

FOR FELDENKRAIS TEACHERS (and others interested in understanding The Embodied Life teachings):

Understanding the connection between The Embodied Life™ and The Feldenkrais Method

When Rabbi Mordechai's son Rabbi Noah took over after his death, the disciples noticed that he did many little things differently. When asked about this Rabbi Noah said, I do things just as my father did, he did not imitate and I do not imitate”.

From Moshe I received many blessings for which I am eternally grateful, two of the most important are: commitment to the process of awareness and valuing my unique ‘handwriting’.

Prior to meeting Moshe, I was devoted to a practice of Zen meditation. My initial insight “on the cushion” revolved around the central importance of being awake in the present moment. In addition, because Zen is above all an embodied practice, I saw how our embodiment could be a great ally in the process of awakening.

Early in my training, ATM's became a laboratory for exploring embodied presence. Before, during and after the training, I was also investigating present moment awareness (is there any other kind?) in the realm of feelings/emotions through Gestalt Therapy, various awareness practices and other approaches to somatic-based psychology.

My professional identity from 1975 onward has been as a Feldenkrais teacher and trainer. In addition, for about 25 years, I also have conducted retreats and seminars, which integrate meditation and “guided inquiry” (an original system for investigating thinking, feeling, communication and relationship patterns) with the teachings of Moshe.

About 15 years ago, while in a time of deep self-reflection, I investigated the question, “if had 5 years left to live what would I do?” The clear and unmistakable answer was that I would devote myself to teaching the most direct and complete path to inner freedom that I could. This questioning led to the creation of “The Embodied Life™” as a mentorship program in which I would guide people in the practices that have been of most importance to me.

3 Main Practices: Meditation, Guided Inquiry, Movement Lessons of Moshe Feldenkrais

All of these practices include the same inner attitude of curiosity, warm-heartedness and spaciousness applied in slightly different ways.

The **meditation** we practice is a direct, bare-bones approach to experiencing our mind/body ‘as-it-is’; this is the basis for being at home in ourselves. Beyond ideology, it directly addresses the question: can I be at ease within my own self-created mental stories? Rather than offering mantras, pictures or other forms of “distraction”, we practice becoming friendly with the present moment.

Guided Inquiry includes a variety of awareness experiments based in the Focusing method of Eugene Gendlin. I have been developing these experiments for more than 30 years. Learning to bring a warm, caring, curious yet objective presence to our feelings/emotions/situations is transformative. Becoming skillful with both inner and outer communication is part of this study. We also use modern neurological understanding to grow “resource states” in which we practice growing “life-giving neural networks” based in our own experiential history.

As you know, **the movement lessons of Moshe Feldenkrais** are perhaps the most neurologically sophisticated ways of

transforming our motor patterns and self-image. In this program we focus in-depth on 5 essential embodied qualities: grounding, centering, breathing, lengthening (lightness) and spatial awareness (inner and outer space). The lessons are specifically chosen to invite a softening of the infrastructure of our learned self-limiting identity. In addition, I have developed “standing gestures” that embody the most important human qualities such as: dignity, humility, courage, groundedness, open-heartedness and presence.

Transformation and Integration

The integration of these modalities is profound and unique. Working with mental/emotional habits, while simultaneously exploring the underlying physical patterns- all from the same perspective- potentiates each approach exponentially. Finally, the power of a committed, compassionate group of people often from various countries doing these practices over a period of time creates an unexpected support for inner transformation.

“I believe we are in a historically brief transition period that heralds the emergence of the truly human man.”

(Moshe Feldenkrais, “Awareness Through Movement”, p.48)

“The Embodied Life” is directly oriented toward Moshe’s vision of the integrated human being in whom sensing, moving, feeling, and thinking function as an integrated whole. Moshe predicted that this integration would be spontaneous when the movement patterns were no longer compulsive. When I shared with him my observation that sometimes people generalize their learning and often they did not, he said, “it is the greatest disappointment of my life”.

We are living in a time a great transformation and evolution of consciousness. I encourage those attracted to the ideas presented here to check out the writings on my website at

www.russelldelman.com and to consider coming to an Embodied Life retreat. Wishing us all many blessings on the path of awakening.

“In those moments when awareness succeeds in being at one with feeling, senses, movement and thought, the carriage will speed along on the right road. Then man can make discoveries, invent create, innovate and ‘know’. He grasps that his small world and the great world around are but one and that in this unity he is no longer alone.”

Moshe Feldenkrais, “Awareness Through Movement”, p.54

QUESTIONS FROM FELDENKRAIS PRACTITIONERS

Is this a personal or professional training?

People come with different intentions: 1) Everybody who attends is interested in self-transformation. 2) Many of the people are active teachers, Feldenkrais practitioners, meditation teachers and therapists who want to expand and deepen their work. 3) Some of the people want to become “Embodied Life” guides.

Do you certify people at the end of the 6 meetings?

Not necessarily. There are at least three major areas of study, though we approach them from the same perspective. The first is meditation, the second movement awareness and the third is the group of practices called Guided Inquiry. Depending on their history and skill sets people develop in these areas at differing rates. My encouragement to teach the work is based on our personal relationship and the dialogue that I maintain with each participant. There are now numerous Embodied Life groups meeting throughout the world. We have approximately the same number of Embodied Life graduates in Europe as in the U.S. The 14th

program will begin this year, with approximately 250 people having participated in the whole program.

Are all participants Feldenkrais Practitioners?

No. I really value and enjoy a diversity of backgrounds. All participants have been on the road of awareness in some form. For example there are Zen monks, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, social workers, artists, film makers and people with many other areas of expertise enrolled in the current courses. This makes for a very rich atmosphere.

Is there homework between the weeks?

A basic law of “spiritual” or inner development is that all tasks or assignments must be done in freedom. This means that I make suggestions for people’s development and the decision to follow through is up to each individual. There are no requirements, yet, almost everyone in the current courses maintains a daily meditation practice and at least once a week they explore some other aspect of the teaching. Each training week is digitally recorded and this is sent to each participant so many people use the interim to review the previous session. Each year there are approximately three recommended readings.

I already have a teacher, do I need to see you as my new teacher?

Not at all. As part of the course, I offer to be in relationship with each participant. Most of the contact is via email. Some people contact me fairly regularly, some never connect with me between sessions. You determine the type of connection that serves your development.

How can I apply?

First go to the website www.russelldelman.com to fill out an application. I request that each person applying come to at least one retreat before the program so that we can have experience working in these forms together.

How can I ask further questions?

For logistical questions contact my administrator, Nancy Fleming, at office@russelldelman.com and for questions related to content or personal issues contact me at Russell@russelldelman.com.