

FELDENKRAIS AUSTRALIA

Journal of the Australian Feldenkrais Guild Inc.

June 2014



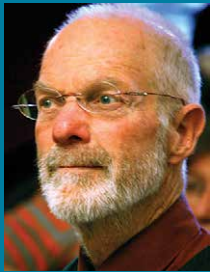
THE VOICE:

ARLYN ZONES

GEORGI LANEY

FRANCESCA WHITE

ZORAN KOVICH



EDITORIAL

By Ralph A Hadden

The theme for this issue is one close to my heart. The voice is important for teaching ATM, of course, but also for singing, something I love to do. I have been singing in the Men in Suits for the last 6 years with great enjoyment. I joined the choir in 2008, a period when I was dealing with the devastating loss a year earlier of my youngest daughter to leukemia. In my still freshly grieving state the choir nourished my battered spirits, giving me a lift each time I sang with the group. I have continued to sing with the group and it continues to enhance my mood each time. And Feldenkrais has been an essential tool supporting me singing and moving well while performing.

(You can see a fine example of us singing on You Tube (*Metro Regrets* by Men in Suits): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh-sl9qajwA>)

Neuroscience studies are now showing how singing in choirs has positive effects on human physiology. In the Voice resources section on page 17 there is a link to a TED talk about this. I recommend singing to everyone.

What I've been reading: Keith Richards' autobiography *Life* (Little, Brown & Co, 2010), written with James Fox (I suppose that means Fox was the ghostwriter). I expected to find that his life was a dissolute one, drenched with drugs, drink and sex and, yes, it was

that. But I was surprised to also discover that he is a serious student of his craft. Throughout his playing life he has been a dedicated learner and explorer of music and the guitar- Blues, Rock, Rhythm n' Blues, jazz and even classical- at first by concentrated listening (with Mick Jagger) to whatever blues recordings they could find in England, then later by closely observing and playing with many guitar masters. So, once again I learn that being at the top of your profession doesn't just happen by accident. There are many hours (10,000 hours is the oft quoted figure) of practice, refining, re-working, collaborating and performing.

For entertainment: *We are all Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler (2013 Serpent's Tail 2014) is an engrossing American family drama with a twist. As Tolstoy said, "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Rosemary, the daughter, relates the special way her family is unhappy. And there is an interesting side exploration of the distorted lives and often unhappy fates of chimpanzees used for experiment and research in the academic and medical world. Our near relatives deserve better.

THE EDITOR

Ralph Hadden (Sydney 1990), Assistant Trainer (2012), practises in Melbourne. He is an AFG(Vic) delegate to the National Council.

ABOUT FELDENKRAIS AUSTRALIA

Feldenkrais Australia is the journal of the Australian Feldenkrais Guild, Inc and is intended for Feldenkrais Method® practitioners and trainee practitioners. Content is copyright © 2014 by AFG Inc. The Feldenkrais Australia journal is mostly made available to members via the internet, with some members receiving a hard copy, at their request. The journal appears approximately twice a year. Next issue is planned for October 2014; deadline for material: 31st August.

The theme for the next issue is Habits, Their Making and Unmaking. Contributions are invited, on this or any other topic.

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Cover: Two of my favourite local performers, Vika and Linda Bull, illustrate the power of the voice. Permission to reproduce was very kindly given by the photographer Mr Frumpy (Lex). See his work on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mrfrumpydotcom> and <http://www.mrfrumpy.com>

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GOINGS ON

THE HIGHEST POINT OF THE HIP

An Advanced Training in Canberra with trainer Stephanie Spink (Melbourne 1991).

Cost: AFG Members- \$280, non-members \$330.

When: Saturday, Sunday 14, 15 June,
9.30am-4.30pm Saturday,
10.00am-5.00pm Sunday

Where: 71 Maclaurin Crescent, Chifley, ACT.

Contact: Stephanie Spink, sjspink@bigpond.net.au

VICTORIAN COMMUNITY DAY: "HOLD YOUR TONGUE!"

Working with jaw and tongue tension. ATMs and some FI. Led by Stephen Grant (Montreal 1997), head of the Voice Department, Melbourne University Conservatorium.

Cost: \$40 AFG members, \$80 non-members

When: Sunday 15 June, 10.00am-1.00pm
(followed by shared lunch)

Where: Balwyn Community Centre,
412 Whitehorse Road, Surrey Hills

Contact: Ann Scanlan, 0409 774 458 or
Fran White, 0421 889 812

GOINGS ON

NATIONAL PAIN WEEK

The AFG Pain team encourages practitioners to be involved in this event, a project of Chronic Pain Australia: <http://www.chronicpinaustralia.org.au>

When: 21-27 July

Contact: Lisa Campbell of the AFG Pain team,
campbellisa@optusnet.com.au

TIMELESS BODY

A weekend to promote our method, nationwide. Stay tuned for news from your division.

When: 16, 17 August

Where: Australia

MAKING MORE OF FI

Post training module with trainer Julie Peck (Sydney 1990) in Melbourne.

Cost: AFG members and Feldenkrais Institute alumni \$550, (or early bird \$500 before 20 July), non-members \$650

When: 22-26 September, Monday-Friday

Where: Box Hill Town Hall

Contact: Feldenkrais Institute of Australia,
+61 3 9645 4373, feldenkrais@feldworks.com.au

List your event in GOINGS ON: send the details to nationalnewsletter@feldenkrais.org.au. Use the GOINGS ON format- name of event, brief description, cost, when, where, contact. RAH ■

FEATURES : THE VOICE



VOICE, BREATH, POSTURE

By Arlyn Zones,
MA Theatre Arts

Arlyn (Amherst 1983) is a Trainer (1994) based in the United States. She has taught extensively throughout the world, including many visits to Australia. Prior to her involvement with the Feldenkrais Method® Arlyn studied acting, voice and mime and taught Movement for Actors.

In 1981 Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais travelled throughout the United States offering a series of five day workshops which were sponsored by an organization named Quest¹. When asked to write about what he would teach, he listed nine ideas or intentions behind the movement sequences he would present. Included in the list was:

- To experience making one feel taller and lighter.
- To train the voice-breathing as our nervous system would like it to be (Feldenkrais Voice Training).
- AND: To become aware of the many different parts of one's self image and how to complete it-in ten different situations or lessons...

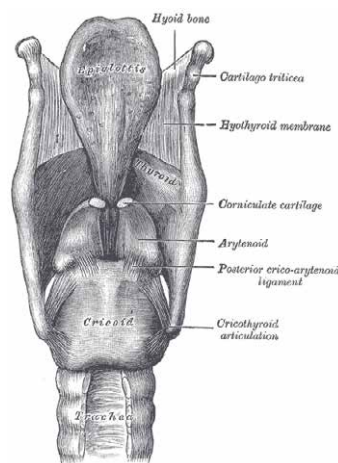
As far as I know he didn't include any direct examples of voice lessons in these workshops although the year before he did start to work with the theme in the Amherst training. If you look, however, at what he wrote in the text above, you will find some of the ideas or principles that I have been investigating in a series of lessons from the Feldenkrais Method® and the Linklater Voice Method.

But before going further let me introduce you to some of Kristin Linklater's philosophy of vocal training. Ms. Linklater's work focuses predominately on actor training and therefore more on speaking than on singing. She refers to her approach as *Freeing the Natural Voice*² and wrote a book by the same title.

As this title suggests, the work to free the voice is not one where the person tries to add something on to the way they speak but instead learns to take away what interferes.



Corinna May (L)
Kristin Linklater
(R)



In her book she says that real spontaneity *depends on reflex action and most people have lost the ability and perhaps the desire, to behave reflexively.* The animal instinct level of emotional response to stimulus, deep in the unconscious mind, is largely conditioned out of us as we grow up ...*Throughout the nervous system impulses have been blocked, rerouted or crisscrossed with countermanding impulses*³. To all those familiar with Dr. Feldenkrais' ideas the parallels become clear. In Feldenkrais language we could say that our voices are the freest when we allow ourselves to express what we want, what we intend, without any cross motivation.

