappy social media bites that we're now accustomed to receiving in the hurry of our modern pace of life. So please take your time to savour and digest it over a number of reads. The shaping of this edition took longer than my original timeline but is so much juicier for not rushing the process (I'm embodying my own lessons on timing in the collating process). I think it's my favourite edition as editor yet, with the coherence of each element towards the story of the whole. I'm humbled that I get to request contributions on the theme of my choosing and receive such quality offerings in response. Talk about curating your own continuing education! May you delight in what's within as much as I do; please t a k e y o u r t i m e to enjoy.

THE EDITOR

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ABOUT FELDENKRAIS AUSTRALIA

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Next issue is planned for 2024 on the theme of Integration. Contributions are invited.

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FEATURE : ON THE GROUND



WHAT DOES MOSHE FELDENKRAIS MEAN BY 'MANIPULATION'?

By Catherine Hamber and Anna Yeatman

Catherine Hamber (Sydney 4, 2003) is a Feldenkrais Method Practitioner and Assistant Trainer. She has a background in physiotherapy and with equestrian and equine athletes.

Anna Yeatman (Jeff Haller's Victoria 1 training in 2007) is a retired Feldenkrais practitioner who still offers a weekly zoom-based ATM class. She is also a retired academic and emeritus professor with Western Sydney University.

...manipulation—it means the way you organize your movement—in the human it means knowing what you are doing (Moshe Feldenkrais)

Introduction

As Feldenkrais practitioners we inherit a number of key terms from the founder of our method, Moshe Feldenkrais. One of these terms is 'manipulation'. The etymology of the word manipulation comes from the

Latin *manipulus*, the root of which is *manus* or hand. This set of associations is given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of manipulation:

The action or an act of manipulating something; handling; dexterity. Also (occasionally): the making of hand motions.

For reasons we discuss, Moshe emphasized this semantic connection between manipulation and how skilfully we (Feldenkrais practitioners) use our hands. He would have agreed with Bronowski's (1973, 115) proposition that:

The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation... The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.

One of the benefits of studying especially the transcripts (and not just the recordings) of the Trainings that Feldenkrais offered is that it gives us time to take in and ponder his statements which can be somewhat

rambling, elliptical, and suggestive. His mode of talking is that of story-telling and, while in this mode he calls on the relevant science of the thing, he does not offer a conceptually explicit and logically ordered exposition of the science. As we shall suggest it is in the nature of the material with which Feldenkrais is working to defy the linear and logical exposition of a concept because he wants how we think about our possibilities for more refined and autonomous agency to be informed by experience.

So, when in our San Francisco Training Study Group, we encountered Feldenkrais talking about manipulation, we both became aware that maybe our prior understanding of this term was not adequate and that something very interesting and exciting is going on with how he uses this term there. As we shall show in a moment, he identifies 'manipulation' with the human capacity for self-organization, and specifically, with a learnt capacity for the ongoing refinement of this capacity for self-organization. In this respect, and in relation to the other components of human agency that Moshe Feldenkrais identifies (orientation in space and time, thinking, moving, feeling and sensing), it is manipulation, understood as 'the way of performing

the thing', that seems to be the integrative dimension of such agency.

As we have suggested, Feldenkrais's use of ideas or concepts such as manipulation, and indeed, more broadly his engagement with words, is complex because he insistently refuses to stay with what Iain McGilchrist calls Left-hemisphere cortical processes of using words (language) in the form of linear-sequential chains of logical reasoning (what a modern culture calls rationality). Instead, Feldenkrais wants to use ideas and words (the form in which ideas are expressed) always in relation to what McGilchrist calls Right-hemisphere cortical processes of embodied experiencing. So, when Feldenkrais introduces his students at a training to the ideas that constitute the Feldenkrais Method he always does so in relation to facilitating in the students experience of how these ideas materialize in their embodied agency. This is where his phrase 'I make the abstract concrete' lands. Put another way, Feldenkrais never talks about aspects of the method without, simultaneously, inviting his students to experience what he means. To call on McGilchrist again, it is as though Feldenkrais is working the integrative seam between Left-brain

verbal-conceptual-rational modes of thinking and Right-brain embodied-experiential modes of thinking but with an emphasis on the importance of the latter leading the former. Once we appreciate this it becomes clear why his 'talks' are so suggestive, elliptical and non-linear. And it becomes easier to understand why he wants to sustain the semantic relationship between the idea of manipulation and the refinement of our skills in using our hands in working with our clients. Of course, as we know, when we come into an embodied-experiential relationship with our clients, it is not just our hands that are involved in this relationship, but it is true to say that in our method our primary way of listening to the self-organizing processes of our client is through how we use our hands to come into connection with them. This is why on the first morning of year one in the San Francisco Training (Feldenkrais 1975a, 1), Feldenkrais begins with: 'touch the person with the hands.' In what he goes on to say, he metaphorically compares how we use our hands to how the octopus manifests its intelligence in its tentacles, a wonderful metaphor that encourages us to sensitively use our hands and arms as tentacles in relation to the person we are working with:

...what we actually do is what we call Functional Integration. That means we join the two bodies, the tentacles, so that there is a communication between the two on a subliminal level: that means non-verbal level: that means ... your hands and the hands of the person with whom you work do two things.

He goes onto say that the first of these two things is the facilitation of a higher level of self-organization: 'you convey [to] him a change that he will make in himself,' an 'opportunity of learning what he didn't learn before':

Your direction does not come because you order, because you control the person; only you convey [to] him a change that he will make in himself-- and that's why it's not teaching. We present him with an opportunity of learning what he didn't learn before.

The second thing is his awareness that such new learning is actually possible by engaging in an ongoing practice of increasingly refined self-organization. Feldenkrais finishes this set of comments with: 'So with the hands we help the person' (all preceding quotes from Feldenkrais 1975a, 1).

Manipulation as 'the way you organize your movement'

Later in that same morning session beginning day one of the San Francisco Training, Feldenkrais says that 'any human action has two main structural things': manipulation and orientation. He goes on:

Orientation means both in space and time, and manipulation means the way of performing the thing. Any act must have all those three ingredients (Feldenkrais 1975a, 6).

These three are well known to practitioners as TOM (timing, orientation, manipulation).

He (1975a, 6) then says that 'orientation is just as important as manipulation.' And further that these three ingredients 'must be harmoniously connected, otherwise it [the act of the person] won't work.'

Because each ingredient is as crucial as the other two, the linear ordering of things in speech does not capture this truth.

He continues to elaborate and suggests that orientation and manipulation also involve what he calls 'action'. Action as he conceives it involves four components: thinking, feeling, sensing and moving. Just as with orientation and manipulation these four components or

dimensions are equally important and inseparable. It is only in the sequential syntactical ordering of language that we conceptually separate these dimensions, and in putting one first, seem to imply that it is more important than the others. But: 'you cannot do a thing without bringing all those things together...they never happen separately (Feldenkrais 1975c, 81).'

It turns out, then, that human action/agency has seven components or dimensions: timing and spatial orientation; manipulation; thinking; moving; sensing; and feeling. No one of these is more important than the others. However, if these components are distinct, it is because they play differentiated roles within human agency. Once we are able to differentiate these dimensions of our agency, we can then pay attention to them in such a way that enables us to refine how we bring them into play. This is 'awareness through movement'.

What, then, is the differentiated role of manipulation in relation to the other six components of action? Manipulation turns out to be 'the way you organize your movement':

But you can see that thinking, feeling, sensing, moving, connecting time, and space, and manipulation—it means the way you organize your

movement—in the human it means knowing what you are doing. Those are seven things that, when we make any act, whether we know it or we don't, they are all one (Feldenkrais 1975c, 81).

Does this mean then that if we *become aware of how we are thinking, feeling, sensing, moving, 'connecting time and space', then we can improve and refine how we organize our entire self for movement?* Does this mean then that 'manipulation' involves the whole self in moving, that it is a capacity for self-organization that improves with awareness, and that its essential role is one of integrating the other six dimensions of human action or agency? If this is so it would explain why Feldenkrais suggests that our capacity for manipulation is bound up with our self-image: 'We act in accordance with our self-image' (Feldenkrais 1980b, 3):

Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks and feels in a different way, each according to the image of himself that he has built up over the years. In order to change our mode of action we must change the image of ourselves that we carry within us ...Such a change involves not only a change in our self-image, but a change in the nature of our motivations, and the mobilization of all the parts of the body concerned (Feldenkrais 1980b 10).

Manipulation as self-organization

If manipulation and its degree of refinement concerns our self-image, 'the dynamics of our personal action' (Feldenkrais 1980, 10), it makes sense that Feldenkrais emphasizes over and over again that no one other than the person concerned can organize their movement. It follows that the practitioner must not try to re-organize the person:

... we are not going to reorganize the chap, we are not going to do anything to cure him or straighten his back or correct his posture--all these things, he should do, not you. You can only make him aware of those means to achieve those things, that he can't find himself (Feldenkrais 1975b, 89).

So how does the Feldenkrais practitioner facilitate and enable such awareness? The Feldenkrais practitioner offers an experiential body schema that enables the person to become aware in practice of the seven dimensions of her action. This offer is made through touch and/or through the prosody and tonal quality of the practitioner's voice in offering both content (the *what* of a functional awareness through movement lesson) and guidance of *how* the person attends to herself in the course of doing the lesson. Such guidance directs the person to attend to herself in such

a way that she becomes more aware of how she thinks, feels, senses, moves, orients in space and time, *and thus, how she organizes her entire self for movement.*

Here we can see why Feldenkrais says that manipulation, understood as the capacity to organize yourself, is directly linked to the human ability to 'know what you are doing'. He differentiates the human capacity for self-organization from that of the other great apes because of the complex development of the human cerebral cortex which gives the human the capacity for ongoing and endless self-refinement:

And what I want to show you now is that any act must have a manipulative part which is that particular mental direction of the body which comes not from the lower centers but from the motor cortex (Feldenkrais 1975c).

Manipulation is something distinct from the organism's capacity to use inbuilt reflexes for re-establishing balance as in the reflex action of saving oneself when slipping on a banana skin. Such reflex action is automatic, and it is not susceptible of refinement and improvement through conscious awareness:

Now you don't know how you right yourself. Nobody does. It's only after that we know that we

did right ourselves. ...there are very old structures in the brain for very fast movement... (Feldenkrais 1975c, 76)

These are functions related to survival and protection for life that operate below the level of awareness and which we share with other primates. However, if we engage in the practice of improving our manipulation this informs the quality of our entire organic functioning so that, for example, our ability to fall without injuring ourselves improves.

Manipulation and the skill of our hands

It is because manipulation is directly linked to cortical processes of awareness that enable continuous refinement of action that in the San Francisco Training Moshe emphasizes the link between manipulation and the evolutionary development of the human hand which is capable of extraordinarily fine somatosensory and motor skills. This is not just an academic point. He is wanting to emphasize to the students in the Training that how they cultivate and grow the fine somatosensory and motor capacities of their hands will make all the difference in how they offer lessons.

...when we talk about manipulation, it's an idiotic word because manipulation means only with the hand... Manipulation, you would think, is a question of acting with the hand. But there is an

enormous difference between acting with the hand by a human being, or even a primate even the most developed primates (Feldenkrais 1975c, 75).

It is in this context that he shares the idea of the homunculus:

...when you come to that part which is manipulative, which we call manipulation... it has nothing to do with strength. It has to do with skill. And our hand has - it is the finer, the most delicate muscles that we can and the most delicate movement we can do is with the tips of the fingers.....and the thumb for instance on the homunculus, on the motor cortex, occupies an area on an adult which is about five times the area of the legs (Feldenkrais 1975c, 77).

The homunculus was an idea offered by Wilber Penfield (1891-1976) in indicating the area of the human cortex that is dedicated to somatosensory and motor functions. It is known as the homunculus as it has features of a



human figure. The relative size of each body part in the homunculus shows its relative functional significance in our capacity to organize ourselves for action. The area for the hand in the sensory motor cortex of the cerebrum is huge then compared with, say, the thigh.

More recent discoveries in neuroscience revise any suggestion of the homunculus idea that these body parts operate independently of each other. Moreover, some parts such as the hand, foot and mouth have a connective role to play: 'The classic homunculus is interrupted by regions with distinct connectivity, structure and function, alternating with effector-specific (foot, hand, and mouth) areas (Gordon et al 2023, 351).' Perhaps, in linking the hand to manipulation understood as the integrative agency of self-organization, it was precisely this point that Moshe Feldenkrais wanted to make. He suggested that manipulation is not just an action of the hand, it has 'particular mental direction of the body which comes not from the lower centers but from the motor cortex.'

Attention is central to manipulation:

'The manipulative part is the part of knowing what you do in movement'

In the Feldenkrais Method whether and how we pay attention are paramount. The key to opening up new possibilities and refinement of self-organization is

'attention'. It is in how we give attention, and to what, that we open up the gateway to doing something other than habitual patterns of self-organization and, also, to conscious 'aha's' about how we may move more easily and elegantly.

In a Functional Integration lesson, as practitioners-- our attention guides how we lead into and follow out a lesson. We observe in our client how she engages in a functional movement, a useful action in her everyday world. We notice how easy it is for her, how clearly it fits her intention and how satisfied she is with the quality of her movement. Then we create a scenario in which to delve into more granular details. We then chunk down what we observe. That means we divide it into simpler and smaller components: clarifying the quality, ease and flow of each component, the path through space taken by parts of the body and the sequence of the components as they come together within an entire pattern of movement that engages the whole person.

We choose what to 'foreground' in a process of spotlighting a part or quality of the movement pattern under investigation. We may choose to foreground breathing and how this major function is integrated. Or muscular effort, or the way the movement passes through the skeleton. We use maps, that guide the

process of working with the client, and help us plan our path of engagement with the existing patterns of self-organization, including as they do not just a somatic but also an emotional- inner landscape, of the client.

Feldenkrais proposes that the quality of self-organization is profoundly dependent on us learning to pay attention to how we 'do'. If self-organization is to have the quality of harmonious connection or integration of all the components of action it is because we have learnt to not just pay attention to how we do, but also to refine the practice of how we pay attention:

Therefore in each act, whatever you learn, unless you pay attention, you become aware of your body, how it's oriented, and you pay attention to the orientation in space and in time and manipulation - all the three ingredients of action must be harmoniously connected, otherwise it won't work (Feldenkrais 1975a, 6).

It is attention, that in enabling us to know how we do something, opens up the possibilities of choice. A freedom of choice is what makes the practice of continuous refinement of our action worthwhile: if I know how I do, then I can do what I want; is a point that Moshe makes many times.

