



Feldenkrais
M e t h o d

The Feldenkrais® Method:

Testimonials from Clients of the Method

**(Note: This includes a testimonial from
David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel.)**

August 2009



דָּאָס הַמְּשָׁלָה
THE PRIME MINISTER

Jerusalem, 28th August 1958

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

My friend, Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, has undertaken an important task which will be of great benefit to the new generation growing up in our country, and perhaps to all of humanity. He is about to establish an institute for the promotion of physical and mental efficiency. The work in this Institute will be run according to the new Somato-psychic method of treatment so successfully introduced by Dr. Feldenkrais.

I had the good fortune of availing myself of Dr. Feldenkrais treatment for about two years, and from my own experience and that of some of my friends, most of whom are eminent physicians and scientists, I know the remarkable results achieved thereby.

Dr. Feldenkrais' new approach to the physical and mental well-being of man holds in store vast possibilities for the elevation of the education given to our new generation, and the Institute which Dr. Feldenkrais plans is likely to be of great benefit to our country and may serve as a model for other countries.

The Institute will be under the supervision of some outstanding physicians and scientists in Israel, and I trust, that Dr. Feldenkrais' method of treatment will, in the course of time, become part and parcel of the medical course of study and training in Israel - and, perhaps, not only in Israel. Any investment in this Institute will, I believe, not only bear fruit to the investors, but will help raise a new generation in Israel, sturdy in body and healthy in spirit.

The Government of Israel will extend to this Institute all the facilities granted other educational and scientific institutions in Israel, and all friends of Israel who will lend a hand to the founding of this Institute will be giving newly-restored Israel a service of a special nature.

Respectfully yours,

D. Ben-Gurion
D. Ben-Gurion.

The following testimonials were provided by clients of Kim Wise. Kim is a Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner from Australia and has also been volunteering her time to National Council of The Australian Feldenkrais Guild Inc., for the past three years and is presently the Health Delegate to National Council of AFG Inc.

Nine year old Craig was referred for Feldenkrais in October, 1991. Craig's masseur noticed he was lying off balance and his mother said she had always known that Craig was a little off balance in some ways, but felt that this was the way Craig was meant to be. However, along the way some adjustments have been made. In 1988, when Craig was six, he had a mouth plate made to correct cross-bite. This corrected within a year. At about the same time, when attempting to have school shoes fitted, an astute shoe salesman noticed that Craig was not standing straight and suggested moulding of inserts. Craig has now been using shoe inserts for four years. These have been of some assistance in helping Craig to stand and walk straighter. Prior to the Feldenkrais, Craig was suffering from pain across his shoulders, in the calves and feet. He was an awkward swimmer and poor runner, although his hand-eye co-ordination has always been good. Since beginning Feldenkrais, Craig has progressed in leaps and bounds. His swimming has improved and he stands straight and moves more freely. His mother said that it has been a whole mind and body improvement, which will continue, over time. The easy exercises for Craig are not only tailored for Craig's needs but also designed for Craig to do himself, whenever he can. More importantly, I know Craig sees a direct correlation between his exercises and improvements, so this encourages him to keep up the good work. In conclusion, I feel that discovering Feldenkrais was, for Craig, the most important thing he will probably ever do. *Author: Mother of Craig*

In January, 1992 I started to lose the use of my hands and arms. I could not raise my arms above my shoulders without serve pain – My hands and fingers were swollen and terribly painful. I went to my local doctor who had been treating me for arthritis in both wrists and hands. She wanted me to see a specialist about having gold injection started. I could not accept taking a drug that had side effects that would cause me more problems in the future. Over a period of 12 months I had seen two other doctors – They said it was the ageing process and would have to live with it. I then tried chiropractic, acupuncture and massage. Nothing seemed to really give lasting relief as by this time had lost 1 ½ stone in weight, was totally dependent on my husband, to do the housework and dress and undress me. I could not sleep at night for the serve pain in my shoulders and neck. The only way I could get a bit of relief was to sit on the lounge, bend over, with my upper body hanging between my legs. I was at the stage of booking myself into a nursing home when I saw the Feldenkrais advertisement in the local paper which after reading the add I got the feeling the practitioner cared about people. I made an appointment to for Feldenkrais and when I walked in I did not have to tell her anything, she told me what was wrong with me. That was in March, 1993. I responded to Feldenkrais from the first visit and have continued to improve. I'm now back to doing my housework and caring for my husband, son, 2 dogs and 20 birds, without taking any drugs. And I owe that to Feldenkrais. Needless to say I have lost all faith in doctors who do not care enough to send you to the

