

Recovering the Natural Wisdom of the Body

The Feldenkrais Method® ~ Liza Weaver Brickey MA



We have spent much of our lives focusing on our ability to think abstractly, believing that the ability to be the cornerstone of intelligence. We have paid little attention to the innate intelligence of our bodies. The *Feldenkrais Method*® is a system which teaches us how to use ourselves, how to become more flexible, and how to find the innate organic wisdom of our bodies.

We often find that problems arise after 25-35 years of misuse of our bodies. We begin to experience low back pain, tight shoulders or more serious problems such as degenerating discs and joint stiffness. Are there better ways to use one's body? How can you restore this innate organic wisdom? In the *Feldenkrais Method*®, awareness and movement are the keys. As a teacher guides you through various movement strategies, a wide array of changes occur. You may find that you no

longer work so hard in sitting and standing. As a result, you may experience more flexibility through your body, posture that is effortless, and easy and increased vitality.

It sounds simple, but it is actually very profound: in each person's hands is their spine, and in their breathing styles rests the entire history of that individual. Every time you take a step, your whole self is in motion. With each series of *Feldenkrais*® lessons, you will begin to regain movement in your neck, shoulders and pelvis. But, it is actually your entire self which begins to feel this added grace.

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984) developed this unique method of combining awareness and movement.

The Feldenkrais Method® is based on the understanding that the vast potential and intelligence of each human being can be tapped through movement.

Dr. Feldenkrais was a physicist, engineer, mathematician, and Judo Master. He spoke five languages fluently. In 1933, he received a doctorate in Physics from the Sorbonne in Paris, and he subsequently worked as a research assistant with Frederic Curie-Juliot.

Dr. Feldenkrais developed his method in an effort to rehabilitate his own recurring knee injury. He brought together principles from his scientific background, his acuity as an observer and his knowledge of judo and body mechanics. The *Feldenkrais Method®* is a system that focuses on our habitual patterns of movement in relation to gravity. The culmination of his work is based on the understanding that the vast potential and intelligence of each human being can be tapped through movement. His well-known pupils and supporters included David Ben-Gurion, Margaret Mead, Peter Brook, Yehudi Menuhin, Julius Irving (Dr. J.), and Dr. Karl Pribram.

The *Feldenkrais Method®* has two forms: the individual sessions and the group classes. The individual sessions, called *Functional Integration®* (FI), usually last from 30 minutes to one hour. Clients work with clothes on as a practitioner guides them through gentle manipulations. These sessions are individually tailored to the client's specific needs.

The group classes are called *Awareness Through Movement®* (ATM) are interesting and a great deal of fun. A group of students are led through a series of exercises, usually lying on the floor. The astonishment comes at the end of the lesson, when the students return to standing. These seemingly innocent movements have led to a greater sense of self, effortless posture, and a reduced strain in the back. There is a sense of well-being all over.

Let me tell you a story about a client of mine. I will call her Sarah. Sarah is a single parent in her mid-thirties, a hair stylist with a very successful practice. She came to me because she was suffering from Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Her wrists were in continual pain due to the nature of her work. In the course of 10-15 sessions she got the relief she wanted. In the process, she learned a great deal about how she used her hands, wrists and arms. But, surprisingly, the benefits for Sarah were even greater. As she began to bring attention to herself, she realized that slowing down was crucial for her. By slowing down periodically during individual sessions, she discovered many forgotten resources in a more healthy and integrated body – a source she hadn't tapped into for a long time. She also found she had more energy and vitality.

The *Feldenkrais Method®* teaches us to bring attention to ourselves through movement. As Julia Cameron wrote in *The Artist's Way*, "The reward of attention is always healing." The *Feldenkrais Method®* is a unique way of integrating the mind and body. Its usefulness is as varied as the desires and concerns of the people who come to it. For some people, improving their skiing is important. For others, reducing low back pain. And yet, for others, it is a doorway in discovering aspects of themselves. But, with each person it will be a coming home – a coming home to the 4 nature wisdom of the body.

There are many highly skilled practitioners of the Feldenkrais Method through Northern California and the world. Please contact Liza Weaver Brickey MA @ florademayo123@gmail.com, or The *Feldenkrais Method®* of Somatic Education. @ <http://www.feldenkrais.com/>

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