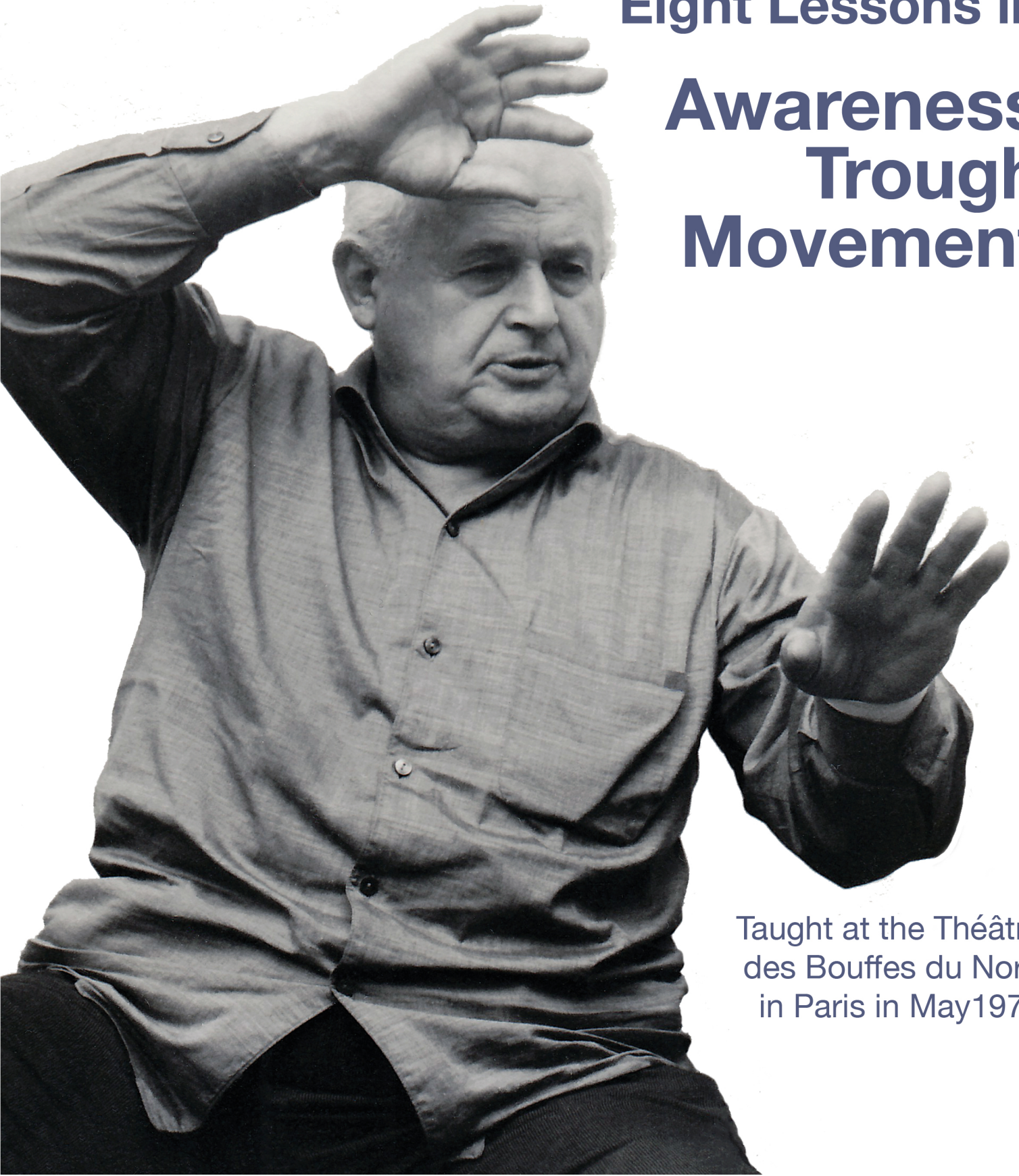


Moshé Feldenkrais

**Eight Lessons in  
Awareness  
Trough  
Movement**



Taught at the Théâtre  
des Bouffes du Nord  
in Paris in May 1973



Dear Colleagues,

the enclosed lessons were taught by Moshe Feldenkrais in French, in May 1973 to the actors of the Bouffes du Nord theatre (Paris) at the behest of their director Peter Brook.