right person for treatment. They only want to write a prescription for pain killers and get rid of you A.S.A.P., after all, to them it is the ageing process. *Author: Client K*

I have had a neck problem for over thirty years, initially treatment by Physiotherapists and regular medication was sufficient to keep me active and working. After retiring in 1982 I found any activity becoming more and more painful with my breathing degenerating, headaches and neck pain keeping me from sleeping, with a generally demoralising effect. With a very rapidly deteriorating situation, I was afraid I would become completely crippled; any movement was becoming more painful, with resulting loss of mobility. My Doctor referred me to a course of treatment with the Feldenkrais method of exercise from which I gained benefit. After a number of treatments I was admitted to Concord for operative treatment of another problem, and no further treatment was ordered by the doctor. In early 1991 my condition deteriorated to such an extent that I was unable to raise my hands above my waist, and my neck movements became very restricted. At this time I had to be assisted to dress myself. I was referred to a sports Physiotherapist, for mechanical traction to try to loosen the neck. This was unsuccessful, and my local doctor expressed the opinion that if no improvement could be made, neurosurgery may be the only solution. I asked to be referred back to the Feldenkrais Method which had been the only treatment to give me any help. I was able to alleviate some of the more immediate problems and I was able to sleep, as during this period pain killers had little effect on the pain and I have continued to improve to include better use for my arms and even my breathing is easier. I feel that the Feldenkrais Method is the only thing that keeps me mobile, and although I realise there is little or no prospect of full recovery from my condition, I firmly believe that regular treatment and the self-management exercises prescribed will give me a great deal of comfort and result is some reduction in costs to the D.V.A. in the long term. *Author: Client N W (72 yrs. age) - Veteran.*

I had suffered damage to the anterior cruciate ligaments of both knees playing football in about 1973. There was no re-constructive surgery at that time and so I lived with the damage since then. My Feldenkrais Practitioner noticed my body had adapted to the problems and advised me that I would be able to reorganise my body to better cope with the ligament damage. After two hands on treatments and homework of ATM's I now can do things with my knee that I have not been able to do for 35 years. I can confidently climb stairs without feeling I was going to fall, I am able to kneel on both knees and get up without any feeling of weakness of the knees and stiffness of the legs. I have no hesitation in saying the improvement has occurred only since using Feldenkrais. *Author: Client JH*

This short letter is to say just how grateful I remain for the wonderful release from pain you found for me with the Feldenkrais Method. The pain which in 1988 distorted my back and made it almost impossible to walk and stand upright is still banished from life by continual use of the program. I am and always will be deeply grateful for this healing help and wish you every success in your very "continuing-to-be-a-blessing to so many" career. *Author: Client J*

The purpose of my writing to you is to grant you permission to use this letter as a testimony of my gratitude for your deep concern for my welfare and your introduction to me of the Feldenkrais Method. A short history of my experience with a chronic case of arthritis and the treatments that have been recommended over the years by the Dept. of Veteran Affairs may be summarized as follows. The instance of osteoarthritis and associated spondylosis has long been treated by the recognised physiotherapists fraternity with ongoing pain relieving hot packs massage ray lamps ultrasound and T.E.N.S. machine applications. All of which constitutes no less than a palliative maintenance program. The patient's contribution to pain relief is to keep weight down to a safe minimum, regular exercise of a specific nature and a mental control of pain dismissal achieved by self hypnosis. To the uninitiated the symptom of spondylosis is PAIN both consistent and an acute stabbing variety. From the very first treatment of the Feldenkrais program I was able to walk unaided up the four ramps of the car park without any sign of a twinge. I am most grateful for your continued support and treatment especially when dealing with the D.V.A. *Author: Client J*

The following are other testimonials provided by Kim Wise.

