

# Feldenkrais® Legacy Forum: Transformation of Trainings Group

## Trainer Interviews

No identifying Trainer names

Original **Question 3** combined two questions into one. This transcript document contains all the Trainer responses to that original question.

Original wording of **Question 3** as asked to Trainers:

*Where do you see the Feldenkrais® work going — does training need to evolve to support that? If so, how.*

Subsequently, we separated the two-part question...we called it:

- **Question 3:** *Where do you see the Feldenkrais work going?*
- and
- **Question 4:** *Do training programs need to evolve? If so how?*

While the transcript is for the original two-part question, we prepared Themes for each part (Question 3 and Question 4).

### Question 3

*Where do you see the Feldenkrais work going?*

### Themes for Question 3

These common themes were identified by the Transformation of Trainings Group in their reading of the Trainer's interview transcripts.

- Expand Feldenkrais into other somatic domains
- Success is not becoming well known
- Balancing respect for Moshe's foundational ideas with evolving the work
- Formulas, techniques and experimenting

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### Common themes followed by verbatim quotes from the Interviews

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#### Expand Feldenkrais into other somatic domains

I see the work having tremendous possibilities in many, many different domains, and it would be foolish of me to predict in what area the work might catch on most enthusiastically.

But it might be education. It might be music; it might be rehabilitation. Now that being said there are a tremendous number of these fundamental ideas that we've been talking about that might take root in other domains without the name Feldenkrais, attached to them.

It seems to me that you don't need the Feldenkrais Method, (Capital M) to take these ideas and education, or to take these ideas into well, even maybe athletic training, or even into this idea of complexity theory.

It may be his ideas will influence domains before the Method (Capital M) does.

As the lessons get more recognized by a research process I think they will find their way into lots of different professions and will probably be reduced to the familiar for those professional fields. So we either reduce it to the familiar or we expand what is familiar to us and go back to our library and start looking. I think that is essential to the future of the method. Otherwise it will become reduced to an auxiliary practice for improving your showmanship, fitness or performance or something like that.

And that's why Moshe thought the whole world will benefit from this work. It'll be a different world as the result of it. And I still think that's true.

But I think maybe what we're discovering is that we're coming closer to just finding our niche in the world. Like the Alexander technique. That doesn't seem to shrink more but it doesn't seem to grow more either. Even when it's mentioned in movies and TV or Norman Doidge's book, *The Brain's Way of Healing* – We get mentioned. It's a blip, it's not enough.

And so I've come to the belief that our work is absolutely important, without question, essential. It can be essential to people, right, and it is to many people. But that we're not the end-all of the thing that's going to change the world. I think it's unrealistic for that reason.

I do think it will continue to appear more. There is a lot of specialization. You are going to see it more in things like the dance, voice, acting and music schools and in the Pilates studio.

Where we will not see it enough, maybe, is in the medical world. Okay, so the future is that we are going to be showing up in more places and we are going to have more outreach. We are going to have more offshoots like you mentioned. And we are going to have more reductionistic offerings. That is the down side.

It is already happening.

One of the strongest values to our Guild is the service mark. I was like a big protector of the service mark. You know what – I'm not so sure anymore.

Think when Pilates lost its service mark. There is a lot of good and a lot of bad Pilates. But there's a lot of Pilates, there's a lot out there.

Trying to stand out as different, to be part of that and then identify the differences. I think it would be good if training programs included that kind of work.

I also think that would make us more articulate and help us not to fall into how different we are than everybody else's.

We need to meet the rest of the knowledge world and feel like we are on an eye-to-eye equal level and engage with them. But we need to learn their language because most of them probably will not learn ours until we can translate Feldenkrais into theirs.

### **Success is not becoming well known**

I think that to stay true to the Feldenkrais Method, you have to be willing to stay small. What I mean is, in my view, the only way the method becomes really popular is if you compromise it.

Success is not getting well-known. Success within the Feldenkrais Method is staying true to that method.

So not to fall into that is really hard if your goal is to be popular. So, I say let go of being popular. Be popular enough that you can pay for bills.

Now I would not be averse to people who say, "You know, I really want to combine this with something."

I am not personally attracted to the idea that we must have more people coming, that we must need thousands of people to become Feldenkrais practitioners.

That is not the Feldenkrais Method. That is intelligent exercise, or a little piece of the method, but it is a reductionistic watered down piece. So you will see that. You will see a dilution of quality as there is a proliferation of the work. I do not know how it can be otherwise, but I hope I am wrong.

## **Balancing respect for Moshe's foundational ideas with evolving the work**

It is important to me that we walk the tightrope of richly valuing Moshe without creating a false idol, without lionizing him, which is what usually happens in most movements and traditions. The teacher becomes this godly-like character. I think that is dangerous.

I think it would be helpful, through hopefully restored video, to keep some images of Moshe alive in the current trainings, without overdoing it which I do not think is helpful. I do not know if many people are still using videos as the dominant mode. I think that would be unfortunate. That was true for a long time. But I think to supplement live teaching so people have some relationship to Moshe I think is a good idea.

I have not thought of this before but I think it would be helpful in training programs to have a historical context of somatics as a development.

So for me Somatic Education is basically a descriptor for consumers who will go, "Oh right it's for my body, I'll try it out." But that is not a professional statement as far as I am concerned. It is a reduction to the familiar which is useful to engage with customers, but we, as teachers training other people, should challenge the assumption that that covers it.

So, the point is that without engaging in exploring the ideas hidden away in many of Moshe's quick statements in Amherst and particularly in San Francisco, I think we are going to pass along the techniques but not the habit or demand to ask another question and keep looking. So that has to be part of the training without letting people get away with reducing it to what they think they understood out of a statement.

It is uncomfortable. Moshe was uncomfortable to be around because he was not going to be nice if you were asking dumb questions. He would just say, "That is a dumb question, go away". But when you asked a good question he would spend time with it. So that is what we have to do with the trainings.

So I think the work has to go through continued iterations of more and more highly refined professional presentation. I think the vagueness that we continue to convey in the training programs has to slowly dissipate.

We can learn templates of action that we do in our training sessions and try to apply those templates to people.

But that does not mean we have given a functional-based, principle-based lesson that actually supports a person in finding their own highest level of expression and functioning. So I think the work has to evolve further and further toward that.

If Feldenkrais is a river, there's many streams flowing into it. And there's a way in which Moshe took these, this kind of knowledge, knowledge in action, knowledge applied, and made it more accessible to people.

But there is a difference between the Feldenkrais Methodology of keep doubting and keep thinking and exploring versus the idea of techniques that are somehow fixed in stone once 'Moses' spoke them to a recorder in Tel Aviv on Alexander Yanai Street and are now the revered word of the prophet.

That means not having a review of the literature of what Dr. Feldenkrais wrote and produced, but having a more complete understanding of the literature that also supports his work. I think that is integral to the process of bringing our work forward into the next generation of practitioners.

### **Formulas, techniques and experimenting**

There needs to be some sort of process by which reduction to the familiar in interpreting lessons is not considered the most advanced way of thinking about it.

I'm thinking that what's happening is that the method is regressing. That's where I'm afraid that it's going. That people are going back to parceling things out, back to making set pieces and protocols, and back to being very clever.

And that's not everybody and it's not in every situation. But I see it as an unfortunate trend with an idea of trying to define what the method is. Which I think is, it can be defined in lots of different ways, and some ways are just ineffable – you just can't speak them. So that's my fear.

I think that Feldenkrais thought it was inevitable that the method decline. He thought it was inevitable that people would begin to make formulaic that he did not want to see as being formulaic.

Which I found thrilling, was because they have this attitude- Moshe's attitude – of well what happens if I break the rules. The empirical, experimental, let's find out. Let's notice what happens. Again feedback. It happened organically. I think the method will continue to develop that way.

The techniques alone are without really trying to deeply understand that the complexities of the phenomena he was exploring and made his FI work so phenomenally effective was a different understanding of who people are.

But there is a tendency of consumers to think they are customers of trainings and demand what the product is that they expect

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## **Question 4**

*Do training programs need to evolve? If so how?*

### **Themes for Question 4**

These common themes were identified by the Transformation of Trainings Group in their reading of the Trainer's interview transcripts.

#### **Zoom**

- Use of Zoom
- FI on Zoom

#### **Models and Topics**

- ATM Only Training
- Other Models of Training
- Trainings in Europe *versus* the USA
- Process for Trainer Certification
- Evaluating Training Programs
- Financial

#### **Trainings**

- Improving Graduates' Confidence and Capabilities
- Models for Practicums
- Apprenticeship
- Ongoing Learning

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## Common themes followed by verbatim quotes from the Interviews

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### ZOOM

- **Use of Zoom**

My experience so far, as a not super-techie kind of person, is I have been really impressed with the value of Zoom for teaching. Not only because it was the only way we could do it, but going forward I am going to do some Zooming as well.

I think there is a real difference between a program that would be fully on Zoom or supplemented by Zoom. I am still old school in the sense that I think being in the room, breathing the same air, hugging, and face to face meetings give something that cannot be done on screen. Once that is implanted into the two nervous systems, the two human beings, then when they meet online there is a whole different kind of interaction that is possible. It is like the resonance between the bodies no longer require in-person meeting if that is already linked.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you see the Zoom application working with teaching? Or do you think FI can be taught over Zoom? How do you see this kind of bringing in of different aspects of distance technology?

If Moshe's dream was to broadcast Awareness Through Movement lessons on international satellite television, I think this is an improvement over that dream.

At the same time that Moshe was talking about that, Bucky Fuller was talking about making cable TV a basis for education and for voting. His thing about it was – through whatever your cable or your remote or whatever the interface was – you had the possibility for feedback; for engagement; for two-way; for conversation; for back and forth. Zoom creates the possibility for that back and forth. That's where I think it's an improvement over the broadcast mode, over television.

So, in that way I think it's wonderful. We have tried so many ways to bring people to class, and now class can come to them. People don't have to leave. For some folks that means the method is available where it wouldn't be- either because they're too far away from other people, or they can't make it, or they couldn't afford to get private lessons. I think that's great.

I am excited that there is a lot of interest in expanding our options and trying new models. Being able to use Zoom. For me the pandemic was just an example

of learning through constraints, because I would never ever have done a lot of the things I ended up doing and in fact I think I would have just been against them.

The other big challenge we are facing now in the training community, and other communities as well, is that at this particular moment of the pandemic there are people who very much want to go back into the live spaces while there are those who very much do not want to be bothered with it.

We have to switch to live in a training. Even the hybrid compromised people, and compromised my ability to see what people were up to. And it compromised their ability.

It is so much work, and also since Zoom we are doing double the work we used to do. But I think we care so if we see something needs to be done, we are going to try to do it.

- **FI on Zoom**

If we call an FI an individual lesson, and we separate that, it's one to one – whether it's in person, or whether touch is involved, then yes, you can do FI online. I've had some remarkable experiences with people doing that. Does it replace or supplant hands-on work and touch? No.

Can you learn to give FIs online? I think you can learn to be better at giving FIs. But the element of touch is in learning self-use which is one of the things that professionally you have to learn in a training. Self-use is not icing on the cake. You can't add it to the end. It has to be baked in.

And it's a way of learning how to apply the percepts of a method to your way of working with people. It's a way of being responsible for your action in terms of needing to be aware of how you are moving when you're moving someone else. You can't hide. You can't disappear. I think that's necessary. I don't want FI to be reduced to that.

I disagree with people that you can teach Functional Integration on a Zoom thing,

Well, like I was in a meeting where we were talking about some of the advantages of teaching online. There are definitely some things, like an ATM practicum. Someone records a lesson. I can watch it with them and talk about it. Stop and start.



Even an FI practicum might work well that way, too. The actual learning of hands-on – I'm not so sure. Like I said, it's possible. It's technique, right. The question is – how do you replace all those conversations that happen in the breaks and after class. Even if it's a two or three minute conversation, it connects someone. Me, the teacher, with that student in a way that, unless they call me up, doesn't happen. And they usually hesitate to call me up, for something like that, it's too small

I'm not sure about the evolution of training programs. To my point of view, if more training happens online, that's a De-evolution. That's something that, I think, we lose some of the qualities of the essential personal connection.

## **Models and Topics**

- **ATM Only Training**

I have mixed feelings about the whole ATM teacher training thing because by dint of the contract that's been created, people are forbidden to touch in that context. That's the way it's worked out. And I would hate to be an ATM teacher who can't touch my students personally.

Is that a useful step. Perhaps it is. But I think touch is a part of ATM, or it can be. Me touching the students; touching themselves; and even touching each other at times.

First of all, I think doing separate ATM only trainings is great. I never had a problem with it. Many, many years ago Yvan Joly had the idea of starting something like this. He and I were talking about it. I said, but what about this? And what about this? and what about this? His response was 'Oh, we'll figure that out later'. I said no – if we already know it could be a problem, we need to figure it out now. There'll be plenty of other problems we didn't foresee to figure out. I think that's happened now.

Why, do I say that? Because I've had almost a dozen people from those trainings contact me saying I want to now join the third year of your next program. And I go, you can't. You've missed two years of hands-on work. I start on the first day with hands on work. I said, I can't catch you up on that. I said there needs to be a whole another intermediary block, something to happen like that.

I would say first of all, we are all about options and I think we need to have a lot of different options in how we do trainings. If you think about it, we are basically

just copying what Moshe did. We copied the Amherst Training for a long time and people did not teach Functional Integration. Then gradually that changed. We still have that ability. People do not have to teach it in the beginning. Some still do not, but many many do and can do it in the ways they want to do it.