This material was edited and given to the French practitioners on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the French Feldenkrais Association, in March 2017. We are now pleased to offer these eight hitherto unpublished Awareness Through Movement® lessons in an English and German translation. The present edition is accompanied by the original recordings of Moshe Feldenkrais' teaching in French.

The title of the lessons has been given by the editors. The lesson order does not strictly match the chronological order in which Moshe Feldenkrais taught them.

This source material, in French, and the translations are being made available to all Feldenkrais practitioners, be they members of Feldenkrais Associations and Guilds or not and will be available worldwide.

The lessons were recorded by Myriam Pfeffer on a small hand-held machine. The tapes have been made available from the archives by Sabine Pfeffer and François Combeau.

Due to the conditions of the original recordings some sections were scrambled and occasionally inaudible. François Combeau, with the help of a sound engineer, has restored six of the tapes to make listening easier. These six lessons were transcribed in French by Mickäelle Acke and proofread and formatted by Vincent Vitte; the final two lessons' audio is unmastered. In the French transcript Vincent Vitte attempted to render Moshe Feldenkrais' words faithfully. Stéphanie Ménasé has reviewed the totality of the eight lessons.

The English translator, Ben Parsons, has based his translation on the original French audio and the French transcription.

The German translation was done by Monika Praxmarer; Anne Barthelmeß has edited the German edition professionally.

Patrick Gruner has coordinated the English and German translations, created the cover-design and has formatted and edited the booklets in their final appearance.

We hope that these materials will bring you much benefit and pleasure with their new and original content.

We wish you an enjoyable experience,

François Combeau and Sabine Pfeffer

January 2019



## Participants

**Myriam Pfeffer** was directly trained by Moshe Feldenkrais in the first group he created in Israel. She was his close collaborator and assisted him until the end of his active life. She introduced the Feldenkrais Method to the French speaking European countries. Myriam Pfeffer taught the Method in many training programs in Europe, Israel and the United States and from 1985 onwards organized and was the educational director of 15 training programs in France.

**François Combeau** has taught movement and voice for more than forty years. He participated in the first Feldenkrais training program in Paris thirty years ago. Since then he has been passionately teaching the Feldenkrais Method® to the public and to professional groups. As a Feldenkrais assistant trainer then trainer (since 2008), he has shared his wealth of experience through the organization of many advanced trainings in France and abroad. His accent has been on promoting, further developing, and clarifying the sensory-motor aspects of the work. In 1987 he and a number of colleagues created the French Feldenkrais Association, becoming its founding president. He was also involved in the creation of the International Feldenkrais® Federation (IFF). As president of the newly formed IFF he made it his priority to make Feldenkrais material available to the global community, and to encourage cooperation between the various practitioners' associations around the world.

**Sabine Pfeffer** trained in the Feldenkrais Method directly with Moshe Feldenkrais in Israel and the United States. She has led 15 professional training programs in Paris, sharing the teaching with her mother, Myriam Pfeffer. She is a leading trainer of Feldenkrais teachers, and has taught in France and internationally for more than thirty years.

**Mickaëlle Acke** was a yoga teacher when she met Myriam Pfeffer at a seminar in Nantes in 1982. After attending numerous workshops in Paris and Normandy and following several invitations to visit the 'Paris I' training course, she enrolled in the 'Paris II' course, graduating in 1991. She has been very active in the French Feldenkrais Association and was its representative on the Eurotab Council for four years (1998-2002). She qualified as an Assistant Trainer in 2005. Nowadays she attends advanced trainings given by François Combeau and teaches Awareness Through Movement® (ATM) and Functional Integration® (FI) in three cities whilst running numerous workshops herself.

**Vincent Vitte** is a philosophy student and actor. His first experience of the Feldenkrais Method® was with individual lessons from Sabine Pfeffer. Interested in Moshe Feldenkrais' humanistic approach to the individual, he continues to explore the theory and practice of the Method and relates it to his current studies. He has assisted Sabine Pfeffer's own research by transcribing audio files recorded by her mother, Myriam Pfeffer. He has corrected and formatted material that Sabine Pfeffer has written for the Feldenkrais community.

**Stéphanie Ménasé** is a Feldenkrais practitioner and Doctor of Philosophy. Professionally her background is in editing and publishing in the human sciences. As the daughter of a Feldenkrais practitioner, from 1991 she would often attend practitioner trainings, invited by Myriam Pfeffer herself. She continued practicing the Method before doing her Feldenkrais Training at the Parisian Feldenkrais Centre "Accord Mobile" which she graduated in 2012.