Feldenkrais has studied the body in movement with a precision that I have found nowhere else. *Peter Brook, Film and Stage Director*

After just a few moments of the Feldenkrais exercises, people often find themselves, as if by magic, easily doing things with their bodies that they never thought possible. *New Age Magazine*

The Feldenkrais exercises are ingenious. *Yehudi Menuhin, Famed Violinist*

My son was severely neurologically injured in an athletic accident. David was able to do what no one else could do. I have witnessed the benefits of the Feldenkrais Method and the results are amazing. I now have my healthy normal child again. *Myra Baltra, Bensalem, PA*

After suffering a serious stroke 10 years ago, my doctor told me I would never walk again. Thanks to David Zemach-Bersin and the Feldenkrais Method I am still walking today. *Dora Good, M.A.*

After years of back problems, the Feldenkrais Method has given me the ability to remain free of pain. They are by far the most effective and pleasurable exercises I have ever done. *Joseph Botkin, M.A.*

The Feldenkrais Method has shown me how to balance my body and improve my flexibility. *Chris Dudley, NBA Player, New York Knicks Team*

The Feldenkrais Method has allowed me to play pain free golf, without worrying about injury. *Duffy Waldorf, PGA Tour Golfer*

The Feldenkrais Method is a discipline for those who look for the glow of their physical and mental life. *Michael McClure, Obie Ward Winning Playwright and Poet.*

I can't say enough good things about the Feldenkrais Method. I believe it's made the difference between continuing my competitive running career and retiring prematurely. *Chris Boyd, 1992 US Track National Champion (5,000 meters)*

The following testimonials have been provided by people with spinal cord injuries.

I was amazed at how much improved physical function I acquired after having completed the Feldenkrais training program, given that I was over 20 years post spinal cord injury at C5 &6 with partial paralysis in all extremities. *Edward Muegge, MA(Counselling Psychology), Feldenkrais practitioner*

I came to the Feldenkrais Method (in 1997) nine years after my spinal cord injury. The Method has helped me see the intricacies of movement. Each session reveals new possibilities that can overcome a lifetime of conditioning. It has been and continues to be valuable to my ease in movement. *Rich McLaughlin, BA(Archaeology and Religious Studies),*

It never ceases to amaze me how after one session with Cindy, I notice dramatic improvements in body awareness, often in places where I have little sensation or movement. Feldenkrais should be a mandatory part of the rehabilitation process I believe. *Claire Freeman, BDesHons, PG Dip Rehab, PG Dip Mk; graphic designer, NZ Spinal Trust, injured 1995*

The Feldenkrais method taught me to refine my sensory awareness by combining visualization with intelligent moving, leading to more mobility. Becoming a Feldenkrais practitioner was then a four-year physical and mental therapy and teaching how to maintain, improve, and refine my balance and awareness of myself as a whole. *Irene Lober, MA, Feldenkrais practitioner, incomplete paraplegia after lesion L 3/4*

Feldenkrais has made a huge difference for me. I did Feldenkrais work with a physical therapist after having developed bilateral elbow and wrist tendinitis from computer work. The symptoms became chronic enough for me to stop my work as a computer graphics designer and manager in 1992.

To have gained a full sense of how my body moved and where my power was made a huge difference. Three examples:

- Given my T12-L1 level, I have full use of my hips. When I do transfers into and out of the wheelchair, I now use my trunk and hips while rotating my body, rather than doing it mostly from the arms and shoulders.
- When I open a door, likewise, I don't just use my triceps to pull with my arm, but rotate my trunk.
- When I push my chair, I involve my trunk much more.

