

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the *Feldenkrais Method*<sup>®</sup> of Somatic Education?**

The *Feldenkrais Method* is a form of somatic education that uses gentle movement and directed attention to improve movement and enhance human functioning. With this Method, you can increase your range of motion, improve your flexibility and coordination, and rediscover your innate capacity for graceful, efficient movement.

By expanding the self-image through movement sequences, the Method enables you to include more of yourself in your movements. Students become aware of their habitual neuromuscular patterns and rigidities, and learn to move in new ways.

### **Who Benefits from the *Feldenkrais Method*?**

Everyone can benefit from the Method. The *Feldenkrais Method* helps those experiencing chronic or acute pain of the back, neck, shoulders, hips, legs, or knees, as well as healthy individuals who wish to enhance their movement abilities. The Method has been very helpful in dealing with central nervous system conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and stroke. Musicians, actors, and artists can extend their abilities and enhance their creativity. Seniors enjoy using it to retain or regain their ability to move without strain or discomfort.

### **What Happens in a *Feldenkrais Method* Session?**

In group *Awareness Through Movement*<sup>®</sup> lessons, the *Feldenkrais*<sup>®</sup> teacher verbally leads you through a sequence of movements in basic positions: sitting or lying on the floor, standing or sitting in a chair. These precisely structured movement explorations involve thinking, sensing, moving, feeling, and imagining. By increasing awareness, you will learn to abandon habitual patterns of movement and develop new alternatives, resulting in improved flexibility and coordination. Many lessons are based on developmental movements and ordinary functional activities (reaching, standing, lying to sitting, looking behind yourself, etc.). Some are based on more abstract explorations of joint, muscle, and postural relationships. There are hundreds of ATM lessons, varying in difficulty and complexity, for all levels of movement ability. A lesson generally lasts from 30 to 60 minutes.

Private *Feldenkrais* lessons, called *Functional Integration*<sup>®</sup> lessons, are tailored to each student's individual learning needs. The teacher guides your movements through gentle non-invasive touching and words. The student is fully clothed, lying on a table, or in a sitting or standing position. At times, various props (pillows, rollers, blankets) are used in an effort to support the student, or to facilitate certain movements. The learning process is carried out without the use of any invasive or forceful procedure.

### **How Does the *Feldenkrais Method* Differ from Massage and Chiropractic?**

While all of these practices touch people, the *Feldenkrais Method* is very different. In massage, the practitioner is working directly with the muscles, in chiropractic, with the bones. These are structural approaches that seek to affect change through changes in structure (muscles and spine). The *Feldenkrais Method* works with your ability to regulate and coordinate your movement, which means working with the nervous system and the whole person.

### **How are *Feldenkrais* Practitioners Trained?**

All *Feldenkrais* practitioners must complete 740-800 hours of training over a 3 to 4 year period. Trainees participate in *Awareness Through Movement* and *Functional Integration* lessons, lectures, discussions, group process, and watch videos of Dr. Feldenkrais teaching. Newtonian mechanics, physics, neurophysiology, movement development, biology, and learning theories are presented in the training programs.

This list of Frequently Asked Questions was originally compiled by Richard Ehrman and the Feldenweb Committee, 1996.