**Ben Parsons.** Born in England, he now lives in Potsdam near Berlin, where he works as a Feldenkrais teacher with an accent on special needs children.

**Monika Praxmarer** has been a Feldenkrais Practitioner since 2004 when she opened her private practice in Berlin. She has supported two Feldenkrais Professional Training Programs in Berlin as an experienced practitioner and has worked as Assistant Trainer of the method in Germany and Spain since 2014. Monika graduated from the first “JKA-Training” in 2013 and working with special needs children is an emphasis of her work. She is head of the Feldenkraiszentrum Schöneberg in Berlin.

**Anne Barthelmeß** has been a Feldenkrais Practitioner since 2012, graduated from a “JKA-Training” in 2014 and has supported one Feldenkrais Professional Training Program in Berlin as an experienced practitioner. Besides her work in a therapeutic context and with children she also offers Feldenkrais for people in life-threatening situations and palliative care.

**Patrick Gruner** has been head of a Feldenkrais Training Institute in Germany since 1993. He is a trainer of the Method and is teaching Feldenkrais in professional training programs all over Europe. Patrick is a member of several boards of the German Feldenkrais Association (FVD) regarding the professional development of the method and was decisively involved in the formation of the German TAB.

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# Lesson #1: Pendulum movements of the head

Duration of the original recording: 45 Minutes

1. Please sit down with your legs in the oriental position. Make sure you are comfortable. Your legs should be more or less symmetrical, and it must be comfortable for you. Place your hands behind you on the floor, lean on them and gently try to lower your head forwards, and then bring it back up.

Don't bring your head further back than where you started, simply back to the starting position. Lower and lift your head gently.

If you haven't understood what sitting in the oriental position means, look around at someone else. Make sure that your legs are crossed, one way or another, well or badly, but crossed.

Carry on with this movement lowering and lifting your head. As you do so, observe what happens in the stomach. When you lower your head do you inhale or exhale? What do you do? And do not say 'I know what should happen'! Just observe whether you inhale or exhale.

Now stay with your head like that, lowered down. Your chin will be more or less resting on the chest or throat, it's not important.

Stay like that for a moment.

2a. Now very slowly, tilt your head to the right as if it were a pendulum swinging in front of you. Lower it like you have been doing, then whilst your head is hanging down turn to the right so it comes to lie on the right shoulder. Come back the same route, the same trajectory. To the right only, then back to the middle. Let your head hang like a pendulum, do not lift it back up, but let it roll onto the right shoulder.

Do it gently, because there is a big difference if you let your head roll to the right like a pendulum, or if you lift it to the right. It's not the same thing. Do it in this way, and from below.

Make the movement again and return by the same trajectory. Carry on until the head can lie on the shoulder, all very gently, and then lower it back down. Lower following the same trajectory.

Some of you don't understand. If you do what I say, your chin will not move right and left. If you haven't understood how to do it, look at the others. The majority have understood. Carry on.

2b. Come back so your head hangs down, then do the same movement to the left.

The top of your head moves in an arc, of which the lowest point moves forwards and first up to the right, and then up to the left. Be clear in your movement. Don't be quick. Be gentle. It is not a matter of turning your face to the right or left. It's not a matter of turning the face. It's to do with swinging the head like a pendulum.

I don't know why but I can't just sit watching whilst some of you seem incapable of following what I've said and need an example. Imitation is the most primitive way in which to learn. The most primitive way. Even a monkey or a dog, or a bear, we can teach them to imitate dancing, but you could never explain it to them. The human prerogative is specific to the individual. 'Have I understood what I have heard? Am I doing what I have heard?' That's the prerogative of the human being; it's something different! When I say lower your head, but you turn it to the right, and yet a person does what I see you here doing, then what? It is necessary to demonstrate. In other words, it is necessary to regress to an infantile or animal level of imitation.

It is not about turning your head to the right. You need to lower your head, and then with the head at its lowest point, oscillate it so it moves up to the right. You'll notice that the nose doesn't move at all [from forwards]! From there, I go back down a little and I come back up [on the side], and this will cause something to happen elsewhere than in the head.

Those who still haven't understood, if you are still doing all sorts of variations, this and that... There are four or five of you who continue to do it in a different way. Well, we'll go on in any case.