Paying attention through how we use our hands

Imagining in sensation, our arms and hands as two octopus tentacles gives us a feeling of increased sensitivity and connection. Quality and attitude of touch encompasses our own self-use in the communication between our nervous system and that of the client.

Not only do our hands express our self-organization, not only do they gather information about the client's self-organization, they also share our feelings of care and nurture. Becoming aware of how our hands express our emotional orientation, our intention, and our self-organization in working with our clients gives us super-powers!

Our clients sense the difference in how we use our hands between an attitude of invitation, kindness, friendship, curiosity, or apprehension, blocking, tension. Our hands express what and how we are thinking and provide a mode of thought that is more sensory than verbal, and more dynamic than a static image. Our hands articulate the state of both our central and autonomic nervous systems in communication with those of the client.

Here it is useful to call on McGilchrist's schema that contrasts how the Left and Right hemispheres of the

brain operate. Physiotherapy, for instance, like other western medical health sciences, was inspired by the early 20th century reductionist model which tends to be a left-hemispheric cognitive orientation, although current practice now encourages a more functional approach. From its inception, the Feldenkrais Method operated in terms of the relationality of the whole living system of a person. It is oriented to a dynamic, evolving whole, and the art of functional integration is to find a path for an enacted pattern of whole self-use that is somatically and emotionally more functional than the habitual pattern(s). Where the physiotherapist invites her client to become more skilled in managing and controlling her 'body' (or, more accurately, her body parts), the Feldenkrais practitioner invites her client to become aware that (as McGilchrist 2021, 17, puts it) attention changes the world, in this case the world of herself as a complex, dynamic, living whole in constant interaction with its environment.

To be sure, Feldenkrais and the Method he offers incorporates the detailed mapping of the human body that is offered in anatomy, neuroscience, and physiology, and to this degree, our practice is a Left-hemispheric cortical activity. But as we have said already, while such knowledge informs our practice, it

is the experiential dimensions of our practice as they bring into play how we engage all seven dimensions of agency that are the key to our work. And it is how we use our hands that brings together those scientific maps, our capacity to listen or attend to, our emotional receptivity and expressivity, and our somatic awareness. Stanley Keleman (2014, 2) eloquently conjures just how the hands do this:

The hand is a cueing organ that teaches the cortex via the tactility and kinesthesia of motor action. The hand is a small body in dialogue with the cortex and has an important relationship of self-knowing that cues action.

Our practice, then, is a predominantly Right-hemispheric cortical activity. And this is why we may have difficulty offering a clear account of just what we did and why in a session with a client. We can say what we intended by way of meeting the client in functional terms but as far as the sensory, intuitive, non-linear processes of the lesson we may have difficulty offering a verbal narrative of what we did and why. Of course, this is why Trainees and Practitioners are invited to directly observe and 'feel' a practitioner giving a Functional Integration lesson. Moshe discusses his process in FI in the Amherst Training Program: '... it's a feeling. I can only afterwards reconstruct the

reason. It's like an intuition. You can find how you worked in order to get to the final result without thinking of the details (Feldenkrais 1981a, 4).'

Our ability to directly access Feldenkrais's Amherst Evening FI Series through the video recordings offers us an extraordinarily rich resource. Of her study of these lessons shared with a group of curious practitioners, Catherine comments: I have always been drawn to the way Dr Feldenkrais' fingers and hands gently probe and question the client, nonverbally through their tissues. He seeks to clarify what is, the local relationships and anatomy but contextualizes these explorations in relationship to the client's whole embodied living system and lived experience. Catherine further comments of her processes of researching and thinking about Moshe's idea of manipulation in relation to her own practice, and in conversation with other sources and colleagues: my action has become more intuitive, which to me means it is based on knowledge from many spheres and also appears in my hands as I work in FI, or in my teaching verbally, as I find diverse descriptions, and examples and introduce new variations and games to clarify a concept.

To conclude...

Our intention has been to open up the idea of manipulation as Moshe uses it, and to take it out of what tends to be our way of using 'Feldenkrais-speak': to use key words without thinking about what they mean, and so denying ourselves insight into the powerful and imaginative invitation to engage in human maturation that Moshe makes to us. If the quality of self-organization matters, it matters because we can endlessly refine this quality and in so doing become both more mature and more free. What these terms (maturation and freedom) mean is a whole other discussion but perhaps at this point we can remember what Moshe said of 'improvement':

...to achieve optimal function while growing there must be continuous change in the direction of improvement.

...the complexity of this process [of change] is so great that failure to achieve is inherent. In ordinary conditions, it is very rare to find the optimum in structure, form, and function. Dysfunction in movement, regressions, and partial development are to be expected. This generality makes it possible to help normal individuals achieve the optimal development which they would otherwise fail to do (Feldenkrais 1981b, 16).

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COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS: HOW TO TALK AND OTHER STUFF

By Margaret Kaye Assistant Trainer, Bones For Life Teacher, and mentor

Margaret Kaye (Melbourne 1, 1991) runs an active practice, specialising in working with chronic overuse injuries and performers (actors / musicians / athletes). She has taught in many tertiary educational institutions such as the AIM and NIDA, is an Assistant Trainer and mentors new-er practitioners. She's about to run a continuation of The Aware Actor course with her Shakespeare actor co-presenter, and a retreat in the Blue Mountains.

“There are no teachers ... there are only people learning and people learning how to facilitate learning.” MF

(..) in this lies **the importance of that way of teaching**. Because you can see, it's not enforcing neither my opinion, nor my will, nor my preference on anybody. **It's only giving you the freedom of choice and giving you the freedom of distinction**—the ability to distinguish, to differentiate and do the way you wish. That's your business. Therefore, to my mind, this is the only way of teaching. It doesn't matter what you teach,

*but the attitude for teaching should be like that. Otherwise it's not teaching—it's brainwashing.**

***The San Francisco Training (1975-1977)** June 19, 1975 – Day 4, week 1: Thursday afternoon

How can we best communicate with our clients? Verbal communication is a big part of being a Feldenkrais Practitioner (teacher). From our greetings, to our explanations, to our movement suggestions, we use vocal interaction. Of course, in a Functional Integration context our communication is (potentially) more about interactive touch, which is a critical sensory pathway; but so too is language. Even when there are language constraints, such as being with someone who is non-verbal, or hard of hearing, or speaks a different language, the auditory cues we convey are critical to the relationship.

Now as you read this, I anticipate there will be an internal conversation going on in your head, of which some will be: 'Yeah I know all this stuff.' Phew, I hope so! But there may be something new here for you and if so then you have learnt something. As Moshe said

– if you learn one thing, then you've learnt something. (Referring to people doing Awareness Through Movement lessons, but also applies to reading an article.)

Each word, each phrase, each sentence, and the way it is conveyed, has **meaning that will be processed by the person/people according to their interpretation**. The interplay between this and tone and gesture will be the difference between how learning takes place.

It also manifests a distinctive quality of the relationship that is built, including the element of trust and emotional expression.

Discussion about the language we use is not something we necessarily learnt in my training. And whilst I have no specific education in this aspect of our work, I do have many years of experience, not only in teaching but also in learning. This article is based upon my experience of conveying new or renewed information to people and how, or if, they soak it up.

The dynamic process that occurs when we communicate with our clients will obviously differ depending on whether we are teaching an ATM or an FI. There, I just did it: I used an abbreviation to explain what I was about to talk about, making the

COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS HOW TO TALK AND OTHER STUFF

By Margaret Kaye Assistant Trainer, Bones For Life Teacher, and mentor

assumption that you know what it is. Perhaps we could describe the full words first. Even in the context of the verbalising in an article, I have presumed you understand the two main processes by which we teach. So, on that point, let's talk about how we convey information in an Awareness Through Movement lesson.

'Please bring your feet to standing.' The request using the word please means you are being polite, but it also changes the tone of the instruction from a demand to a request. This doesn't mean you have to use that word every time, but it sets an environment of politeness and respect. The other issue is the clarity of the description, which may mean to some that from a lying down position they are expected to come to standing. Clarity is the key and so we may add a phrase such as: *'...so your knees are bent towards the ceiling.'*

An acknowledgement of people's different learning styles is key to engaging with different or preferred learning patterns. Personally, I became disengaged at times, or disassociated during my Feldenkrais training. This was my first intense immersive engagement in this method. Sometimes the choice to stop, not listen, or blank out, was due to the styles of language or tone. Sometimes I was unclear as to why. I undertook

counselling in the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) methodology and lo and behold, I discovered something new.

Before I tell you what it was, notice I just told you a brief story to pique your interest! **What stories can you find that will engage your audience while being on topic?**

The basic premise of NLP (acronym provided, now you know what it stands for) is that there are different learning styles, of which you may have a preferred inclination. While we are taught in school that we have five primary sensory skills: sound, taste, touch, sight and smell, there are many versions that describe more. So we have people who are more inclined to learn more if they have visual input, auditory, kinaesthetic experiences, or by touch / doing and scent. Having one preference doesn't mean the others are excluded. I know I am the kind of person that loves to have someone explain so I can hear, but also have a visual reference, such as a diagram. Then actually engaging in a process such as handling a pan or writing on paper will allow me to recall something even more readily.

This is not to say that you can't learn new styles, such as kinaesthetic and proprioceptive attention and

awareness; as is our primary way of engaging with people in our methodology.

Before I explain further, let's try something.

Read this list first, before trying all of it with your eyes closed, as you think about:

1. Looking at something you like.
2. A satisfying smell; maybe roses, or your favourite gum tree.
3. The taste of chocolate.
4. The sound of the ocean or your favourite music.
5. The sensation of a physical thing such as velvet or cactus, or the wind on your skin.

How did your eyes travel whilst going through the above instructions?

Check again and notice if your eyes travel differently as you imagine these sensory inputs. These are called Eye Accessing Cues, indicating which representational system is being used.

I know when I imagine the scent of something my eyes will travel in different directions to how they travel when I perceive in my mind the sound of the ocean. The recognition of these characteristics actually

COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS HOW TO TALK AND OTHER STUFF

By Margaret Kaye Assistant Trainer, Bones For Life Teacher, and mentor

changed my life. I was able to be conscious of what had been my unconscious patterning, and thus change it.

What's this got to do with how we talk? Well, if I constantly use the language of visuals then this may engage my visual sensory pathways and not engage my primary focus of learning. 'Now see if you feel differently.' 'Now as you lie on your back see if there are any changes.' So, do I use my eyes in the visual pathways or do I refer to the sensory input that we are inviting people to engage? Here's a different version: 'Now as you rest can you **feel** any differences?' 'Do you sense any changes?'

A Google search about the variety of senses we have shows there are various versions beyond the five basics.

Vestibular: perception of body position and movement: eg balance

Proprioception: keeps track of where our body parts are in space. ie your surroundings relative to yourself. Kinesthetic: is often used interchangeably with proprioception - but the first is considered more behavioural, while the second is considered more cognitive.

You can learn more about this here: jackwestin.com.

We access all of these different levels depending on who we are and how our brain is functioning. So when we give an **Awareness Through Movement lesson (ATM)** and say – *can you see how..* it potentially triggers visual stimuli, which may potentially be external as opposed to our internal or relationship to self and environment. Feldenkrais used this terminology himself on occasion but primarily used the language of sensation. I like to explain that we are building a skill set that may have been declining as an attribute for many years. From school we are told to 'sit still', even though we have spent years interacting with our environment through movement and sensation. We are taught to ignore our motivation to shuffle and gesticulate whilst processing and expressing. So when we are teaching our work, it is as if you were a musician learning to hear music, but it's the music of the body.

Mutual Respect in the Learning Environment

If our inclination is to correct someone or define how they must do an action, that suggests a power interplay that is uneven. While we may wish to express our knowledge and skills in the human capacity, and even be admired for this, the approach of suggesting another way and setting up an exploration invites the notion of possibilities.

Words like 'should' and 'must' impose an authoritative inclination, at the expense of the freedom of exploration. For example: 'Now I want you to..' (client thinks: ok boss). This defines the action as YOUR choice not THEIR decision. How could we reframe that?

Perhaps something like: 'If you'd like to explore further / there's another way we could approach this movement/' (client thinks: What?! I have to decide for myself! Oh, I have authority over myself....I can rest and not go on.... Etc.)

Socially we are so trained to follow instructions the 'correct way'. Colouring how we process instructions 'I'm doing it wrong'. So addressing this commonality by reiterating 'There's no right or wrong here, you can do it how you like - it's about exploration.' We are here to teach them how, not what. Suggestions to deliberately get it wrong, be awkward, mess up the rhythm, hold the breath, frown, don't coordinate the limbs, offer memorable learning! As noted by Abraham Mansbach in his new book *The Feldenkrais Method Power of Self-Transformation*:

'The Feldenkrais Method does not offer a model of how each movement should exactly and unerringly be made. Instructions given in the lessons are not

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orders to move according to some prototype or in a very precise way, as in gymnastics. p 15.*

In his book *Awareness Through Movement* Moshe Feldenkrais explains under the title on page 58 **To understand movement, we must feel, not strain.** This in itself refers in my mind to the use of language such as ‘stretch your legs out’. You may mean lengthen them, but someone familiar with terminology about, for example, gymnastic work, may interpret this to mean that they need to go to the end range of the movement, so that it feels like it reaches the edge of pain. This is contrary to our philosophy:

‘..if we try to do most things by sheer force we shall achieve precisely the opposite of what we need.’

Some teachers will wander around the room during an ATM lesson, and ‘correct’ positioning or ‘suggest’ a better way through hands-on intervention. This is a long discussion, but my suggestion is we may be inciting activation of the sympathetic nervous system for some people, which can trigger the acute stress response: the ‘fight or flight’ response. This will hinder learning, creating the opposite strategy to the purpose of our work, which is more ‘rest and digest’ mode, facilitated by the parasympathetic nervous system. Don’t get me

wrong; I too will sometimes wander and help people who seem to be struggling to understand instructions or enable the movements suggested. The sharing of possibilities can be a relief and gratifying for that person. Let’s just clarify what we are doing, verbalise it, and get permission before we impose ourselves.

Personally I think we need more knowledge of anatomy, physiology and neurobiology than the relatively small degree of this that was included in my training. Some of us are more knowledgeable than others in this area from prior backgrounds. So how do we talk about it? It’s professional to use scientific language. ‘Flexion/extension terminology’ can show our expertise but we can’t assume our clients understand. If we wish to engage them in somatic knowledge we can explain or reframe, without belittling them but engaging them in the learning process.

Conveying the movement strategies of resting, pausing and noticing, along with other techniques, keep people engaged, such as little stories and jokes.

Do you wanna know what makes me smile? Face muscles. (Personal confession: stolen from the internet somewhere).

