



THE WELLNESS SALON

Musings on wellness from Donna Simmons, Feldenkrais® practitioner

No. 3 January 15, 2014

Life expresses itself in movement...

In this issue I'd like to address the Feldenkrais Method[®], the principle (but not the only) modality I use in my practice. Many books have been written on this subject, and you can find the Wikipedia entry on Moshé [here](#), but I'll give you a snapshot. Moshé Feldenkrais (1918-1984) was a Russian émigré to Palestine who worked variously as a laborer and a cartographer before moving to Paris to study civil engineering. There, he earned a doctoral degree at the Sorbonne. Along the way he took classes from Marie Curie, and was a research assistant to Frédéric Joliot-Curie. He also met Jigoro Kano, founder of judo, in Paris. (Moshé had studied jiu-jitsu while in Palestine.) He eventually acquired a second-degree black belt in jiu-jitsu.

During the war, Moshé worked on anti-submarine projects (including sonar) and taught self-defense techniques in Scotland. It was during this time that he aggravated a knee injury suffered while playing soccer in his youth. Rather than submitting to surgery, he began to apply his formidable intellect to the subject of his own body's physical rehabilitation – the beginnings of what would come to be known as the Feldenkrais method.

For adherents, I apologize if this sketch leaves out important elements of Moshé's life. What I wish to convey is the sense of a man who had a diverse and rigorous intellectual life that he fused with an athlete's understanding of human physiology to develop a unique approach to healing and neurological reeducation.

In the last few months I have enjoyed an opportunity to teach once again in an undergraduate professional Feldenkrais training. It has been a long time since I worked with beginning students, as the last 10 years or so I have taught or mentored only post-graduates with a minimum of 5 years experience. Being with this fresh batch of students has made me look closely at the foundation of my practice as well as review the basic principles of the Feldenkrais Method. Moshé provided a way of **thinking** about human anatomy and function as well as a **system** of touch and "listening hands" to help facilitate or resolve instances of pain and discomfort in the body. We all have patterns shaped and conditioned by stress or trauma; it is in how we deal with them that there is a possibility for change. We can change the patterns both in our body and in our minds by paying attention, without judgment and take action once we have not only the **awareness** but also a new option. This is the gift as it were of the Feldenkrais Method.

In my own practice, I use the Feldenkrais Method in combination with a variety of other modalities to find a way forward for my clients. I believe that it is this integrated approach that best meets your needs. In my next newsletter I will describe the integration of these other modalities, such as Cranial-Sacral Therapy.

Namaste, Donna