3. Lower your head forwards and oscillate it to the right and to the left like I described. Now pay attention. When your head comes close to your right shoulder, which buttock do you lean on more strongly? What do your shoulders do? Above all what does your spine do? What does it do in the middle of the shoulders?

When you put your head to the right, where does the spine between your shoulders move to? How about the upper torso? Does your spine go right when your head is to the right, or does it shift to the left?

Continue the movement, each time going a little further to the right and a little further to the left, till your head manages to pass behind you. Come back each time. Don't do a full circle. Come back each time, but each time your head moves more easily let it travel a little bit further.

Try to organize your body in a way that will allow your head to continue and go behind you. Don't circle; it's not a full circle. Just go to the furthest possible point behind, then return. Now pay attention to what you need to do with your back. What happens in the lower back when the head goes beyond the point of the shoulders? What do the muscles in the lumbar region do? What do you do with your stomach?

If you cannot move the head all the way behind you, it's because you are not letting the belly go forwards and your lower spine, the hollow of your back, is fixed. Let the belly come forwards, expand it forwards and tilt your pelvis so that the lower back hollows out at the height of your trouser belt, the lumbar region, and you will find that the head can go backwards quite easily. You will feel the pelvis tilt on the floor, on the two ischial tuberosities, the sitting bones. The weight shifts forwards, in other words your pelvis is moving.

4. Stay with your head backwards, hanging behind you, and try to push your belly out. Puff out your belly so that it drops towards your pubic bone, as if your gut could lie between your legs. Now stay like that and start with your head at the lowest point of the arc behind you, and move it a little to the right then a little to the left. Let your body be free to follow the head and assist it in its movement so it moves comfortably, like its been oiled. Be gentle.

Now what does the spine do? What do the shoulders do? If your body is stiff and we leave the shoulders, if your buttocks, your bottom doesn't know that the head needs to be able to turn, there's nothing for it. No explanation will help you.

Allow your body to follow the movement, to support the movement, so that your body becomes human. Softly, softly. Observe what you actually need to do so that your head moves like a real pendulum and so it comes to lie quite easily on one shoulder and then the other. What do you need to do with the pelvis? What do you need to do with the shoulders? What about the chest and the spine?

Allow your kinesthetic sense to guide you. Carry on with the movement and you will see that your shoulders, the whole spinal column from the bottom up is also required to sway to one side then the other. This allows the base of the neck to move in a small circle, in other words the seventh cervical vertebra that is located between the shoulders. Without this movement the head would not be able to turn in a complete circle without getting twisted. Like when you wring a hen's neck, the hen dies.

Do it gently until you can complete the biggest possible complete circle with the crown of your head. You'll notice that your entire spine is moving, your shoulders go forwards and backwards in turn, and when you find you can do it easily, you'll notice how good it feels for your whole body.

Very gently let it be and lie down and rest.

5a. Come back to sitting exactly as you were before, but this time change your legs over. The leg that was in front should now be behind. Put your hands behind again to lean on and repeat the same movement, but now with the head backwards.

When you move your head like this oscillating from side to side, what catches your attention? Is it your ears, your nose? Let's try thinking about different parts of your head during the movement.

5b. Try doing it whilst thinking of your right ear, it's the right ear which makes the movement.

You'll notice that you do a completely different movement. Your right ear goes back, to the right, to lie on your right shoulder, then it comes forwards and towards the middle, then moves over the left shoulder and then passes behind and drops down. It's your right ear that does it! Do two complete circles in one direction, then two in the other direction.

Now can you pay attention through the entire movement of the head that air goes out and comes in through the nostrils, that there is no interruption of the airflow through the nostrils? At which point, if any, is there a tendency to interrupt the airflow? If you pay attention, you will observe that when the movement continues from the base upon which you are sitting, all the length of the spinal column, moving each spinal vertebra one after the other, there will be no interruption of your breath. However, if you move several vertebrae in an undifferentiated block, there will be a stoppage of the breath at one of the points where the movement changes from one direction to the other, or forwards or backwards.

Now pay attention to how the weight of the body is spread on your arms, on your hands. Pay attention to which side you are pressing and how the shoulder starts to move with the head. For many of you, neither the head nor the shoulders moved at all at the very beginning.

5c. Continue this whilst thinking about your nose. It's the nose that makes the movement.