After doing the Feldenkrais work in 1993, people noticed the difference in how I was using my body as I pushed. I share your view that it has much to offer people with SCI. *Gary Karp, BArch; Guest Speaker, NZ Spinal Conference (2000); Speaker; Author; Trainer, injured 1973*

I have been using Feldenkrais for almost a year now and as a result have a new awareness of my body which I feel not only benefits my wellbeing but also helps with my posture and balance. *Hamish Ramsden, BAgCom; company administrator; Spinal Network News Editorial Team Member; C5/6 tetraplegia; injured 1994*

My first session with Cindy was incredible - I experienced tingling on the soles of my feet and I could sense a circling motion as well. Previously my partner had massaged my feet and I had not been aware of any sensation at all. This continued throughout our sessions and by the time it came for me to go home to Wellington I was able to have a sense of where my legs were and constant tingling in my feet. I am still experiencing this now...Cindy also taught me how to roll onto my side with ease and to use my body more economically...I am very grateful to Cindy for introducing Feldenkrais to me. *Anthea Gunner, 28/6/06; PA to South Island Manager, CourierPost; initial diagnosis -T10/11 ASIA A*

I had experience with Feldenkrais prior to rolling my car and sustaining the C5-6 spinal cord injury. I was able to call upon its basic premise, that of bringing awareness to the parts of the body where the energies are blocked or stagnant, feeling from the inside-out and the outside-in.

From the beginning, even though I was “paralyzed” from the shoulders down, I could feel the difference in my right and left sides energetically. Feldenkrais work assisted my body’s cellular knowing, allowing what was ordered in my left side to inform my right side. The consistent patterning practice of Feldenkrais, whether the movement was a visualization or actual hands on work with a practitioner, enabled my body to keep reclaiming more of itself. *Molly Hale, BS(Psychology); Keynote Speaker, “Endless Possibilities” Conference, G.F. Strong Rehab Hospital, Vancouver, 2005; Aikido 3rd degree black belt; Olympic torch bearer, 2002; injured 1995*

You feel so relaxed, and at the same time, you're doing something really good for yourself in a physical sense. *Andrew Hall, BAgCom, CEO NZ Spinal Trust, injured 1983*

In the beginning, I was surprised that unexpected movements were possible again. Important for me, above all, was to learn to feel myself once more, although I have a complete loss of sensation. I could feel once more my feet and legs through pressure, movement, warmth and the orientation of my legs in space.

In the session, I could feel myself whole again, as Helga gave me an impulse for organisation to stand, compressing from the foot to the head. And because of that, the pain diminished. (Translated from German) *Michael Willems, Marpingen, Germany*

I really enjoy working with Cindy and her ideas make a lot of sense to me...I found that over the course of our sessions I noticed improvements in awareness and sensation... I have adopted Cindy's techniques into my daily routine and believe as a result they relieve my pain and spasm, keep my body supple, and increase the potential of recovering sensation so much more than if I was to neglect these techniques.

I totally recommend the ideas and techniques that Cindy offers. *Johnny Bourke, Psychology student, Massey University; Spinal Network News Editorial Team Member; initial diagnosis - C4/5 ASIA A*

The following were provided by New Zealand practitioners.

My experience with the Feldenkrais Method has made me more aware, not only of how I move my body, but on a holistic level, it has sharpened my awareness of my changing physical and emotional states. *Amie*

Now I can mix concrete again by hand, despite an old back injury. *Norman*

Since attending Feldenkrais classes, I have learnt how to use my structure better. Consequently, my back is so much better and I haven't needed to go back to the physio. *Eila*

I have found that Feldenkrais has been most beneficial for me in my recovery from a stroke. My whole body is freeing up, my head and neck are straight in line with my shoulders and chest through to my pelvis, leg and arm. My breathing has improved and my balance has also improved, all of which help me regain my confidence in life. *Ross M.*

Feldenkrais has helped me move and rest more easily and with greater comfort. Awareness through movement classes promote my sense of well being, challenge me to keep on learning and refining what I have learnt and best of all, they are a pleasure. *Kerry*

Has improved the way I walk and helped with knee problems. *K.B.*

As a swimmer, Feldenkrais has given me an awareness of how important the hips/pelvic area is in my sport as well as life in general. As a short person, after attending Feldenkrais lessons, I walk taller. *Mary Garner*

I have experienced a huge improvement in my health and wellbeing since I began having a regular massage and attending Feldenkrais Awareness through Movement classes and Functional Integration sessions.