I think having the ability to experiment is really important. Fundamentally the model has not changed very much in all these years and I am disappointed in some of what I have heard about the response to the ATM trainings.

We force people to do four-year trainings to be ATM teachers, but if you look at the statistics more people from four-year programs become ATM teachers than Functional Integration teachers. So if we separate them we can have people in the longer programs who actually really want to teach FI and not include people who really just want to mainly teach ATM.

Now if they want to be ATM teachers their only chance is to train for four years, or else they drop out and teach ATM but call it something else. There are a lot of people out there who are not interested in a hands-on practice.

Coming out of what I said before, I believe that following the model I described or even during the model of ATM-only trainings, will increase greatly the presence of ATM teachers in far-flung communities.

But you have to have more people in the community teaching ATMs. In each community, not just in big cities, and even the big cities, I do not think there are enough people, because people do not practice.

Examples of that are people who teach voice, acting, and certain kinds of athletic activities. They are excited about ATM. They see the transformative potential, but they also like the work they have and want to integrate the method into that work.

Think about it. Acting or voice teachers, musicians who are teachers, are going to expose hundreds and hundreds of students over time to the method. We want these people to become ATM teachers and to understand what they are doing.

Otherwise sometimes people who have not done a training get excited about ATM and try to integrate it in their work and then they teach it without really knowing what they are doing.

So having more people really properly trained in, and understanding, the [ATM] element of the method is one new option we could have.

I think the real problem is that the people who are just doing ATM are people who are going to do that. That the people who are doing ATM and FI are going to have a problem with the general public – to advertise, and how to work on people.

I think sometimes, if you see people who can't do an ATM, and you think you know how to help them with FI, that's a nice thing to be able to do. Or vice versa. I think it's nice to know both.

Well, you know, I think it's [ATM only Trainings] still in the experimental stage.

I'm very skeptical, very skeptical about the understanding. I don't know that the students could actually understand movement if they're not touching other people while they're moving and being moved. So I'm very skeptical.

- **Other Models of Training**

We know there have to be a certain number of hours that we call immersion. You are given a series of lessons that go on and on ad infinitum. Or you are given certain series that connect in some way and you are given these conditions where you are not told what is what, but you have to kind of find your way, and then each day you get another piece of the puzzle.

I think Amherst is the best example of those kinds of conditions, much more than his previous trainings. So, learning through immersion. But that is not enough.

At any rate the immersion is just one piece of it. I think a really open question is how do we make the interweaving of the more analytical, verbal exchanges with these non-verbal experiences.

We can talk about it together but each Director has to puzzle it out.

And the other piece is that we need way more supervision, which is very tricky because of finding the funding to pay teachers to do it a lot of the time.

In order to make it really clear what the learning is, I have created a self-evaluation according to that list I sent you, in terms of their own process of doing ATM.

Then I do not have to say, "Look you do not have your breathing free". It is on the paper. They can see and confront it, but I am not part of that equation. It is between you and yourself. You know you hold your breath so work on it. Why do I have to tell you? I do not really want to tell you.

So in asking people to self-evaluate. I say of course that it is going to be lifetime learning.

- **Trainings in Europe *versus* the USA**

Training programs are evolved. I've been teaching now for several years (in Europe) with a group of incredibly intelligent practitioners. Well informed about science, group dynamics, communication, and the Feldenkrais Method. They live it, they breathe it.

Our graduates typically really practice the Feldenkrais Method. They are expected to practice in between and talk about their practicing and bring back questions from their situations in between the training segments. So you know that's an aspect that needs to be emphasized.

So the Feldenkrais Method, as we know it in the United States is diminishing and the trainings in Europe are flourishing.

- **Process for Trainer Certification**

I do not for the life of me understand why I cannot make a recommendation to the Feldenkrais Guild that a person, who has been my assistant Trainer for ten or fifteen years and has been through four or five programs with me, be advanced to Trainer, and to have a process, just like going for a black belt test, where that person meets a group of Trainers and does something like a PhD student does in defending a thesis. Why in the world can we not have our people just go through a simple process?

So I think we have to radically look at the process by which we move people into being Trainers because we need a lot more of them.

Our system doesn't allow for that kind of random growth, which – that's how systems develop, in random ways. The same thing with becoming Trainers. I was part of a committee that rewrote the whole way. I was part of the original group that set up the policy- How do you become a Trainer?

And when I left the board it was like, Oh, what have we done? This is hard. I wish I had had that training myself in many ways, but when I look back it's like maybe we made it too hard.

And now there's not – enough people applying, and I rewrote it with a bunch of other people, made all these other possible pathways. Didn't work. Didn't make a difference. So we need to tear it apart, not just put Band-Aids on it.

But I think again that the work should not be compromised or diluted in order to have 10 new Trainers. The way I look at it is that precision takes a lot of time.

There are a lot of other things I could say about how to become a Trainer and all that, but that is not relevant to this discussion.

I think we have a kind of lopsided view that the pinnacle of being a Feldenkrais teacher is to be a Trainer. I think the pinnacle is to be an experienced practitioner in your community, to inspire other people to become teachers, and to support the people that are coming along.

- **Evaluating Training Programs**

But I think the biggest challenge is how are we really assessing the success and I do not think we have answered that question. That is going to need some serious work. If we let a lot of experimentation happen, then how are we assessing the success there?

At the moment we really do not know what people do in their trainings. On the one hand, as an Educational Director, I really do not want a group of bureaucrats telling me what I can and cannot do in my training. On the other hand, I see that we have to maintain quality and need a way of assessing a pilot program. If somebody has a new idea I would really like us to have the ability to help that group develop that idea and have a way of assessing it.

And I still think there needs to be another way in which the Guild determines the certification of its membership.

- **Financial**

But what's not brought into this conversation is the whole idea of the financial aspect of it. Because that colors everything, whether we want to admit it or not. And I've always been fortunate to work with people who always put the educational part first. Money, second. And we're all happy to make money, but it's like let's do this right, let's make people learn better.

But this is a bigger question of making the work available to people who were less able financially. And I don't have an answer for that. I was once teaching a kind of

a small workshop in the dance department of Sarah Lawrence College, and this young woman raised her hand and said – ‘why is this work only for the elite?’

I wanted to make a training for years. I was hoping I would make enough money that one day I could just make a training free for people who have no money. Those kinds of people should become practitioners.

So they would have a way to make a living. and then oh, I would have enough money to pay all of the Trainers, and I do it.

But it could be that the Guild might be better serving the Feldenkrais work if they had Guild trainings, which means run by the Guild, not by private business.

So the profit part of it does not have to be a big player. When you put up a training there are so many expenses. It is so expensive, and you put so much in there, you invest so much, that the money part is important.

But we grew up in a period of time where it did not take much money to live and, at least, for myself being a hippie at that time, I was able to devote a big portion of my life to trying to get my practice going.

I have people in the ATM training who have three jobs. It is a better training but people cannot spend the time they need in between the segments many times to work on it and to read and do all the things we did. So we worked really diligently just to make it happen and I do not see that in the great number of people in training. They are also older, so they do not have the kind of big energy of a 20-or 30-year old. I was in my late 20s and you were probably similar.

The older people certainly have the maturity and the intelligence. They do not have to prove themselves. So it is not ageism. It is just a question of time and energy.

But I have to say that the world and the expectations financially are growing so fast that you have to make a lot more money than we did.

I include how to create a successful business and practice within my training program. So that helps. If you expect people are going to be successful as practitioners, they need to know a little bit about how to construct a business and maintain it-- including advertising presentations, forming groups, and an individual practice.

## **Trainings**

- **Improving Graduates' Confidence and Capabilities**

About the future of the trainings, in my experience, the people who make the easiest transition into teaching are by and large people with performing arts backgrounds. People in the performing arts have stood up in front of people and offered their wares and already have a discipline. They have a very high level of success.

We have to look at how we are going to help people understand their competence as they go through a training program

That feeling of trying to get it before they leave – or trying to get it, period, is one that usually isn't very useful for people.

And you come out of your training, and really, you know, you don't get it yet.

And to realize that what we're learning is how to learn, and that at a certain point you won't need a teacher.

That you'll realize that you have the skills that you need to progress.

But again, that's an educational thing I think needs to be built into the program, so it's not just this piling up of information that overwhelms someone. They need to be able to make a comparison between last segment, and now and one week to the next week to the next week. And then when they go home.

So my way of organizing trainings, is I want everything that's behind the scenes to work seamlessly – so that when someone in a training gets perturbed, as often happens, just by the nature of our work – when they get perturbed they can't attach that feeling onto the training.

Anyway there are pluses and minuses about all of that. So the future of the training is that we need more young people. I think everybody knows that because you have that young energy to build something for yourself and go at it with everything you have got. In a different way. I mean when you are older maybe you have the maturity and self – confidence, but do not have the drive to make it a kind of day and night undertaking. Or it is a second career.

- **Models for Practicums**

Then I realized a practicum is actually a social and symbolic situation. Traditionally three people were given one lesson to teach, which I think is absolutely ridiculous from where I sit now. They enjoy doing it but how much anybody learns is really a question for me.

But in the \_\_\_\_\_ training they now have to do a pre-practicum and send me a recording. I lie down and do the lesson, take extensive notes, and have a private conversation about it. Nobody hears. It is not social.

Then they did their practicum. I was not there, but I heard great things about their teaching. Obviously, they made a huge step, but if I had tried to say this list of things to them in front of the group, they would have heard nothing because it is so loaded with people's past, for having been shamed in public or.... It is just so loaded that it is the rare person who is free enough to learn.

Where I am seeing it now in FI is that \_\_\_\_\_ students now give a lesson to an assistant who is giving them the same kind of feedback one-to-one in the FI that I am doing in the ATM. The training has enough staff they can spare it, they have a lot of staff in the room.

So the bar has to be raised and there have to be more chances for feedback or supervision. I think the other thing that helped me with the dilemma, I am actually not spending a lot of time in the ATM on people's personal growth. They are growing, but we are not spending all our class time talking about it.

Now, I find that doing an ATM supervision online is great. And in my last training students recorded FI lessons they had done, so I could just look at one lesson with them rather than supervising a couple of people at the same time. We could stop and start as we went along. I loved that and I never would have done those without the pandemic.

- **Apprenticeship**

Four years does not make any musician. That is the beginning. And I would say it is the same with Feldenkrais, especially with Functional Integration. It is a beginning. You give a person a path, and a map, and then they have to start walking.



That is why I think an apprenticeship is very necessary. The person you apprentice with will give you constant feedback, and if it is a good relationship, you will become confident – or will find out that it really is not your talent. You find out it takes too long to really learn, and you do not want to do that. But while still being able to teach ATMs.

But I think if it continues like this, Functional Integration will become as they do in martial arts. You go to a class and learn martial arts, and if the Sensei, the teacher, has the skills and understanding of what is happening, they do private sessions.

When you introduce touch, there is a whole other dimension to this. I think it would be possible, but that training would be only through apprenticeship.

Just having a back belt means you have the basics from which to learn.

I think of Feldenkrais training as exactly that. You create a foundation from which to learn.

- **Ongoing Learning**

In this last training program we had 11 or 12 practitioners go through the training again with us and have the experience of looking at another approximation of their learning cycle and experience. I think that ongoing training is essential to this work.

I think the biggest weakness we have had as a training body is not having time for the Trainers to demonstrate themselves to their other colleagues in the areas they have an interest.

I mean the body of work and knowledge Feldenkrais left is so vast, it's enough for a lifetime. More than a lifetime, and that's always been.

So in asking people to self-evaluate. I say of course that it is going to be lifetime learning.

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## Compiled TRANSCRIPTS for Question 3 and 4

**INTERVIEWER:** *Where do you see the Feldenkrais work going – Does training need to evolve to support that? If so, how.*

**TRAINER:** Okay. There you go. I will tell you... I will talk about the ATM training for a minute. It is extremely creative. There is nothing I am doing that I have ever done before, except one segment with old material, and I had this really big realization. We had our first practicum and a couple of these academic people gave each other feedback that was really not okay for me to hear. It was just like going right for the jugular like they may do when they are defending their dissertations or something.

I realized in the moment they created, that everybody is going to be afraid to do a practicum after this. What was I going to do? Then I realized, okay, a practicum is actually a social and symbolic situation. Traditionally three people were given one lesson to teach, which I think is absolutely ridiculous from where I sit now. They enjoy doing it but how much anybody learns is really a question for me.

But in the ATM training they now have to do a pre-practicum, send me a recording, I lie down and do the lesson, take extensive notes and have a private conversation about it. Nobody hears. It is not social.

I say halfway through, 'Is this too much for you?' 'No no this is great, really really great.' Then they go back to the drawing board.

I just had a round happen in September where I was very underwhelmed with the teaching, but we went through it. Then they did their practicum. I was not there, but I heard great things about their teaching. Obviously, they made a huge step, but if I had tried to say this list of things to them in front of the group, they would have heard nothing because it is so loaded with people's past, for having been shamed in public or.... It is just so loaded that it is the rare person who is free enough to learn.

**INTERVIEWER:** *That is so great what you did. That is such a big leap.*

**TRAINER:** It was for me. I am just so excited about it. It is the number one thing that has allowed me to understand where I am in the training is to hear their teaching by themselves. They are not going to go out and teach a third of the lesson to the public

and then hand it off. It is a fun pre-thing to do because if we are talking about training people to be professionals you give them the space. You let them do it and feel it as a solo teacher.