Linklater also says that *as long as we are emotionally protective our breathing will not be free. When the breathing is not free the throat, jaw, lips and tongue work twice as hard to compensate for the lack of breath power.* Anyone who has closely observed

themselves while speaking can verify the number of habits that interfere with a really free sound coming out thru the mouth.

Another strong resemblance of Linklater's approach to that of Dr. Feldenkrais is the strong emphasis on making sensory distinctions. All the Linklater exercises are designed to help one experience the vibration of sound rather than judging it as good or bad.

My own work in exploring how to combine the two systems has evolved over many years of bringing the voice work into Feldenkrais Professional Training Programs.

What began as a one hour vocal class in 1989 has gradually grown into a week long curriculum. Recently I have also begun to work with Corinna May, a designated Linklater teacher who has many years experience teaching voice and is also an actress and a Feldenkrais Practitioner.⁴

In beginning the work with the voice, the first question that I usually ask the group is: "How many of you have a good self image around the way you use your voice?" On average one third of the group will have a good self image, one third of the group will say they have a medium image, and one third of the group will

say theirs is poor. Of those that have a good self image nearly all of them have previously had some special training in singing or speaking. So the first order of business is to decouple the business of sound making from previous associations about oneself.

For Kristin Linklater the place to begin is the spine. The first exercise in her Method is a spinal drop in which you are asked from a standing position to drop down the spine one vertebrae at a time and then build back up. The chapter is entitled: *The spine: the support of breath.* In this chapter Ms. Linklater actually offers us a quote from Dr. Feldenkrais in which he says that the muscles should not have to carry out the job of the skeleton but should be free for movement.⁵ As one gradually learns to think of the spinal column from the inside, the vertebral bodies become linked to the image of a channel for sound. The vibrations which begin in the belly pass upward along this channel and unimpeded out thru the front of the mouth.

In my curriculum of ATMs I also begin with the spine. The ATM focus on the sensing of the inside of the spine and the realization that the vertebral bodies are large supporting structures helps to create a sturdy feeling of the skeletal support when the students return to the work in standing.

I next move to the awareness of the space inside the mouth and the abdomen. In the lesson on the mouth and palette Dr. Feldenkrais shows very clearly how eliminating unnecessary contractions of the tongue has immediate beneficial effects on the breathing. He also utilizes what I call a back door approach to the work with breath in that he uses *imagery* to influence awareness and awareness to evoke the change in musculature.

Linklater also says that when working with the breathing we need to develop the ability to “observe without controlling...Conscious control of the breath will destroy its sensitivity to changing inner states, and severely curtail the reflex connection of breathing and emotional impulse.”⁶

In the next phase we influence the breath by taking away the unnecessary parasitic work of the intercostals so that the ribs and diaphragm can be free to respond to the natural inflow and outflow of the breath. Awareness Through Movement® lessons which involve twisting of the spine can be linked to the experience of the breath gradually being able to expand in multiple directions: from lower down spreading upward, from the center spreading outward and from the center spreading forward and back.

Gradually as one continues through the Awareness Through Movement® lessons which are chosen for their ability to make the Linklater work more accessible one can expect the following to occur:

1. The inner space expands in all directions
2. The breath expands in all directions
3. The skeleton fulfills its supporting purpose
4. Posture and acture improve

Going thru the Awareness Through Movement® lessons in conjunction with the voice exercises makes it possible to focus on the details and the whole simultaneously. Shifting between the foreground of vocal production and the background of the support of the entire skeleton allows unnecessary efforts to fall away.

One can now begin to explore the resonators with a better chance of keeping habits of the tongue, jaw, lips and throat from interfering. The work with resonators can be great fun when properly prepared for.

Vibrations of sound are sent into various parts of the face and high up into the palette and are clearly sensed. At this point one's relationship to the voice begins to shift to the experience of the *pleasure* of

feeling sounds. The sound has an energizing or re-vitalizing effect on the whole self.

In my recent collaboration with Corinna May in a training segment in San Diego she was invited to teach the students the Linklater portion of the curriculum. Her comment as the week came to a close was as follows:

As I'd anticipated, the group as a whole and individually had found much more resonance than they'd begun with, but what was arresting was the quality of the resonance- we say in the Linklater work that we are looking for a transparent voice, that is, we want to hear the person, not the person's voice. In the end I was hearing not “good voices,” but strikingly richer, suppler, brighter more expressive voices that came unforced, without pushing or reaching or crafting, just releasing vibrations with ease from their whole selves.

When Corinna works with actors using Feldenkrais as an adjunct to the voice she also finds that the process is enhanced.

For the work in trainings the final task is to ask the students to give each other a scan. The students are asked to couple their words with an inner image

and also to send their voice into the bones of their partner. I like to refer to this as skeleton to skeleton contact in the teaching of ATM. The vibrations of sound carry with them all the intentions of the teacher as he guides and focuses the students' attention to new domains of perception. Over time one can include the physical sensation of one's own voice while teaching and this helps to deepen the pathways of communication between the teacher and the group.

In closing, I would note that in my own work I have found that the inclusion of the vibration of sound of

my voice while teaching creates a strong effect on my entire organism. There is usually a movement downward in myself that becomes more and more available as a lesson progresses. This downward movement both influences the deepening of the breath and the whole breathing mechanism regulates itself into a steady pulsation of air becoming sound. The improvement of the breathing and the sensory experience of the sound is felt as a kind of tonic for my entire system. The connection with an image of what I am asking the students to feel further improves my contact with my own skeleton. So for myself and for

those I teach I think that the issue of self organization and self awareness is just as pertinent to the teaching of ATM as it is in the giving of a Functional Integration® lesson. And certainly it is possible to give a whole group a lesson in Functional Integration® thru the medium of one's voice alone.

Footnotes:

1. Brochure for Workshops with Moshe Feldenkrais sponsored by *QUEST*: Dallas, San Francisco, New York, 1981. Check with www.feldenkraisresources.com for available recordings of these workshops.
2. *Freeing the Natural Voice* by Kristin Linklater. Quotes are from first edition published by Drama Book Specialists 1976. The first edition is known as the Blue Book and the 2nd Edition published in 2006 is known as the Yellow Book. Both are carried on Amazon.com
3. Ibid. pg. 12
4. Corinna May, teacher of Voice and Speech at Pace University, New York City, NY. Corinna is also the teacher for the Linklater work for the CD/DVD series published by Feldenkrais **Resources**. See www.feldenkraisresources.com The series is entitled: *Voice, Breath and Posture* by Arlyn Zones with Corinna May
5. For exact quote refer to *Freeing the Natural Voice* by Kristin Linklater, p. 20. Kristin Linklater was in contact with Dr. Feldenkrais and they observed each other's work. She also wrote an article about his Method entitled: *The Body Training of Moshe Feldenkrais*. After her exposure to his lessons she began to use the Pelvic Clock in her own teaching.
6. Ibid. pg. 25





ENHANCING VOICE PRODUCTION: FELDENKRAIS AND SPEECH PATHOLOGY

By Georgi Laney

Georgi (Melbourne 2013) is both a certified practising Feldenkrais Practitioner & a certified practising Speech Pathologist with a keen interest in voice production professionally and personally. She runs her practice, Feldenkrais Hunter Valley, from Newcastle, NSW. RAH.

I came to studying the Feldenkrais Method® from a background in Speech Pathology with many years of experience working in the medical model, in the hospital environment. I am a Certified Practising Speech Pathologist, specialising in rehabilitation for 20+ years, working with adults who have communication and swallowing difficulties as a result of acquired neurological damage. I have also nurtured a long interest in voice and have a passion for singing as a member of a community choir over many years.

I was drawn to studying the Feldenkrais Method® for several key reasons.

Professionally I wanted to facilitate greater self-empowerment of clients during their rehabilitation

journey of recovery and adjustment to living with acquired disability. I also wanted to create an opportunity to follow a vision of combining my Speech Pathology skills in voice management with my personal interest in voice production in an innovative way.