Humour can shift the nature of the lesson to lighten it – literally – as laughing or smiling can lighten the cognitive load and become a breathing happy moment. These may be directly linked to the theme of the lesson or maybe they’re an unrelated back of tricks you can draw from. Compliments can be woven in as well, ‘You all look like dancers!’

“ We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do” Mother Teresa.

Alan Questel wrote an article about this <https://www.feldenkraisinsantafe.com/free-resources/humor-feldenkrais-journal>



A cheeky ‘Don’t smile!’ direction will often draw a laugh and neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin and endorphins come into play with the endorphins acting as a mild pain reliever / antidepressant - ‘happy chemicals’.

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The tone of voice used will make the difference in so many ways. We want our clients to feel safe including that they are with someone who has authority over the subject in question. This safety also means they need to hear from the tone we are using that they are secure in terms of their comfort. This may be different for everyone, and you may have no idea of their history to determine that. Using a tone that expresses surety may be interpreted by someone as arrogance. What is being communicated through tone? Authority, authenticity, helpfulness, playfulness, simpleness? The volume of your voice will often couple with the tone, which can be interpreted in various ways. We need to be mindful of various hearing capacity, yet a loud voice does not need to sound like shouting, which may seem aggressive.

Our gestures and facial language communicate so much and active listening (acknowledging so they feel heard) goes miles. Be mindful there are cultural differences in how we express ourselves though. Making eye contact, is in general a sign of connection, as someone for example, walks in the room. Years ago, when I was training in other work, I had a young man in the group, who never looked me directly in the eyes when I spoke to him. I assumed (automatically) that he

was very rude. Later I found out his behaviour was an indigenous custom indicating respect for elders.

FAQs:

- Do we call the movement we explore 'exercise'?

YES! It's just that there are different interpretations of what this means.

'Exercise is a body activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness.'
Wikipedia

That includes us. In a class I was running the other day, one woman said she was beginning to understand – it's all about focus on the skeleton and therefore the muscles become engaged. Indeed. After all Moshe's book **Awareness Through Movement** has a sub-title: *Easy-To-Do Health Exercises to Improve Your Posture, Vision, Imagination, and Personal Awareness.*

- Do we talk to them while giving a Functional Integration (FI) session?

Some of us were advised not to do so, as this reduced the kinaesthetic experience, and thus the learning potential.

Here's an example: they walk in the door.

Me: 'How can I help you?'

Client: 'I have a really sore back'.

M: 'How long has that been going for?'

C: 'Well... (short or long story)... Can you fix me?'

M: 'My work is not to fix people, but then again, it kind of is. We explore our habitual unconscious movements ...etc' Or 'Do you have any movement goals?'

I may begin explaining just a little to my clients as I explore movement. For example: 'Do you notice that one shoulder is higher than the other?' We have given them a reference movement, so they can sense the before and after.

C: 'No.'

M: 'Well I can slide my hand in under this one easily as you lie down, compared to this one.'

C: 'Oh yeah!'

I've directed their attention both with my hands and cognitively. Now they're not necessarily thinking about their coffee or how they can help me.

The conversation may continue, but I won't allow it to do so for too long, so the sensory input computes too. Either way we provide optimism.

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And now to the issue of touch. The language you use is critical, but our touch is a form of communication too. There is a presumption you have the power – people will often assume that. In some ways you do. You have a responsibility to ensure the person is in safe hands – literally. If you wish to do one-to-one sessions, there are issues around consent that need to be addressed. (Please note that Molly Tipping has written more elaborately and beautifully about this subject – www.tippingmotion.com.au). Your client needs to understand there will be a process of touch and movement. You may explain it is (mostly) a hands on process and ask if it's ok to touch them. Once they have agreed, subsequently this may not be necessary, as they understand the process, and presumably feel safe. Upon agreement, if you cross personal boundaries such as seeking to touch the sitz bones, or near the breast line in order to touch the ribs, you can ask simply – 'Are you ok if I put my hands on your ribs near your bra/pelvis where your bottom is?'

I am not going to 'manipulate' them. I know this language is used in massage and by other somatic practitioners, but it can infer a controlling, rather than responsive implication.

Here's the Google definition of this word:

1. handle or control in a skilful manner. (note the American spelling)
2. control or influence cleverly or unscrupulously

So how do I describe my touch? Here's one way:

'Notice how as I move you, I explore your movement patterns, and possibilities.' Now as I wrote this sentence my grammar corrector/suggestion was to change the word MOVE to LOVE. I pondered that, and it's not that I have a romantic relationship with my client but I certainly have a caring role. I am not their 'fixer', but I am their teacher.

And then there's proximity issues. How close shall I get? This too is a form of communication. I remember when I first went to a country that was of a completely different cultural history, I had to queue with others to get my food, and I struggled with how close everyone was, compared to how we may do in Australia. So how close do I get in order to create a space of inclusivity, and trust, without it feeling invasive? That will be dependent upon the individual, but generally speaking you want to ensure you're not seeming creepy. People may not inform you if they feel that, so it's a humanistic response to read the person, with a quality of kindness.

You may even wish to ask if it's ok that you're this close.

Some people on the other hand, potentially as part of an expression of their trust, may tell you some secrets about their emotional world. If they are trauma related, this may trigger a nervous system threat response. How do we manage that? Firstly, I explain I am not qualified to give psychological advice. If I am comfortable to discuss the issue, I may say I can discuss it with them as a human. I will then remove my hands if it's a traumatic issue or even a political issue about which we may or may not agree, as this may then be associated with the issue 'at hand'. The placement of the hands on the same place later may trigger the same response. I may acknowledge the issue but then divert and come back to the discussion about the kinaesthetic experience, in order to revert to a calmer response. Or suggest we discuss other issues after our FI, without being dismissive.

Similarly, we consider the quality of touch and where and how: the degree of firmness and whether you connect to the skin, fascia, muscle, bone etcetera, are all forms of communication. I won't attend a masseuse as I have had painful experiences, and ones that felt imposing, like physical interference. The FI intentional

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touch distinguishes us from other modalities, even when we all have our unique styles.

There is much more to convey than what I have included in this article and so I hope we can open up a conversation, based on trust, curiosity and a passion for our work.

“What I’m after isn’t flexible bodies, but flexible brains. What I’m after is to restore each person to their human dignity.”

- Moshe Feldenkrais

I know there’s a lot of words here, but before we finish, you may know I began this discussion as part of the Assistant Trainer talks in Australia. You need to know I am not a psychologist or trained verbal expert. Although I do have some thirty plus years of experience in this world. However, there is an expert beyond me that has something to say. One of the practitioners here, Lynette Guy, was inspired to go to our new artificial intelligence (AI) source, the GPTCHAT - Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer, to ask the question about how we communicate. One response is as follows.

And speaking of more words, let’s keep this conversation going! Feel free to contact me!

FELDENKRAIS FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION I _ ASKING FEEDBACK FROM CHAT AI - 18/7/23

questions by Lynette Guy - <https://chat.openai.com/>

Q. Some say that the role of Feldenkrais practitioners is communicating new pathways with people through movement. This is conveyed through verbal communication and touch. We are taught many aspects of these in our Trainings, yet there are many elements to explore. When giving a hands-on Functional Integration lesson, we usually decide how, when and why we speak with the participant. How best could we convey meaning through touch, in such a way that they can learn and integrate new possibilities of embodied action?

CHATGPT: “As a Feldenkrais practitioner giving a hands-on Functional Integration (FI) lesson, you have a unique opportunity to convey meaning through touch in a way that helps your clients learn and integrate new possibilities of embodied action. Here are some principles and techniques to consider when using touch to communicate and facilitate learning:

1. Non-verbal communication: While giving an FI lesson, prioritize non-verbal communication through touch over verbal instruction. Touch is a powerful tool for conveying information directly to

the nervous system and bypassing the conscious mind, enabling deeper sensory experiences and learning.

2. Gentle and respectful touch: Approach your clients with gentle, respectful touch. Use a soft and listening quality of touch to facilitate their awareness of tension, movement patterns, and restrictions in the body.
3. Create a safe space: Establish a safe and supportive environment during the FI lesson. Encourage your clients to be receptive to touch and assure them that their boundaries and comfort levels will be respected throughout the session.
4. Listen and respond: Be attentive to your clients’ responses to your touch. Listen to their non-verbal cues, such as subtle movements or changes in breathing, to gauge their comfort and engagement with the process. Adapt your touch and approach accordingly.
5. Create novel experiences: Use touch to guide your clients into novel movement experiences. By introducing new patterns and pathways gently and skillfully, you can help them explore possibilities they may not have previously considered.
6. Engage the sensory-motor system: Through touch, engage the sensory-motor system to elicit

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automatic, more efficient movement responses. Use slow and deliberate movements to give your clients the time to sense and integrate the information.

7. Explore the edges of comfort: Encourage your clients to explore movement within their comfort zones while gently nudging them towards the edges of their habitual patterns. This can create opportunities for new learning and integration.
8. Avoid imposing movements: Be mindful not to impose movements on your clients. Instead, guide them towards discovering the movements themselves. Allow their curiosity and intrinsic learning processes to unfold.
9. Encourage self-awareness: Use touch to highlight areas of tension or holding in the body, promoting self-awareness in your clients. This awareness can lead to greater understanding and autonomy in their movement.
10. Integrate touch and verbal cues: While touch is the primary means of communication in FI lessons, you can also use occasional verbal cues to enhance the learning process. Keep the verbal cues simple and supportive, reinforcing the information conveyed through touch.

11. Offer space for reflection: Allow moments of silence during the lesson to give your clients space for internal reflection and integration of the sensory experiences they are having.

Remember that each client is unique, and the learning process can vary from person to person. By using touch with sensitivity, intention, and a focus on facilitating self-discovery, you can guide your clients to explore and integrate new possibilities of embodied action in

Functional Integration lessons. As you gain experience, your intuition and skill in using touch as a form of communication will naturally deepen, enriching the learning experiences for your clients.”

P.S: Note that the International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) standards of practice refers to forms of communication: <https://feldenkrais-method.org/iff/standards-of-practice/> ■

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PACING, PACING, PACING

By Ralph Hadden BA CFP

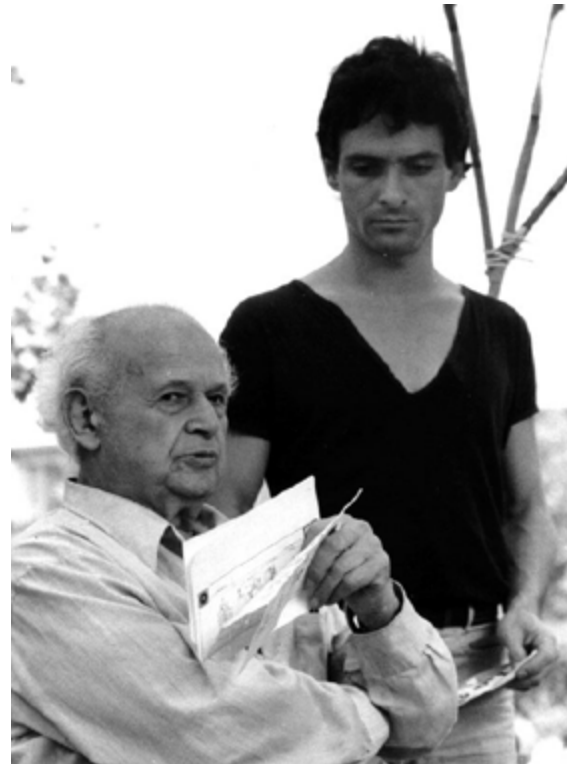
*Ralph Hadden (Sydney 1, 1990)
is an Assistant Trainer (2012).*

*He practises in his hometown
of Naarm (Melbourne) and teaches nationally and
internationally. He is the author of the recently
published book, Your 14 Day Pelvis Program
(Busybird 2023).*

The baby cried and cried and cried. I watched as mum, dad, grandma and aunts took turns to try to settle him. I thought of the talks Mark Reese had been giving us, on what he'd learned from Dr Milton Erickson.

I was in Sydney, attending one of the segments of our training, with Mark Reese as the trainer. One evening my wife and I visited family in a Sydney suburb, to catch up and to also greet the new baby, the baby that now would not stop crying.

They tried everything- nappy change, burping, a feed, cuddles...- he just kept crying. I watched on and thought of what Mark had been telling us about 'pacing'. I observed the baby was crying in a particular rhythmic pattern, wah, wah, wah, wah.



Moshe Feldenkrais with Mark Reese

"Hey, let me try." I held the baby comfortably and began to gently bounce, matching the rhythm of his crying. Wah, wah, wah- bounce, bounce, bounce.

Within moments he stopped crying and in a few more moments he fell asleep. I handed him back to his mum and the family gazed at me in wonder. "Wow, you're the baby magician!"

I smiled, feeling a little sheepish as I wasn't quite sure myself what I had done. I had simply 'paced', matching my gentle bouncing moves to the rhythm of the baby's cries. I felt rather awed myself, glimpsing the power of the pacing technique.



MILTON H ERICKSON

Milton Erickson was an American psychiatrist, specialising in family therapy, using hypnosis. He was roughly a contemporary of Moshe and the two did actually meet (though stories of the meeting say it was not particularly productive).



In our training Mark spoke of Erickson's strategy of pacing- observing the rhythms of the patient, their breathing, walking, talking or actions and then speaking in a rhythm that matched the patient's.

Mark talked about Ericksonian pacing with us to encourage us to use this strategy ourselves, in ATM and FI. He spoke about Moshe Feldenkrais also being alert to rhythms and matching his talking and handling to the rhythms of his students.

MOSHE AND FRANK

I remember Frank Wildman (the organiser of our training) telling the story of his first FI from Moshe, during the San Francisco training.

Moshe did rather abrupt, jerky actions, pushing and prodding Frank rather roughly. "Where is the gentle, sensitive handling that I was expecting?" wondered Frank.

But, if you knew Frank, you would know he was a rather jangled, nervy person, probably more so back in the early stages of the SF training. So Moshe, as Frank eventually realised, was doing a rather clever matching, or pacing- creating a tempo and mood that fitted perfectly with Frank's way of being. As the FI proceeded Moshe gradually smoothed things out, slowed things down and Frank correspondingly slowed down. Eventually Frank was getting the gentle, sensitive FI he had been expecting.

THE STRATEGY

This is the Ericksonian and Feldenkrais strategy: Pacing (or 'matching'), pacing, pacing... directing. And this is probably the strategy you may already be using, consciously or unconsciously, with your clients- matching their patterns until you and your client are nicely in harmony and then you start to subtly add in some new possibilities to their patterns.

