

What is the Feldenkrais Method®? How it Works

“Feldenkrais work is the most sophisticated and effective method I have ever seen for the prevention and reversal of deterioration of function.”

~Margaret Mead, PhD, Anthropologist

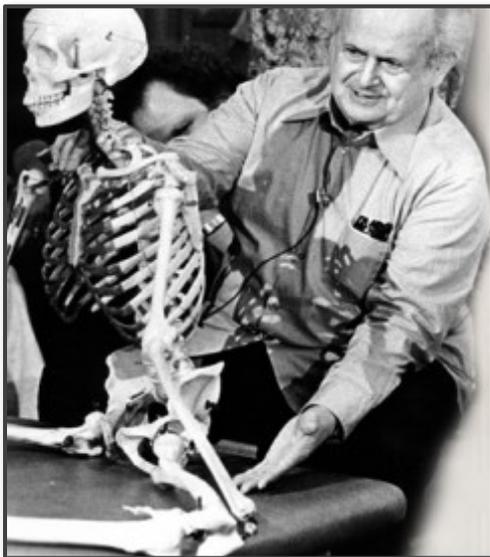


Annie Thoe teaching at Advanced Training for Feldenkrais Practitioners

I began studying the Feldenkrais Method® in 1985 after seeking every possible treatment for chronic, debilitating knee pain (sports medicine doctors, osteopaths, physical therapists, chiropractors, various massage therapies, Rolfing, cranialsacral, acupuncture, psychic healing, meditation, yoga and psychotherapy.) I couldn't walk, hike, bike or swim without knee pain. As a former college athlete, yoga student and martial artist, I was desperate to find a solution since I relied on strenuous

movement to balance my emotions. Finally, I found a Feldenkrais Practitioner.

After my first Feldenkrais lesson, I experienced a profound shift in my awareness, alignment and coordination of my legs with my entire body. I felt my legs “deeply connected” to the ground! While it took me seven more years to shift how I used myself with my knees (and entire self) to move beyond this pain pattern, that first Feldenkrais lesson marked the beginning of my career in bodywork and awareness work. Today with over three decades of study and practice, I enjoy much greater ease and confidence in my body, mind and movement. I continue to use the Feldenkrais Method® along with Nature Awareness and many other healing modalities to help my clients move past limiting beliefs toward creative problem-solving, new possibilities of ease in movement, inner guidance and deep healing.



The Feldenkrais Method® is named after its founder, Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais and is a **sensory method of learning to refine one's movement, improve function and expand awareness of self and one's environment.**

Moshe Feldenkrais developed his method in the mid-1940s after suffering a crippling knee injury. He found he could teach himself and others to align, stabilize and move better based on the neuroplasticity of the brain through attention for learning to function better. Through guided positions with slow movements using self-awareness, a student engages their senses to refine their ease in an activity. People who use this method can develop expanded awareness to find better choices for movement, action and life.

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I find there are **3 major Principles in the Feldenkrais Method®** that yield the magical results of ease in movement:

1. **Sense Your Bones:** The bones are the most solid and stable support in the body. Once you can sense where your bones are and how your bones connect and stabilize your body on the ground or to a point of contact, the entire body responds to the sensation of support. Sometimes instant relaxation occurs simply by “sensing your bones” alone! Sensing the position of one’s bones during movement and rest (interoception) helps the internal mapping of orienting where you are in space (proprioception.) This awareness of your bones helps refine and improve movement by using the bones as consistent landmarks for guidance, alignment and builds a sensory map for movement.
2. **Focus on Ease & Well-Being:** Awareness of where you are moving and attention to the level of effort needed can bring much more finesse and control for movement. Tuning into the quality of ease refines one’s movements to become gentler, smoother, better coordinated and more aligned. This principle of the Feldenkrais Method that focuses on ease requires a person to slow down in order to sense/feel more. Reminding yourself to search for “ease” as well as to cultivate the intention to slow down during a movement will connect with more of your nervous system for better results.
3. **Attention to Whole Self:** Sense how your bones and specific areas connect through the entire body during movement will engage your whole nervous system. Even during a constrained movement where you may be just moving one arm, this intention to sense the whole body helps connect and balance oneself within a larger environment. Feldenkrais sessions continue to refine one’s abilities to sense parts of the body in greater detail and then integrate these parts to the whole. This maturation process of attention expands one’s vocabulary of movement to act with more choices, ease and mastery for self-expression in a context where self connects to the greater environment.

As a nature awareness teacher, I’m excited to explore how the Feldenkrais Method can connect with our environment and our animal relations as the next evolutionary step for human consciousness.



Experience a 5-minute demonstration of these three principles with this [YouTube lesson](#).

For information on Annie’s live and recorded classes, articles, and [Feldenkrais CDs](#) go to [Annie Thoe’s Website](#) or [Patreon Page](#).

Thanks for [donating here](#) or on [Youtube](#) toward Annie’s video production, future articles, creation of video & CD library and

future creative projects. Sign up for [Annie’s newsletter](#) for latest updates, classes, workshops, nature awareness stories and video releases.



For more information about the Feldenkrais Method® in North America, practitioners, professional trainings, classes and workshops, go to [North America Feldenkrais website](#). For other regions in the world check out the [International Feldenkrais Federation](#).