Personally, I was looking for a vehicle to facilitate greater self-awareness and hence self-growth. I wanted to better understand *how* and *why* I kept injuring myself and experiencing discomfort and/or pain. I also wanted to take more responsibility and self-directed action for recovery and injury prevention, rather than always deferring to health professionals to 'fix' the problems, as is more the case working within the medical model. Feldenkrais offered me these possibilities, and so many more.

Studying the Feldenkrais Method® has taught me to understand more about HOW I learn and move. I am constantly learning more about how I can move with greater ease, comfort, awareness and confidence.

As is the case for all of us, learning to enhance my self-awareness, moving and functioning in daily life is a life-long study.

Some of the benefits I am personally sensing with my singing from developing my self-awareness and learning through the Feldenkrais Method® include:

- I feel greater comfort in sitting and standing while rehearsing/performing
- I feel more grounded and stable on my feet during rehearsals and performance
- I feel less neck and shoulder tension while holding my music
- I feel freer, more adaptable breathing, which has enhanced my phrase length
- My pitch range has effortlessly increased
- My vocal resonance has bloomed

It is inspiring that some Conservatoires have included Feldenkrais as a part of the curriculum for trainee singers, such as the former Victorian College of the Arts

in Melbourne and the Dublin Conservatory of Music. They appreciate the Method's positive effects.

The Method has not only directly influenced my approach to voice therapy, but more widely to my approach to the provision of Speech Pathology intervention. I approach interventions more holistically than previously. Some examples of how include empowering clients to actively develop their own sensory self-awareness via collaboratively sensing, noticing and learning as equal partners in the therapeutic relationship, thus providing less direct feedback as to 'right/wrong' use of techniques; I encourage mindful noticing potentially limiting tension and movement habits without self-judgement; I think of moving as a whole organism rather than in segmental isolated units within the whole.

I believe that the Feldenkrais Method® and Speech Pathology blend well and complement each other, especially in the area of working with voice, speaking or singing, professional or amateur. As a certified practising Feldenkrais Practitioner I am excited to be sharing my skill set with clients interested in working with voice, breathing, posture, moving and learning, in an empowering, positive and enquiring way.

Recently I co-ran a weekend workshop in Newcastle NSW, *Optimising your body, breath and voice*, together with my husband Dr Christopher Allan, and step-daughter Miriam Allan, both professional singers and singing teachers. We combined Feldenkrais Method®, Accent Method breathing, and voice production from both Speech Pathology & singing perspectives in this practical experiential workshop. We attracted an exciting mix of attendees including singers (professional and amateur), vocal teachers, choir directors, Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapist, GP and Massage Therapist. It was well attended and greatly valued and enjoyed by all. We have since run a successful follow-up workshop and plan to re-run the entire workshop later this year/next year, here and possibly in the UK, where my step-daughter lives.

I also attended a workshop in Sydney run by Fran White, Feldenkrais Practitioner from Melbourne. This 2-day workshop, *Improve your vocal support*, was for vocal teachers and singers. It was a great success and great fun for all attendees and a workshop I would recommend to anyone interested in understanding the critical connection between voice, pelvic floor and breathing for efficient vocal production.

References:

- *Singing with Your Whole Self*. The Feldenkrais Method and Voice. S.H. Nelson & E Blades-Zeller. 2002. Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- *The Busy Person's Guide to Easier Movement. 50 ways to achieve a healthy, happy, pain-free and intelligent body*. F. Wildman. 2000. The Intelligent Body Press.

Note: Georgi's website is:
www.feldenkraishuntervalley.com.au





TEACHING ATM TO STUDENTS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS AT TERTIARY LEVEL

By Francesca White

Francesca (Melbourne 1991) is an Assistant Trainer (1997) and has a busy practice in Fitzroy North (Melbourne). She travels worldwide to teach advanced trainings, particularly on the theme of the voice.

Ralph recently asked me to write about my experiences as an ATM teacher working with students of the performing arts.

It's been quite a journey sitting at my computer and scanning the years, enjoying the memories and going through 24 years of class notes.

In my third year of the first Melbourne Feldenkrais Training Program (1988-1991) I was invited by John Bolton, theatre director, to teach a weekly ATM class to 25 Drama students at his theatre School in Williamstown. At the time I was still teaching Yoga which meant I had about 10 students who were willing guinea pigs as my first ATM students. I had memorised a few lessons that I felt confident teaching.

I'd been an enthusiastic weekly ATM student of Fawn Cooper's for a couple of years in the 80's which inspired me to join a training program. F.I.G. was very active at that time, inviting inspiring overseas teachers to introduce us to Feldenkrais, and the F.I.G. library served as our only source of materials and tapes.



Monika Pagneux

John Bolton had studied mime and theatre at the Le Coq School in Paris and had participated in Feldenkrais ATM classes with Monika Pagneux, one of Europe's leading exponents of movement in contemporary theatre. She studied and worked with Moshe and Peter Brook. It's worth looking her up and observing how Feldenkrais has influenced her

work*. John felt ATM was central to students of the performing arts.

And so it began. Each Friday, 9am sharp, I taught an ATM in the dusty, drafty old church hall in Williamstown. I was to be part of the teaching team composed of teachers of voice, acting, acrobatics, and music.

Teach the lessons you love to do, had been the excellent beginners advice from our wonderful assistant trainer, Edna Rossenas. I took a Public Speaking course at the CAE to learn how to carry and present my voice. I took an NLP course to learn how to communicate effectively. This was all immensely useful when it came to learning how to give effective, empowering and non-judgmental feedback.

That requirement came at the end of each semester at the John Bolton School. Each teacher had to write a report about each of the 25 students. Each student gave feedback to each of their teachers. This was a unique process for me.

Here are a couple of examples of end of semester feedback about the ATM classes from a couple of John Bolton Theatre School students:

“Jane”

Francesca– I am continually amazed by how the results of doing so seemingly little can be so dramatic. I’ve been enjoying exploring the different ways of sensing and exploring my body and the way it works and all the connections to acting made in a class.

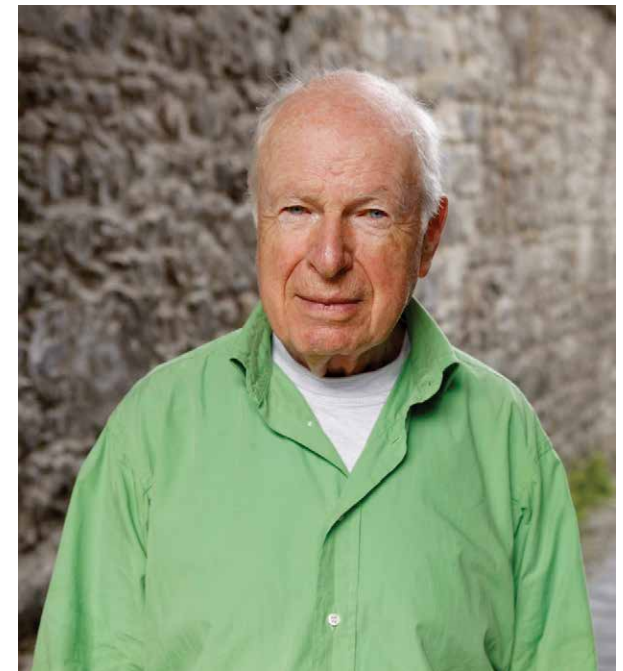
“Viv”

Friday mornings continue to be an amazing time of learning– often difficult with the emotions that have arisen, especially with thoracic work. I learnt a lot about my try harder nature during your classes. It has helped me develop more subtlety in my acting. I understand more about intention and focus. I understand now what you mean by doing less. This is such a hard lesson!! Sometimes in the classes I’ve wanted to completely let go of the pools of tears inside me. I realise this meant I need to make more space in my life to address my emotions. I feel it would benefit my acting, singing and movement.

Not every piece of feedback was necessarily positive. Plenty of students struggled with the slowness of the work and the frustration of trying to work things out with their eyes closed.