MASSAGING A RUSHED DENNIS

I remember a massage I gave, years ago, before I was a Feldy (although I had experienced some Feldenkrais

workshops). My regular client, Dennis, arrived in an agitated state. He'd had a very busy morning and then had to rush through heavy traffic to get to his appointment with me.

I didn't know much about Feldenkrais or Erickson back then but, even so, I intuited what to do. I began my massage very fast- rapid and vigorous strokes, matching his speeded-up state. As I continued the massage I progressively slowed down and by the end I was working in a slow, relaxing rhythm and Dennis was feeling much better and pleased to have made the journey from agitation to relaxation.

If I had started the massage in a slow, relaxing rhythm I am certain he would not have relaxed, he may have even found it irritating. My matching of his agitated state gave him the feeling that we were in harmony with each other and (as he discussed with me after) he was able to gradually slow down and relax.

SUPPORTING THE PATTERN

One last example:

In the preliminary chat with my client, "Helen", I observe she tends to shorten along her left side. So, when she is lying on the table I do what we Feldies often do- I support her pattern. I place my hands on the

PACING, PACING, PACING *By Ralph Hadden BA CFP*

left side of Helen's ribcage and gently move my hands closer together, helping her do what she is already doing, helping her to shorten on this side. I then slowly release. I repeat this manoeuvre several times and sense her relaxing.

We all know how to do this but now we can think of it in Ericksonian terms. 'Pacing' the client is trance-inducing- the patient/client tends to relax and becomes more suggestible. The Ericksonian practitioner uses this to encourage their subject to follow their instructions and to lead them into a hypnotic trance.

When we 'support the pattern' our client also tends to relax, maybe go into a light trance and they become more suggestible, more receptive to the introduction of other movement options. The handling feels so nice that they become willing to trust our touch and to be receptive to suggestions of new movement patterns.

The next time I return Helen from shortening along her left side I add a little movement in the other direction, then shorten along the left again, return and begin to shorten a little more along the right side. And so on; you know how it goes.

Helen finds the new movement comfortable and interesting and gradually, together, we help her develop

more ability to lengthen along the left / shorten along the right.

I'll leave you now to your own explorations but I hope I have given you some ideas to reflect on and to expand what you are already doing. Below is a list of some recommended reading on Erickson. I particularly recommend *My Voice Will Go With You*. Erickson, like Feldenkrais, used stories to teach and to intrigue and this book has many delightful stories.

My Voice Will Go With You, The Teaching Tales of Milton H Erickson editor Sidney Rosen (1982 Norton 2010)

Uncommon Therapy Jay Haley (1973 Norton 1993)

Conversations with Milton H Erickson, MD editor Jay Haley, Volumes I, II and III (1985 Triangle Press 1999)

Experiencing Erickson, an Introduction to the Man and his Work Jeffrey K Zeig, PhD (Brunner/Mazel 1985) ■

Interesting?

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TIME AND TRANSMUTATION

By Shona Lee

Shona Lee (SEAUS 1, 2018) is a Feldenkrais Practitioner and remedial massage therapist based in Sydney. She's 'done busy well'

for most of her life and is recently coming to appreciate how much can be gained by slowing down, doing less to appreciate more of what's present.

Transmutation (noun): 'the action of changing or the state of being changed into another form.'

Much of what happens through the Feldenkrais Method is a remarkable, transformative experience; such that it gets likened to magic. Whilst transmutation has an associated connotation of magic, notice however, that the definition of transmutation does not speak of magic, just the fundamental notion of changing state / form.

That's actually what we do.

Our 'magic' is **attention to the interconnections, observing how someone's system responds and allowing time for that to happen.**

'Some things can't be rushed' is the Feldenkrais life lesson I am realising at this point in time. I say some things but perhaps everything *shouldn't* be rushed...? By accepting that things take however-long-they-take, in the fullness of time, to infuse, percolate, ripen, mature and blossom when ready, when 'the time has come', the final expression will be all the fuller than a pre-conceived version could have constructed. But this requires patience...and much trust.

I've always driven projects forward; which is a highly useful skill to have... But where I'm at right now is more about **responding to what's happening** around me - being led by the moment and not over striving. I'm not saying you never need to hustle. But I am dropping in the notion of 'Divine Timing'. *Which does border on the magical realm...hmmm.* Here's a story to illustrate the sort of scenario that I'm referring to in relation to Divine Timing:

Last year we were given 90 days notice to vacate the sharehouse that we'd been living in for a number of years. The owners were getting divorced; selling to divide their assets. External timing was forcing our

hand to move but the net result was my partner and I purchasing a place that we absolutely adore. If it wasn't for this impetus, we wouldn't have been looking at property. The previous owner of our fabulous new home lived there for 30 years before selling, so even if we had been looking, our new home, which feels right in every way, wouldn't have been on the market for us to find, prior to early 2022. We lent-in to what was presenting itself by life, et volia! *Shall we call that one magic?* Of course all the other factors had to be there for this to be possible, finances are fundamental etc, but **the element that galvanised this transmutation of living environment came from an external in-put.** We were comfortable and had no particular reason to hustle from the good thing that was the 6-person share house we were living in; until we did.

An interesting aspect to consider with folks who come our way: what brings them to us at this particular point in time and **what are they ready for** that they may or may not be explicitly conscious of themselves?

Over the last four years I've been attending classes in Yuan Chi Tai Chi Chuan. It's through this practice

that I've come to embody the richness of not rushing. By allowing each move its full expression of time to complete before moving onto the next style in the form, that's when you feel you're being moved by Source / Chi. (*More magic...?!*) It's a 'listening' rather than 'doing' motion. Such a difference in quality of experience; not constructed - alive. It had me considering other areas in life where I was ever moving on, to whatever was next, instead of fully embodying the moment and really receiving what was on offer there. I love variety, exploring new; but it's staying with something over time that takes you beyond surface level, to depth. We know that already in the realm of long-term friendships versus new acquaintances. Whilst we may click instantly with someone we've just met, bonding over common ground; there's still an unquantifiable depth to those we've known over the years through changing circumstances. With value to both those with whom we've spent a lot of time with, as well as those we've shared real quality time (without necessarily huge quantities). We come to know ourselves better over time by our interactions with others modelling different ways of being and engaging with the world. Cultivating preferences for what we value, coming to recognise what our strengths are and reading the varying attributes of others.

Time is where iteration happens - over time we get closer and closer towards whatever our orientation is pointing at. Something that fascinates me is the difference between decay or maturation. Both occur over time. What are the inflections / turning points that set someone down one pathway or another. Who were we at different points in time? How does someone who sounded expansive, exploratory, adventurous at a certain age, pull back to become set in their ways, entrenching their views and solidifying their state to effectively close off their options?

What's the difference between post traumatic stress versus post-traumatic growth? Is it Reflection? Being able to contextualise a traumatic event/s within a larger frame of reference, looking for what you might learn from all manner of experiences? By identifying what are these key markers that meander us towards maturing or decaying we may more deliberately steer a direction of growth and harvest.

I don't think decay is irreversible, it's a process, it's alive, it can be rerouted and salvaged. How? Orientation is the anchor – updating your actions to align with your current views and values. Things you thought you knew or wanted, do change over time. Not clinging to a previous version is perhaps a

key difference between decay and maturation. What we orient towards, whilst often habitual, has much scope to be a deliberately steered choice. Time on the other hand, is the fate part. It's patience, giving things time, acknowledging that healing and maturation require time. It's a real point of difference we have as Feldenkrais Practitioners - lingering long enough for a learning response, a recalibration. Taking your time, iterating, revising and updating is actually the faster, more complete route than being paralysed by compulsion for perfection or hurrying to get through it.

By orienting towards the ever so subtle yet significant improvements we arrive at with our clients with more long term / chronic conditions (*a 90+ year old that's been bed bound and non verbal due to brain swelling for the past 4 years or the 13 year old with CP that we're working towards being able to crawl*) that allow hope, optimism and satisfaction in progress. Those less tuned to the significance of these 'miniature' milestones might only see lack / restriction...

In the busy 'doing' of life, let's assess whether the activities we fill our time with are moving us in a meaningful direction. In the age of busyness, where time is a luxury to crave more of, we can gift it to ourselves by deleting what's extraneous. Again this

requires a clear orientation. Deleting what's extraneous allows the value of what's underlying to actually emerge. Illness is one example, when we need to ration our energy reserves. It forces our hand to decide what's actually essential. But perhaps this can be more deliberately curated. Creating space in our lives for enjoying that's there. No longer living in a sharehouse is probably a key factor in my new found way of being unrushed - by having an environment that supports quiet contemplation. Time is where consolidation and integration happens; it's where you extract the value from any experience. However, allowing ample time is also often skipped!

Time Management

I've been speaking of time as if it's the panacea to all transmutation but is there actually a sweet spot, a right amount of time? When is too long detrimental? Time lets you return to something with a fresh perspective but can it also dilute potency, resulting in missing pieces, for something to be no longer be as pertinent as it once was? Using the allotment of time you have, to determine what's the right task to take on, is a big part of staying in flow for me. Over time I'm also getting better at accurately estimating what's a reasonable amount of time for particular activities. Not being

overly ambitious in what I'm intending to do within a certain period of time goes a long way to not getting flustered / having to rush something. This decision making is an educated one that's been built up from past experiences.

We can be savvy about picking our timing for anything. I shake my head when emails with key content get sent out on a late Friday afternoon / evening...I definitely understand that you will draft the email when you have time in your schedule to compose it. But to maximise the likelihood of it being read and acted upon, being strategic about when you press the send button can make a huge difference in uptake; considering that you've gone to the effort of composing it....

Length of time = relativity

The amount of time you've been alive is the yardstick you have to measure duration of time. When you're 5 years old, a year is literally one fifth of your entire lifespan, when you're 50, a year is a measly fiftieth, hence proportionally both the 50-year-old and the 5-year-old will experience the duration of the same year differently, from their different frames of reference in relation to their life thus far. Funnily enough, the longer you've been engaged with something, the

less hurried you feel with how long something takes! Earlier on you tend to want to see results. Having been engaged with something for a shorter duration of time span you don't yet have the longer frame of reference to couch it in. And I guess I'm yet a way off from the latter part of life when perhaps you feel like you're running out of time, so I can't comment on that one...

The future of Feldenkrais

What will happen to the Feldenkrais Method over time? Has it had its' prime time to shine or is that yet to come? If the uphill nature of ever pushing it forwards is fatiguing on our reservoirs, would a more potent approach be patiently cultivating our craft and nurturing presence whilst priming and positioning to pounce and ride waves of opportunity when they crest, wherever we're at in the world. I know the question of sparking younger generations to keep the method alive is highly relevant, however I really enjoy working with older clients who have had a whole lifetime in their bodies (*and more interesting conversations than less worldly twenty-year-olds....*) I think we're such a great fit for seniors. Australia has a burgeoning generation of baby boomers to take care of and funding will be directed as such. I see many pluses to working with those who are already coming and interested in what

we're offering. Working with this demographic has also taught me that a big part of the value we offer is quality time together, not merely the technique of what we *do* with them.

How many iterations does it take before our approximations converge towards the version best suited to the scenario at hand? Time is a teacher, time is a revealer – time will tell :-)

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ORIENTING IN A HUMAN WORLD

By Zoran Kovich MSc, Feldenkrais Method teacher, trainer & educational director

Zoran Kovich, MSc, CFT
(Melbourne 1, 1991).
Philosopher-historian; martial
artist; professional dancer;

cognitive scientist; lecturer; somatic educator;
emotional balance teacher: Zoran's teaching is inspired
by knowledge and know-how spanning 50 years of
reflective learning and personal practice. He lives and
teaches in Sydney, Australia, and is an internationally
certified Feldenkrais Trainer.

A human world is synchronically terrestrial, biological,
psychic, social, and linguistic. Making one's way, living
agentively, in such world entails orienting across the
many dimensions of human life.

This article is in two parts. The first is a collection of
quotes. The second is a case study. This composition
is purposeful. It is meant to engage you in a process
greatly extolled by the creator of the method you
practice -- the process of concretising the abstract.

My ability is to take abstract ideas and concretize
them -- to translate abstract ideas into concrete
sensory motor facts. [I'm able] to find a way of
concretizing an abstract idea into such a thing
that the person feels and senses and appreciates
what I wanted to convey without having to use
the abstract verbalization. Because verbalization
is abstract. It is possible to concretize abstract
ideas in the terms [that are] familiar to that
person. And this is nothing exceptional. I found
that most of the people who studied with me
gradually got to the same knack and some of
them do it wonderfully well.

Moshe Feldenkrais
Amherst Training, 1980

From his early writings to his last works, his
Method would dynamically integrate research,
theory, and practical applications.

Mark Reese
Moshe Feldenkrais: A Life in Movement

The quotes orient you towards a selection of concepts
which have a bearing on the topic of orientation as
it pertains to the many dimensions that constitute
being in a human world. The case study situates you
in narrative intended to exemplify what it means for
two individuals to relate with one another within the
domain of Feldenkrais practice. You are invited to
contemplate the relation between theory and praxis --
to search for and find the abstract in the concrete.

When we plant in the soil of contemplation, we
shall reap in the harvest of action.

Meister Eckhart
German Theologian, Philosopher & Mystic.
1260-1328

For Feldenkrais self-knowledge through self-
observation was a priority. His mission was to
help people 'wake up' to higher awareness and
individual freedom. True freedom becomes
possible only as a result of an intense discipline
of self-awareness and self-development.

Mark Reese

PART 1

Section A

In his writings and recordings Moshe Feldenkrais has much to say on the topic of orientation. The quotes below are a representative of his ideas.

It's impossible to have any action whatsoever without thinking, feeling, sensing, moving, without temporal coordination, without orientation in space, without manipulation. All these things can only be talked about in separate quantities verbally.

San Francisco Training, 1975

Orientation is essential for everything we do. "Orienting" means directing yourself with a purpose. Any action without orientation means nothing. To orient yourself is the most important thing you have to learn.

Amherst Training, 1980

Orientation in space and in time gives direction and adroitness to whatever we do. It is useful to experience the value of purposeful orientation as compared with succeeding by chance.

Orientation in space is an abstract notion and cannot be handled as such. I do not know how to improve on the words or the function "orientation in space" but I know how to help a person in distinguishing between right and left, in bettering [their] dexterity and precision of turning, so that when his/her performs his movements efficiently and precisely she/he has, in fact, improved his orientation in space.

Our orientation is often far from perfect.

The ability to learn a skill such as right/left orientation needs the childish state of mind, that ability to play while learning the ability to pay attention, without intending to learn. It also needs, among other requirements, the ability to feel differences; that is, the ability to distinguish between one sensation and another very similar one. It needs attention with intention.

