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Relieving pain by enlivening the question of "Myself"

Are you concerned with pain, either your own or someone else's?

When pain is there, the passionate question is: "How do I get out of this?" But the rational question is also important: "How did I get this way?" To think about the course of pain, let's take as an example neck pain.

Will you recall, please, the last time you parallel parked. You turned your head to look behind. How did you do it? Did you turn the head by itself? With the shoulders? With the shoulders and hips?

Honestly, it's hard to remember.



So now, please, try a similar movement. There will be three stages.

To begin, sit in an upright manner. Look straight ahead. Rest your hands on your lap.

1) Turn your head to the right, but keep the shoulders fixed. Return your head to middle. Repeat 5x.
Ask yourself: how far do you turn? Where can you see? How do you feel while moving?

Sit a moment quietly in neutral.

2) Turn your head again to the right and add your shoulders, the left forward and the right back. Let your upper torso move too.

Observe -- this is a bigger movement, isn't it? Your head turns further, you can see more, and the feeling is more flowing.

Again, sit a moment quietly in neutral.

3) Turn your head to the right, include the shoulders and upper torso, and add the lower body: shift your weight to the right hip and press the left knee forward. Also add your hands: let them move with the turn.

Now turning is a big, obvious movement, and you turn further and more easily.

So! Apply this to parking. If, as you park, you turn the head alone, you strain your neck, a little bit each time. But, if you include more of the body, then each time you preserve your neck.

This insight is fundamental to my teaching through the Feldenkrais Method. When I am with a client or group, I often say, "In turning, the neck needs for its *friends* to get involved. It needs not to be alone." Or I say, "It's about the kinetic chain. How the shin bone is connected to the thigh bone." And I have heard one of my colleagues say, "It's about synergy." In sum, actions are easier when the body parts work together! Neck pain can clear up like this, and so can so many other pains -- lower back pain, knee pain, ankle pain, shoulder pain, etc.

It's about focusing on myself: "How do I do this action now? How might I do it otherwise?" For me, and for many others, following this process has led, gradually, to living with less pain and more comfort.