What lessons did I teach? Eventually I found it useful to know what themes other teachers were covering. For example, when John was teaching Neutral Mask I focused on ATMs that fitted in with the theme, such as breathing lessons, eye lessons, lessons about the function of standing and finding stability, feeling “grounded”, learning how to sense where you are in space, how to breathe optimally. On the Neutral Mask John Bolton said: *it is a full face mask devoid of character and emotion. It is ready to be happy, sad, angry; whatever the body is conveying. Wearing it, the expressive body can be found where each gesture is magnified and made significant. It has no past or future– it is before character and the tics and idiosyncrasies that character brings.*

I read Peter Brook’s book, *The Empty Space* and learned about the many different types of theatre the students would be covering, such as Theatre of the



Peter Brook

Grotesque, where the actor needs to sustain a distorted position (the Hunchback of Notre Dame, for example) for the entire performance. It helped me to search for ATMs that could help students not only stay in these poses and but also recover from them.

Peter Brook says in chapter one, “The Deadly Theatre”, *...a deadly director is a director who brings no challenge to the conditioned reflexes that every department must contain.*

I decided I needed to stop being a deadly Feldenkrais teacher, and find more challenging ATMs to teach my students. So, when they were learning falling and rolling in acrobatics, I revisited all the Four Winds lessons, judo rolls and “preparation for head stand” lessons. I kept notes describing what worked well and what needed clarification, or adding other lessons that could clarify movements they might have struggled with. I still use this method as “self supervision” and continue learning how to become a clearer communicator, clearer teacher, and it has helped me collect the ATMs that work well for corresponding themes and functions.

These were some of the most thrilling years of my career as a practitioner. It was fabulous being on a team of teachers, finding out how Feldenkrais could complement the work of other teachers. Working with young creative people was enthralling.

After 9 years John wanted to focus more on his own acting and directing career and eventually became Head of Drama at the Victorian College of the Arts. By then I had been invited to teach ATM at the VCA by Lindy Davies, the dean of the VCA Drama Department who was an ardent Feldenkrais fan. (Soon after this

Julia Scoglio also started teaching ATM at VCA, to the Dance students.)

ATM was built into the curriculum, and weekly attendance counted towards course credits. There were up to 45 in a class, and I was given 2 hours to teach. This meant we could take a movement lesson and analyse it, talk about it, work on the tricky parts, all of which the students really liked. If appropriate, we did some hands-on with each other to clarify or enhance a movement. I took my skeleton with me to demonstrate some of the mysterious movements such as how the scapula moved and could move.

I consulted the other drama teachers and what they were covering each semester. This encouraged me to keep researching ATM lessons that addressed some of the functions such as learning easier breathing, rolling (a lot of the judo series of lessons), jaw work, grounding, flexible pelvis, carriage of the head, finding flexibility in the ribcage, pelvic floor connections for vocal strength, movement of the sternum and so on. The Alexander Yanai manuals have been invaluable, and I am ever grateful for the good folks who had years of negotiations with the Feldenkrais family in Israel to obtain the material, translate it and organise

dissemination of Moshe’s work. We owe thanks to our own Aussie colleague, Cliff Smyth, now resident in San Francisco, who was largely responsible for carrying out this delicate, diplomatic task.

Part of my teaching at the VCA was also running a 2 hour weekly class at *The Centre for Ideas* – a spin-off department of the Arts School. The intention of the course was to include students from across the Performing Arts Campus – Film, Script Writing, Music, Dance, Drama, Print Making etc. and to look at creative intention and how to put this into action, using Feldenkrais ATM classes. The aim was for these students, who normally did not meet, to see the many diverse ways of expressing their art. The director of this program was familiar with Feldenkrais and felt strongly that the Method lends itself to exploring expression. Using Awareness Through Movement® Classes metaphorically, the cross-pollination amongst these wonderful artists, 20 students of a very high calibre found ways of linking Moshe’s ingenious classes to ways of better using themselves and thus performing differently. This was a truly exciting experience. For the end of semester project, I asked them to describe what Feldenkrais had meant to them and how did it inform their creativity– in any form they wanted. It could be a

TEACHING ATM TO STUDENTS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS AT TERTIARY LEVEL *By Francesca White*

song, a painting, sculpture, whatever they wanted. I have a collection of exquisite, treasured creations reminding me of the wonderful and satisfying times we all had.

These were thrilling and challenging years in which I honed my skills and cut my teeth.

Still honing. Still cutting...

Afterword:

Just to clarify how the VCA supported Honors and Masters Students of Voice- each semester the students had 3 teachers they could work with.

One would be a voice teacher (Anna Connolly or Stephen Grant, both Feldenkrais practitioners, for example), one could be a language coach and one choice could be an FI with Fran, (for which the VCA paid). Over the 9 or 10 years at the VCA, almost every student who undertook Feldenkrais as an elective subject would more easily win competitions and get second calls at auditions. Each year in the Herald Sun Aria Awards at least 3 finalists would have done 3 years of Feldenkrais ATM classes with Stephen and FIs with Fran White. One year all 6 finalists were Anna Connolly students and all 6 had had many FIs with Fran. Word got around, and

soon there were students wanting FIs to “iron out what ATM wasn't quite getting to!”

So, with 3 Feldenkrais practitioners, two of whom have been Head of Voice at either the VCA(Anna Connolly) or (currently) Stephen Grant at the Melbourne University Conservatorium of music (VCAM), students were winning wonderful scholarships to the National School of Music in Leeds, UK, and The Guild Hall in London. Both scholarships are worth several thousands of dollars. Feldenkrais has been established in both these universities since 1989.

In recent times Marilla Homes also taught ATM at VCA. Sadly, budget cuts have now resulted in this enlightened Feldenkrais program no longer being offered at VCA. RAH.

**Queensland Feldenkrais practitioner, Anna Yen, studied with Monika Pagneaux- see Anna's article on Monika in the FGNA's Feldenkrais Journal number 25, 2012. RAH. ■*



RIBS IN PLEASE!

By Zoran Kovich MSc

Zoran (Melbourne 1991) maintains a practice in Sydney and is an assistant trainer (2004). He completed a master's

degree in cognitive science in 1995 and from 1990 to 2009 taught Feldenkrais-based courses in university performing arts programs.

Sometimes our learned habits hinder our intent. This was so with Meipa, a 26-year-old opera singer from Melbourne, who was referred to me by an interstate colleague. She had experienced a number of lessons with my colleague, and had called to book a lesson during her brief stay in Sydney on her way to participate in operatic master-classes in France.

Meipa was tall, thin and attractive. We talked about her previous lessons and the kinds of things she would like to address in her one lesson. Meipa had done a lot of training in classical ballet. Due to the structure of her rib cage, her ballet teachers had often instructed her to “keep your ribs in”. She conveyed how she had become self-conscious about her protruding lower ribs, and had learned to flatten her rib cage to keep



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the artist Chalernpol Harnchakkam.
Website: www.huebucket.bigcartel.com*

it from “sticking out”. I told Meipa that I had been a professional ballet dancer and explained that dance teachers often used the phrase “keep your ribs in” to correct the common fault of dancers arching their back in order to lengthen themselves- to pull-up- resulting in their rib cage being pushed too far forward and the lower ribs protruding. Meipa had no idea that this may have been the intent of the instruction. Whether her dance teachers’ correction had been prompted by aesthetic or technical reasons, Meipa literally did what she was asked to do. This may have served the body aesthetics of classical ballet, but it was inappropriate to the act of singing.

I asked Meipa to stand. Her lower ribs did protrude. I asked if I might feel her abdomen. With her permission

I felt the muscular tonus of her abdominal wall. It was taut. Was Meipa still working to hold her ribs in, even though she was consciously not intending to? I asked Meipa to close her eyes, sense the width of her rib cage, and then show me how wide she felt her rib cage to be using her hands. The distance between Meipa’s hands quite accurately approximated the actual width of her rib cage. We repeated the process, this time sensing the depth of the rib cage. The position of Meipa’s hands revealed that she sensed her rib cage to be far deeper than its actual physical dimensions. We talked a little about proprioceptive body image and how it affects movement. After some discussion Meipa and I agreed to do a lesson about mapping her rib cage and relating that to breathing.

