

Learning Compassion and Functioning Fully

I revitalize. I bring life back to people who want to do easily what they cannot. I do that by teaching "Awareness Through Movement" and "Functional Integration." What I have learned from Moshe Feldenkrais is profound. I learned to sense what others need in their self-representation in the most direct manner possible: through the sense of touch. As Feldenkrais Practitioners, we are taught to touch and connect compassionately. It is an exceptional and emotional experience to be listened to in this way.

While I am working, I move slowly, quietly, mostly sensing what the other is doing, at times deeply sensing what I am doing, and occasionally what we are doing together. When in this state, I am simply relating as one human to another, not as teacher to student. I am thinking, feeling, acting, and communicating differently. I am not evaluating, interpreting, or diagnosing. I am not being moralistic about what is right or wrong, or ideal, but rather I am empathetically relating to another. I do this because I enjoy the sessions more when this spirit is alive in me. My clients also comment on their appreciation of this nonjudgmental way of looking at things. Learning more about compassion and its interplay with awareness, and relating with each other is my current passion. This pursuit seems profound. This way of "functioning fully" is what I am after.

How do I insure that what I am doing is getting me what I want? When watching Moshe on tapes, one can see that his state of awareness was heightened while he was working. He was more vital in those moments. His eyes were brighter; there was a visible twinkle and gleam in them. That's what I look for in the responses of people that I work with. It may be a look in their eye, or the ease with which they can walk, or perhaps the pleasure in a breath that recognizes how incredible what they are doing is. I look for the movement and grace of someone who, five minutes ago, was immobile, stuck, hurting.

Often I am inspired by a serene look or smile of deep appreciation when someone realizes they can do something that was impossible just a moment ago. While working with a young girl today I was struck by the richness and spontaneity in her voice as she talked about her ability to sit quietly because she no longer had pain in her legs. It was both hearing the words and the quality with which they were spoken that I celebrate. Noticing the spoken and unspoken clues is what enlivens me today. I saw this understanding and compassionate way of being in Moshe. I see it in young children's way of being, and I see it in others during our work.

By the way if this article were a poem by Rumi or Hafiz, it would be much simpler, and might read like this:

I am afraid
this awareness stuff has
untied in me a greater respect
for being alive
and living compassionately.