We have two of those coming up which means hours of supervision. Hours. It is an 80-day training. If we did all of that in training, it would be fifteen days of the training. I do not have that much time. But anyway where I am seeing it now in FI is that \_\_\_\_\_'s students now give a lesson to an assistant who is giving them the same kind of feedback one-to-one in the FI that I am doing in the ATM. He has enough staff he can spare it. He has a lot of staff in the room.

There are other people doing it now as well, and I think you are going to see more of it. Certainly, it is a way better way of knowing where somebody is at than just watching them from across the room. It is pretty clear when somebody touches us.

So, the bar has to be raised and there have to be more chances for feedback or supervision.

I think the other thing that helped me with the dilemma, I am actually not spending a lot of time in the ATM on people's personal growth. They are growing, but we are not spending all our class time talking about it.

We have better stuff we are doing. The whole process of self-evaluation, and of course the competency people have been working on this for years... I am using the competencies for my training but not in such a belabored and kind of heavy-handed way as I see it sometimes happening. But it is there. I am looking at it.

I decided that in order to make it really clear what the project is for ATM, what the learning is, I have created a self-evaluation according to the list I provided, in terms of their own process of doing ATM.

Then I do not have to say, "Look you do not have your breathing free." It is on the paper. They can see and confront it, but I am not part of that equation. It is between you and yourself. You know you hold your breath so work on it. Why do I have to tell you? I do not really want to tell you.

At any rate, so I just want to mention that that document I sent you is taken primarily from the first two weeks of Amherst. I put the first year, but to me the first two weeks of Amherst Year I are 80% of the whole business, where he lays things out so so clearly. The neurological ideas, the.[tensional / intentional] ideas, the whole paradigm shift that we are being asked to meet.

They gave themselves a pretty good. Out of a scale of 1-10 there were a lot of 7s and 8s after one year of training.

I think that is good, but it is also clear this is the project, and they can look at it and go, “Oh I never think about the eyes” or “No I do not know what a ? fission vision ? action is”.

**INTERVIEWER:** For me this is so exciting because the newer generations coming out of trainings, I think, are going to be so much more, or already are, prepared to be what previous generations had to offer when they first came out of trainings.

**TRAINER:** There are a couple of differences. We should probably get into this a little bit and then move on to the last question.

We are giving high level training in many ways, though I have yet to find many who teach ATM at the level that Feldenkrais was able to do, and they do not make up lessons very well. I am very underwhelmed about some of the creative offerings out there.

But we grew up in a period of time where it did not take much money to live and, at least for myself being a hippie at that time, I was able to devote a big portion of my life to trying to get my practice going. There were a lot of opportunities. There were less competitive modalities out there. I was given a lot of chances to do things for which I am of course very grateful. I made my living in three hours a day, so I could start building up my practice.

I have people in the ATM training who have three jobs. It is a better training but people cannot spend the time they need in between the segments many times to work on it and to read and do all the things we did. So, we worked really diligently just to make it happen and I do not see that in the great number of people in training. They are also older so they do not have the kind of big energy of a 20 or 30 year old. I was in my late 20s and you were probably similar.

Anyway, there are pluses and minuses about all of that. So, the future of the training is that we need more young people. I think everybody knows that because you have that young energy to build something for yourself and go at it with everything you have. In a different way. I mean when you are older maybe you have the maturity and self-confidence, but do not have the drive to make it a kind of day and night undertaking. Or it is a second career.

**INTERVIEWER:** I am actually taking my training all over again. I and a couple of other practitioners, my age, are taking trainings all over again just to be able to really fill in little gaps, or becoming a little bit clearer on those areas that maybe we were not clear on.

**TRAINER:** It is another level of successive approximation, just at a higher level. That is the thing. Because the method is so big, there is nobody who has the whole thing. We all sort of gravitate in the path of least resistance of what we resonate with.

For instance, this principle in my notes about the importance of the eyes. In the early days I worked with the eyes with everyone who came to see me. Then I totally forgot about it and went and did something else. So it is a very big method.

**INTERVIEWER:** I agree completely about getting more and younger, and more diverse people involved at early stages of getting into a training. Then in terms of people who have been practicing, getting them back into another training, to do it again. Even though it is expensive can we attract people who are practicing, and have gone through four or five or whatever advance trainings, back into a training at their level that they have already been practicing for something like 10 or 20 years where it is not as expensive. Not to have to pay for the whole thing all over again but somehow continuous learning, getting them back into the community.

**TRAINER:** I know. I live in \_\_\_\_\_, so in \_\_\_\_\_ we had twenty years of workshops, before the pandemic, and two-thirds of the people there were practitioners taking short – one, two or five day – workshops. Those are not so expensive. So, we have a lot of practitioners here who have spent a lot of time on the floor. There is room for all sorts of things, but maybe it is time for another Amherst study group or something. That is also really good material.

About the future of the trainings, in my experience the people who make the easiest transition into teaching are by and large people with performing arts backgrounds. I am sorry if that sounds prejudiced or exclusive, but if you look at who presents at the conferences and see what their backgrounds have been you see that verified.

People in the performing arts have stood up in front of people and offered their wares and already have a discipline. They have a very high level of success. There are very few younger people if they take it on, but the ones in my training are also performing arts people. So, there is that.

The older people certainly have the maturity and the intelligence. They do not have to prove themselves. So, it is not ageism. It is just a question of time and energy. I think the method is becoming better known because the straits of the pandemic forcing everybody on Zoom picked up a lot of people who would not have otherwise had room. I have a class that is half \_\_\_\_\_USA area and half \_\_\_\_\_Europe. I like that very much. It works for me. But obviously I could never have had that class pre-pandemic. And I was not the type to offer online, so the constraint kind of forced me to do it.

Summits are now popping up all over the place internationally and more and more people are finding out about Feldenkrais. I do think it will continue to appear more.

There is a lot of specialization. You are going to see it more in things like the dance, voice, acting and music schools and in the Pilates studio.

Where we will not see it enough, maybe, is in the medical world. That is a whole...

I did have a fantasy once that I would like to do a class for doctors, but now I sort of like why do that when I can have more fun doing this. But I wish somebody would do it. It would be great for somebody to take it on.

I just went to a doctor about one body part and showed him what I was doing in my walking that I thought was the problem and he said, "Oh that's way too complicated." I was like okay but you are the man that gets a zillion dollars an hour. I just let it go. I thought I am here for him to give me his opinion. I do not go to doctors very often. I was not going to spend my time trying to convert him but I did say, "Look. I am walking. I am doing this". And did it in slow motion, because it was only about my hip.

They don't have a clue. Maybe it was because I sprained my ankle on the other side when I was 10. You know. They don't have a clue.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, could have been your shoes.

**TRAINER:** Yes. Could have been my shoes. I think it was my shoes actually.

Okay, so the future is that we are going to be showing up in more places and we are going to have more outreach. We are going to have more offshoots like you mentioned. And we are going to have more reductionistic offerings.

That is the down side. It is already happening. People go on to a summit and, I was told, the featured ATM teacher teaches twenty-minute ATMs, never once calling your attention to the part you are moving. And that is the featured teacher.

I think the person running the summit did get some pushback from people on it. I know people who were just irate. I did not do due diligence to listen to the person teaching.

That is not the Feldenkrais Method. That is intelligent exercise, or a little piece of the method, but it is a reductionistic watered down piece. So, you will see that. You will see a dilution of quality as there is a proliferation of the work. I do not know how it can be otherwise, but I hope I am wrong.

At the same time, you will see more outreach. I can now work with a family in India and maybe help them with their child. So, a proliferation of opportunities. We can reach more people, be in more settings.

The other big challenge we are facing now in the training community and other communities as well is that at this particular moment of the pandemic there are people

who very much want to go back into the live spaces while there are those who very much do not want to be bothered with it. This is a whole thing between having to put the trainings on Zoom or hybrid or live.

We have to switch to live in a training. Even the hybrid compromised people and compromised my ability to see what people were up to. And it compromised their ability. It is not very good, but we did it and now to get people to commit to going in that room for two months a year is tricky.

A Trainer friend of mine just wrote that he is in New York for two weeks with the Hassidic community there. I think that is interesting.

So, I think the method is going to grow. We are trying to upgrade the quality of preparing people. We need the people on the other end to meet us halfway at least. We need to meet each other halfway. They need to do their stuff and not just put it all on us to make it be a happy story for them.

That is what I felt in my trainings. It was like some people just put it all on me... 'make my dreams work out for me and do not ever say anything not sweet'. So, okay, we will just stop talking and fill out this self-evaluation.

**INTERVIEWER:** If we were to have a couple more questions would you be willing if we could find the time?

**TRAINER:** Of course. I felt like I needed more time to prepare for today, but maybe in the end it is okay because the things I care about more come out.

If I look at my list that I made for you I could see three or four of these things that were the gems for me. The work with attention and self-image are stepping stones to a better adaptation to gravity. That is a big one for me because I work with kids so I see things through a developmental lens that a lot of sports and Pilates people are never going to see.

They think oh this person does not even know how to weight bear and they are telling them to do a plank or whatever.

So, I would and I think \_\_\_\_\_ has evolved a super interesting amount of pedagogy because she is also doing a pilot program. That is the whole question. If we can develop these, it will then allow more people to take trainings who do not want to commit to four years. Most of my people did not want to commit to that, which is a trend. But now I think some of them will be ready for a part two, so it just a different way to go about it.

So, \_\_\_\_\_ is doing a thing in \_\_\_\_\_ and she has lots of pedagogy and is evolving and very upbeat. So definitely talk to her.

**INTERVIEWER:** That is so great.

**TRAINER:** Let us see in a year from now when we have graduated our students and see where the pilots... \_\_\_\_\_ is doing a pilot program. Maybe they have graduated, I do not know, but they definitely raised the bar on homework for them. I do not know what their conclusions were.

**INTERVIEWER:** It was a huge amount of work.

**TRAINER:** It is so much work, and also since Zoom we are doing double the work we used to do. But I think we care so if we see something needs to be done, we are going to try to do it. Has everybody said something different about this nugget?

**INTERVIEWER:** Just about. I get goosebumps right now just thinking about it, so how can we get this information to practitioners and people who are interested even in attending classes. Professionals. This information you are giving us is priceless. Thank you so much.

**TRAINER:** You are so welcome. I enjoyed it. It was great. We will see what brings a year for now. Thank you for spending time on this.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Third Question:

***Take a moment to reflect and speculate about the future. Where do you see the work going and how do training programs need to evolve?***

**TRAINER:** I can speculate. First of all I think we have to decide what we want to be the Feldenkrais Method of the future. I think we should really deeply respect the talk \_\_\_\_\_ just gave to the conference on the theory of the method, and to recognize that Dr. Feldenkrais did not, as a scientist, put together something that was shaped in magical belief systems.

I mean he certainly knew of the Kabbalah, and of acupuncture, and of yoga principles and philosophy. He was deeply related through his Jewish tradition to a spiritual root. I saw him in his bed when Jeremy came and blew the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. (I think that was the holiday.) I watched him be transfixed in his bed hour after hours – he had a window across from him and he would be transfixed into long faraway spaces. I have no doubt of the man's relationship to what one would call mystical and spiritual. But that was not the basis of the work. The basis of the work was how can we help a person refine their self-image so they can function in a difficult world and be composed.



So, what are the foundations of that work and how do we look at, and continue to further our practitioners, having a more and more profoundly professional basis for doing the work.

That means not having a review of the literature of what Dr. Feldenkrais wrote and produced, but having a more complete understanding of the literature that also supports his work. I think that is integral to the process of bringing our work forward into the next generation of practitioners.

I am not particularly interested in hocus pocus. I think we have to be at the place with ourselves that we show people how what looks like magic, and what a magician produces, is actually done. Show them there is a valid firm foundation within themselves and in their understanding and a way they can convey that understanding to the public.

That has to be from the lowest common denominator all the way to the point where any practitioner that works with us could meet with the highest-level scientist and speak about our work with the kind of intelligence and integrity that will not have the scientist roll their eyes up.

So, I think the work has to go through continued iterations of more and more highly refined professional presentation. I think the vagueness that we continue to convey in the training programs has to slowly dissipate. That does not mean there is not a magical component to the process of people making self-discovery. That is extraordinarily magical. But not the process by which we keep it vague for them.

For years there was the thought that when a student asks a question, we do not answer it, but that they have or will get the means to find the answer from within themselves. It is not my history that that is the case. I know how long it took me to solve the question when Feldenkrais said, "I can lift someone's head without changing the tone in my arms".

I have a particular proclivity for those kinds of questions. I can guarantee you that 99.9% of the population in the Feldenkrais Method would never even perk up their ears at that question or ask how they are going to do that. So, on what basis or what principles would I investigate in order to make that a possibility for myself?

Now I do not believe we are actually practicing the Feldenkrais Method unless we are grounded in these principles and can know how to be auto didactic in ourselves and utilize those principles as a basis for self-regulation and discovery. We can practice the method rhetorically. We can learn the lessons and give them rhetorically any way we want to. We can learn templates of action that we do in our training sessions and try to apply those templates to people.

But that does not mean we have given a functional-based, principle-based lesson that actually supports a person in finding their own highest level of expression and functioning. So, I think the work has to evolve further and further toward that.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, after a three- or four-year training. Do you think that is enough? Do you think that after five, ten, twenty years or however long there should be another kind of take the training over again, encouragement, and fill in the gaps?