Before lying down on the table, I asked Meipa to notice her breathing, especially which parts of her rib cage she felt moving as she breathed. “Take a few breaths as if you were about to sing a demanding phrase from an aria”, I suggested. As Meipa did this I noted the movements of her lower ribs, sternum and upper ribs. All these areas moved, but I had a vision that they could move more fully. When Meipa was lying on her back on the table I once again observed how she moved to breathe. “What part of yourself do you feel moves most when you breathe?” I asked.

Meipa took her time to sense herself and then replied, “My abdomen”. This was true. Her lower ribs hardly moved at all, and while her middle and upper ribs did move, the movement was not extensive. In my imagination I conjured up a vision of how Meipa’s rib cage would move in a full, hearty yawn- we would work together towards this vision.

Positioning myself at the side of the table, facing Meipa’s left hand side, I once again asked permission to place my hands on her abdomen. I used my hands to tactually define the difference between abdomen and rib cage on her left hand side. I informed Meipa of what I was doing, as I alternately touched her abdominal wall and her lower ribs. “That’s your abdomen. That’s your rib cage. Fleshiness of abdomen. Firmness of ribs”, my words echoed what my hands were articulating through touch. “This is the “shoreline”, where your abdomen meets your rib cage,” I said as I traced the outline of Meipa’s lower rib cage with my fingers/hands.

“Is that my rib cage!?” Meipa exclaimed.

“Yes. Your lower ribs, the floating ribs, almost touch your hip bone”, I replied.

“I’ve never felt that. I had no idea”, she responded.

Meipa was curious, so I briefly described the anatomy of lower ribs, especially the fact that the anterior portion of the lower rib cage was made of springy, flexible, cartilage.

After mapping out and defining Meipa's left hand side lower ribs, I asked her to notice differences. "I actually feel I have ribs on the left" she said after a while. "My ribs on the other side feel small, almost as if they're not there." I wanted Meipa to experience her whole rib cage in the act of breathing, so we proceeded to proprioceptively map her right-hand-side lower rib cage.

In ideal breathing the lower ribs swing upwards and sideways on the in-breath, and downwards and inwards on the out-breath. I returned to Meipa's left hand side and began to explore the movement possibilities of her lower ribs in reference to the ideal act of breathing. I placed my fingers on the "shoreline" of her lower rib cage, and began to direct my attention to the inferior surfaces -- as if I were sliding my fingers under her lower rib cage. Feeling my way, I began to scoop my fingers under the costal cartilage of her lower rib cage. "Does this feel okay to do?" I asked. Meipa replied she found it interesting, so I proceeded.

After repeating this manoeuvre along the whole left-hand-side border of her lower ribs, I positioned the pads of my fingers of both hands along a long "stretch" of her lower rib "shoreline". Again I began directing my attention to underneath her lower ribs, and then gently scooped all of my fingers under her costal cartilage. Very slowly, I began to move her lower ribs outwards and upwards, constantly feeling for Meipa's response to my proposition. I did this several times. Meipa responded with a deep in-breath. I slid my fingers to another "stretch of shoreline", further along Meipa's lower rib border, and repeated the same process.

We paused. Meipa noticed her breathing and described how different it felt on her left side. I outlined what we were doing, and we then explored the same ideas on her right-hand-side. We proceeded slowly, Meipa reporting feeling a kind of tenderness in her right hand side lower rib cage as I eased the costal cartilage upwards and sideways.

In ideal breathing the uppermost ribs swing upwards and forwards on the in-breath, and downwards and backwards on the out-breath. I now wanted to explore these movements with Meipa. I positioned myself at the end of the table facing Meipa's head, and



*Moshe articulates the floating ribs, San Francisco, 1977,
photo by Bob Knighton*

began outlining her clavicles, first her left then her right. I consulted with Meipa about what I wanted to explore. I wished to place my fingers just below her left clavicle in order to feel for, and move, her 2nd rib. Meipa was fine with this, so we proceeded. Placing the back of my left index finger just inferior to Meipa's left clavicle, I began to direct my attention inwards towards her 2nd rib. I waited for a moment, until I felt Meipa acknowledge and accept my presence, and quietly began to move my finger towards her rib. Contact - I felt the firmness of her 2nd rib against my finger. "That's your 2nd rib" I told Meipa. I let my finger recede a little and then pressed in again, doing this several times, each time reminding Meipa that I was in contact with her 2nd rib.

I let myself settle on Meipa's 2nd rib. Slowly, I began to move her rib downwards and backwards – as if in a breathing out motion – and then let it slowly spring back upwards and forwards. Each time we went a little further. The movement felt resilient but not stiff or resistant. There was a willingness to move. That same willingness was not present on Meipa's right side. On her right I moved her rib as far as it would yield willingly and no further. Placing my fingers on

both 2nd ribs on either side of her sternum, I gently pressed downwards and back wards, feeling for the quality of the movement and Meipa's response. Meipa accepted the motion, but the right hand side 2nd rib was reluctant to be like its neighbour, so I intentionally calibrated everything I did in accordance with its kinetic capacity.

I pressed downwards and backwards again. Meipa's rib cage began to flatten, as if breathing out. I stopped and waited. I waited until I could feel the first inkling of an impulse to breath in. When the impulse came I gradually released my push on her 2nd ribs, pacing the release to the speed of her in-breath. At the end of her in-breath, I paused and then pressed downwards and backwards again. We repeated this process many times, each time her rib cage yielded a little more. The next time I felt her impulse to breath in, I maintained pressure on her right 2nd rib, but gradually released my push on her left. The left side of her rib cage rose and expanded, while the right remained flattened. It was as if Meipa was breathing in with just one side of her rib cage. I repeated this process, asking Meipa to attend to the sensation of one side of her rib cage expanding while the other remained flattened. In doing so I

hoped that Meipa's experience of her two differently functioning sides would provide a new sensory benchmark of what an expanding rib cage feels like.

We continued with this theme a little longer, switching sides, and then turning our attention to the act of breathing out. Finally, I simply pressed and released each of her 2nd ribs alternatively, observing the response through her rib cage and trunk. Meipa's right hand side 2nd rib was moving more freely now, and her whole rib cage flattened and expanded more fully.

I moved again, positioning myself at the side of the table so as to be facing Meipa's left hand side. Placing my left hand on Meipa's abdomen, I sculpted my fingers to match the contour of her lower ribs "shoreline". My right hand was placed on her left 2nd rib. I pushed slightly downwards and-backwards on her 2nd rib, just enough to suggest her rib cage flattening as if breathing out. Then, using my left hand I encouraged her lower rib cage to move upwards-sideways. My right hand "listened", waiting for the upward movement of her lower rib cage to arrive at her 2nd rib. And arrive it did. I gradually released the pressure of my right, letting Meipa's rib cage continue its upward journey. And then it was time for

the downward journey. I changed the position of my left hand so that the palmar surface of fingers/hand sculpted themselves around the waistline area of Meipa's lower ribs. I gently began pushing downwards and backwards on Meipa's 2nd rib, waiting for the downward motion to travel through her rib cage and arrive at my right hand. When it did, I used my right hand to support and encourage the downward-inward path of the lower ribs. Back and forth we went like this, Meipa's rib cage movements becoming more and more supple. We then repeated the process on her right side.

I pulled my stool away from the table to sit and observe Meipa's breathing. All her rib cage looked involved. I asked Meipa if she would like to tell me what she was experiencing, and what parts of herself she now felt were moving when she breathed.

"It's all moving," she said. "It feels like I don't have to do anything to breathe, and yet the movements feel so big."

I continued to observe Meipa as she stood up. Her sternum was higher. Her rib cage looked deeper - less flat. Meipa's face said it all. She was smiling,

her hands lightly gliding over her lower ribs as if she were getting to know them again.

"That feels good," she said.

"Remember the feeling, and think of yourself singing." I suggested.

Meipa closed her eyes. Her lips began to move as if sub-vocalising. Her rib cage became more held, but not held as before. There was movement through her lower and upper rib cage. This was quite different from before.

