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Feldenkrais: The gift of awareness

People come to the Feldenkrais Method for many reasons, including relief from pain, increasing limberness, becoming more centered and exploring new possibilities in movement. The way the Feldenkrais Method unites these diverse goals is by focusing on awareness. By this, we mean becoming more conscious of what you are doing.

As Feldenkrais said,

“The aim [of the Feldenkrais Method] is a person that is organized to move with minimum effort and maximum efficiency, not through muscular strength, but through increased consciousness of how movement works.”

This “increased consciousness of how movement works” includes several layers.

1. Greater depth of sensing. As infants we are specialists in sensing and observing the world around us. As we grow older, though, the sensing and noticing retreat, while doing takes precedence. Doing can progress to insisting, and, ultimately, to unpleasant experiences of “All will, no skill.” This is the phrase Feldenkrais used to describe his own attitude while playing soccer as a young man. It led to a serious, life-long knee injury. Skill

development depends intimately on return to the child’s mode of sensing and observing.

2. More focus on coordination. The body consists of 206 bones and 360 joints. How are they coordinated? In a young person – beautifully! But as the person gets older, and sits too much, and experiences injury, the coordination declines. With focus it can improve.

3. Playful exploration of other ways to take an action. Children have more fun than adults. ...and adults take more responsibility. Adults can remain adult and still restore more fun to their lives by taking familiar moves in unfamiliar ways. The Feldenkrais variations are guided by neurological principles. One is that unrelieved sameness is not good for you.



What do you get by cultivating awareness in this manner? Many good things. Quite possibly, exactly what you are looking for when you come to Feldenkrais, and, quite possibly, more than you thought was possible.