**TRAINER:** \_\_\_\_\_ has been assiduous in having ongoing post-training programs. I have my own program, which is focused on just understanding the basic fundamentals of biomechanics that many many people do not really find themselves understanding when they graduate from a training program. I teach that over a two-year period of time, so people are involved in a training program that has an emphasis and deals with it in some measure of depth. It supports people to enter their practice with a much higher level of skill than they had before.

In this last training program, we had eleven or twelve practitioners go through the training again with us and have the experience of looking at another approximation of their learning cycle and experience. I think that ongoing training is essential to this work.

I have always related it to the point of time that you graduate with a black belt in Aikido. That is only a statement that you have accomplished a beginning level of competence, but you are proficient in the basic underlying foundational body of the work. But it is not a statement that you have attained anything other than a proficiency in a fundamental body of work. I cannot imagine anybody who wants to continue their work in Aikido not having to put twenty or thirty years into their practice. I cannot imagine you would become fully bloomed.

Just having a black belt means you have the basics from which to learn. I think of Feldenkrais training as exactly that.

You create a foundation from which to learn. You have not acquired anything except you have graduated and have the means for a certificate to be recognized in the field. You have all the advantages of that. But as far as becoming a practitioner that meets the general needs of the population you are going to work with, I cannot imagine that not being an ongoing practice and study – looking into the world of how human beings can function in a changing and uncertain world.

**INTERVIEWER:** This is not one of the actual interview questions, but I am curious because it has come up for me, wondering. You have created kind of a new iteration. I think the most comprehensive way of teaching and training.

Do you think other Educational Directors should be required, more or less, to attend other people's trainings, not necessarily to teach but to be there, for say a segment or something, just to observe and learn from another Trainer.

**TRAINER:** I think the biggest weakness we have had as a training body is not having time for the Trainers to demonstrate themselves to their other colleagues in the areas they have an interest. For the most part we have been such a disparate and political group. This is not a non-partisan group. We do not cross the aisle in any particular way with any facility. I think there are collegial relationships, but for the most part I do not think this is a group that is really interested in listening to each other.

I had a situation where there was a lesson being taught, there were other Trainers around and there was a particular expression in the lesson of some activity. So I was curious and asked for what reason in the lesson did they give that direction. Another Trainer said how can you ask a question like that? They did not ask me what was going on in me. It was a pejorative statement, like how can you ask that it is such common knowledge. But it isn't. I would not have asked the question if it was common knowledge, because I think there are four billion years of development for the human nervous system to learn how to lift ourselves away from the ground.

The questions and statements we have... because they have been used for so long without examining how it is that we lift ourselves away from the ground, by expressing to someone in a lesson 'push into the ground to do this'. I do not for a moment understand that. If I am going to take the lesson in the *Awareness Through Movement* book of coming to sitting and standing, and Moshe says, "Stand in such a way that you do not go past your body weight", I can tell you that you cannot push into the ground to do that. It is right there in the book.

Now Moshe did not teach that as standard in all cases, but it is a standard and is again an unquestioned activity.

I think Moshe rolls over in his grave every time someone does something without questioning what has taken place. He himself always said, "Do not believe a damn word I say. Find out for yourself." But I think so much is going on – that the thinking that is underlying some of the things we just pass off as a level of understanding – diminishes the potential for the work to be evolving as we are extending it.

So do I think we should learn from each other? I think the groups at this time have so thoroughly divided themselves that the colleagues are not going to work together. To basically teach the same more or less together, those divisions are pretty soundly established and as I said I think they are pretty partisan.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything we have not talked about that we should include today?

**TRAINER:** There are several different things for the work to evolve. First, I do not for the life of me understand why I cannot make a recommendation to the Feldenkrais Guild that a person, who has been my assistant Trainer for ten or fifteen years and has been through four or five programs with me, be advanced to Trainer, and to have a process, just like going for a Black Belt test, where that person meets a group of Trainers and does something like a PhD student does in defending a thesis. Why in the world can we not have our people just go through a simple process. If I say someone is skilled enough to be a Trainer, why, at this point in time, after all these years teaching, is my voice not strong enough to make such a recommendation?

So I think we have to radically look at the process by which we move people into being Trainers because we need a lot more of them.

We also have to radically look at the process of how we find the means to organize programs. And we have to look at how we are going to help people understand their competence as they go through a training program because the competence model we used in the last training program is a close approximation of what is going on in the \_\_\_\_\_ Training Program. For the most part the competency process met significant resistance.

And I still think there needs to be another way in which the Guild determines the certification of its membership. I think those things are crucial to our legacy, to our lasting and being able to stand up to different kinds of perturbations. I think the chaos that surrounds us is going to heap on us. We cannot become less. We have to continue to bring people into a more and more complete sense of what it is to be a practitioner so they can stand within themselves with a higher measure of skill and acumen and sense of their own autonomy if they are going to meet this world and thrive in it, especially if we are not going to be licensed as healthcare providers and have all the other backups. They will have to come into a much higher standing with themselves.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there a way you see having more trainings or training organizers? This is not one of the questions, but as we are talking about the evolution of things. How could there be more trainings available or how they are advertised or how you get people to know about them?

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Where do you see the work going and how to training programs need to evolve?*

**TRAINER:** I think there are three directions. Two years ago, the Americans decided you could have credit ATM trainings. Other people were already doing that but they did not call it Feldenkrais. The Germans are right now having a big conversation with the German Tab, the German Guild (called the [Verb...] in German), the membership, Trainers, assistant Trainers and lots of other people about establishing a different way of distinguishing or differentiating a training for ATM from a training for FI in ways they are put together so you can either stop at the end of your ATM training and teach that the rest of your professional life or continue on to FI.

I consider that probably a constructive move, but I also consider it a problematic move because I do not think most people can really figure out in the two years of an ATM training what the essentials are from all the stories that try to explain those essentials.

Most people use ATM as an addition to their repertoire of working with the body or doing therapy or yoga or martial arts or something.

In philosophy there is a question about what theories are and what explanations are and that is kind of a tricky question. Explanations are supposed to say why something happened by using other information.

One author I found very useful distinguished between five types of explanations. The first two were you come up with some statement of something that happened, like 'I fell and broke my leg'. Then why 'Because of gravity'. That is an explanation that is true: 'I fell on the steps and broke my leg because gravity dragged me down and I was not on my feet.' Well, that is called gravity an explanation in order to basically describe what you believe happened.

Then another type of explanation, which I think is widespread and the thing Moshe was warning me about when he called me a fool, was reducing the phenomena to what you are familiar with. So, you do a Feldenkrais lesson and, if you are a martial artist or a sports person or a meditator or a psychologist or yoga person, there is often a tendency to put the lesson within the framework you are familiar with rather than let the lesson expand your framework because that is actually just more comfortable.

Then the other three explanations actually get down to the idea that there is eventually some cause of something happening and you can use that to describe it.

This is all very controversial stuff among philosophers. They do not really agree on what an explanation is. But there is a wide tendency to reduce the lessons to the familiar. That can mean this is 'increasing the mobility of the joints'. It is true.

It can be guaranteed to do that, but is that what the lesson is actually about?

Well, 'I am familiar with that idea so I will leave it there'.

I just saw some advertisement of someone explaining a lesson that will 'lengthen your short hip flexors'. That is a reduction to the familiar. I do body stuff in order to lengthen or strengthen my muscles, which is widespread in the PT I learned here in \_\_\_\_\_.

So I am concerned about accrediting ATM trainings where people are not challenged like Moshe challenged me to rethink and expand my foundation of interpretation of what the lessons are about.

They are about a lot more than what most people reduce them to. There needs to be some sort of process by which reduction to the familiar in interpreting lessons is not considered the most advanced way of thinking about it.

I think the lessons are headed to a more widespread recognition of Moshe's work. I have been involved with the IFF Research Working Group with the idea of setting up a network and an infrastructure for communication among researchers in the Feldenkrais community and outside. As the lessons get more recognized by a research process I think they will find their way into lots of different professions and will probably be reduced to the familiar for those professional fields.

The psychologists will call it mind/body exercises. The PTs will call it neural whatever they call it – rehabilitation – or I have heard things like 'neural movement'. Well of course it is neural movement. Every movement has to have a brain getting the muscles to do things.

Then I think the research process will force the engagement of thinkers to go 'Wow, that phenomena we did not even pay attention to'.

I was talking to some people the other night and we all have experiences where we get up from the lesson and go holy mackerel, I never imagined what I am now experiencing.

So, I could not learn to do it if I could not imagine it. If playing a flute or having some experience of myself moving was outside of my range of self-image or imagination, I could not possibly ask myself how I could learn that.

That forces a question of what are we going to describe and explain how that worked. We can test it and try it three or four times and find out every time. A similar type but not exactly the same phenomena shows and it is beyond our explanatory comfort so to speak. So, we either reduce it to the familiar or we expand what is familiar to us and go back to our library and start looking.

I think that is essential to the future of the method. Otherwise it will become reduced to an auxiliary practice for improving your showmanship, fitness or performance or something like that.

I have been reading some books about yoga to find out what is behind the set of beliefs about what it is about. It is really revealing. Part of it has to do with European gymnastics educational systems in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They realized that asanas practices, which were not really a major part of yoga in India before then, would be great stretching exercises so they integrated them for that purpose.

But if we make Feldenkrais a way to improve stretching we have reduced it to something we already know rather than maybe re-evaluating how we think about ourselves and how we even use the words 'my body' and what that means.

Going back to Moshe's material and an article from 1964, the first article in Embodied Wisdom, the lecture from 1959, begins by saying, more or less, 'As far as I am concerned there is no split between body and mind. The fact is that only exists in our language'. Well, the philosophers and neuroscientists have been looking at that for the last thirty or forty years.

We need to meet the rest of the knowledge world and feel like we are on an eye-to-eye equal level and engage with them. But we need to learn their language because most of them probably will not learn ours until we can translate Feldenkrais into theirs. I have watched that happen in conferences.

**INTERVIEWER:** There is a word for what you are starting to describe that starts with an F or V in German [Verband?]. It is how you are thinking about a structure for a different kind of training or taking it further relative to teaching ATMs? It is very new. I guess the German Guild has taken it further? Something very new. You would know if I said it.

I am curious to know if the other guilds would be able to learn this from you.

**TRAINER:** It is a very controversial decision because there is a lot of concern from many very experienced Feldenkrais people that it took years after the training for it to really sink in what a complex and deeply wisdom-anchored methodology it is that does not get its full explanation by talking about body stuff. So, a lot of people worry that Feldenkrais will be reduced to techniques explained simply through what is familiar to the people who did a two-year training.

So there is a lot of controversy about it and years before the dust settles. But there is a difference between the Feldenkrais Methodology of keep doubting and keep thinking and exploring versus the idea of techniques that are somehow fixed in stone once

'Moses' spoke them to a recorder in Tel Aviv on Alexander Yanai Street and are now the revered word of the prophet.

The techniques alone are without really trying to deeply understand that the complexities of the phenomena he was exploring and made his FI work so phenomenally effective was a different understanding of who people are.

If you watch the Amherst FI films there is something really interesting that most people kind of pay attention to but find kind of sweet, but some people find it kind of upsetting. A little girl comes in and he is smoking a cigarette. He says hi to her but just keeps on smoking. Well, growl growl growl, people get so busy with Moshe doing that they don't notice the little girl is not bothered at all but is really captivated, calmly waits for him to finish and then they have a really good time together because that was not the first lesson he had with her and she knows he is going to offer something she has not run into or literally been touched by.

We have a colleague in Prague who said something wonderful when she was giving a little boy a lesson. She said she had the feeling he looked at her and without saying anything was communicating that he had been waiting for those hands for years. That is not just theoretical. You cannot just get there with familiar concepts. So those are other elements and qualities of the work. If Feldenkrais becomes a short quick technical education, there is a lot of concern that using the experience to provoke really deep thinking about what brings that richness gets lost in paying attention to what did he do with the little girl after that.

Well, that is pretty obvious, but why was she so fascinated. What captured her attention?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, how FI or touch is communicated, how we learn. I am very curious about how that part of the training will evolve because if people just do ATM trainings will they touch people? Will it change?

**TRAINER:** I think the ATM practice can stand on its own if it is taught thoughtfully and not as an auxiliary. A lot of people do a lot of fitness stuff in order to look good. They want to be fit and all that but it also looks pretty cool on films and in pictures and they make selfies and all this stuff.

The ATM lessons are the exact opposite of performance, but we really need to be careful about what is really a convenient habit to reduce anything new to what is familiar and go on. If it remains unfamiliar it really forces us to rethink what we think about ourselves and the world and how we interact with the world. So, the fast reflex to reduce the surprise to the familiar is a loss.



The other thing is when we were being trained we challenged Moshe in San Francisco. That was not successful. It did not last very long. We all thought we were smart for about two weeks and then the first FI demo he made really blew the socks off everyone and they realized 'Well, I do not understand that at all'.

But there is a tendency of consumers to think they are customers of trainings and demand what the product is that they expect. With potato chips and televisions and cars that is fine, because they describe exactly what the product is going to be.

But I guess if you were really going to advertise the Feldenkrais training you would say 'This training is going to surprise you every day with something you cannot explain, and you are going to have to open your mind to questions and descriptions and explanations and ideas that you have never crossed paths with. It does not matter what you are familiar with, it is going to be something you cannot put into that box'.

**INTERVIEWER:** I love that.

**TRAINER:** That is essential for the training process. If it becomes listening to people's desires to understand with familiar ideas and then feeding that as a consumer activity something will get lost.