Orientation of objects relative to ourselves does not come from nowhere.

Each one of us can improve his own orientation and body awareness.

If I can improve my orientation and body awareness, then I achieve a fundamental change which can better any of the actions making up my life.

When words like "orientation" and "unconscious" were formulated they were used to sum up, or shorten, a detailed description of a concept. Over time, however, with increased familiarity the word tends to become a thing -- a something which exists.

Everyone uses abstractions, but one is at a loss to know what to do when ... "orientation" go[es] wrong.

No one can do anything with abstractions such as ... orientation... One ... cannot change the notion orientation unless one knows whose orientation and what precise defect one deals with. The semicircular canals may be defective. A variety of feedbacks to the nervous system may be defective and so much else may be wrong. The familiar words lull us often into complacency and in such cases hinder constructive thinking.

The word orientation sums up a detailed description of a concept - it is an abstraction. So long as I do not think of the activities from which it was abstracted I am at a loss to know what to do when 'orientation' goes wrong.

The Case of Nora

Orientation in space is an essential function for any living organism. The human species maintain a peculiar vertical alignment quite distinct from all other animals. We are not necessarily consciously aware of the spatial relation of the body to space and orientation.

Section B

The quotes that follow share a common orientation -- that you and I are corporeal, animate, vagile, social, languaging beings. Our corporeality situates us in a world. Our animation is the dance of life through which we and the world are dynamically coupled. Our freedom to move about in the world is an inheritance afforded us by the particulars of our embodiment. Our sociality promotes human flourishing in ways that are inconceivable for a lone being. Our ability to communicate knowledge through symbolic language confers to each speaker the human capacity for awareness. From this multi-dimensional perspective, we can appreciate that orientating in a human world takes us beyond spatial orientation.

Proprioceptive awareness of movement may be the very first kind of consciousness to emerge in the developing nervous system.

*Shaun Gallagher
How the Body Shapes the Mind*

To understand consciousness -- the fact that we think and feel and that a world shows up for us -- we need to look at a larger system of which the brain is only one element. Consciousness is not something the brain achieves on its own. Consciousness requires the joint operation of brain" body" and world. Indeed, consciousness is an achievement of the whole animal in its environmental context.

*Alva Noe
Out of Our Heads*

The Rotisserie Experiment

Vision is not the only sense that cooperates with the vestibular receptors in determining the orientation and movement of the body in space. Touch plays a fundamental role that is worth examining, for it reveals the richness of multisensory interactions. Here, now, is the rotisserie experiment.

A subject lying on a bed can discern which way is up without difficulty. Lackner had the idea of placing a subject in a machine developed during the 1950s by American air force researchers interested in how the otolithic organs of the vestibular system detect the vertical. This machine looks like a rotisserie .

Subjects are laid in it horizontally, as if they were brochettes or chickens, and turned at a constant velocity around a rotational axis perpendicular to terrestrial gravity. When they are in the light, with their eyes open , subjects have no trouble perceiving the direction of their rotation. If the light is switched off, they have only vestibular and tactile information to rely on for detecting the axis of their rotation. The semicircular canals are stimulated by the initial acceleration and the otoliths by the sweep of the components of gravity in the planes of the respective maculae of the utricle and the saccule. Then, because the velocity of the rotation is constant, and the angular acceleration therefore nil, the response of the semicircular canals subsides after about 20 seconds. Only detection by the otoliths of the angle in relation to gravity persists. Consequently, during rotation at constant velocity, only the otoliths and the skin contribute to the perception of the direction of the body with respect to the vertical. In general, the subject correctly perceives the axis of rotation in the dark. But Lackner demonstrated that just manipulating tactile cues is sufficient to completely alter the perception of orientation of the body. If the subject's feet are suddenly pressed, he has the impression of tipping up and rotating in a vertical position. If his buttocks are pressed, he feels as

though he is sitting and spinning in a chair. If his head is pressed, he experiences conical motion about his head at the apex. In other words, despite the sweep of pressure on the side of the body, the brain treats the local point of pressure as a point of reference that determines the perceived center of rotation. In this case, the tactile cues determine the frame of reference in which the rotation occurs. Sometimes the postural context affects how the brain interprets tactile cues. An experiment of Gurfinkel's is a nice illustration of this property. Lay your hand flat, palm up, on a table and ask someone to draw a "p" on your palm with a pencil. Now put your hand behind your back and ask the person to repeat the drawing. You will note that in the second case you perceive the letter as a 'b' and not as a "p". In other words, the same sensation yields a different perception according to the orientation of the hand in relation to the body. The extremely discontinuous character of these alterations in perception shows that the brain carries out genuine perceptual decisions based on the state of several receptors, which we call a configuration of receptors.

Alain Berthoz
The Brain's Sense of Movement

The basic orienting system serves to keep us in contact with the most fundamental properties of the world around us – the direction of gravity, the distinction between the sky above and earth below, the distinction between here and there, the location of the ground, and the location of major sources of information in the environment. Functional basic orientation is a prerequisite for any other functional activity. Without orientation to gravity and to local surfaces of the environment, no organism could engage successfully in any form of movement or posture. Exploratory and performatory activities always occur against the backdrop of basic orientation. Without this basic ability to adjust one's body and its parts to the surroundings, literally nothing else could happen.

Edward S. Reed
Encountering the World

Personal space is the fundamental scaffold of human interaction. That mechanism works mostly outside of consciousness, shaping our judgements of other people and our interpersonal behaviours. As long as it works correctly, we don't even know it's there.

Michael S.A. Graziano
The Spaces Between Us

Embodiment entails the following: (1) cognition dependent upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities; and (2) individual sensorimotor capacities that are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological and cultural context. ...sensory and motor processes, perception and action, are fundamentally inseparable in lived cognition, and not merely contingently linked. In a nutshell, the enactive approach [to cognition] underscores the importance of two interrelated points: (1) that perception consists of perceptually guided action; and (2) that cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided. The overall concern of an enactive approach to perception is ... to determine the common principles or lawful linkages between sensory and motor systems that explain how action can be perceptually guided in a perceiver-dependent world. In the enactive approach reality is not a given: it is perceiver-dependent, not because the perceiver "constructs" it as he or she pleases, but because what counts as a relevant world is inseparable from the structure of the perceiver.

Francisco J. Varela
Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom and Cognition

The knower and the known [are] engaged in a dynamic, symbolic dance, connected by means of the human body. It is by means of this 'dancing' that together we actually create as well as come to know experience and reality.

Jerry H. Gill

Learning to Learn: Towards a Philosophy of Education

Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interactions with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositions.

Mark Johnson

The Body in the Mind

People want their lives to be meaningful. [We] need to make sense of our experience and to inquire into its overall meaning and significance. Unfortunately, meaning is a big, messy, multidimensional concept. meaning grows from our visceral connections to life and the bodily conditions of life. We are born into the world as creatures of the flesh, and it is through our bodily perceptions, movements, emotions, and

feelings that meaning becomes possible and takes the forms it does. From the day we are brought kicking and screaming into the world, what and how anything is meaningful to us is shaped by our specific form of incarnation. Our "minds" are processes that arise through our ongoing coupling with our environment. Mind is in and of this embodied experiential process, not above it all. Abstract conceptualization and reasoning depend directly on the fact that "body" and "mind" are not two separate things, but rather are abstractions from our ongoing, continuous, interactive experience. Meaning and thought are based on patterns of sensorimotor experience. What we think of as "higher" cognitive activities are grounded in, and shaped by, activities of bodily perception and movement.

Mark Johnson

The Meaning of the Body

Spatial orientation [metaphors] arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation; for example, HAPPY IS UP. The fact that the concept HAPPY is oriented UP leads to

English expressions like "I'm feeling up today." Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary. They have a basis in our physical and cultural experience. Though the polar oppositions up-down, in-out, etc., are physical in nature, the orientational metaphors based on them can vary from culture to culture. For example, in some cultures the future is in front of us, whereas in others it is in the back. Most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors. Spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience; they are not randomly assigned. A metaphor can serve as a vehicle for understanding a concept only by virtue of its experiential basis. We do not know very much about the experiential bases of metaphors. We feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis. For example, MORE IS UP has a very different kind of experiential basis than HAPPY IS UP or RATIONAL IS UP. Though the concept up is the same in all these metaphors, the experiences on which these UP metaphors are based are very different. It is not that there are many different ups; rather, verticality enters our experience in many different ways and so gives rise to many different metaphors.

George Lakoff & Mark Johnson

Metaphors We Live By

The intersubjective world of life, the *Lebenswelt*, or “life-world” is the world we organically experience in its enigmatic multiplicity and open-endedness, prior to conceptually freezing it into a static space of “facts”. The life-world is thus peripherally present in any thought or activity we undertake. Yet whenever we attempt to explain this world conceptually, we seem to forget our active participation within it. Striving to represent the world, we inevitably forfeit its direct presence. In their striving to attain a finished blueprint of the world, the sciences [have] become frightfully estranged from our direct human experience.

The world that a person experiences and comes to count on is deeply influenced by the way they live and engage in that world.

Underneath the anatomized and mechanical body that we have learned to conceive, prior indeed to all our conceptions, dwells the body as it actually experiences things. Considered phenomenologically -- that is, as we actually experience and live it -- the body is a creative, shape-shifting entity.

David Abram
The Spell of the Sensuous

PART 2

Case Study

Mary and I had been speaking together on the phone for over 15 minutes. Her ongoing neck pain was affecting every aspect of her life. Most of all it was intruding on her work. Despite medication and diverse therapeutic interventions, the pain persisted.

“The pain is getting worse,” she said. “It’s there constantly, pulling at me. I struggle to stay focused on what I’m doing. I feel I’m being tugged in opposite directions, the pain dragging me one way and my mind commanding me to concentrate on what’s at hand so I can work effectively.”

“How long have you been experiencing this trouble?” I asked.

“Five years”, she replied. “Doctors can’t find anything wrong. My work is suffering. My ability to read, comprehend and analyse is affected. What used to take me half a day to do now takes two days. I can’t mentally focus, get my thoughts straight, and align new ideas in order.”

With a PhD in philosophy Mary worked in high level government departments, checking and re-writing documents of national political and economic

importance. The pressure to perform was immense. That said, Mary relished meeting the challenge. In her academic studies Mary specialised in Wittgenstein’s philosophical investigations. She also had a keen interest in phenomenology. As our conversation deepened, Mary increasingly perceived parallels between philosophical processes she used in her thinking, and the Feldenkrais learning processes I was describing. I explained to her -- in conceptual terms she was very familiar with -- processes she might apply to investigate her pain conundrum. As we spoke, I could hear she comprehended the systemic nature of her situation.

“The problems I’m experiencing with my neck,” she paraphrased, “are related to the way I move myself?”

“Yes”, I replied. “You need to deconstruct the current way you enact your intentions and then re-construct them in ways that your trouble does not manifest. Movement, perception, and thought are intimately related,” I offered and added “that was the focus of my cognitive science studies. Thinking is not something that happens just inside your brain. Thinking is woven into the matrix of bodily experience, which itself is part of a larger matrix of the physical and social world - because as an embodied being you are inextricably situated in the world. The movements and postures

through which you manifest your thinking could also be manifesting the trouble you are experiencing with your neck. Together we can investigate how you physically manifest both your problem and your skills, then disentangle them, until you are able to do your work without experiencing pain. Your engagement in the process will be essential. Are you prepared to do this?"

Mary affirmed her readiness, and with that we scheduled her first appointment.

LESSON 1

The connection Mary and I had vocally established in our initial phone conversation was almost instantaneously re-established in the first few moments of meeting. We remained standing as we spoke. Mary was tall, about 186 cm in flat shoes. She was of moderate build, not lean and not overweight. She did not wear glasses. She was animated when speaking, gesturing freely with her hands and arms, despite her neck pain.

"I think this is going to be great," Mary said. "Everything we talked about made sense."

"Marvelous", I said. "Let's start simply and find some ground from which we can proceed. Please stand simply, comfortably over both legs and let me observe how

you're standing." I took a few steps backwards away from Mary to be able to see her, in a single glance, from head-to-toe, and then added, "And you too can consciously attend to the way you stand, and then we can mutually discuss what I see and what you feel."

As I looked at Mary side-on, I was surprised. The whole length of her body -- from shins through to top of head -- was inclined forwards 5-10 degrees off vertical. In my imagination I dropped a plumb-line from the centre-of-mass of Mary's head towards the floor. It touched the floor beyond the tips of Mary's toes. I prompted Mary to notice whether she felt she was standing upright.



After a few moments of consideration Mary responded, "Yes I feel completely upright".

"How do you know that? What sensations do you perceive that affirm for you your uprightness?" I asked.

"So, now we're doing epistemology!" she jokingly exclaimed and then laughed.

"Yes, we are, but a very pragmatic form of epistemology," I replied and laughed with her. "You learned to stand, it's a skill, a know-how you have acquired, the details of which have become implicit.

If you want to change that skill you need to make that kinetic know-how conscious, and the way to do that is to pay attention to the sensations you feel associated with the act of being upright."

I asked Mary to purposefully direct her attention to sensations associated with her feet being in contact with the floor. Under which places of her feet did she experience greater pressure? "Towards the toes", she responded. And where the least? "Under the heels." I continued the inquiry. And if the pressure is greater in front, and less at back, what does this imply about how you are standing? Mary paused. She looked perplexed. After a while she answered.

"I can't be standing upright, can I? What I'm feeling indicates that I'm leaning forward. Why hadn't I noticed that before?"

Addressing Mary's question, I explained that, generally speaking, we are not proprioceptively literate. Like reading, writing, and comprehending, proprioceptive discernment is a perceptual ability that needs to be cultivated through attentive learning. The sensations she perceived were present all the time. However, it was not until she intentionally directed her attention that these sensations surfaced to a conscious level. I spoke a little, in evocative

terms, of how somatic sensations were processed at a subcortical level (inferring sub-conscious) in the brain and that the processing of sensations at the cortical level was necessary to prevent cognitive overload. Somehow the act of attending enables previously unperceived somatic sensations to be perceived. Just as in philosophical inquiry a particular question can illuminate ideas, meanings, implications that were previously unilluminated, so too intentionally directing one's attention, with a question in mind, brings into awareness previously unnoticed bodily sensations and feelings. Knowing the kinds of questions that are ask-able, and the conditions to create that afford proprioceptive discernment, would enable her to investigate her actions and, if she wanted, change her enaction of them.

"Can we try-out something," I asked. Mary nodded. "Is it okay to place my hand on the back of your neck?" Mary nodded again. We were both standing. I walked behind Mary and softly sculptured the palmar surface of my right hand to the contours of her neck. Intentionally I positioned my hand so it spanned from the base of her skull, along the length of her neck, to her shoulders at the C7-T1-1st rib area.