Once again pay attention to not allow an interruption of the flow of air in and out of your nostrils. No stopping, no holding. The nose makes the movement. What is different in the way that you do this? Do you feel in your body that it is not the same thing? Do two full circles in one direction, then two in the other. Your nose leads the movement in one direction, then back in the other. What difference do you notice in the execution of the movement when you think of the nose?

5d. Now make the movement led by your chin.

Rest your hands by placing them on your thighs or your knees, then continue with the movement.

5e. Now make the movement with the crown of the head.

Start by placing the index finger of your right hand on the crown of your head and try to use the hand to guide the head to do the movement. Observe: does my hand disturb my head? It was disturbing before, but you didn't notice then.

Try moving the shoulder, the shoulder blade, in a manner which allows you to roll the head to your satisfaction; in a way that allows the finger and the head to coordinate. The entire movement, two full circles. One circle in one direction, and another in the same direction. Then two full circles in the other direction. It's better like that. Finish the circle and do another.

One says 'crown of the head', but there are not many people who put their finger in the same position. Everyone's crown is in a different place!

6a. Now lean on your right hand which is still behind you. Change your legs over if you wish. Change your legs and feet. Put your head backwards and place your left index finger on the crown of your head, and circle your head twice in one direction, and twice in the other. Observe the difference.

Two circles in one direction, then two circles in the other. Two complete circles, and simply observe what happens. You need to lean on your right hand. The right hand supports the body throughout. Do two complete circles in this direction, then change to move in the other direction, but the circles should be complete.

6b. Now once again, bring your hands in front of you, and sit in the oriental style or in a way that works for you, and simply observe if it has become easier for you to have your legs crossed like this. You will see that soon your legs will become more and more comfortable.

Now do I need to explain how it is possible that when you circle your head around, your legs become more supple? There is probably a link between the legs and the head. It's strange, but that's how it is.

7a. Now bring your hand to the right and lean on the hand. This means that you will be leaning to the right, and that your head is also to the right. Place your left hand on the head, the crown of the head. Obviously if you are using your left hand here, the elbow will be more or less to the left. Now try to do two complete circles in one direction, guiding the movement with your left hand, but make sure that the contact through your right hand remains constant. It will become lighter.

Not behind (with the hand). You should be pretty much sitting on your right buttock. Continue, two circles in one direction, then two in the other.

7b. Now lean on your left hand. Your left hand on the floor to the left, and the right hand doing what the left did on your head.

You need to be seated, and once seated, to put your hand in place. If you are seated without leaning to one side, the elbow will be in a certain position and you will not be able to circle. When you lower your head and have your hand as support, the elbow is free to turn. Now it's important that you feel how you are sitting more upon one buttock than the other. And also that your left hand is necessary.

7c. That's enough. Bring your two hands behind and swap your legs around. The more often you change them, the more they will open.

This should not cause you pain. For many people, the foot is stiff and not supple and so this position hurts the external malleolus, the outside of the ankle bone. Try to organize yourself, and you'll see that at the end of this lesson even hares might be envious of you!

7d. Now have the hands behind, and your head backward. Just observe if your head hangs better than before. Breathe, allowing the chest to rise higher, and the collarbones too. Breathe by allowing the chest to expand and lift up towards the front.

The collarbones move towards your head. For that to happen, you will observe that the back needs to become stronger in the lumbar region. Do three, four, five such movements. Don't force, to avoid cramp in your rib muscles.

8. Hold this position, and now open your mouth, but in a strange way. Firstly, close your mouth and bring your lower teeth in front of your upper teeth. Your lower teeth will be on the upper teeth.

Repeat the action several times, bringing your lower teeth in front of your upper teeth. Repeat it until you feel that the movement has become comfortable, easy, and simple, and that all the teeth are in front of the others. You can even do this with dentures, no joke. There are lots of young people with dentures. Eighty percent of the population, in England.

Now, seated, bring your head forwards and see if you can open the mouth, and how. You'll see that you open your mouth like a singer, really wide!

9. Now put your hands behind you again, with your head hanging back, and open your mouth. Can you open your mouth? Open wide, and stick out your tongue, and in that position try to move your head, two consecutive circles in one direction, and two in the other. The tongue guides your movement. It's the tongue that traces the circle.

