

FOR SHARING AND LIVELY DISCUSSION!!

# THE ESSENTIAL PILLARS OF THE *FELDENKRAIS METHOD*®

A WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE LEGACY FORUM'S  
"TRANSFORMATION OF TRAININGS" GROUP

JUNE 6. 2021



# WHERE THIS CAME FROM, WHAT IT IS FOR...

The “Transformation of Trainings” group of the Legacy Forum decided it was important to draw out: *What are the essential qualities and characteristics of the Feldenkrais® work – without which it would not be Feldenkrais work!*

- THIS is the foundation that helps us as Practitioners to be ready to work in any situation – and to know that what we are doing IS *Feldenkrais* work and not something else.
- And, trainees need to learn this, through their training process.



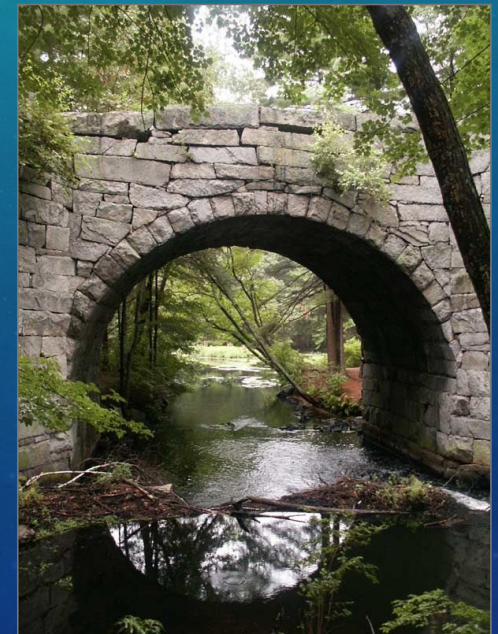
**This document is intended to be a SEED:**

- To share, use, change, refine, improve - go for it!
- To inspire lots of lively development of this topic 😊

## SO – WHAT ARE THE “ESSENTIAL PILLARS” OF OUR *FELDENKRAIS*® WORK?

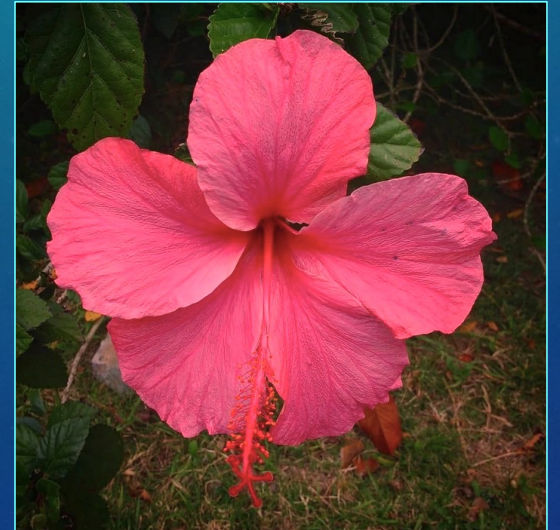
What are the essential qualities and characteristics of our work, without which it is not *Feldenkrais* work?

- What distinguishes the *Feldenkrais* work from other professions?
  - What is the key thing that is still unique?
  - What is the gem that makes this worth being a named method?
- What are the “essential pillars” that guide us, no matter who we are working with, or in what environment/ situation?
- What is essential to the *Feldenkrais* “way of working”?



# THE ESSENTIAL PILLARS: FIVE KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Learning and Discovery
2. Curiosity, Sensing Differences, and Exploring Habits
3. Health
4. Embodied Experience and Connection
5. Biomechanics and Movement



# 1. WE ARE ALL ABOUT LEARNING AND DISCOVERING

## Essential Pillars related to learning and discovering:

- As Practitioners , we direct you *inwardly* - to tap into *your own experience and the potential that lies within you...*  
... and to then *bring your potential into your life.*
- We create the environment for learning – through *the art of asking refined and skillful questions that generate curiosity.*
- We offer *lessons* that engage you in organic exploring and doing. The *Feldenkrais Method*® is not a therapy/treatment.



## ... MORE: ESSENTIAL PILLARS RELATED TO LEARNING AND DISCOVERING

- We cultivate learning experiences that *feel safe*, so that learning can happen easily.
- We pay attention to *the relationship between sensation and movement*.
  - Movement is for the sake of learning and discovery. It's the "doorway" we use to open up awareness and change.
- The capacity to learn is inherent within us. People can learn and adapt at any age.
- We work in a way that is open ended, and we are excited about the possibilities that can emerge.