Now I am relying on the fact that some people will not do that. They will be thankful for the challenge rather than getting what little they expect. Because I always feel like the Feldenkrais lessons are the most valuable when we find out we have underestimated ourselves. We have underestimated our own possibility for discovery, for taking care of ourselves and for learning how to do something in ways we have never met. So we are constantly going 'Boy, that exposes my believe of what I cannot do as not being true'.

I remember some of the lessons in San Francisco I felt like I was moving joints that should not move that way. I really believed that my hip joint could not turn like that. I was so puzzled I had to look because from my point of view about anatomy what I was doing was impossible. It should have hurt but it felt great. So, I had to go back to my anatomy book.

That is a very important issue. Until it all gets mapped out in two or three more generations of what each lesson in its complete potential exposes in ourselves and others as possibilities, we need to still be doubting.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything we have not discussed that we should include?

**TRAINER:** One thing that comes to mind is that if we are going to maintain that in trainings, in the education process of teaching new practitioners, it needs to be in

the educational process of the teachers themselves. The range of experience and understanding that is built into those lessons.

You know, Moshe also talked about reversibility. At the end of that lecture which was turned into an article, Mind and Body, he gives, from the point of view of an engineer and physicist, what ideal movement would include. It is a mechanical engineer's point of view about how that is going to work, but it basically defines how you would look at the biomechanics of what ideal movement is. He ends up by saying that those five conditions satisfy the principle of reversibility in theoretical mechanics.

Well, he was not talking about what most of us all mean about reversibility, which is to turn around and go in the other direction as a pathway. He was talking about the energy and forces necessary to reverse or change your mind and do something else.

When I finally realized what that meant, because I had been studying a little biomechanics and I remembered my calculus, I realized that statement about reversibility is basically his whole methodology. It is a pathway of moving our entire self that allows us to stop and go back and do something else.

He said, I think it was, without using extra energy.

**INTERVIEWER:** Like a prior adjustment.

**TRAINER:** Well, that is what you are doing but basically, he says you can initiate a new movement without any energy at all. That is mind-boggling. It is about something called virtual movement and the work done by virtual movement is zero. Work requires that we move something across a distance, but the reversibility condition that he named means you are not moving at all. It is only an instantaneous moment when you are not moving in any direction. So, you are not going anywhere. Mathematically it does not require any work and it forces zero energies.

Well, that is mind-boggling but it has a consequence – if that might be possible what did I miss in looking at athletic movement or my own movement or that of the people I am working with and how can I find out.

That was his method. Finding out what would allow that condition to be true along any kind of movement pathway through the whole body or the whole self.

Even for people who know what that means it is a puzzling idea. I talked to a physicist friend of mine who said, 'Yeah, that is what it means. You do not need to use force to change directions'.

If you do not make yourself familiar with those ideas and look at what work is and the equations and what does instantaneous movement and stuff mean, you do not catch that

it is a revolutionary question. If that is what he means by reversibility there is a completely different way of understanding what the lessons might be offering beyond all the familiar stuff you read about or claim.

I even have a bit of a problem with calling it Somatic Education, because that maintains the dualism that he said at the beginning of that article. It is not the way I look at it. I look at the whole person and do not split them up as mind and body. The Hindus add spirit to the whole thing, so they have not dualistic but trialistic people.

So, for me Somatic Education is basically a descriptor for consumers who will go, “Oh right, it’s for me body, I’ll try it out.” But that is not a professional statement as far as I am concerned. It is a reduction to the familiar which is useful to engage with customers, but we as teachers training other people should challenge the assumption that that covers it.

That is my point of view, and it is uncomfortable for all the consumers in the room in the sense of ‘Wait a minute, I didn’t agree to expand my mind beyond what I thought I was going to do, my idea of expansion’. Well, too bad.

**INTERVIEWER:** *It is wonderful.*

**TRAINER:** Yes. So, the point is that without engaging in exploring the ideas hidden away in many of Moshe’s quick statements in Amherst and particularly in San Francisco, I think we are going to pass along the techniques but not the habit or demand to ask another question and keep looking. So that has to be part of the training without letting people get away with reducing it to what they think they understood out of a statement. It is uncomfortable. Moshe was uncomfortable to be around because he was not going to be nice if you were asking dumb questions. He would just say, “That is a dumb question, go away.” But when you asked a good question he would spend time with it.

So that is what we have to do with the trainings.

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Please take a moment to reflect and speculate about the future. Where do you see the Feldenkrais work going and how do training programs need to evolve?*

**TRAINER:** It is tricky again. I think there is a way in which, to stay true to the Feldenkrais Method, you have to be willing to stay small. What I mean by that is in my view the only way the method becomes really popular is if you compromise it.

I do not think the consciousness of the world or of the country is evolved enough on a grand level to accept the essence of Feldenkrais. I think you have to compromise.

That is okay. Some people want to do Pilates or yoga and Feldenkrais together, that is a better sell. I think to stay within the methodology you have to make that choice. So, you say okay we will never be real popular but that is not a failure. Success is not getting well-known. Success within the Feldenkrais Method is staying true to that method.

Most people would much prefer more authoritarian teachers. Most people would prefer being told what is wrong or right with them, even if they spend twenty years feeling like they are not quite getting it, they feel like they are in the hands of somebody who knows what they are doing, or something.

So not to fall into that is really hard if your goal is to be popular. I say let go of being popular. Be popular enough that you can pay for bills.

Now I would not be averse to people who say, "You know, I really want to combine this with something." Moshe was against that, but there are ways of integrating work that is very healthy.

Now, here is a finer distinction that sounds contradictory to what I just said: I have developed my work to what I call \_\_\_\_\_ and I no longer teach Feldenkrais trainings, because in the ideology which I think is still around it would not be right to be also teaching – other topics – at a deep level as well as Feldenkrais.

So, I can value that distinction. Okay, this is a Feldenkrais training and you do not want to confuse people. One could say that I am combining different methods into something and it is a mish-mash. One could say that.

I would argue it is an incredibly integrated deep awareness program that uses Feldenkrais exquisitely. But it is not a Feldenkrais training because we would need five days a week, ten months a year for three years to go deep into Feldenkrais and the other work. So it is not that.

I do not know how this could be done, but I do think maybe there could be a way in which people like myself could be cousins of the work. Not that I feel outside of it. I still teach in a lot of Feldenkrais environments. I do not feel excluded in any way.

But in terms of the evolution of the work and its public domain, there might be a way of helping... How do I want to say it...? People who are attracted to my work sometimes end up going to certain centers because they love that work. Sometimes they go to Feldenkrais teachers because they have gotten turned on to Feldenkrais.

There are other people like me who are not just teaching Feldenkrais who, if they are concerned part of the community in a large sense, might be able to help bridge some people to Feldenkrais who would not find it otherwise. Maybe.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, that bridging. So, with how we are communicating now, I am just curious, do you have some feelings or thoughts about how this approach online, this Zoom way of communicating, can be part of a training?

**TRAINER:** Yes, I think so. My experience so far, as a not super-techie kind of person, has been really impressed with the value of Zoom for teaching. Not only because it was the only way we could do it, but actually going forward I am going to do some Zooming as well.

I think there is a real difference between a program that would be full on Zoom or supplemented by Zoom. I am still old school in the sense that I think being in the room, breathing the same air, hugging and face to face meetings give something that cannot be done on screen. Once that is implanted into the two nervous systems, the two human beings, then when they meet online there is a whole different kind of interaction that is possible. It is like the resonance between the bodies no longer require in-person meeting if that is already linked.

**INTERVIEWER:** That is so great. Once the nervous systems are evolved to that level.

**TRAINER:** Right. I think it would be different for different people in terms of how long can you be sustained. I would even argue, not so much psychologically, but neurologically how long can the mutual co-regulation sustain itself? If you met one time and then are on Zoom for two years, I do not know if at the end of that time... You are still getting a lot because the visual information is so potent and the expressions etc, but it's like, a terrible analogy, but what comes is like you lose immunity over time. You lose the connectedness over time. Something like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Well that is the physicality too, as opposed to the neural part. Do you think FI could be taught over Zoom?

**TRAINER:** I think yes and no. If you have learned some FI at a live meeting you could then get some mentorship on line, through questions and comments or self-work or maybe having a client in the room and someone is watching you work. I would be reluctant to try to teach it predominantly or initially without being in the same room with someone. It is so challenging to get the level of touch that is occurring.

I would feel comfortable if I had a group and we were working with some things for a couple of weeks and then after the next couple of months we met once a week or month

or whatever, and I saw and was watching and we were doing some practices and then got together again after a few months or something.

That I could imagine.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything we have not discussed that we should include?

**TRAINER:** It is important to me that we walk the tightrope of richly valuing Moshe without creating a false idol, without lionizing him, which is what usually happens in most movements and traditions. The teacher becomes this godly-like character. I think that is dangerous. Not just to acknowledge his difficulties and warts or challenges or whatever. But also, he was just like us. He was brilliant and had some skills that most of us do not have, and uniqueness, but he was a regular person. He was working out how to live this life.

If we lionize him too much that impedes learning in my opinion. If his unique contribution is not simultaneously really respected it is really unfortunate. I am more concerned about the lionization than the second.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, how best to help students and trainees to understand the essence of the work and to focus on the future and not so much on the past?

**TRAINER:** I am not sure I like the second part so much. I think the past has a lot to teach the future, so I would not want to separate that out so much. I think we have to live in that kind of timeless realm where past, present and future are all living together. That is one part.

I think it would be helpful to have hopefully restored video keeping some images of Moshe alive in the current trainings, without overdoing it which I do not think is helpful.

I do not know if many people are still using videos as the dominant mode. I think that would be unfortunate. That was true for a long time. But I think to supplement live teaching, so people have some relationship to Moshe I think is a good idea.

Keeping with the idea of multiple teachers of the work is a really important idea. I would not encourage it to become individuals or two people teaching a whole program.

I have not thought of this before but I think it would be helpful in training programs to have a historical context of somatics as a development. There are some really good books around that could help that. I never did it as a Feldenkrais Trainer, but if I really wanted to look at the past and future and development of the work, I would contextualize the work in the philosophical traditions out of which it grew and with which it is sustained today.

Some of that, the people who were influential on Moshe like Merleau-Ponty for example, but also more generally. Nothing arises out of nothing so there were even in the early 1900s somatic traditions that were popular in Germany, that were using softer more sensory based movements like Elsa Gindler and some others.

So contextualizing the work within a larger tradition rather than only trying to stand out as different, to be part of that and then identify the differences. I think it would be good if training programs included that kind of work.

I also think that would make us more articulate and help us not to fall into how different we are than everybody else's.

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Please, now take a moment to reflect and speculate about the future. Where do you see the work going? And how do training programs need to evolve?*

**TRAINER:** I hope that work is going someplace where my opinion doesn't matter that much. People like to say that the future belongs to children. I beg to differ. I think they're renting it; they don't own it. It gets passed on.

Moshe's Method is our method, and we continue to develop it. Going back and studying Moshe's lessons, the trainings, the AY lessons – I realized that Moshe didn't regularly include scans in his lessons. But we do. Most of us do.

A long time ago, in the early 90's, I wrote an article about this. and then, as I traveled around the world, working in trainings and in advanced trainings I used to travel many miles a year, to many places.

And everywhere I went. I asked people – do you do scans in your lessons? And pretty much, everybody said yes. And every so often somebody said no. And I said, Really, tell me about that. I swear half of those people said, well, I read your article about how we always do scans, and so I taught some lessons without it, just to find out what it was like.

Which I found thrilling, not because they read my article, but because they have this attitude – Moshe's attitude – of well what happens if I break the rules. The empirical, experimental, let's find out. Let's notice what happens. Again feedback. And most of them said they went back to doing that.

I find this fascinating. You've been involved in the community; I mean the professional organizational aspect of the community; for decades as well. And you know we have never had a meeting to decide that we should do scans. That was definitely a kind of

anarchistic in the real sense of the world that from the bottom up that change happened. It didn't happen because anybody organized it. It happened organically.

I think the method will continue to develop that way.

I've noticed recently on Instagram, because that's the one social media I kind of participate more or less. I've noticed recently a trend of people breaking one of the rules which is demonstrating lessons – not in a class, but in their promotion for the method, like an explosion of that. That was pretty rare.

Ruthy made a videotape of herself, doing a lesson a long time ago. And at that time that was incredibly controversial. Some people loved it. Some people said 'uug'. I think that's a change. I'm still chewing on that.

We could look at that as a way in which how we present the method is meaning the mind of the times. The method continues to evolve, in those ways.

I know, from talking to my colleagues, that some people are incredibly concerned about the method losing its meaning and its strength.

I certainly have my moments of wondering about that. And I also have a great faith in the method – in the traditions.

Moshe integrated many, many other traditions. We have the background of Yoga and Kano. You could say Kano's mission of taking the ideas that that we are meant to move, and it doesn't matter how big you are, and how strong you are, but you can be effective in the world. I mean you can defend yourself with his approach. Moshe took the understanding from judo and martial arts, and in a way made that more secular and available.

I didn't know until a few years ago, I learned this from Moti Nativ that Moshe and Mia studied Yoga together for years. Obviously, you could tell that if you studied yoga in the lessons, but you could say that that stream or that tradition is integrated.

There are the sacred dances and this aspect of dealing with the habit of emotion from the Gurdjieff work.

If Feldenkrais is a river, there's many streams flowing into it. And there's a way in which Moshe took these, this kind of knowledge, knowledge in action, knowledge applied, and made it more accessible to people.