It's a funny thing, but animals' heads are so free and their tongues so long that they can touch them to their chin and to their nose and clean their noses. Humans can too; yogis do it. Yogis find this so important that for people for whom the tendon under the tongue is very hard, they cut it early in the morning with a Gillette razor blade, until they can do this. With it they discover secret powers. I can't tell you the secret, though I know it. If I told you, you would loosen your own tongue like that! Well, those familiar with serious writings will see that the ability to extend the tongue and to stretch it out confer sexual prowess and a whole manner of other benefits, but we are interested in just one: namely

the movement of the head, what the head can do, and even the fact that the eyes improve too. You will see for yourself shortly!

Please sit once more, place your hands behind you and feel how your legs can open more easily now. With your hands behind, hang your head backwards and open your mouth, then try making three circles in one direction, with your tongue guiding the movement, the tongue itself doing the circle. Your tongue will descend and rise, it will go right and left. The tongue moves in a circle. It goes to the right, then down in the mouth and back, then upwards. The tongue leads.

Try the return too. The tongue leads the movement, and you will see for yourselves how far the head can then move back. We gain this capability solely by doing what we are doing here. You could die trying to achieve this by hanging the head back, and you would never manage because the back would remain stiff and would hurt. You will see shortly how you feel as a result of doing it in the way we are.

Now, change direction. Three times. Three circles.

10. Please now lie down on your back and rest. Pay attention to how your back lies on the floor. Which parts of your back are now in contact with the floor, that normally are not?

There is part of your back that lies on the floor, and part that you can not touch to the floor, except by a huge effort of will. Which would be painful. Else, you would need to lift your head for it to happen, or some other part of your body.

11a. Try bending your legs, with your feet apart and on the floor, then try to roll your head right and left, with your eyes looking right and left together with your head.

What this means is that when your head turns to the right, your eyes will look even further to the right, as if you wanted to look at your right ear. Then when your head turns to the left, you wish to see your left ear. The eyes move with the head. Pay attention to not stopping the flow of air through your nostrils, not matter what, whether you focus on your eyes or not.

11b. Very gently try to change the direction of your eyes. From the mid-point, when the head goes right, the eyes will look left. When you change the direction of the head, the eyes move to the opposite side.

So when you turn your head left, the eyes look right. See how this impedes or facilitates the movement of your head. For some of you, it will improve the head movement to one side, but limit it to the other. Try it, and gradually continue with the movement and increase the speed. The frequency increases. The eyes continue to move in opposition to the head. Go even faster if you wish, but without letting the movement become ragged. Your head and eyes move in opposition to each other.

11c. Now bring the movement of the eyes and head together again and see if the movement of your head has become easier and more uniform.

12. Sit once more, with your legs in the oriental style, and see how they are now, your legs. Put your hands behind you and now try to make five circles in one direction with the head

hanging back, and sense how your chest lifts; how far can your head go behind now? What a wonderful sensation!

(End of lesson)





## Lesson # 2: On all fours, side movements

Duration of the original recording: 49 Minutes

The audio track is 48m 55s long including silence. The lesson lasts 36 minutes 30 seconds.

1. Come onto your knees please, with your hands on the floor. Spread your legs, spread your knees, so you are on all fours. In other words, you are on your knees and hands, not on your bottom. Have your knees in such a position that you are able to support yourself on your hands and knees.

Now, anyone who has a knee problem can simply fetch one of the rubber mats to put under their knees. I'll wait for you. Those of you who have knee pain or a knee injury can take a rubber mat as support, otherwise you will be in pain after the lesson and won't be able to move. Make sure you have enough space; move away a bit from each other.

There we go. Now try gently to ... Separate your knees; don't have your knees together. I will show you that he can do this just like the rest of you in spite of his back pain and his illness. When you have finished what I am going to get you to do, you'll observe that if someone were to come in, they would not be able to tell him apart from the rest. Right, let's go. Is anyone wearing shoes? Slip your shoes off.

Have your feet long with your knees spread. Your feet are backwards. Lengthen them. In other words extend your feet. Now flex them, lift the foot off the floor and flex the ankles so that your toes touch the ground. Flex the feet. Now straighten and flex them again.

Continue doing this and pay attention to what you do with your body when you bend your feet. What do you do? Do you move forwards or backwards? When you bend your feet, do you move your pelvis and your head forwards, or backwards? Do you move backwards when you lengthen the feet? Do you move a little bit forwards when you flex them? Let the body help the legs and feet, and let the feet help the body, and move as much as is necessary to bend the feet and extend them. As it becomes comfortable, speed up the movement.

