



Maureen A. McHugh

Feldenkrais Practitioner

Winter 2018

January -- March

Cultivating Flow with the Pelvic Clock

Would you, please, imagine the following:

Following through on one of your New Year's resolutions, you sign up for a Winter exercise class through Arlington County. On the first day, you are early. You find the room and enter through the back door. Although you are the first to arrive, twelve mats have already been set up. They are laid out in a rectangle, and there is room for another row at the back. On the wall at the front of the room is a clock.

Feeling conservative, you walk toward the mat that is furthest from the door and in the last row. As you arrive at the mat, you see something unusual. Looking toward the front of the room, you see a "double" of the clock slide leisurely down the wall and along the floor until it comes to rest on the mat where your hips will be. You are standing near the top of the mat, where your head will be, and see clearly that the clock's "12" is close to your feet, and the "6" is close to your head. Your head tilts to the side in silent astonishment. The double settles into the fabric of the mat. A moment later, a second double slides off the wall, travels along the floor and comes to rest in the place where your head will be. Again, the 12 is closer to your feet and the 6 closer to the top of your head. This second double also blends into the fabric.

In the meantime, another student has arrived. You see the same thing happening on her mat. But she is not surprised. With an accustomed air, she lies down and makes herself comfortable. You decide to do the same.

This imagination is the setup for the one of the very practical and well-loved Feldenkrais movement themes, which we call the Pelvic Clock. The lesson begins when you are asked to lie on your back with your knees bent, your arms and head comfortable and:

1. Rock the pelvis, lightly, from side to side. Sense the weight shifts and silently use the vocabulary that you are rocking the pelvis from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock.
2. The same idea, but rocking from 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock.
3. Shift weight around the pelvis in a diamond pattern: 12 – 3 – 6 – 9.
4. The same as above, but smoothing the diamond into a circle.
5. Same as above, but circling in the other direction.

If you go slowly and pay close attention, you are likely to observe that your circle is, to begin with, not even. But, by continuing, most likely, gradually, it will become smoother.

Next, you will be guided through a similar sequence with the head. Then, combinations between the pelvis and the head.

There may also be enough time to explore a circle of an arm in relation to the pelvis or the head. And, best of all, a circle of the ribs in relation to any of the other parts.

This is comfortable, patient work. It brings about more connectivity and flow between the torso and the limbs. It yields surprising benefits in terms of relief from pain and improvement in the overall sense of well-being.