"Can you feel what's different?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm not holding onto my ribs so much." she replied.

"Remember the feeling." I softly suggested once more, "You can create that feeling whenever you want." ■



VOICE RESOURCES

By Ralph Hadden

BOOKS, LINKS

Blandine Calais-Germain

Anatomy of Breathing (2005 Eastland Press 2006) and *Anatomy of Movement* (1985 Eastland Press 1993). Fran White says: "I think *The Anatomy of Breath* is super and very useful for practitioners."

Janice Chapman *Singing and Teaching - A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (Plural 2011), recommended by Fran White. She says: "another useful book for voice (though it's aimed more at voice teachers)."

Eric Franklin *Pelvic Power for Men and Women: Mind/Body Exercises for Strength, Flexibility, Posture and Balance* (2002 Elysian Editions 2003). Also recommended by Fran White: "an interesting book that's useful for connecting breath/voice to pelvic floor."

Joseph Jordania *Why Do People Sing* (Logos 2011).

I loved this book as it explores favourite topics for me: biology, evolution, neuroscience, human behaviour and music. Joseph is an ethnomusicologist and evolutionary musicologist at Melbourne University. Originally from Georgia, he has taught Georgian style singing to the choir I sing in, *Men In Suits*, enabling us to produce some beautiful harmonies. In this book he puts forward some startling propositions on why people sing. It has to do with evolutionary survival and building social harmony.

Samuel H Nelson and Elizabeth Blades-Zeller
Singing With Your Whole Self (Scarecrow Press 2002).
Feldenkrais for the voice, by a Feldenkrais practitioner and an associate professor of voice.

Steven Mithen *The Singing Neanderthals* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2005).

Eloise Ristad *A Soprano on Her Head* (Real People Press 1982).

Oliver Sacks *Musicophilia* (Picador 2007). Tales of music and the brain.

From Fran White: "Breathing is often a mystery to clients– follow this link to a fantastic animation of the movement of the diaphragm. I show this animation

for all my voice/breath clients and they are astonished at how breath is actually created (i.e. the direction/movement of the diaphragm)":

<http://www.yorku.ca/earmstro/journey/diaphragm.html>

Fran also recommends Denis Leri's interview with Moshe on the Martial Arts (published in FGNA's *Feldenkrais Journal* number 2, 1986).

Good Vibrations, a TED talk on the benefits of singing in a choir:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBbj2wtjLpE>

(Singing lifts your spirits, gladdens your heart, increases oxytocin, endorphins, dopamine and decreases cortisol)

RECORDINGS

These sets of recordings are all by American Feldenkrais teachers and are available as CDs or MP3 downloads.

Richard Corbeil *Vocal Integration with the Feldenkrais Method*. Available from *The Feldenkrais Store*:
<http://www.achievingexcellence.com>

Mark Reese and David Zemach-Bersin *TMJ Health* (Sensory Motor Learning Systems 1988) and *Sensory Motor Education for the Mouth and Jaw* (Sensory

Motor Learning Systems 1984). Primarily designed for people with TMJ Syndrome and problems of the mouth and jaw the lessons can also be used for improving the voice and singing. The 1988 recordings are a more commercial production, spoken by a professional actor and while the 1984 recordings are taught directly by Mark and David. Both sets of recordings have similar lessons. Available from *Feldenkrais Resources*:

<http://www.feldenkraisresources.com/category-s/1827.htm>

John Tarr *Dynamic Musician Series - Dynamic Stability and Breath, Volumes 1 & 2*. Available from *The Feldenkrais Store*: <http://www.achievingexcellence.com> ■

ATMs FOR VOICE

By Ralph Hadden

Alexander Yanai (AY) 5: *Equalizing the Nostrils*. Very nice lesson for the voice- making sounds while closing one nostril. Explore variations- open mouth, speaking with closed mouth, speaking with open mouth but teeth held together etc. Mobilises mouth, jaw, tongue, clears the nostrils.

AY 110: *On the Back; Twisting the Spine with the Head Fixed* (a version of this was taught by Francesca White in her workshop, with Stephen Grant, *The Embodied Voice* in Melbourne, September 2008). Twists and mobilizes the torso and spine. (I taught this lesson in my classes recently, along with practitioners around the world, in the week of Moshe's 110th birthday.)

AY 126: *Mouth and Head Cavity*. Clarify through sensing and imagery.

AY 146 & 148: *Bend Spine & Twist and Bend the Spine, sitting on chair*. Lessons involving turning, twisting, flexing and extending, while on a chair. Thorough mobilizing of the torso.

AY 170: *Lifting the Head Diagonally* (a version of this was taught by Francesca White in her workshop, with

Stephen Grant, *How Can the Feldenkrais Method® Inform the Voice* in Melbourne, June 2009)

AY 179: *To weld by Breathing*. Use the breath to press from the inside to 'massage', mould and expand the ribcage.

AY 217: *On the Side, Sternum Becoming Flexible*. Twisting torso to mobilize chest and encourage the sternum to move.

Paradoxical Breath: a classic lesson, also known as *See-saw Breath*; many versions available, starting with lesson 4 in Moshe's *Awareness Through Movement* book. He calls it *Differentiation of Parts and Functions in Breathing*. I taught a version of this in a workshop at the Boite Singers' Festival (held every January in beautiful Daylesford in Victoria). One singer was very pleased to find she was able to hit a higher note after doing the lesson.

The Actor: Supine, turn and reach arm up- releases and expands the chest. I originally learnt this from Alan Questel when he taught it at a FIG meeting in Melbourne.

Fran White contributed this list of recommended Alexander Yanai ATMs:

- 25: On the cheek
 - 35: Foot on the head
 - 48: And from here to the frog stand
 - 63: Knee hiding the foot
 - 71, 72: Preparation for headstand parts 1 and 2 (see also 163, 164: Preparation for headstand parts 1 and 2)
 - 81: Wash face with feet
 - 87: Lift feet, head, twist
 - 90: Lengthen arms; sitting cross-legged (follow with 91, 92, 93)
 - 112: Plane dividing body
 - 121: Extend arms and twist to the back
 - 134: Rolling in a bridge, with hands on ankles
 - 149: Sitting on the toes next to a chair
- She also recommends the Carp lesson, from the Amherst training

These are just a few of the many ATMs that could be employed for enhancing the Voice. Do you have any favourites? Share them with us: go to the Facebook page, *Feldenkrais Australia*, and make a comment: <https://www.facebook.com/FeldenkraisAustralia> ■

COMMENT



COMMUNICATION

By Michael Cann

Michael Cann (Melbourne 2013) sits on the AFG National Council where he is leading a project to rejuvenate the Guild's databases

and website. He lives in Melbourne.

Dear Colleagues,

I write to tell you about my struggle to communicate about Feldenkrais to the wider world. It is a struggle that many of us share. It has at times left me stressed, exasperated, frustrated and hopeless.

As I have spoken to the general public about my study, and now my work, I have watched many kind faces showing polite interest, while my workshops have been empty and my phone silent. Despite the most sincere conviction in our Method, and despite having reasonable skill with words and websites, my first three years of attempting to market ATM and later FI were an abject failure, and I was despondent.

But not any more. I am writing this to tell you about how I came to feel optimistic about our potential to reach people on a much larger scale. I want to tell you about my learning path in case it helps you too.

The Internal Struggle

Feldenkrais develops our inner authority, and we generally teach alone - even if we share premises with another teacher. For me, the Method appealed to my desire for self-reliance. Or, put another way, it supported me NOT to ask for help from others.

The first step for me to overcome my limitations was to genuinely accept that I needed teachers. And I don't mean Feldenkrais teachers. I mean people who know the structures of business the way we know the structure of the body. People who can make obvious the elusive of commerce.

After that, I had to overcome the fear of spending money on proper advice and training. I would tell myself "I can't even earn \$20 profit from a workshop! How can I afford \$1000 for coaching?" In the end, I found a course run by a company called *Heart of Business*. It resonated with me enough for me to stop resisting.