Why did I go to her neck; especially since this was the 'problem' area? First, I wanted to feel the degree Mary's neck muscles were working -- as I anticipated the muscles felt tense and hard to my touch. Second, I had already formed a working hypothesis that perhaps Mary's problem was nested in how she used her eyes and self to attentionally engage with the substance of her work. The more engrossed she became with thinking about, analysing, what was written on the computer screen, the more her visual attention 'pulled' her head closer and closer to the monitor, the rest of herself following.

I talked Mary through what we were going to do. With the hand on her neck, I was going to delicately suggest directions in which she could move -- as if I were 'whispering' to her via my hand. She was to attentively 'listen' for these 'whispers', and follow, moving her entire self -- head to foot.

As I positioned myself behind her, lightly holding her neck, Mary's stance remained unchanged. Slowly, I began intending to move Mary's neck-head a little backward in space. I intended this act until I could feel my whole self responding. Was Mary responding? Yes, she was moving with me, head-to-toe. Okay. Now another intent. Let's go forwards. As the intent

manifested itself through me, I could feel Mary also going with it. She was 'hearing' my tactually conveyed, whispered, intents, and was able to follow. We continued together like this until Mary swayed backwards and forwards, slowly, gently, through a large amplitude. Mary's breathing was even, unaffected, her movements smooth, her attention alert. Good! Once the swaying had become consistent, predictable, metronome-like, I directed Mary's attention to the contact her feet made with the floor. "What happens to the contact as you sway?

"It's constantly changing. I feel more contact under my toes when I go forward, then more under my heels when I go back." Mary responded.

"Yes, that's it," I acknowledged. "Keep feeling for the contact your feet make with the floor. Tell me when you feel your feet contact the floor evenly all over."

Gradually I diminished the amplitude of the sway, moment by moment becoming smaller and smaller like a pendulum coming to rest.

"Now," Mary calmly said. "My feet are making contact with the floor all over."

Mary was upright. Her forward lean absent. "How does it feel to stand this way," I asked.

“Totally weird!” she exclaimed. As she paused, I removed my hand from her neck and stepped away. “But my neck...! It feels better... much better.”

I was tempted to ride the wave of Mary’s excitement and explain how what she was experiencing may have come about. Instead, I quietly suggested, “Let’s explore the same idea a few more times.” Mary was willing.

Together we repeated the process many more times. I varied where I stood in relation to Mary -- sometimes to her right, then to her left, then directing her from behind, out of line of vision. Sometimes the amplitude was large, other times quite small. I anticipated that each variation would afford Mary a different perception of the activity. However, on every occasion, once the speed of swaying was established it remained even, constant. Each time Mary came to rest, her newly found uprightness felt less and less proprioceptively ‘weird’.

Eventually I asked Mary to initiate the swaying movement herself, and to decide when to reduce it to bring herself to quiet standing. As she practiced, I used my hand on her neck to follow her movements. As her initial movement ‘stutters’ gradually evened out, I could feel her neck muscles becoming softer under my hand. The next time Mary came to quiet standing on

her own, I stepped away, asking, “How does it feel to stand?”

Mary was silent. It was the kind of silence that transpires during the moments when a connoisseur of wine, food, music, literature -- of anything -- appreciates inwardly what she/he has just experienced. Mary’s perceptual ‘savouring’ was visible in the expression on her face. And then... “It still feels a little weird to stand like this; far less than before... Another pause. But the pain is almost gone.” I acknowledged what Mary felt. Given that Mary was now capable of bringing herself into this state I decided it was appropriate to share with her my reasons for doing what we did. It would also serve as a segue to setting her home-study.

“Let me draw your attention to this phenomenon,” I said as I walked over to my bookshelf, selected a small print book, and then returned to Mary. I stood a meter or so in front of her, with the book open at her eye level so she could read it. “Please remain standing where you are, read what’s on this page, and then tell me the gist of what you read.” I observed Mary as she oriented herself to the book, the text, and the meaning conveyed in the words. Her stance changed as she focused her eyes on the words and sentences to grasp

their meaning. Her head followed the direction of her gaze. The rest of herself followed her head. I waited until Mary’s stance was tilted forward enough for her to appreciate the fact that it was so. “Stop, and remain as you are,” I softly instructed her. She did so. “What do you feel under your feet, and what sensations are in your neck?”.

“I’m leaning more towards my toes again, and my neck feels tighter. All that from just reading!?”

I explained to Mary my thinking. Our lessons were to be about learning new postures for reading, comprehending, and thinking -- a posture being a set of body-part relationships in order to perform an action that is situated in a particular environment. For her home study Mary was to notice her standing in everyday situations and, when possible, to recreate the feeling of the new way of standing she had experienced during the lesson.

Before leaving, Mary repeated the oscillatory process we had done while I watched and assisted her to re-create again, and again, the body-mind-world circumstances that generated the new sensations associated with standing upright. Every now and then the look of concentration swept across her face, and with it a change in her breathing. At those times I

reminded Mary of her proven abilities in the lesson and encouraged her to do the activity whilst spreading her attention head-to-foot. Her expression would then soften, and her breathing become fuller.

Mary and I stopped. She was standing upright. "That feels much better", Mary said. I suggested to Mary that she re-create this feeling for herself during the week by re-exploring, with the same quality of attention, the standing oscillatory process from her lesson. Mary agreed, and we made an appointment for the following week.

LESSON 2

Mary stood upright before me, arms hanging freely by her sides, her thumbs brushing the outsides of her thighs. She had been mindfully doing the oscillatory movements throughout the week in a variety of different situations as I had suggested. Her neck pain had subsided, but she continued to feel discomfort. I began to look for clues.

When standing, Mary's head was ever so slightly forward of her shoulders, but not significantly enough to be a source of excessive mechanical stress. Simply standing there, the back of her neck did not appear to be excessively shortened, the curve of the neck was

even across the whole length. Touching the back of her neck I felt for the state of contracture of her cervical musculature. The muscles felt more tense than they needed to be. I ran my hands down her back, feeling for the degree of firmness of her spinal muscles. There was a marked difference compared to Mary's previous session. Her back muscles felt more 'fleshy' and yielded to slight pressure, suggesting they were working far less. I needed more information.

I asked Mary to slowly look at the floor between her feet, and then to look forward again. As she did this, I carefully observed the trajectory of her head through the air. Something caught my eye. On the return journey Mary observably shortened her neck -- the back of her head coming closer to the back of the base of her neck. This shortening resulted in her head never quite arriving at the same high point as when she started the process. In my imagination the ideal skeletal trajectory for the skull in this intentional movement would be for it to travel along the same arc, returning to the same initial height. Also in my imagination, the ideal skeletal motion would be for the movement to be proportionally distributed between all participating bony segments and joints. I compared what I imagined could be happening, with what I saw

Mary doing. Mary proportionally involved her whole neck, upper back, shoulders and head to look down. Returning, all was fine until, at the moment just before her face was vertical, she would complete the lifting by predominantly extending only a few top neck vertebrae. The work associated with lifting the head had become concentrated over a few vertebrae and smaller muscles. Mary did the same thing when she was sitting.

So, here was a way of moving her head and neck that Mary could not stop doing. I described to Mary what I had seen and asked her to feel for it as she moved her head.

"It's like my neck kinks at the last moment. Right at the very top. Everything is coming up evenly and then, 'ka-chink', it buckles." Mary reported.

I watched as Mary, on her own initiative, went into a phase of trying to stop doing what she was doing. "It's no good," she said "when I try to do it differently I feel more discomfort."

"To construct a conclusive counter-argument, you have to know about what you are arguing against. The same thing applies to constructing an alternative way

of moving yourself," I said. "First, let's find out all we can about how you do what you do. As you become more familiar with what's actually going on, you'll be in a more informed place from which to investigate alternatives."

I asked Mary to lie on the table, her shoulder blades resting half-on and half-off the table's edge, and with her head resting on a padded stool the same height as the table. I frequently place a person in this situation when I anticipate exploring extension movements of the neck and upper thorax. The position affords me easier access to a person's whole neck and upper thoracic spine. By supporting the person's head in my hands, and removing the stool, the situation also affords moving the person's head backwards unimpeded by the table's surface.

I proceeded to place supports under Mary's head and legs so that she was comfortable and, more importantly, in a position where her whole self was more available to respond -- her legs, pelvis, lower back, and thorax. Visually scanning how Mary was lying I noticed her head was rolled a little off to her right. I placed my right hand on her forehead and rolled her head a little bit, feeling for her preferences. After rolling her head with my left hand, it seemed

Mary preferred rolling her head to her right. Was this preference reflected further afield than her head? I went seeking. Slipping my fingers behind her neck, I felt for whether one side of her neck was higher from the table -- it was the left side. Continuing further down, I felt under her shoulders. The same thing, the left shoulder was a little higher from the floor. I proceeded, lifting one shoulder, and then the other, away from the table. Mary's thorax yielded with the lifting of her left shoulder, and hardly budged when lifting her right.

Returning to Mary's neck, I used the pads of my fingers to feel the state of contracture of her muscles along either side of the cervical spine. Her upper neck muscles felt harder, less yielding to the same grade of touch as other muscles of her neck. The muscles on the upper right side of her neck seemed to be a little harder, but the significance was not pronounced. The place where Mary's neck muscles felt the firmest was the same place she tended to suddenly extend -- 'ka-chink' -- when raising her head. For some reason these few, smaller muscles, were taking-on the task of lifting the heaviness of the head. And even now, these same muscles remained more contracted than their surrounding neighbours despite the fact that in this body position they had nothing to do.

When a muscle contracts it pulls equally on all bones to which it attaches, moving those bones towards each other. It is possible to move a person so that their bones are displaced as they would be if specific muscles were contracting. The advantage of doing this is that the resulting skeletal configuration slackens the associated muscles, leaving them with nothing to do. The outcome often is that chronically contracting muscles reduce their level of contraction or stop contracting altogether. This was the case with Mary. Holding her head in my hands, pads of fingers nestled under either side of her upper cervical spine, I slowly, attentively, began moving her head. My intent was specific. To move her head as it would move if the posterior muscles in the upper neck were bi-laterally contracting and moving the head backwards and down. The image of skeletal motion in my mind acted as a general map of what is possible. However, it was what I felt in my hands that guided the specifics of what I was doing -- in what directions to go, what angles, how far, how quickly, and so on. I lifted Mary's head and began moving it, mimicking the kind of upper-cervical extension movement I had seen her do earlier when lifting her head in standing and sitting. As I moved Mary's head in subtly different variations, I was waiting to experience that elusive sensation of 'the movement doing itself'.

It's a feeling I have learned to recognise, and it's created when the movement I am doing with the person is 'just right' (the 'Goldilocks effect'), matching how their 'system' is ready to move.

That feeling appeared when I moved Mary's head in a manner that was congruent with what I had found when rolling her head and palpating her upper neck muscles. A slight turn of the head to the right, combined with slightly more shortening in the upper right cervical spine, produced a feeling of lightness of her head in my hands. I hovered Mary's head in that position for a little while. As I did so, her chest started to move more freely as she breathed. Quite slowly, I began returning Mary's head to the initial, somewhat more 'neutral', position from which we had started. Within a few millimeters of moving her head in that direction, I felt the quality of movement change, becoming 'thicker', more resistant. To proceed I would need to apply more force. Instead of proceeding I retraced my steps and once again found that place where Mary's head felt light. I continued moving her head back and forth like this for a while, each time moving her head a little closer towards 'neutral', but only as far as Mary allowed me to go. Eventually, Mary was able to move her head without restriction. This

was great, because each act of bringing Mary's head to 'neutral' was a movement away from her habitual way of organising her head.

While moving Mary's head I was also feeling through her skeleton, discerning the involvement of her spine and thorax. From prior FI experience, and an acquired proprioceptive and imaginative appreciation for how the human skeleton can move, I sensed Mary's chest was not quite following the lead of her head. Could it be more responsive? Leaving one hand under Mary's head, I placed the other hand under the T1 area of her spine, moulding my fingers around the spinous process and forming a 'U' shaped platform of support for the vertebra. As I moved Mary's head with one hand, I felt for the participation of the upper spine and chest with the other hand. With each repetition I listened for, and encouraged, collaborative movement of the head, neck, spine and chest. Gradually, I started changing the initiation -- sometimes the head leading the movement, other times the upper chest, but always moving congruently. Mary's head now felt even lighter in my hands, and the movements of her head and upper chest readily flowed through her torso towards her pelvis. I lowered Mary's head, took my hands away and let her rest a few moments.

"Is it okay if I place my hands on the front of your hip bones?" I asked Mary. She nodded. With my hands placed on the front of her pelvis I pressed slightly, directing the force through the pelvic bones in the direction of the table, and feeling for the sensation of Mary's sacrum settling onto the table. I began rolling her pelvis, head-ward, then foot-ward, feeling for the trajectory of roll that would require me to do the least amount of work to move her. It did not take long to establish a clear, smooth, connection through her spine with her head. Mary's head rolled freely, her neck arching as I rolled her pelvis head-wards, and lengthening as I rolled her pelvis foot-wards. I spoke with Mary, asking her to sense the connection between movements of her pelvis and head. I could see the expression change on Mary's face as she began to 'concentrate'. At that very moment the quality of her movement changed. She stiffened a little, the flow of motion becoming thicker.

"Soften your eyes a little," I suggested. "The way you are paying attention is affecting your movement." Mary understood this from her first lesson and began to focus differently. Her movements became more fluid again. "Feel how you are moving now", I said. "At the count of three, tense your eyes like you did before and

concentrate. Feel if your movement changes. One. Two. Three.” Mary noticed the change. We continued like this for a little while, with Mary switching between broadened attention and concentration, while I continuously rolled her pelvis at the same speed. Every time Mary went into concentration mode, her head would stop rolling in synchrony with her pelvis. When she softened her gaze, her head would resume rolling. Mary noticed this and commented.

“Every time I try to figure out what’s going on, how movements of my pelvis and head are related, I stiffen my neck, and then nothing happens. When I soften my eyes, and don’t concentrate, my head starts rolling again, but I then can’t seem to get an idea of the overall picture of what’s happening.”

Mary had accurately described how her way of organising herself to perceive and think was linked to the troubles she was experiencing. I assured her that she was more than capable of learning other ways of organising herself to think, and that we would explore these in subsequent lessons.