So you didn't have to go to a yoga class. I think that's what's incredibly promising in the ATM side.

Perhaps the best possible thing that could happen is that that will continue to develop.



At this point, where I am is I want to help other people develop their work, their understanding. Other teachers. People who are being assistant Trainers and Trainers.

I think we have a kind of lopsided view that the pinnacle of being a Feldenkrais teacher is to be a Trainer. I think the pinnacle is to be an experienced practitioner in your community, to inspire other people to become teachers, and to support the people that are coming along.

I've been doing Feldenkrais for more than 40 years.

I continue to be supported by the method, by my own practice. I don't know how I would have made it through as well as I have, and with as much joy as I've had, thru the difficulties of the last few years – the ones that we all shared and my personal ones – without the method. I'm really grateful for that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Well, may I ask, how do you see the Zoom application working with teaching? Or do you think FI can be taught over Zoom? How do you see this kind of bringing in different aspects of distant technology?

**TRAINER:** Well, if Moshe's dream was to broadcast Awareness Through Movement lessons on international satellite television, I think this is an improvement over that dream.

At the same time that Moshe was talking about that, Bucky Fuller was talking about making cable TV a basis for education and for voting. His thing about it was – through whatever your cable or your remote or whatever the interface was – you had the possibility for feedback; for engagement; for two-way; for conversation; for back and forth. Zoom creates the possibility for that back and forth. That's where I think it's an improvement over the broadcast mode, over television.

So, in that way I think it's wonderful. We have tried so many ways to bring people to class, and now class can come to them. People don't have to leave. For some folks that means the method is available where it wouldn't be – either because they're too far away from other people, or they can't make it, or they couldn't afford to get private lessons. I think that's great.

Like every other educational approach that's transitioned to online learning. Let's say it's a diamond in the rough. It's a beginning. You cannot bring the same – it's not equivalent to a classroom – so it requires a different kind of understanding.

I think we're at the beginning of our understanding, of knowing what that means for us as Feldenkrais teachers.

When all this started, I kind of thought there was ATM, FI, and option Three – which was doing a lesson online. I'll stick with the classic distinctions – a class lesson and an individual lesson.

If we call an FI an individual lesson. And we separate that, it's one to one from whether it's in person, or whether touch is involved, then yes, you can do FI online. I've had some remarkable experiences with people doing that? Does it replace or supplant hands-on work and touch. No

Can you learn to give FIs online? I think you can learn to be better at giving FIs. But the element of touch in learning self-use is one of the things that professionally you have to learn in a training. Self-use is not icing on the cake. You can't add it to the end. It has to be baked in.

And it's a way of learning how to apply the percepts of a method to your way of working with people. It's a way of being responsible for your action in terms of needing to be aware of how you are moving when you're moving someone else. You can't hide. You can't disappear. I think that's necessary. I don't want FI to be reduced to that.

I have mixed feelings about the whole ATM teacher training thing because by dint of the contract that's been created, people are forbidden to touch in that context. That's the way it's worked out. And I would hate to be an ATM teacher who can't touch my students personally.

Is that a useful step. Perhaps it is. But I think touch is a part of ATM, or it can be. Me touching the students; touching themselves; and even touching each other at times.

I would say, Zoom is a boon to the method. We need to be more responsible about how we use it and to get better at doing that.

You know this is a little bit politically delicate, is the word I'm looking for. I'm thinking that what's happening is that the method is regressing. That's where I'm afraid that it's going. That people are going back to parceling things out, back to making set pieces and protocols, and back to being very clever.

And that's not everybody and it's not in every situation. But I see it as an unfortunate trend with an idea of trying to define what the method is. Which I think is, it can be defined in lots of different ways, and some ways are just ineffable – you just can't speak them. So that's my fear.

I had conversations with Feldenkrais about this. I was on an early Board of Directors at the Feldenkrais Guild as an appointee by Moshe, and there was talk then about certification and stuff like that. It was interesting because people were offering all the

old ways that people are certified and stamped as competent and wanting to bring that into the method.

People were in the, not testing but testing practicums. There evolved this notion that every FI had to be like a short story with the beginning, a middle, an end, and a denouement.

That's not the way Feldenkrais gave FI.

There is an arrogance, forgive me, there may be an arrogance of people thinking they could actually see what a student was doing and thinking, when often they couldn't, and wanting to be too much the teacher rather than the coach. So, there are a lot of things that distress me, as you can hear, about where the method is going, or may be going. These are all pet peeves of mine.

And then we'll see what people do with it. I think that Feldenkrais thought it was inevitable that the method decline. He thought it was inevitable that people would begin to make formulaic that he did not want to see as being formulaic. And that was an explicit conversation I had with him about how to keep it fresh and alive.

So I'm not the greatest optimist about all of this. But I had a conversation with Mia Segal. I was visiting with her a little bit frequently, after many years of not, just before the pandemic closed everything down. I was visiting her at her home up in Santa Rosa, California.

She said, to me, we're talking about all this kind of stuff. She said to me. Well, do you think any of your students really got it? And I thought that's an important question and I thought about it.

She was making tea. It took a good long time to think about it, knowing Mia, she probably left me to think about it.

And I thought about individuals. I said, yeah, more than I would have thought when I go through and think of the people who I think as individuals got it.

She said, well, you know what I think we should do. And I said what, Mia? She said, "I think we should work with those people. I think we should continue to offer education to those people". Then we were going to have more conversations about it. But Covid intervened.

As I try and save up the Mia anecdotes: to work with the people who can get it; who are going to get it; or who have gotten it. And that's the only way I think I can see of keeping the thing alive.

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**INTERVIEWER:** The next question would be.

***Speculate about the future. Where do you see the work going? And how do training programs need to evolve?***

**TRAINER:** I'm going to take a sidetrack. When I was teaching on Zoom. First, I was dealing with a lot of technology with 5 cameras. Everything was like a big learning curve. And at the same time, I was editing one of my audio programs on perception. In that series of lessons, I have one lesson where you're converging and diverging your eyes.

While I'm teaching, and I can feel it now when I'm talking to you, my eyes are converged. I can feel it affects my breathing, and it actually makes me more impatient.

And I thought well, that's the medium. The medium is influencing the context of learning, without me even knowing. If I had not been editing at that lesson, I don't think I would have recognized it. I just would have been like – I don't like teaching like this. I didn't know why I was so impatient. I found some reasons for it, physical concrete reasons for it.

So, in terms of where the work is going? Again, I don't know about you, but I've always held the belief that this work is for everybody, without exception.

And that's why Moshe thought the whole world will benefit from this work. It'll be a different world as the result of it. And I still think that's true.

But I don't think it's accurate, meaning that our work is, to a high degree, about awareness. It's about learning, right. If I stop 20 people on the street, and say, would you like to like yourself more? They all say Yes, sometimes they'll say I already like myself? Good. Would you like to like yourself more? Who would say no to that?

I can get a consensus pretty easily. But if I stop 20 people on the street, and I say, would you like more awareness? Some of them are going to go. Huh! What! What!

People, many people, are not self-reflective. They're not interested in that. Most mystical traditions from any religion is about developing awareness. And even in that, they talk about you need a teacher who's a good teacher – otherwise you can go mad.

We have something that replaces that madness, which is our skeleton. I think that grounds people in a significant way, so that we're able to ride the emotional maelstroms a little bit better.

So how the work is going to evolve. You know I've been involved in the work for a long time. I've seen it growing, growing, and shrinking, shrinking. I'm not convinced that it's going to disappear at all. I think it has a great potential to continue to grow.

But I think maybe what we're discovering is that we're coming closer to just finding our niche in the world. Like the Alexander technique. That doesn't seem to shrink more but it doesn't seem to grow more either. Even when it's mentioned in movies and TV or Doidge's book. (Norman Doidge. The Brains's Way of Healing) We get mentioned. Stuff like that. It's a blip, it's not enough.

I've come to the belief that our work is absolutely important, without question, essential. It can be essential to people, right, and it is to many people. But that we're not the end-all of the thing that's going to change the world. I think it's unrealistic for that reason.

And so from that point of view, I'm not sure about the evolution of training programs. To my point of view, if more training happens online, that's a De-evolution. That's something that, I think, we lose some of the qualities of the essential personal connection.

But that's because I'm biased by my whole history, and the precedents that I've set and been part of. So maybe that's the future of the work. I don't know. I know people who do programs entirely online. And it works – because people don't have the comparison of something else.

And so, could it evolve to something that's all online? Sure, I could see that happening. It's not something I want to do. But I have a different – that's my personal interest. Something like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think that the actual structure of the administration of the trainings should be different, in some way? If you could see something more into the future relative to where we've come, and where we would go that we haven't explored or experimented with yet.

**TRAINER:** Ah huh! So the structure in that way. Well, like I was in a meeting where we were talking about some of the advantages of teaching online. There's definitely some things, like an ATM practicum. Someone records a lesson. I can watch it with them and talk about it. Stop and start.

Even an FI practicum might work well that way, too. The actual learning of hands – on – I'm not so sure. Like I said, it's possible.

It's technique, right. The question is – how do you replace all those conversations that happen in the breaks and after class. Even if it's a 2- or 3 minute conversation, it connects someone. Me, the teacher, with that student in a way that, unless they call me up, doesn't happen. And they usually hesitate to call me up, for something like that, it's too small.

So in terms of when you say the structure of trainings, the place I first go to is how it's organized

I'll tell you my secret for organizing a training This is true from the very first training I organized in the eighties, and I was talking with someone recently about it.

I don't know if it comes from a background as an actor. Because as an actor, you rehearse, and you rehearse, and there's an opening night. And everything has to be ready and it's often it's chaotic and crazy by the time you get there – but the show has to happen now. Right. Everything has to be like that.

So my way of organizing trainings, (and this might be part of it I don't know, you'll tell me) is I want everything that's behind the scenes to work seamlessly – so that when someone in a training gets perturbed, as often happens, just by the nature of our work – when they get perturbed they can't attach that feeling onto the training.

You said we were going to do this, and we're not doing this. And when am I going to get that? And now you got a big kerfuffle with everything.

And if everything is smooth, now you're left with yourself. And I see, unfortunately I see, that too often happen in programs where things aren't well taken care of.

That's the environment that gets created where someone can learn, not just learn the method, but back to the personal part – learn about themselves, pushed up against ourselves.

Moshe was kind of – I mean he was unusual. He was the only show in town right. So there was not a choice to go somewhere else, If you didn't like them, and people would argue with him and tell them him how to teach.

But it was kind of like – you had to figure things out. I remember I asked the question once "What is learning?". He screamed at me. I said, "learning is incorporating change". And he said, I'll kick you in the ass – you incorporate that change. I'll pour hard coffee on you – you incorporate that change.

And what I learned – was to not talk.

But at the same time, when I had the impulse to talk, there was something in that interaction that made me think. Why am I talking? Am I talking just to hear myself talk? Do I want confirmation about what I'm thinking, and someone to pat me on the head. Do I really? Am I thinking about this, or am I just learning something out?

So it taught me how to reflect a little bit differently. In terms of before, I would jump in on my compulsive way to answer questions – be the smart one, or the right one, or something like that.

And I think that's part of the organization – that the training organization is responsible for that environment.

I've been fortunate to work with organizers who take care of things like that. They're responsive. And when I've worked with ones who aren't, I don't work with them again. It's too messy. It's messy enough, this process, without adding stuff to it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So there's a quality or characteristic that might need to be attended to. Who's organizing, right?

**TRAINER:** That's a big question is organizing. And look, let's not exclude a new organizer from learning how to do it. So it's not like start at the level I'm talking about. But you can be moving in that direction.

One question is if something goes off the rails, how quickly can you come back. I'll give you an example. Today I was teaching my training. It's the last day of the week. I had a lot of things I wanted to cover. I specifically asked everyone, please be on time tomorrow. Bring that sheet of paper with those notes.

And half of them were late. And so I say come on! Let's move! I'm a little bit like this – and I could see a few people flinching. And after a while I sat them down. I said look! I'm sorry for being short with you. You've met me. I'm not that tall – I didn't mean it like that. So I'm sorry for being short with you. But I was thinking of what we were going to cover today, and how much I wanted you to get this.

But the fact is – I addressed it. I didn't just move on. And you know what? The whole room exhaled. It was like Good. Okay, we know what's going on with \_\_\_\_\_ now. And then we were joking about it and stuff – and it was fine.

But man, so many things happen that are just pushed to the side. And that builds up. That really builds up in a training. In four years, that builds up a lot.

**INTERVIEWER:** That's kind of interesting because I'm sure many people are really trying to get it before they leave.

**TRAINER:** That's another question. That feeling of trying to get it before they leave – or trying to get it, period, is one that usually isn't very useful for people.

The question is – how can they be shown that they're getting it. So that means just like in a lesson, in an ATM, there are reference movements you can return to and feel – Oh – that feels different.

So I build that into the training week after week after week. That we can come to a place where we go – How is it now to do that? And they go Oh, I've – and people use the words like more confident, or ready, or something like that. So, I think oh, it's working, if I'm doing something like that.

But again, that's an educational thing that I think needs to be built into the program, so it's not just this piling up of information that overwhelms someone, right? They need to be able to make a comparison between last segment, and now and one week to the next week to the next week. And then when they go home.

Like this group we hadn't met for 2 years other than on Zoom. We did some different things on Zoom. Yeah, it's fine. I was more trying to keep people engaged in the program, in the process.

This was interesting. \_\_\_\_\_ was the Trainer of the first two weeks. She set them up to do some FI.