The next step, which remains a real challenge for me, was to stop needing other people to say yes to my services in order for me to feel worthwhile, and in order to trust the potential of the Method. I was mistrusting and underinvesting in my business based on a very small amount of real data. Meanwhile, I was burdening everyone I spoke to with the hope that *they*

would be the one to reverse my trend of despair.

Neediness is normal enough. We do need to make a living, we do need appreciation and acknowledgement. But when you are relying on your potential customers to satisfy that need, it is very unattractive.

The Epiphany

On the back of these internal changes came an epiphany - the kind of subtle overthrow of an unconscious belief that is simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary: "I do not have to explain what the Feldenkrais Method® is. Ever."

Before this revelation came to me, I had proceeded as if marketing were an exercise in persuasion. The more accurately I described the benefit, and the more persuasively I connected the Method to the benefit, the more people would come. My job was to be compelling, knowledgeable, persuasive and impressive. I had to educate people, tailor my services to the biggest recognised needs, and speak my customers' language.

Wrong.

Mark, who teaches the course at *Heart of Business* puts it this way: when you are walking down a crowded city

street, amidst all the background noise, when someone calls your name, you turn and look. The first job of marketing is to call someone's name- to cut through the background noise with something personal, familiar, intimate, and compassionate.

I began to turn my attention away from Feldenkrais, even away from its benefits, and instead gave my attention to the question "what is someone's experience like when they have never tried Feldenkrais, and what is it in that experience that they would change if they could." At the same time I asked myself "who are the people I really love to work with."

These two contemplations led me to rethink the way I communicated. I realised that, just as in social conversation, marketing material is only inviting if about half of it is about the customer, and if it openly elicits the other person's stories.

That seems straightforward enough if you are talking to someone in person. Of course you don't just talk about yourself the whole time. But I wondered, "what do I do when I can't actually have a conversation with someone? What do I do when I don't know them personally? How do I bring that quality to my online presence and printed materials?"

Functional Integration

Then, in the middle of the night, I woke up with a solution. I would use storytelling to invite people to identify themselves as being interested. I would tell the story of the kind of person I most want to help. I would spend lots of time talking about them before I would even mention Feldenkrais.

The job of my website was no longer to make me look good. It was to reach out and speak to people in a personally compelling way. I got rid of flashy images. I put an alright, but clearly not professional, photo of myself on my homepage. I toned down my language. I stopped trying so hard.

I knew that story telling would make my communications longer than usual. I worried that I would have so much text I would lose people. So I decided to create a sketch animation video to add visual interest, and improve the chances that someone would stay with the message from beginning to end.

I used software called *Sparkol Videoscribe*. I bought a one month subscription for about \$35, used free images that came with the software, and built the video myself in 20 hours of work over one month. Now that I know what to do, it would take me 10 hours.

After three years of failure, I had taken my first step in genuinely effective marketing action.

The Results

Prior to this video, I had very limited reach. I had an email list of only 70 people, mostly friends and family. I would post things on Facebook and, if I was lucky, they might be seen by 20 or 30 people. Perhaps one or two might click on a link. I would put flyers on crowded noticeboards and hope against hope that someone – just one relevant person – might actually read it.

As I write this, my video has been on YouTube for exactly one week. My facebook post has shown up on at least 700 people's news feeds. 600 people have viewed the video. I have had contact not only from Australia, but also from France, Spain, the Netherlands, and the USA. Dozens of people have left comments. Friends and family have called me to tell me how much they related to it. One person has booked in for a package of 10 Fls.

I am just a beginner at doing this. I haven't made many of the important changes I plan for my website. I would give my own web presence a six out of ten for effectiveness. And, to be honest, I think even my video could be a lot more effective than it is. But even my

first approximation has seen a hundred-fold increase in the effectiveness of my communications in its first week.

We know from working with people's movement that the difference between ease and difficulty is often qualified guidance. Even when we think we have tried everything, we have often just been recombining enough old dysfunctional habits to give us the illusion of variety. We need others' feedback to guide us into the reality of a new experience. This is just as true in marketing as it is in movement.

The Community

It has become normal for Feldenkrais practitioners to be anguished about the lack of recognition, lack of awareness, lack of interest, lack of customers, and the difficulty of communicating the Method. We have not seen the ways in which the malaise is a symptom of our habits. It is neither a feature of the Method, nor an immutable law of the universe.

I am currently leading a project to review and invest in the Guild's IT systems, including improvements to our website, which currently attracts 20,000 visitors a year.

And I wonder... Do we have the courage to dare for a hundred-fold improvement in the quality of our communication? Or will we just tinker around the

edges doing versions of business-as-usual? Can we overcome our fear and low self-esteem and actually invest what is necessary to get the job done well? Can we weather the disorientation and discomfort that comes from change?

These questions are analogous to the ones we ask our students every day. But can we ask them of ourselves?

So, I invite you to ignite your passion for this method and come together with your peers to tell some new stories. Stories with empathy. Stories with hope. Capture these stories in whatever way you can- in writing, on video- whatever. And start sharing. From these stories of your students, your families, your friends, and yourselves, we can find new and better ways of calling people's names.

Let's increase our effectiveness one hundred-fold this year. It is demonstrably possible.

Afterword

to see Michael's animation, go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO3E3XQeF0U>

It's a splendid explanation of Feldenkrais, succinct and appealing. I shared it on Facebook and other practitioners have been sharing it too. Today, as I write, number of views is over 2,700. RAH ■

REPORTS

PHILOSOPHY AND FELDENKRAIS PROJECT UPDATE

By Eva Culek

Eva (Sydney 2003) maintains a practice in Canberra. She was given funding by AFG Inc (QLD Division) for a project to explore Feldenkrais and Philosophy. Here she gives a progress report on the project.

Thinking, one of Feldenkrais' four components of the waking state, intrigued me as a student and now as a practitioner of the Method. Exploring the interventions that meditation, aspects of psychology, psychotherapy and neurolinguistic programming propose have revealed useful approaches to bringing habits in thinking into awareness. In 2011, the opportunity to research this subject in collaboration with a philosopher emerged. I won funding at the Brisbane Symposium, and so the *Philosophy and Feldenkrais Project* began.

Both the Feldenkrais Method® and western philosophy have developed tools for attending to habits of imagination, thought and feelings. The outline of the project is to bring these different approaches together.

The aim is to find new ways to express and reflect on the somatic experiences in ATM and FI, and new ways of understanding the bodily habits that open up philosophical thought and dialogue. Philosophy may seem to be a disembodied set of concepts, but its ideas are always sensed and felt. FI and ATM may emphasise sensory awareness over verbal communication, but in another regard they invite us to find ways to articulate our experiences.

The project has three phases. The first involved exposing a philosopher to the Method. I recruited philosopher Doctor Undine Sellbach for the project. Undine is a writer and performer and she is a research associate in the School of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania. The project is nearing the end of the first phase with a second face to face meeting in April 2014. The second phase will involve compiling a collection of philosophical texts, concepts and activities that could be brought into productive exchange with ATM and FI processes.

The third part of the project will be a collaborative attempt to bring philosophy and Feldenkrais together as a hybridised practice. This will involve a final face to face meeting in which the new material will be delivered to a test group and refined. The results will be shared with the Feldenkrais community in writing or as a conference presentation. (Another conference anyone?)

Dr Sellbach has become intrigued with the Feldenkrais Method®. Here are extracts from some preliminary writing she has done on the subject:

Rather than positioning Feldenkrais in the conventional/alternative medicine divide, I view Feldenkrais as helping orchestrate a very particular occasion of performance, where the sharp distinction between unconscious physiological processes and the feeling subject, gives way to a series of open-ended experiments that imaginatively act out, and reassemble the edges of sensation. This mode of investigative performance is productive, I believe, in so far as it makes visible connections and disjunctions between biological and experiential dimensions of the body, as well as the externalities– cultural, linguistic,

technological and environmental– that carry traces of our bodily patterns, instincts and affectual states.