I returned to Mary’s head, picked it up with both hands, and slowly moved it as I had before. The spine followed like a flexible serpent, the chest responded, I could feel, and see, her pelvis moving responsively

on the table. Her head movements were now fluently connected to, integrated with, movements of her torso and pelvis. Placing her head down again, I rolled it side-to-side. Better. In the first moments of movement, she was equally able to orient her face right and left. This was enough.

After assisting Mary to sitting, I asked her to look down and forward of herself again. I watched in anticipation as she lifted her head. Would she create that ‘ka-chink’ in her neck again. Sometimes she did. Other times she did not. With one hand on her neck, and the other on her chest, I assisted Mary to consistently lift her head in a way that was ‘ka-chinkless’.

“That’s better!”, she exclaimed with a big smile on her face.

We repeated the same process with Mary standing. After a while, without my assistance, Mary was able to lift her head, and direct her face forwards, without ‘ka-chinking’ her neck. Instead, her neck remained lengthened, and her chest and shoulder rose with her head. The neck discomfort Mary had been feeling was gone, and in its place a feeling of lightness in standing. I asked Mary to remember that feeling, and practice recreating it during the week.

LESSON 3

In ‘Body and Mature Behaviour’ Moshe Feldenkrais writes:

“The most abstract thought has emotional-vegetative and sensory-motor components. Abstract thinking is possible only in conjunction with a special configuration, or pattern, or state of the body. ...whether it is easily observable or not is only a matter of knowing what and how to observe.”

Mary’s cognitive style was to concentrate her attention. In order to think, analyse, comprehend and understand, Mary had formed a particular way of organising herself. Some of the somatic features of that organisation were the ‘stiffening’ of her extensor muscles and the carriage of her frame in the direction of her gaze. When operating in this psycho-physical manner Mary was not aware of herself or what she was doing. In this lesson we explored more fully how Mary enacted her thinking.

After greeting Mary, I spent a few moments observing her lowering and lifting her head. Towards the end of each lift her upper chest subtly followed her neck

and head, elevating her overall stature. No more neck 'ka-chinks'. Placing my hands on her chest and neck I 'listened' to the quality of her movement. Smooth. Free. Elegant. Mary said she was pleased with her progress. Her neck discomfort had disappeared. I congratulated her for creating this for herself.

In order to observe how Mary manifested her style of thinking I asked her to read some text from a book (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenological treatise titled "The Primacy of Movement") that I had placed on my computer screen. After reading the text she was to explain to me the content of what she had read. I had intentionally set-up this situation in order to observe how Mary actually organised herself to read from a computer screen. The nature of the text, and comprehension task, were needed in order to simulate as closely as possible the nature of her work.

Mary did all the 'correct' things in order to prepare herself to read from the computer screen -- adjusting the height of her chair, tilting the screen to an appropriate angle, positioning herself so the screen was not too close, or too far, and so on. However, the longer she read, the more her cognitive habits manifested. The more she engaged with what she was reading the more her torso and head drifted closer

to the screen. I could see traces of muscular activity around her jaw, ears and temple. The tip of her tongue ever so slightly protruded at the right-hand corner of her mouth. Leaning-in even closer to the screen Mary lent her elbows on the desk and rested her head on her clasped hands. Her facial expression changed as she focused intently on the screen. Most noticeable was the contraction of the muscles around her eyes.

After Mary had finished, she explained to me what she had read. As I listened and observed her, I realised that this was a very different Mary to the one that was sitting huddled around the computer screen a few moments ago. Her face was animated. Her hands gestured freely. With each change of gesture her bodily attitude changed as well. Sometimes she was tall. Sometimes she was small. There was not a hint of postural fixity.

For a while Mary and I discussed ideas raised in the text -- basically the importance of being aware of ourselves as animate beings. Given the topic of our discussion I eventually asked Mary whether she was aware of herself while she was reading the text on the computer screen. She reported knowing she had lent on her elbows and brought her face closer to the screen, but not much else. As I shared with Mary

some of the details of what I had seen her do, her facial expression changed to mild disbelief. It's at times like these I wish I had a video camera permanently installed in my office. That way I could record what clients do, and then they could witness directly the way they enact their behaviours. I explained to Mary about the relationship between thinking, posture and movement; and how her cognitive style involved tightly focusing her attention, excluding all else from focus.

"I have to be able to think quickly, critically and clearly," Mary stated "That's what my work is all about!"

I could hear the concern in Mary's voice. We had reached a crucial moment. Now that Mary was no longer in pain her initial motivation for lessons was absent. However, I believed it was only a matter of time and circumstance until her manner of enacting her thinking created new troubles. I reiterated this to Mary. She understood but was somewhat apprehensive. I assured her that her cognitive abilities would remain intact. We would explore if her existing postural and movement habits could be 'de-coupled' from her cognitive abilities, and new ones 'grafted on'. The old habits would be left intact. If the new ones served her better, she could adopt them. If not, she could rely

on tried-and-true ways of acting. Mary looked a little calmer and agreed.



Overall, what Mary needed to practice was keeping herself in mind while thinking. Given her propensity to visually narrow her field of attention I set up with Mary two situations in which she experienced

successfully maintaining a wider field of attention whilst doing a task located in front of herself.

Lying on her back with her head supported at a height that enabled her to freely roll her head and breathe, Mary looked at a multi-coloured juggling ball I was holding directly in front of her eyes, at about arm's length. I showed Mary each of the four different colours on the ball -- red, blue, green, yellow. As I rotated the ball, she was to name the colour she saw, but only when that quadrant of colour was fully visible. After a few trials, Mary fully understood the 'game' and we moved on to the second stage.

I asked Mary to raise her arms, position her hands on either side of the juggling ball, and commence slowly wiggling her fingers.

"See the ball and your wiggling fingers," I instructed. "Now, very slowly, lower your arms sideways, away from the ball. As you do that look at the ball while still seeing your wiggling fingers. Keep your arms long. Keep wiggling your fingers all the time as you lower your arms. See the ball and your fingers. Stop lowering your arms as soon as your fingers start to disappear from view. Stay there, just a moment. Adjust your arms so you can definitely see your fingers moving in your peripheral vision. And now, slowly return your hands towards the ball. Keep seeing the ball and your fingers. When your hands are next to the ball again, stay there a moment, and watch them all -- the ball and your fingers. Now, lower your arms and rest."

"Am I supposed to look at the ball or my hands?" Mary asked.

"Look at the ball, and your hands," I answered. "Intentionally direct your gaze at the ball, and while you do that keep noticing your hands and those wiggling fingers. When you do it, you'll notice a very different sensation in your eyes and face."

After a number of repetitions Mary seemed to be getting use to this 'unusual' way of using her eyes and attention. We proceeded a little while longer, adding one more element -- that she wiggle her fingers very softly and gently. Like the 'bell-hand' movement, moving her fingers in this even, gentle manner had a flow-on effect, further reducing muscular tension around her eyes and face. She reported her eyes feeling quite 'soft' and 'deep'; her face 'open' and 'glowing'.

Mary now stopped and listened as I described the third part of our activity, which was a combination of the first and second parts. She was to see the ball and her hands and name the quadrant colour when it alone was in full view. We proceeded gradually, with frequent pauses, and time for reflection. I monitored Mary's breathing. When it speeded up and became shallower, I rotated the ball even more slowly, maintaining that speed until her breathing became steady and even again. As soon as I saw the muscles around her eyes tensing, I verbally reminded her about her experience of having 'soft' eyes and that gently moving her fingers could encourage such softening. Mary patiently continued. Her pace had slowed. She no longer snappily named the colours. Her voice had lost its urgent timbre, the tones deepening. I stopped

rotating the ball and we returned to her simply seeing the ball and her hands. She breathed-in deeply, her torso settling more fully on the table. We both paused a moment.

After bending Mary's legs to a standing position, I cradled her head in my hands and I asked her to slowly tilt her legs side-to-side, just enough to sense which direction was easier. After reporting that tilting her legs to her right was easier, I asked Mary to roll herself in that direction and come up to sitting whilst I supported her head. Mary smoothly glided up to sitting, her feet on the floor, her eyes softly open, and her face on the verge of a smile.

"Are you up for doing a little more?" I asked.

Mary nodded, affirming her readiness. I collected a book from the bookshelf -- one with large print on its dust jacket -- held it in front of Mary, and described to her what we were going to do. She was to read out loud several reviews written on its dust jacket. While doing this she was also to move her arms so that her hands travelled from beside the book, sideways around in an arc, until her gently wiggling fingers were just within sight of her peripheral vision. Then she was to slowly return her hands to beside the book, and so on.

Mary quickly realised the task was similar to the one we had done when she was lying down.

"Do you want me to remember what I read and report it back to you?" she asked.

"You can." I replied. "What's more important is that you see and read the words in front of you, and keep noticing your hands. Keep your hands in your attention all the time. Read in such a way that you create the same feeling you had in your eyes and face when you were lying down."

It did not take long for Mary to transfer abilities she had acquired lying down to the new situation. Initially her reading was very slow and irregular -- suggesting she was indeed engaging in the challenge of keeping her arms and fingers within her attention. Several times she needed gentle reminders to pause, which she did understandingly. It seemed as though a connection was developing between the tone and cadence of her speaking and the soft, wave-like movements of her fingers. When Mary was reading fluently, it was time to stop.

"That's what it is like to read and be aware of yourself," I said.

Mary understood. We spoke about her experience, and I suggested that during the week she practice reading whilst being aware of herself -- the sensations associated with breathing, sitting, moving her eyes, and so on. The reading was not to be associated with work. Whatever she chose to read, it was to be for her own enjoyment. As I watched Mary leave my office, I could not help but notice her walk. It was like she was gliding across the floor. Experiencing a different way of using her eyes and attention had indeed affected a change throughout her entire self.

LESSON 4

Mary's fourth lesson was delayed by one week. She called to reschedule her appointment when a project needing urgent completion was assigned to her. Her brief responses to my questions over the phone suggested she was doing her 'home-study', but that it was a challenge on her own. Mary had experienced some positive changes in her lessons. Transferring these experiences to her work tasks was an act of construction, that is, learning. Such learning takes patient, persistent, attentive, practice. Without such practice Mary's existing habits would continuously 'swamp' the new one's she was attempting to instate. That was why I suggested that, initially, she practice in

situations not associated with work. And that was also why I was concerned for Mary now, because the added 'pressure' to perform at work would readily trigger Mary's tried and true working habits.

Mary looked tired when she arrived at my office. Her face and bodily attitude clearly expressed it. She had successfully completed the important project, ahead of deadline. Her neck pain had returned, but the intensity was far less than when she commenced lessons. To her credit Mary had set aside time each day to do her home study. She called it her 'daily meditation' and affirmed she enjoyed doing it and always felt better afterwards. Putting it into practice at work had eluded her however, except in quiet moments -- and there were very few of those. I wished to continue developing ideas from her previous lesson but did not want to tax her attention.

"How would you like to continue investigating the ideas from last lesson?" I asked. "We could do it quite actively like last time, or we could proceed more quietly."

I had barely completed my sentence when Mary requested a quieter approach.

I asked Mary to sit on the table, eyes open, and for a few moments recall the kinds of changes she had felt after her 'daily meditations'. As she recalled, I asked Mary to remain attentive to herself sitting on the table in the room. After a minute or so had passed, I asked Mary how well she was able to keep herself within her field of attention. She spoke of noticing many bodily sensations, and how those sensations were what she tended to now notice after her home study practice. However, not once did Mary mention noticing sensations associated with her face. This area of herself was still a proprioceptive 'blind spot'. In her previous lesson Mary had not noticed changes in her face, mouth and jaw when reading intently. I decided that we would spend this lesson bringing these parts of herself to Mary's attention.

After Mary was made comfortable lying on her back on the table, I began observing her face. Using an imaginary sagittal plane midline I compared the location, size and shape of her eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, nose, nostrils, and the two sides of her mouth. Her right eye looked smaller and closer to the midline. The right-hand corner of her mouth was drawn in closer to the midline, and her lips on that side looked thinner. Also, the distance from the corner of her mouth to the

outside corner of her eye was visibly shorter on the right side than the left. Projecting her facial midline over her jaw, neck and torso I noticed two things. First, the centre of her chin was displaced right of the midline. Second, the midline of her face did not line up with the midline of her torso -- it was angled off to her left, projecting in the direction of her left leg. Softly I began to explore with my hands what I had seen with my eyes.

Gently moving the corners of Mary's mouth, I felt the left readily yielded to a lateral pull, whilst the right did not. Her lips parted more easily on the left than on the right. Using my fingers to simulate the closing movements of the sphincter muscle around the perimeter of the eye, I felt the right eye closed more readily than the left. The mouth, cheek and eye more readily moved together -- shortening the right side of the face -- while the left side of Mary's face more readily lengthened. Slowly and methodically, I used my hands to repeatedly reproduce, then gradually amplify, patterns of muscular contracture I detected on the right side of Mary's face. With each repetition I looked for effects elsewhere on her face, forehead, jaw and neck, and began to include these in my manipulations. Moving her jaw slightly right made shortening the right

side of her face easier, as did displacing her larynx and trachea to the right. Placing my finger on the fleshy underside of her jaw and displacing the root of her tongue right, further supported lateral movement of the jaw to the right.

After 20 minutes or so of investigating and simulating Mary's facial pattern, I began to translate it across to the other side. Using very slow, almost imperceptible movements, I coaxed Mary into doing with the left side of her face that which she did so well with her right. I also used movements on the left side of her face to coax the right side into being organised opposite to how it was habitually held. When I felt Mary's heart rate elevate, or her breathing quicken, I proceeded more slowly. We continued like this until the contours of Mary's face appeared to be transformed.

The midline of Mary's face was now aligned with her torso midline. Lifting Mary's head, I began searching for the place where it felt lightest to hold. Upon finding it Mary sighed. Leaving my right hand cradling her head, I held her chin between my left thumb and index finger and began seeking ways to move Mary that would enable her jaw to open and close smoothly and easily. The easiest coordination involved slightly drawing her jaw forward, downward and slightly to the right whilst

tilting her head backwards with her right ear moving slightly closer to her right shoulder. When I felt in my hands that Mary was able to readily follow me as I moved her in this pattern, I began exploring variations of it. The variations involved different permutations of head and jaw spatial trajectories, as well as different temporal sequencing of head and jaw movements. Commencing these variations, I noticed Mary's eyes darting almost haphazardly under her eyelids. I continued to repeat each variation, finely adjusting it, until her eyes definitely followed the movements of her head, or jaw. Then I proceeded onto the next variation and repeated the same process.

I lowered Mary's head, deliberately positioning it so it rested in the same way it had at the start of her lesson. Then I waited. Would she leave her head to rest as it lay? Or would she move it? Mary's eyes were moving under her eyelids. Left. Right. Left. Right. Was she thinking, comparing, considering? Moments passed. Mary then moved her head so the midline of her face once again lined up with the midline of her torso. Something had changed in Mary's proprioceptive appreciation of her head-torso relationship. Her lips looked fuller, her mouth wider, her eyes (although still closed) more 'open'.

