

Feeling more connected

This article refers to the lesson with the same title that can be heard here:

www.feldenkrais.co.uk/audio_viewer.php?whichAudio=80

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During this last year, when many of us started to feel somewhat disconnected from others, the world around us and also - to some extent - from ourselves, I found it soothing to lie on my bedroom floor and bring my attention more inward. Attending to the ebb and flow of my breathing, sensing my contact with the supportive surface of the floor and exploring simple movements often helped me to reconnect to myself and to restore a sense of balance and equilibrium. To help with this internal focus, I would often begin by covering my eyes or ears with my hands so that there was no invitation to see or hear. In this way I could orient myself more within myself, momentarily putting the outside world on hold. I might then progress to introducing simple movements of my eyes and hands or branch

out into gentle movements in space.

This process is not unlike of what happens in a Feldenkrais class. The movements we enquire into might be different and possibly more dynamic, but the starting point is always ourselves, our internal sensations while we move, explore and learn. We take time out of a possibly busy day and afford ourselves the luxury of turning our attention inward, listening to our inner world and sensations. Attending to ourselves in this way can be nurturing and calming, but it is also conducive for learning. Moshe Feldenkrais reminded his students many times that the actions he taught them were of no special importance but that the way his students inquired into their experience of these movements was paramount for their ability to feel better, to learn and improve.

As human beings, we live with the dual reality of having an inner and outer world. Our skin forms the boundary between these two interrelated worlds, which constantly influence and inform each other. Moshe Feldenkrais noted that we know about the outside world through our internal appreciation of it and that we have no other means of experiencing the external world than through our senses. He took counting as an example. How do we count objects? We can see them but how do we actually count them? By moving our eyes and attention from one object to another, Feldenkrais concluded, or by touching one object after another if we are not able to see.

We might therefore make the mental leap that the way we feel inside influences how we perceive the world around us and how we relate to it. If two people listen to the same piece of music, they will appreciate it in different ways. A trained ear will pick up many more nuances and might therefore have a richer experience. When during difficult times we manage to feel easier and more comfortable within ourselves we most likely experience our environment as a friendlier place. Connecting better to ourselves and our inner resources, either through Feldenkrais lessons or by other means, will change the way we feel and relate to ourselves and in turn to others and the world around us.

The way Feldenkrais lessons call many parts of ourselves into an action, the way lessons consider our entire self while we move, including our thinking, sensing and feeling, has an integrative quality. Rather than feeling fragmented, frazzled and anxious, we can begin to feel more centred and collected influencing not only how we experience ourselves but also our environment. In addition, group or individual Feldenkrais lessons encourage us to find creative solutions to movement questions or difficulties, which in turn supports our ability to stay more flexible with our responses in difficult times.

During this last year, my place on the floor has become a respite, a resource and in many ways also a launching pad. My movement explorations supported my physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, gave me more insight into how I am and how I perceive and relate to the world around me. A skill worth developing also in good times.

If you would like to explore more Feldenkrais lessons to support your physical, mental or emotional wellbeing please head to www.feldenkrais.co.uk where you can find free audio recordings or a list of

teachers offering weekly classes and workshops. My own classes are currently on Zoom and you can find details here www.feldenkraisbrighton.co.uk