To help develop my reading, I am drawing on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, in particular his notion of philosophy as an activity that imaginatively restages everyday habits, turns of phrase and patterns of thinking, in order to bring new affiliations and distinctions to light.

I would like to thank Undine for her willingness to immerse herself in the Feldenkrais Method® under my tutelage. We both thank the AFG Inc QLD division for their financial support and flexibility with timelines. If you would like more information feel free to email: evaculek@gmail.com ■



Eva Culek with David Hall, Image © Louise Whelan

TEACHING AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT, JULIE PECK ADVANCED TRAINING

By Joanna de Burgh

Joanna de Burgh CFP (Sydney 1990) practises in Hobart.

After all these years I have come to experience ATM as the heart and soul of our work. We are teaching learning to learn. FI is fun and can be life changing: ATM is more powerful and profound.

On Monday March 3rd, fifteen happy practitioners assembled at Box Hill Town Hall. Under the watchful eyes of Jenni “there has to be a better way” Evans with assistance from Glen Hall, Julie Peck created a learning environment in which we experienced how we could work the same magic for our own students. Julie had given us pre-reading: 3 chapters of *The Elusive Obvious*, and an article, “The Natural Flow of Learning, Conditions which enhance and maximise learning” by Julia Atkins. We worked to the framework which Julia set out, starting with effective teaching requisites of relationship, growth of the individual, and learning experiences. Progressively, through our experience, details were added and fleshing out of the

skeleton occurred. The relationship and experience of the student are central to the learning. The learning environment is the relationship with the student.

Each day we moved from one aspect of the model to another, sharing the experience of Julie’s modeling, mining Julie’s experience as a teacher, making our own discoveries in the wonderfully supportive belief that life is a work in progress. Each of us had the opportunity to ask for and receive feedback about our teaching. We all experienced different voices, different vocabulary (how do you like the word vivid to describe the experience of breathing?), different styles. Along the way we discussed what assessment is helpful / essential prior to starting classes, gathering of information to direct the choice of classes, sources of inspiration, what is appropriate for novice students (always inconclusive as Moshe dived right in with what I would consider advanced classes with large numbers of the public), helping with our hands, individual, series and workshop differences in what and how we would



Julie Peck

teach. Then there was the teasing out of the movements what Moshe was getting at, changing from one position or orientation to another to direct the experience of the student.

We also delved into Moshe’s writing to examine the organising principles of lessons.

We looked at what we avoid. We were reminded that as Practitioners, we have habits- yes- HABITS, which it behooves us to become aware of.

What do I think I will do differently?

I had started this year of classes feeling ready to make them more varied, use more props, ask for more feedback. I have had a fascination with extension,

TEACHING AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT, JULIE PECK ADVANCED TRAINING

By Joanna de Burgh

flexion and the interplay between these for a couple of years. My personal discovery in the workshop was how flexion and extension can be generated from the hip joint- it feels so good- how will my students resist being seduced by such delight? Well, I could ask them. I will be directing some different questions and involving them more in planning. I will practice one of the organising principles at a time, consciously. My students may not notice the difference, but I will.

I was greatly surprised that only seven experienced practitioners made the time to attend. The other eight were new graduates. I recommend that everyone who teaches ATM, experienced or not, attend if they possibly can if it is offered again.

Julie is promising another five days of training, at the end of September, on FI. I have booked in.

See you there. ■

NATIONAL AGM, MELBOURNE

By Ralph Hadden

It was the Victorian Division's turn to host the AGM and I believe we did a splendid job. It was held on 22nd March at the Habitat Centre in Hawthorn, the former church providing a lovely setting for the day. About 30 members attended, including some from interstate, which was a good turnout. We began with an ATM and talk presented by Stephen Grant CFP, on the theme *Vocal Freedom, Vocal Health. The Feldenkrais Method® and the Voice*. There was a lunch break and then a session of 5Rhythms Dance, presented by guest teacher David Juriansz- a delightful hour of shaking ourselves loose before sitting down to serious business. The AGM proceeded smoothly and productively, accompanied by refreshments supplied by the Victorian Division. ■



photos by Maria Yebra

USEFUL INFORMATION

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

AFG Inc has a library of photos of ATM and FI available for members to download and use in their promotional materials (such as flyers, newsletters and websites).

To access the photos, go to the AFG Inc website: <http://www.feldenkrais.org.au/members>, log in, then click on Business Centre (on Left hand side of Members Home page), then, in the “Your Practice” section, click on “Promotional Photos”.

PAST NEWSLETTERS

You can read past issues of this journal, and previous eNews bulletins on the AFG Inc website. Go to the AFG Inc website: <http://www.feldenkrais.org.au/members>, log in and on the members home page click on the “News & Events” menu and click on “Past Newsletters”.



Feldenkrais Australia Journal, November 2012



Feldenkrais Australia Journal, May 2013



Feldenkrais Australia Journal, December 2013

NEXT ISSUE: HABITS, THEIR MAKING AND UNMAKING; CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

By Ralph Hadden

Our choice of theme has great relevance for the practise of our work and the living of our lives. In our clients, we regularly encounter difficulties in creating change and improvement due to entrenched habits. And our own lives, in all aspects, can be troubled, hampered and even enhanced by habits. Yet the Feldenkrais Method® has ingenious ways to deal with and transcend habits. I'm sure there will be many stories from our community about working with habits. I heard one story recently on the TED Radio Hour: A folk singer related how he was terribly troubled by stage-fright. He had a great desire to perform but when he got on stage he was crippled by fear. His solution was to write and perform a song about stage-fright and the more fearful he could be, the better the song worked. The more he performed the song, the more he became comfortable about being on-stage. A very elegant Feldenkrais or Erickson style solution, I thought.

I invite you to contribute on the Habits theme: case

histories, stories, Moshe anecdotes and whatever you may come up with. There are overlaps with Milton Erickson and NLP - perhaps Feldies who also work in these modalities will have something interesting to share. I also invite someone to review Moshe's recommended reading on this topic: *Habits, Their Making and Unmaking* (1932) by Knight Dunlap. There is also a new book out on habits (which I haven't read yet, though I've heard it's good): *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* by Charles Duhigg (Random House 2012) - maybe you would like to read it and write a review?

And contributions on topics other than "Habits" are also very welcome.

To submit something, follow this JotForm link, it makes it easy for you to do all the required bits for an article, report, comment or whatever you wish to offer:
<http://jotform.co/form/40381389362862>

Next issue published in October 2014, deadline for contributions is 31st August.

Suggestions for future themes? Email me: nationalnewsletter@feldenkrais.org.au or post a comment on the Feldenkrais Australia Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FeldenkraisAustralia> ■

JOURNAL PARTICIPATION INVITED

You can be involved in the production of this journal - your participation is welcome. Possible ways to participate: editing, proof reading, coordinating theme articles, following up reports on workshops and trainings, finding images, or something clever you just thought of.

Contact me and have a chat:

nationalnewsletter@feldenkrais.org.au,
0425 742 048.

- Ralph Hadden

NEW PRODUCTS!

Meet Moshe's 13 find out what it was like to be around the table at the beginning. 'A Story Through the Feldenkrais Method' is a documentary video which brought together 7 of his original students. Only \$25

Downloadable ATMs specifically for the public Francesca white has recorded several sets of shorter lessons with instructions that are clear for beginners. Now available as MP3 downloads, they're ideal homework for your clients. 2 lessons for \$27.50

How Feldenkrais Can help people Maybe you've seen Michael Cann's great little video and wish it had your contact details at the end. Now you can!

Check out the possibility and the other great items at www.feldebiz.com.au



Supporting the people
Supporting The Method

NEW TRAINING!

Starting in November this year a new model of training will be trialled. Local groups will spend most of the year based in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide but will come together once a year in Melbourne. See Training on the website for details.

Free Workshops are being offered in each city in preparation. You can bring/send anyone who is interested in the Feldenkrais Method® whether or not they're interested in training. Look under Event list on the website. Click on the title for details.

A fortnight of Felde! The first 2 weeks of the training will open to anyone who would like a personal or professional development experience.

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