As I assisted Mary to sitting her head felt light. She sat upright without a hint of visible effort, her eyes and mouth perched on a smile. Mary slowly opened her eyes. The way she used her eyes to look had a different quality to before. It was as-if she were looking from behind her eyes (which is of course where retinal stimulation actually takes place) -- a look and feeling I was familiar with from doing particular ATMs -- and not urgently visually grasping to see.

"As you look around the room, sense yourself as well," I instructed. "See the room and keep yourself in mind."

I did not have to prompt Mary to report what she was sensing. Wide eyed, she excitedly shared the new sensations she was experiencing in her neck, shoulders, chest, and... face. Above all else she felt a sense of lightness, her head buoyant. Watching Mary walk was a treat. Her feet alighted on the floor without sound. Each change of direction was led by the eyes and head. Beautiful.

I encouraged Mary to include her face in her awareness during her 'daily meditations'. As additional home study I gave her a recorded ATM lesson to do, involving attending to movements of her tongue and jaw, advising her to do the lesson before going to bed and then reviewing upon waking in the morning --

before getting out of bed -- whatever sensations and movements she could remember.

LESSON 5

Mary called me several days before our next scheduled appointment. Things had been going really well with her practice since her last lesson. But... she was finding the tongue and jaw movements from the ATM challenging. Inquiring further it turned out Mary was attempting to do the movements while working, not just at home. When she did the movements at work she was unable to think clearly. I suggested Mary only do the movements at home and that we would explore them more thoroughly at her next session.

One of Mary's facial habits when reading intently was to poke her tongue out slightly from the right-hand corner of her mouth. I experimented, feeling what happened in myself in order to organise my own tongue, mouth, jaw to do what Mary did. As I produced these movements, I began noticing the effects through my face and neck. The facial pattern I felt forming in my own face was similar to the pattern I had observed on the right side of Mary's face at the start of her fourth lesson. The way Mary used her tongue was not incidental. It was part of how she enacted thinking.

After greeting Mary and conversing with her about her home study and other experiences during the week, I shared with her what I had found through my experimentation. Mary listened with interest.

I then presented Mary with another reading and comprehension task. She was to read a paragraph from a book of her choosing (selected from my bookshelf), and then summarise what she had read. While reading she was to continuously oscillate her tongue, left and right, inside her mouth. Mary selected her book (*Mind in Life: biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of the mind*, by Evan Thompson), sat down, flicked through pages until she chose a page of interest. When Mary was ready, she commenced reading.

She had not been reading long when she stopped, looked at me, and said she could not continue because the words were just not making any sense. I asked Mary to use her hand to show me how fast she had been moving her tongue. Her hand movements were very rapid. I recommended she reduce the speed of her tongue movements by half and try reading again. She commenced but stopped soon after. No good, Mary still found it difficult to read. Next time she reduced the speed of her tongue movements by a further half (one

quarter of the original speed) and found she could read for a while longer before needing to stop.

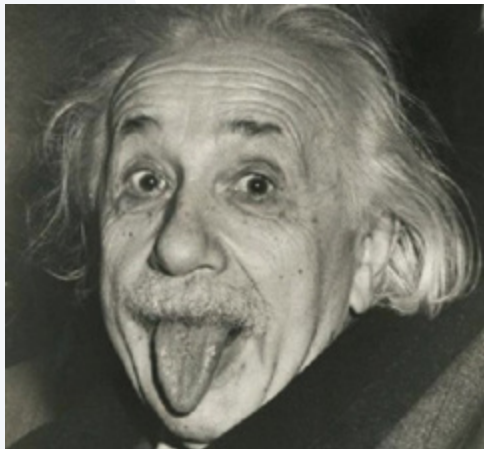
Mary looked at me with an expression of understanding and commented that up to now she had no idea how much her ability to read was so strongly associated with a habitual way of holding her tongue, mouth and jaw. I then asked her whether she would be interested in investigating alternative possibilities, acknowledging that these alternatives may, for a while, slow down her reading and comprehending abilities. Mary was willing to try, and we commenced.

For the next forty minutes or so we explored undifferentiated and differentiated movements of Mary's: head/jaw; jaw/tongue; tongue/head; tongue/larynx; larynx/jaw; larynx/head. We proceeded in discrete steps. First, I observed Mary rolling her head side-to-side, then moving her jaw side-to-side, then moving her tongue side-to-side. She moved herself easily without much extraneous effort. However, Mary appeared somewhat embarrassed by protruding her tongue and moving it. I needed to create a situation in which Mary felt more at ease with poking-out her tongue. We had developed sufficient rapport with each other for me to joke, and be child-like, with her.

Grinning at Mary I said, "You know what my favourite photo of Albert Einstein is?"

She looked at me quizzically, "What?"

"It's this one." I said, and proceeded to poke-out my tongue, taking the tip towards my chin.



The expression on Mary's face told me she knew the photo to which I was referring.

"See, geniuses are free to be silly," and I poked-out my tongue at Mary like a kid, tilted my head side-to-side and said "Naaaaaa".

Mary joined in, poking out her tongue mockingly at me, replying with "Na, Na, Na." We laughed.



Once again, I observed Mary moving her tongue. Her 'seriousness' and 'embarrassment' had left her as she wiggled her tongue freely right and left.

I then began to move Mary, first rolling her head, then moving her jaw, and then moving her larynx side-

to-side by gently holding the surrounding cartilage. Mary was still in good humour, and anticipating my next move she said, "I guess you're going to move my tongue now huh!?" I replied I was, but first she was going to hold it and move it herself.

I collected a clean, ironed handkerchief from my office draw, walked back over to Mary, and presented it to her to handle and inspect.

After explaining to her how to use the handkerchief to hold her tongue we proceeded, with Mary holding her tongue briefly and then pausing, letting herself swallow and rest her tongue inside her mouth. After a number of repetitions Mary appeared relatively at ease with holding her own tongue, at which point I asked her to gently pull on her tongue to move it right and left. I watched as she did so, observing that she moved her jaw with her tongue, that her eyes moved in the direction she was pulling with her hands, but that her head remained relatively still. We continued a little while longer, but with my hands placed over Mary's, and with me leading her hands to move her tongue.

We both stopped and rested. I watched Mary resting. Her breathing gradually slowed. Her lips appeared

fuller. Her mouth wider. Her chin a little further from her nose, suggesting a change in jaw position.

Mary agreed to allow me to hold her tongue with the same handkerchief she had used. Proceeding unhurriedly, but with clear intent, I rolled Mary's head with one hand and moved her tongue in the same direction as her head with the other hand. After three or so rolls I stopped, allowing Mary time to swallow and rest her tongue inside her mouth. We proceeded in this fashion of doing a few movements and resting. Next, I maintained Mary's tongue in the middle as I rolled her head. After that I moved her tongue right and left while maintaining the head in place. Finally, I moved Mary's tongue in the opposite direction to which I was rolling her head. I then proceeded to explore similar sets of combinations with Mary's jaw/tongue, and larynx/hyoid/tongue.

Mary and I rested again. A long, silent rest. When Mary swallowed her movements appeared to happen in slow motion. Her lips, mouth, tongue, jaw, throat, face, and head all were involved in what appeared to be an integrated, luxurious, attenuated movement.

"Can I go to sleep now?", Mary asked with a faint, contented smile on her face.

I asked Mary to roll her head with the intent of sending herself to sleep. Her movement was transformed compared to before -- the movement of the head and neck appeared fluid, without a tint of muscular effort. The same quality manifested when she moved her jaw and tongue. I rolled Mary's head, feeling for her responsiveness in her neck, spine and thorax. The connection to these parts of her, through her head, felt clear and vivid. Gently I pushed and pulled through her spine from the head, sensing for a connection through to her pelvis. After a few movements that connection appeared, and I could feel Mary's pelvis rocking in tune with the movements of her head.

After assisting Mary to sitting I allowed her some time to orient herself and attend to her sensations. Moments passed in silence. Without need of an invitation, Mary stood, waited a moment and began to walk. What experiences of herself was she savouring?

"I have not felt like this in years." she said without breaking the rhythm of her walk. "Thank you".

Mary walked for a while longer. She finally walked towards me and stopped. I suggested she do some gentle home study. First, I gave her a recorded ATM lesson involving movements of the tongue within the mouth around the upper and lower teeth. Second,

lying down she was to roll her head, jaw open, tongue protruding beyond the teeth and (1) move her head/tongue in the same direction (2) keep her tongue in the middle while rolling her head (3) move her head/tongue in opposite directions to each other whilst slowly, continuously rolling her head. Mary departed aesthetically satisfied with herself.

LESSON 6

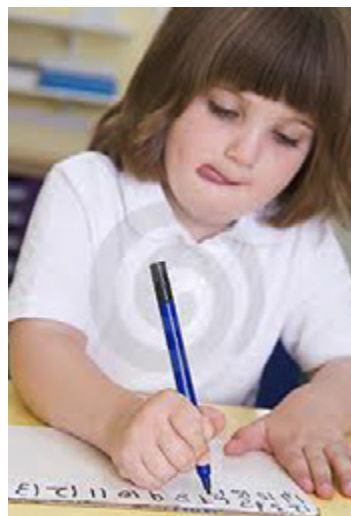
I did not see Mary again for three weeks. She called to say she had been assigned to complete urgent work in Canberra and requested an appointment when she returned.

Mary arrived in my office, greeted me, and then said she had decided not to continue with lessons. She spoke of struggling with the tongue lessons I had given her to do, and described how her work performance would drop as soon as she tried to do something different with her tongue. Mary felt she had achieved and learned more than she anticipated through our lessons together, and that she was okay with leaving her tongue habit 'as is'. I noted Mary's voice was calm and considered. She had thought things through and made a choice. I inquired about what she had been doing, and Mary described in detail her systematic home study. She was successfully transferring to her

work many aspects of what she had experienced in lessons, but this “tongue-stuff” was a different matter. She was very content with her overall progress and was willing to leave the tongue “ happily doing its own thing” she said with a laugh.

My role as a Feldenkrais teacher is to assist a person do what she/he wants -- to better enact their intention. It is not my place to evaluate their intent, nor to judge what she/he have chosen to do. It was clear to me Mary had made an informed choice, and that she was satisfied with it. So, I asked Mary what she would like to do in this session. She wished to re-experience the lesson we did with the ball and fingers. I inquired what specifically was it about that lesson that she wanted to feel again. Mary said it was the feeling of “neutrality” in her eyes that she remembered -- she could be busy with her eyes, and yet still feel calm. I agreed, and we proceeded, re-visiting processes from her third lesson.

Towards the end of the process, I added a variation. While Mary was still lying supine on the table, I asked her to position her right hand directly in front of her right eye, at a distance she could clearly see her fingers. I supported Mary’s arm and added a detail -- to turn her forearm so the fingertips pointed towards the right eye. Mary did so.



“Close your eyes. Now, lightly squeeze your fingertips and thumb together,” I instructed. “Increase the pressure. Increase it some more. A little more. What do you sense happening in your eyes?”

Mary exclaimed, with surprise, that her eyes were tense. How could this be? She was squeezing her fingers, and yet she felt her eyes squeezing too! I have done this with many people, with fairly consistent effect. Whatever the explanation is for the effect -- perhaps a learned correlation between mental effort, focal use of the eyes to visually guide a complex manual task, and use of the hands to perform that task, learning to write for instance -- the fact is that people experience it. The pedagogical value of such

experiences is that it enables people to appreciate that enacting learned behaviours involves coordinated movements of the whole self; and that modifying behaviour involves re-coordinating movement relationships between all involved parts of the self -- not just ‘a’ part.

I verbally guided Mary into doing “bell-like”, opening/closing, movements with her right hand. Mary did these with sensuous dexterity. We then repeated the same process with her left hand (same effect), and then with both hands (more pronounced effect). The same neurophysiological ‘mechanisms’ that triggered increased tension in the ocular and facial muscles when Mary tensed the muscles in her hand/forearm, now operated to produce the opposite effect. As we proceeded through the process I watched as Mary’s eyes went from rapid flickering to quiet stillness. We repeated the same process in sitting, but with Mary’s hands positioned comfortably, away from and in front of her chest. After this Mary opened her eyes.

“That’s the feeling I wanted to experience again,” she said.

“And what will you do with that feeling,” I asked. “When could you invoke it in your daily life?”

Mary calmly looked at me, considering the question. She scanned the room, stood up, walked across to my desk, sat down on the seat, and placed her hand on the computer mouse. She turned to look at me and described how she could manipulate the mouse differently and use that action to relax her eyes when working. I nodded, impressed. Mary had learned how to play, and I believed she would continue to improve.

POSTSCRIPT

About one year later, by chance, I met Mary in a shopping centre car park. Her neck pain never returned. Yes, she still stuck her tongue into the corner of her mouth, but it did not bother her. She had spoken with work colleagues about her Feldenkrais lessons, sharing with them many of the things she did. A number of them were able to use what Mary had shared with them, and found it was of benefit. Perhaps the social act sharing her experiences with others enabled Mary to conserve that which she had come to know about herself. ■

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NEXT ISSUE

THE THEME FOR OUR 2024 JOURNAL IS: INTEGRATION

Moshe's methodology arose from the integration of many different influences he was exposed to over his lifetime, resulting in a groundbreaking unique approach that synthesised and applied concepts from many different fields. What influences can you identify / unpack that shaped Moshe's teaching? What life experiences shape your particular blend of practice? What have you learnt through Feldenkrais that carry through into other avenues in your life?

What is Integration? Perhaps you could describe the opposite of integration - when things are disparate, disjointed, clunky, isolated, distorted? Is Integration our point of difference? If so, do we emphasise it enough? Deliberate choices in how to wrap up a lesson to leave our clients with a sense of wholeness, of being able to take what they've learnt into everyday functioning.

In order to understand integration we have to know differentiation. We have many 'tricks' for differentiating, what are your favourites? This topic of integration and differentiation really lends itself to case studies to illustrate what these chunky words are all about.

Are we too hung up on differentiating 'ourselves' from other modalities; does that get in the way of wider integration with the mainstream healthcare system. Or are we not articulate enough about what exactly our differences are and why they're key additions for this modern age of shrinking attention spans.

You are invited to submit your contributions by Aug 31st 2024.

You can email contributions, comments, feedback and suggestions to: nationalnewsletter@feldenkrais.org.au.

You may also post a comment on the Feldenkrais Australia Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FeldenkraisAustralia/>.

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