And it was like they look really good. I'm sitting there going – did I teach them that? Where'd they learn that? That was an example of how the process keeps cooking in us. Some of them practiced some, but most didn't. But still there was a perceivable growth, development, evolution – whatever word you want to use.

Then they need to feel that. It's not enough that I say it. And if I do say – I said it to the group today. I told them exactly what I was saying – how impressed I was. And I said, if you're thinking well, he's talking about everyone else, but not me, you're wrong! Because I'm talking about you too. And that addresses someone's lack of confidence – like Oh, I'm being seen. I'm being heard.

Maybe that's another aspect, an essential quality of the work is that someone feels seen, heard, by us.

How do we bring that more into training programs? So it's not the Trainer isn't this really distant person. That's hard. I have had big trainings; I know what that's like. I can do it.

But I've noticed with the smaller trainings that I contact people better, there's no question about it.

But what's not brought into this conversation is the whole idea of the financial aspect of it. Because that colors everything, whether we want to admit it or not. And I've always been fortunate to work with people who always put the educational part first. Money, second. And we're all happy to make money, but it's like let's do this right, let's make people learn better.



**INTERVIEWER:** Will you tell me more a little bit about how that might work relative to people who are more disadvantaged financially?

**TRAINER:** Big problem. That's a big problem. I mean I've always had work-study in my trainings. But here's how I do it if someone says – do you offer scholarships? Well, I say, well, I can consider it. I said my trainings aren't that big – but tell me what you need.

And most of the time it's like a sliding scale – Well, how low do you go? And I go no, no – what do you comfortable paying? Let me find that out right. And I would say 95% of the time people come up with a figure where I go – Okay, let's do that. But in exchange you'll do some mild work-study.

I don't want people doing the sound and recordings. Too distracting right. And then, if they erase it, people get angry at them. That's a terrible situation like that. So, if you're going to help me set up, take things down, clean up the room a little, that's it. But I can do that with them, too. So, it's not like you go do that, or anything like that.

But this is a bigger question of making the work available to people who were less able financially. And I don't have an answer for that. I was once teaching a kind of a small workshop in the dance department of an ivy league College, and this young woman raised her hand and said – why is this work only for the elite?

And I'm in an ivy league college. It's like the most expensive college in the country. Now I don't know if she was on scholarship or not, or what, but I said to her. You know, depending on how you view the word “elite” – the welfare class can be considered an elite class. So, what do you mean by “elite”? You mean that it's separate in some way from the rest of the world. You're presuming that it's always higher – it could be a lower-class thing too.

In any case, I remember that story because I've always thought about that. The place where, like in my private practice, where it's absolutely the hardest to charge, is to charge kids. Because the parents have to work to do it. Kids can't generate their own income. I can't say I'm going to say no to a kid, It's like Boo.

That's hard, but then now I'm talking about another question, which is everyone's personal values around money. I give a talk about money in my trainings. It's partially about the concrete things of money, and what you do, but it's also about the feelings that come up around money.

So how do we bring people in? Here's one answer I have. That, to me it's not about just offering scholarships. There needs to be a demonstration of want in that person, and

when I see that it's easy to offer them a discount. But if someone is just like, well, it'd be nice if it was cheaper maybe I would do it if it were cheaper. No – when you decide you want to do it, then let's talk.

If what's stopping you now is the money, and this is a tricky question, too, I can say what if money was taken out of the equation? I've had people who, thinking about not coming back – it's expensive and everything. So I say, what if money wasn't the issue. Some of them go – I'd be there. Then I know money is an issue. But many go, well, yeah, it's really not money. They're just using that as an excuse.

Money is one of the more complex things I can think of, in terms of trying to figure all this stuff out. And I would love to see this work made available to people in need.

I mean that's a grand idea to do something like that. And I know in California, in New York, they did low fee clinics, and I think those kinds of things are great.

I worked for a few weeks at an overseas institution with the disabled children, and it's like Wow, that really woke me up to a lot of different things, a lot of other possibilities, and stuff.

I don't know how to do it – because if it's free, that's tricky too. I've had people when they say, what would you like to pay? And they said, free. And I go No, you have to pay something, and I have a point where I go. that's as low as I'll go. And when everyone who I said it needs to be at least this – they've all said yes, and they came.

**INTERVIEWER:** What are your thoughts on the experimental ATM training programs – the two-year ATM programs and possibly a separate kind of FI program only.

**TRAINER:** Well, I'm going to perturb a lot of people with this one. First of all, I think doing separate ATM trainings is great. I never had a problem with it. Many, many years ago Yvan Joly had the idea of starting something like this.

He and I were talking about it. I said, but what about this? And what about this? And what about this? His response was Oh, we'll figure that out later. I said no – if we already know it could be a problem, we need to figure it out now. There'll be plenty of other problems we didn't foresee to figure out. I think that's happened now.

So my understanding. and this is my opinion, and people may like it or not, my understanding of one of the big reasons to promote the ATM trainings was to get more people interested in the work; to get more of the work out there; to get more teachers.

So, what did we do? Well, in a regular four-year training, after 2 years, you qualify as a student teacher. You can charge money. That's 400 hours.

Well, these new programs are 450 hours. When I teach 400 hours, probably an hour a day, is something to do with hands-on work, maybe a quarter of it is some kind of pedagogy related to FI, not so much to ATM.

It means a quarter of that time is spent doing something else. And now I'm down to 300 hours. I actually think it's possible to teach it in less time. That's my opinion.

When I made my DVD for \_\_\_\_\_. I made it for Feldenkrais practitioners. I said, be a teacher. It's free – give you this big manual and everything. I'm happy to do it.

But I get people writing me all the time. Can I become a teacher? Can I become a teacher in this? Honestly, if I really wanted to, I could teach them in a week how to do it. So six lessons. I could teach them enough to make sense out of it.

So personally, I can't say I'm that excited about what's happening. But I also have to wait and see, because I could be way wrong.

But, here's the big But – one of the questions that we knew about beforehand – that was not answered beforehand – was how to make the transition into either a four-year training or FI. And that was irresponsible and that's a harsh word, but it's irresponsible.

Why, do I say that? Because I've had a number of people from those trainings contact me saying I want to now join the third year of your next program. And I go, you can't. You've missed 2 years of hands-on work. I start on the first day with hands on work. I said, I can't catch you up on that. I said there needs to be a whole another intermediary block, something to happen like that.

And I know a number of people who were not happy with that. Because to some of them it wasn't clear to them. They didn't find out until later. And this is just messy. The problem is – it didn't need to be. Something could have been done beforehand, more of a process even, to really be investigating, not waiting until you got a bunch of upset people and stuff like that.

So I'm all for ATM training programs I think it's great.

Again. I have a personal, how would I say, upset – I guess upset is the right word.

So I live in \_\_\_\_\_ right? My training is here. Probably 90% of people come from other places, maybe 10% nearby. My new program has 35 people. It's full, maybe I have three people from \_\_\_\_\_, the rest are from everywhere else. So, I can't attract a large population of people to come here so easily.

I can for a four-year program. For a pilot program of ATM – now that's something that I could do a lot of it online. I'd still want to meet with them. But I think with that I could do a great deal online.

And honestly, I wrote the TAB to say – look I'm not in New York or California. I can't attract these numbers of people to come to \_\_\_\_\_ which is expensive to stay here and stuff.

Can I do this program online? And they just went No, no – and it's like so much for experimentation for a pilot program.

Because I had everything written out. I could tell you all the ATMs I was teaching them. How I would teach them. How I would develop them so that they could teach them.

I mean it's like it's not brain science to figure something like that out, I think. I would have considered that with 10 people if I could do it online like that.

But – now this brings me to another thing and this – I don't know if this is the place for this or not.

But I'm going to say it because we're all connected to it, which is the Guild. And people can be happy or unhappy. Unfortunately, people are mostly unhappy with the Guild, where it is right now.

But my perspective is that we have been in a narrowing path ever since the lawsuit with Anat Baniel. Where everything is now viewed through legalize. To the point where it's strangling things and where there's no creativity anymore. Where there isn't enough of an opening for something new to happen, because oh but that, oh but that, and oh but that.

I'm a member of five different Guilds. Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, Columbia, the United States. Soon France and Belgium too because I'm doing trainings there as well. Okay, so that's seven Guilds. So I support Guilds across the board, and I've always felt there was a value to it.

One of the strongest values to our Guild is the service mark. I was like a big protector of the service mark. You know what – I'm so sure anymore. I'm not so sure.

Think when Pilates lost its service mark. There is a lot of good and a lot of bad Pilates. But there's a lot of Pilates, there's a lot out there.

Our system doesn't allow for that kind of random growth, which – that's how systems develop, in random ways.

So, I may be the renegade here, who's saying maybe we've been on the wrong path for a while, guys. It worked, it worked for a long time, but maybe it's time to toss it away.

The same thing with becoming Trainers. right. I was part of a committee that rewrote the whole way. I was part of the original group that set up the policy – How do you become a Trainer?

And when I left the board it was like, Oh, what have we done? This is hard. I wish I had had that training myself in many ways, but when I look back it's like maybe we made it too hard.

And now there's not – enough people applying, and I rewrote it with a bunch of other people made all these other possible pathways. Didn't work. Didn't make a difference. So we need to tear it apart, not just put Band-Aids on it.

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Please take a moment now to reflect and speculate about the future. Where do you see the work going? and how do training programs need to evolve?*

**TRAINER:** Training programs are evolved. I've been teaching now for several years (\_\_\_\_ in Europe) with a group of incredibly intelligent practitioners. Well informed about science, group dynamics, communication, and the Feldenkrais Method. They live it, they breathe it.

Our graduates typically really practice the Feldenkrais Method. They are expected to practice in between, talk about their practicing and bring back questions from their situations in between the training segments.

So, you know that's an aspect that needs to be emphasized.

I include how to create a successful business and practice within my training program. So that helps. If you expect people are going to be successful as practitioners, they need to know a little bit about how to construct a business and maintain it – including advertising presentations, forming groups, and an individual practice.

So that's included in my training. I think I'm including what's necessary to create very highly, very sophisticated Feldenkrais practitioners. I don't know what's being done in other training *programs*. I can only speak to my own.

**INTERVIEWER:** Excellent! So you were in \_\_\_\_ Europe, right?

**TRAINER:** I have two training programs currently in \_\_\_\_\_ Europe and have had so for several years. So, we've already graduated a few hundred practitioners, and the results are quite amazing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think that what is happening perhaps over in Europe relative to \_\_\_\_? I don't know how many people from North America you have in your training. Do you think that there is any difference between what's going on there and what's happening in North America.

**TRAINER:** I think it's extremely different. Now, I don't teach very much in the United States. I think probably it's better that you talk to people that have North American training programs and create some kind of comparison on your own.

But it's obvious to all of us that there aren't very many trainings in the United States, and they're very small trainings. So the Feldenkrais Method, as we know it in the United States is diminishing and the trainings in Europe are flourishing.

So something very different is happening in the United States compared to what's happening in Europe because \_\_\_\_\_ Europe is flourishing. It's all over Belgium, new trainings starting. What we think of as the Eastern European countries – Czech Republic Slovenia. France, Belgium, Moscow, on and on, new trainings. They have a lot of people in them. I can't name one large training program in the United States. Can you?

**INTERVIEWER:** No, maybe one. I don't know what \_\_\_\_\_ training is, what the participation is there. So is there anything that you have had with experience that you would be willing to comment on about like the ATM trainings or something that the community has talked about – doing ATM trainings, and then doing FI trainings or something along those lines.

**TRAINER:** Well, you know, I think ATM Trainings are still in the experimental stage. You know I just taught in one ATM training, and I'm teaching in another for a few days. I mean it's just my personal experiences. I felt like my hands were tied, literally, because I couldn't demonstrate with hands on work and reference it.

And you know my own experience of learning the method is so tied in with touching as well as moving, that it's really hard for me to separate the two. And my learning of the method and remembering is so enhanced through the touching.

And it was right from the beginning. I can remember everything if I'm touched and touching. It's much harder for me if I'm just using words and watching movement. I'm very skeptical, very skeptical about the understanding that the students could actually understand movement if they're not touching other people while they're moving and being moved. So I'm very skeptical.

**INTERVIEWER:** A last question. Is there anything that we have not discussed that we should include today?

**TRAINER:** Well again I don't know if I want this on the record.

Okay, So I know you're recording, and transcribing and that makes me hesitate to say some things, maybe.

**INTERVIEWER:** And if you decide what you want to do, okay, I'm going to pause the recording.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Question 3

***Then where do you see the work going and how do training programs evolve and need to evolve?***

You have a special perspective here since you have done the first two years of developing ATM teachers, and some of your students now want to go around and find the Functional Integration component.

**TRAINER:** Some do, some do not. Yes, this is the question I am really most interested in.

I would say first of all, we are all about options and I think we need to have a lot of different options in how we do trainings. If you think about it, we are basically just copying what Moshe did. We copied the Amherst Training for a long time and people did not teach Functional Integration. Then gradually that changed. We still have that ability. People do not have to teach it in the beginning. Some still do not, but many do and can do it in the ways they want to do it.

I think having the ability to experiment is really important. Fundamentally the model has not changed very much in all these years and I am disappointed in some of what I have heard about the response to the ATM trainings. There are some people I have spoken who seem feel we would be killing the father by doing that separating ATM from FI.

We have to change for the 21st or 22nd Century, wherever we are going. We have to be able to be nimble and offer different kinds of programs. I think there are plenty of people who can come forward with good new ideas.