# CURIOSITY, SENSING DIFFERENCES, AND EXPLORING HABITS

Essential Pillars related to curiosity, sensing differences, and exploring habits:

In the *Feldenkrais Method*<sup>®</sup>:

- We help you to distinguish between:
  - curiosity, and
  - the willful production of outcomes you “will” yourself to conform to an external image or expectation with little attention to what actually suits you.
- We invite you to notice differences, and to use what you notice to guide your own choices.
- Through sensing differences as you move, you explore the initiation of movement, and come to know your habits. From there, you can create new options – and notice what suits you best.
- As a participant, you learn to use your attention, sensations and movement to organize yourself according to ***your intention*** - and thus *create what you want* to improve your life.



## 2. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH

### Essential pillar related to health:

- A healthy person who has the ability to thrive, has the resources to be adaptable, and meets instability and uncertainty in a potent spontaneous way.





### 3. EMBODIED EXPERIENCE AND CONNECTION

#### Essential Pillars related to embodied experience and connection:

- As *Feldenkrais*® Practitioners, our work is relational: we invite you to explore the function of your whole self, in relation to a changing environment.
  - “Everything is connected, and relates to everything.”
- We invite you to have a friendly connection with your own self – through curiosity about your own sensing and experiences.
- As Practitioners we are fully present in ourselves, in order to touch and sense the presence of those we are working with.



## ...MORE: EMBODIED EXPERIENCE AND CONNECTION

- Our work is a continuous interweaving of communication between us and our participants.
- We carefully watch, listen to, notice the participant(s) - and we adjust what we do in response to what we notice.
- We have the intention to connect *with* the other fully, and help them discover how to get to their potential.



## 4. BIOMECHANICS AND MOVEMENT: *OUR* LENS

Essential Pillar of the *Feldenkrais Method*® related to biomechanics and movement:

- **Good posture/acture is the ability to move with freedom and ease in any direction - without hesitation or preparation, in an ever-changing environment.**

Some elements within this:

- For more freedom and ease, we optimize how we utilize ground forces in order to find clear support through our skeleton.
- Gradually expand your attention to *include your whole self*.
- Open up versatility and *create choice*.



Putting these pillars into *action!*

# WE OFFER LESSONS. THIS IS WHAT WE DO!

- Our work is rooted in and informed by the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, DSc.
- *Awareness Through Movement*® and *Functional Integration*® are the foundational ways in which *Feldenkrais*® Practitioners work. They are distinct in their own way and yet the same.
- In addition, there is a broad spectrum of other ways in which we can offer *Feldenkrais* lessons so that they best suit the participants and the situation.



Grounding what we do in the “essential pillars” of the *Feldenkrais Method*® is what makes a lesson a *Feldenkrais* lesson. 😊

## EXAMPLES OF SOME DISTINCTIVE *TEACHING STRATEGIES* WE USE IN LESSONS:

- Experience novelty and non-habitual actions
- If something is difficult, chunk it down into do-able bits
- Expand what works/what is easy
- Notice differences
- Explore the proportional distribution of effort
- Experience the *qualities* of good movement
  - e.g. clear support from the ground; reversibility; freedom of the breath
- Use many ways of sensing, and experiencing (e.g. imagination)



## THE FOUNDATION (TREE TRUNK) CREATED BY “THE ESSENTIAL PILLARS” CAN SUPPORT MANY BRANCHES

For example:



- It provides a base from which to identify the expected learning outcomes for a training program ...
  - ... and from there could spring plans for how to design trainings (in a wider variety of formats) to achieve those.
- It supports Practitioners to more confidently meet their clients where they are – and create great learning experiences tailored for them!

## OUR INVITATION:

LET'S WATER, FERTILIZE AND GROW OUR CLARITY ON  
“THE BIG QUESTION”:

What ARE the essential qualities and characteristics of our work, through which we know we are practicing the *Feldenkrais Method*® and not something else?





Here, we have asked that “**BIG Question**”...

... And we have provided *our* current approximation of an answer.



We don't put this forward as “the ‘correct’ answer” – we offer it to support more exploration – by everyone interested in this question!

*This is “a work in progress” 😊*

It will grow and change as more people dive in to develop this.