I no longer need to visit an osteopath or physiotherapist for treatment for OOS symptoms. The tension in my neck and shoulders has largely disappeared, and I rarely experience aches and pains in my lower back now.

I am stronger, more flexible, and can move efficiently with less effort. I feel more comfortable with my body. *Nomi*

I have had back problems for several years, and could find no permanent relief for the pain. I also more recently had a knee replacement operation, but this unfortunately accentuated my back problem. But after several sessions with Malaika, who I read about in the paper, my improvement has been amazing. *Norma*

As a chef with hip pain, without Feldenkrais my job would have become more and more difficult.

I have learnt about my habitual patterns which were contributing to the pain and how to change them. Quite simply, with profound results. I know too that if I lie on the floor after work I can relieve shoulder and neck pain with simple gentle exercises.

Sometimes when I get migraines I have a table session which seems to put me back on track to helping myself.

The key and joy of Feldenkrais is the self help aspect and that you can do it anywhere any time without special equipment. *Lynn*

The Feldenkrais Method has added a whole new dimension to my overall health -- physical, emotional and intellectual. I came to the classes with a serious form of OOS (Occupational Overuse Syndrome) that produced chronic migraine-like headaches.

Feldenkrais has not provided a magic cure but has over the years given me a deeper insight into my bodily functioning. It has enabled self-learning that has led to a steady improvement in my chronic condition and many other health benefits besides. Particularly noticeable has been the greater ease and efficiency of my daily walking.

It has also enabled me to continue enjoying my favourite summertime recreational activity at an age where many others have retired owing to muscular and other physical conditions. *Alan*

For me, the Feldenkrais Method is a continual learning and self awareness experience. It has helped me to understand what I do, or what I'm about to do, to create tension in my shoulders and back.

Now I know what I can do to prevent myself getting into that state and to release tension when I get careless and ignore the warning signs. *Lynda*

I have found the study of the Feldenkrais Method to be extremely helpful in my quest to play the violin with greater ease, comfort and stamina. *Helene, NZ String Quartet*

During the years I have been attending Feldenkrais classes I have learned so much about the way my body functions, and how to access change for improved mobility. It's a great challenge and I feel very affirmed as I leave the class feeling younger, lighter joyous and invigorated. *Daphne*

Feldenkrais offers the opportunity to explore the way we move and to learn about ourselves. It provides an insight into where we feel discomfort and what we are doing to exacerbate the problem. I feel exercised after a class yet the movements are so gentle. The relaxation between movements is most welcome.

Feldenkrais offers an alternative to the stereotype exercise regime of 'no pain no gain' - of overuse of certain muscle groups creating an imbalance in our structure with possible damage to hips, knees etc.

Elke has the ability to make the classes fun, informative and relaxing. It is an hour in the week where external influences are excluded and we can just focus on ourselves. *Robyn*

My chronic shoulder pain is less and my hunch is a little less, my spine straighter and balance better. *Kate*

I am in my 70s and have done some Feldy classes for a few years and went with my daughter-in-law to Chi Gong and she couldn't do the movements but I could. *Gwenda*

I have cerebral palsy and used to fall a lot, maybe four times a week. Now it is a year since I fell and I am learning to cook and draw. *Yewtze*

My back is very curved and I used to need to use three pillows to sleep. Now I only need one and I am straighter and taller. *Judith*

My stamina, my flexibility and my range of movement have increased. I recuperate much faster. I'm doing physical work, such as gardening on the steep Scarborough hillside, which I couldn't have done without Feldenkrais. *Jude*

It has changed my life. *Janice*

It has made me more aware of my body's abilities. *Gail*

I'm far more in balance in my body. *Jane*