It takes time. I feel even more excited about the ATM program now than when we started it. Some of the reason for that is because we have been including people who really would not do a four-year training. We force people to do four-year trainings to be ATM teachers, but if you look at the statistics more people from four-year programs become ATM teachers than Functional Integration teachers. So, if we separate them we can have people in the longer programs who actually really want to teach FI and not include people who really just want to mainly teach ATM. Now if they want to be ATM teachers their only chance is to train four years, or else they drop out and teach ATM but call it something else. There are a lot of people out there who are not interested in a hands-on practice.

Examples of that are people who teach voice, acting, and certain kinds of athletic activities. They are excited about ATM. They see the transformative potential, but they also like the work they have and want to integrate the method into that work.

Think about it. Acting or voice teachers, musicians who are teachers, are going to expose hundreds and hundreds of students over time to the method. We want these people to become ATM teachers and to understand what they are doing.

Otherwise sometimes people who have not done a training get excited about ATM and try to integrate it in their work and then they teach it without really knowing what they are doing.

So having more people really properly trained in, and understanding, the ATM element of the method is one new option we could have.

In Germany, it is interesting, they are trying this modular system for forming ATM teachers. I am not sure what I think about it, because I think people really need individual tracking and I am not sure who is tracking them in a modular system? But I don't know enough about it to make a judgment.

So I think we need new options around the four year programs. And I think we should also have options of two-year programs.

But I think the biggest challenge is how are we really assessing the success and I do not think we have answered that question. That is going to need some serious work. If we let a lot of experimentation happen, then how are we assessing the success there?

At the moment we really do not know what people do in their trainings. On the one hand, as an Educational Director, I really do not want a group of bureaucrats telling me what I can and cannot do in my training. On the other hand, I see that we have to maintain quality and need a way of assessing a pilot program. If somebody has a new idea I would really like us to have the ability to help that group develop that idea and have a way of assessing it.

In the same way, how are differences being assessed when people are teaching within the same model. I do not think that is a simple question, but it is one we need to explore if we are going to open up and explore more possibilities for training.

I am excited that there is a lot of interest in expanding our options and trying new models. Being able to use Zoom... For me the pandemic was just an example of learning through constraints, because I would never ever have done a lot of the things I ended up doing. In fact I think I would have just been against them.

Now, I find that doing an ATM supervision online is great. And in my last training students recorded FI lessons they had done, so I could just look at one lesson with them



rather than supervising a couple of people at the same time and we could stop and start as we went along. I loved that and I never would have done those without the pandemic.

So I hope we are able to exchange about what we learning and keep developing as a community and finding new options.

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**INTERVIEWER:** *So take a moment now to reflect and speculate about the future. A little further out. Where do you see the work going, and how do you see training programs needing to evolve, considering what we've just been through the past couple years, for example?*

**TRAINER:** I don't know what we, whoever the we is ,that has been through whatever we have gone through in the past second several years, because I have not worked in the United States in 15-20 years I have worked in Europe and Asia, and you know all kinds of places all over. But I have no idea about the United States of America other than it's a madhouse at the moment.

**INTERVIEWER:** Maybe what have we the world relative to Covid and a hybrid learning and people being more or less isolated from a lot of hands-on work.

**TRAINER:** I've been obliged to do a few trainings now.

Hybrid because of covid I don't like it. I disagree with people that you can teach Functional Integration on a Zoom thing.

So I think to say that you're doing FI and I think you're lying to yourself and collecting your money, and maybe you can sleep well at night.

I've seen Moshé mostly talk to people, but 99% of the time he touches people.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any thoughts on how their experimenting with the two-year ATM program?

**TRAINER:** And then maybe a different kind of program afterwards that would just be Functional Integration or smaller trainings. I'm not really sure. There's a lot of ideas that have been floated. Look, I have mixed feelings.

Do I think that you can teach ATM by itself. I don't know. I assume that the people who are doing that believe so. Otherwise they won't do it and I think they're, like me, intelligent people.

I think the real problem is that the people who are just doing ATM are people who are going to do that. That the people who are doing ATM and FI are going to have a problem with the general public – to advertise, and how to work on people. I think sometimes, if you see people who can't do an ATM, and you think you know how to help them with FI, that's a nice thing to be able to do. Or vice versa. I think it's nice to know both.

In training programs, I think I don't have enough information to give them in certain areas. I think I have better information in other areas. I think I have some things that I do.

So I try in my trainings to get people who will have different capacities.

I think that many people run training programs always with the same people the same thing, and they don't grow. I take that that's not so cool. But that's human, humans like certain people and not like other people.

So that's what I would say so when I first started my training.

It was for two months. The first year was two months ,the next was two months, and then two months, and so it was really quite immersed.

I loved it. I was able to do it, and then I switched halfway through to the weekend format.

I thought I was going to lose my mind. but I managed it and Mark Reese had said to me, if even if you didn't do a training, if you read all of the books, and did all of the ATM, and just immersed yourself as much and you got lots of FIs and immersed yourself.

He said you would understand it, you would get it. Not that you would be a professional, but you would understand it.

And so I thought that was very interesting. Mark had started us, I think, the second week with FI, which at the time he got a little flak from other Trainers.

But he just thought it was so important to start touching as soon as possible, and it occurred to me recently. Moshé didn't have ATMs first.

He touched people first. Right? I mean it is personal development – his personal development.

Or are you talking about in training programs? Well, I'm not really sure because he wasn't really training anybody. But he touched first, and then, when he realized he couldn't, at least my understanding. he wanted to find a way that people could kind of get a little bit more without all the hands-on work from him or someone. So it was that atmosphere emerged after.

So I kind of wondered, just out of the blue. What would it be like if Feldenkrais trainings started out with just touching, just touching, because some of the early touching things

that I do on the second day, and the third day and every and almost every day along with the ATMs that's how my trainings have evolved.

So yeah, I think, yeah, they grew together. Did they go together with Moshe?

No, he touched for a bit, and then he started doing his ATMs.

I wanted to make a training for years. I was hoping I would make enough money that one day I could just make a training free for people who have no money. Those kind of people should become practitioners.

So that they would have a way to make a living. and then oh, I would have enough money to pay all of the Trainers, and I do it.

Moshe, I asked him one time – How would you like your work to exist after you die?

I didn't use the word die because he hated that word. He said – What do I care?

I'll be dead. That's what he said.

I try to make my trainings have all different kinds of Trainers. Because I don't like to use the same thing. I feel students are going to come back and want to learn so that the students can learn from other Trainers and not always the same.

So I do that. So I think sometimes I say you've learned so much from all these people.

If I really had my way and my druthers, I would say, you have to go now to five more other training programs and not be with the same Trainers in the second year. And in the third year, and then I would say then maybe they'd be pretty good practitioners.

That would be better. Yes, and there are some students like that.

The real problem is, is some students transfer after the first year into – but each training, each ED [Educational Director] has a plan for the whole four years.

And so then it's a pain if you do it in a different one every year.

But if you go through a whole one, and then go review, maybe see a third year or a fourth year, or your ATM, that I think that would be great for people,

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Where do you see the Feldenkrais work going, and does training need to evolve to support that? If so how?*

**TRAINER:** So, it is all actually one answer. Coming out of what I said before, I believe that following the model I described or even during the model of ATM only trainings, will increase greatly the presence of ATM teachers in far-flung communities.

You see because people will feel comfortable teaching ATMs. You have a text. You know what I mean, in the beginning, you have a text, and after many years you start making your own, but again like music, you have a score.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes. And then you can play jazz. But you do not play jazz unless you can play an instrument.

**TRAINER:** Yes, for which you have to practice, right? I say out of the many ATM classes that will happen, will emerge people who are devoted to the process and who will want to teach it. Once they are in a training and experiencing FI lessons – because people get FI lessons and have some basic experience with FI – part of the people will want to continue with FI learning to become successful FI practitioners.

That is the process that I see. But you have to have more people in the community teaching ATMs. In each community, not just in big cities, and even the big cities, I do not think there are enough people, because people do not practice.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you see the structure of training programs changing? I think you have already discussed it.

**TRAINER:** There are a lot of other things I could say about how to become a Trainer and all that, but that is not relevant to this discussion. I think every person that trains or runs a training, most of the ones that I attended, the Educational Director feels very responsible about the results and how much people learn. And they develop their own way of doing it within the format of the Guild, right?

It could be – and I am not sure about that and not planning to do a training right now, so not really thinking about it – but it could be that the Guild might be better serving the Feldenkrais work if they had Guild trainings, which means run by the Guild, not by private business.

So the profit part of it does not have to be a big player. When you put up a training there are so many expenses. It is so expensive, and you put so much in there, you invest so much, that the money part is important.

If it could be offered by the Guild – and I do not know how – as something that can be available and affordable to many more people, I think it would have been better.

I need to think about that, more.

I would say that the format of four years... Four years does not make any musician. That is the beginning. And I would say it is the same with Feldenkrais, especially with Functional Integration. It is a beginning. You give a person a path, and a map, and then they have to start walking.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes. There is also an element of having the confidence to walk or to do FI on another individual.

**TRAINER:** That is why I think an apprenticeship is very necessary. The person you apprentice with will give you constant feedback, and if it is a good relationship, you will become confident – or will find out that it really is not your talent. You find out it takes too long to really learn, and you do not want to do that. But while still being able to teach ATMs.

I love teaching. I still have groups, even on Zoom. If I wanted to invest more time and money in promotion, I would have a lot more. I just don't.

I would actually really like to go back to local. I like to have people in the room. I like to observe them, make different variations, and fit my direction to the people in the room.

**INTERVIEWER:** And there is a different energy with a group of people who are physically present.

**TRAINER:** Yes, and creativity is different than looking at the little squares.

**INTERVIEWER:** Let me ask, looking into the future, how do you see Zoom affecting or impacting the trainings?

**TRAINER:** We did quite a bit at the end with Zoom, and we brought the training to a close. It is possible. Is it my favorite way of doing it? No.

ATM, of course, is less problematic but still, I know people that sign up who nobody ever sees them doing the ATM. Even Moshe, who thought he would never correct anybody, first of all, he did...

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, he did.

**TRAINER:** Loudly.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes. And emphatically.

**TRAINER:** Yes. I listened to it directly and sometimes would go, 'Oh Moshe, please'. But he changes his direction, he changes how he explains the direction. according to what he sees.

But I have to say that the world and the expectations financially are growing so fast that you have to make a lot more money than we did. A musician in the symphony and a Feldenkrais practitioner, educating our children, having to pay for schools because the

ones here were not good at the time and you could not afford a good school area... Today I do not think we could have done that. So, it is a real problem.

But I think if it continues like this, Functional Integration will become as they do in martial arts. You go to a class and learn martial arts, and if the Sensei, the teacher, has the skills and understanding of what is happening, they do private sessions. And some of them are incredible. When you come to hands-on, even Moshe said that about Alexander, that he had the hands of God.

When you introduce touch, there is a whole other dimension to this.

I think it would be possible, but that training would be only through apprenticeship.

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**INTERVIEWER:** *Where did you see the work going? How do training programs need to evolve?*

**TRAINER:** These again it seems like, where do you see the work going is a completely different question and has nothing to do with how training programs need to evolve.

**INTERVIEWER:** *Where do you see the work going?*

**TRAINER:** Well, I'm not a seer. I see the work having tremendous possibilities in many, many different domains, and it would be foolish of me to predict in what area the work might catch on most enthusiastically.

But it might be education, it might be music, it might be rehabilitation.

Now that being said, there are a tremendous number of these fundamental ideas that we've been talking about that might take root in other domains without the name Feldenkrais, attached to them. Right? Yeah, definitely, because there's so much, at least from my point of view, there is so much that is unique and special and novel and revolutionary. And not just what Moshe created, but the ideas behind what he was doing.

It seems to me that you don't need the Feldenkrais Method, (Capital M) to take these ideas and education, or to take these ideas into well, even maybe athletic training, or even into this idea of complexity theory.

It may be his ideas will influence domains before the Method (Capital. M) does.

Okay. What was the second part? That was a completely, distinctly different question, how do training programs need to evolve?

They should evolve in the opposite direction of dilution. Whatever dilution means, training programs should go in the opposite direction.

I am not personally attracted to the idea that we must have more people coming, that we must need thousands of people to become Feldenkrais practitioners.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why?

**TRAINER:** I can think of a couple of good reasons, but mostly I think of not very meaningful reasons. It seems to me the less that marketplace concerns are a part of the discussion of what training programs should look like, the better off we will be.

I think the integrity of the work. And the lack and the integrity of the work is more important.

Do we train 1,000 people or 500 people? I understand there's concerns that the average age of a Trainer is 60 years old, whatever it is. And that they're all going to die in a plane crash at the same time.

And then what will we have.

But I think again that the work should not be compromised or diluted in order to have 10 new Trainers, right? The way I look at it is that precision takes an awful lot of time.

And you come out of your training, and really, you know, you don't get it yet.

And to realize what we're learning is how to learn, and that at a certain point you won't need a teacher.

That you'll realize that you have the skills that you need to progress.

I think personally that the Liturgy, if I can use that word, the liturgy, that Dr. Feldenkrais left. I don't mean it in a religious sense, I mean the body of work and knowledge Feldenkrais left is so vast, it's enough for a lifetime. More than a lifetime, and that's always been.

My quest is to attempt. I don't think anybody else could have given it to me to attempt to figure out. What is he thinking? When he did this movement, and then that, what was he thinking?

I think he gave us a lot. It's a blessing how much he gave us.