Do it faster and you will see that when you move faster and your body is more supple, you will move less and less. Except that is for movement in one area, the lower back. If you let the belly rise and sink the movement of the feet will become easier. Can you see that when the feet are lying, the belly moves in [Translator's note: Dr. Feldenkrais probably made a mistake and meant 'moves forwards'], and when you stand them on the toes, flexed, the belly is pulled in. Repeat the movement for a while, with the pelvis free so as to allow the action to happen.

2. Now do the same movement but with the right foot only. But do it quickly. The right foot. Notice what happens with your back? Try with just your left foot and see the difference.

3. Now try moving the right foot and leg but keep the knee on the floor. Move your right leg to the right, with your foot stretched out long, then return. Repeat the movement, softly. When it is clear to you speed up the movement.

Pay attention to what happens in your lower back. Now pay attention: stay, try, when your foot moves, imagine that your body is solid, in other words, your head, chest, torso and trunk are connected to your leg. So when your right leg moves to the right – as if you are pivoting a stick – your head and shoulders go to the left.

So move your body like it is all one piece, like a stick. The leg goes to the right. Where would the body go if it were like a stick? A solid object?

Ah, I've caught his attention. Hey! Are you dead? [Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais' tone is friendly and there is laughter from the floor.] No? So listen to what you are being told! Look at what the others do and continue.

Move your body with the feeling that you are just one piece. Look what the person who has an injury is doing. Can you see? Where are you? Don't you see the difference? No? Well, copy your neighbor so you can carry on. Yes, now you are moving your body as well. There you go. Why are you moving your foot much more than your body? If you have backache move your leg less. You're a strong guy. I tell you, at the end of the lesson, you won't have backache!). Do it gently, but make sure you do what I've said: move in one piece. Move the leg in a way whereby the leg knows that you have backache. There you go. Perfect!

Sit down, lie down. Rest a moment.

4. Please come back onto your legs again, onto your knees. Move your left leg to the left. Just the leg. Do a few easy movements. Then link the leg with the body. In other words, move your leg and your body as if they are a single solid. Like a stick which turns around your knee. That means that your shoulders, your arms, everything should be moving.

5. Now, do the movement once with your left foot, then once with your right foot.

Be gentle, very gentle. You should be able to smile at one another as you do it, even give each other a kiss. The better your mood, the more comfortable you will be, and the better you will move. That's it. Stop a moment.

6. Now try it once more with just your right leg, and see if it goes more, and easier. Now this time move your leg and foot to the right but turn your head at the same time so you can see your right foot. Then come back to the middle, and once again look at your foot with your head, look at it.

Be gentle. So what do we expect now? Your bottom moves to the left, doesn't it? And softly, and then the ribs in your right side move towards each other like a fan closing, whilst your left side opens. Try it gently. Perfect.

Now that you are familiar with the movement you can speed up. Don't go crazy though, speed up but make it congruent. It has to be as much as the body can deal with and only as much as you can feel throughout the body. One should respect oneself as much as others, or perhaps even more so! Moses said 'Love thy neighbor like thyself'. Because the person who does not love themselves won't know how to love another. If you don't love yourself, you don't know how to love others.

7. Now continue doing the same thing, but now make the body into a solid block again. In other words when the body moves left, it is one solid block again. Pay attention to whether your range of movement has become bigger. Now make one movement as a solid block, and the next look at your foot.

That's it: one movement in one way, and the next in the other. Pay attention to how the lower back has become more supple.

Lie down, rest a moment and just notice the difference between your right and left sides, and how they differ in their contact with the floor.

8. Come back onto your hands and knees and do the same thing with your left leg. That means firstly move your left leg out to the left keeping it as one solid with your body, turn your leg left and your head and trunk will move to the right. Now look at your foot, turn your shoulders, take your pelvis to the right, your shoulders and head to the left till you can see your foot without straining.

Note once more how the ribs of your left side come together as if the left armpit was going to come closer to the left hip. And on the right your ribs open like a fan.

Now do the movement simply, small and a bit quicker. Now that it is familiar to you, you can move without effort. Try not to do more. One time your head goes and looks, the next time the body is solid.

9. Stop for a moment and bring your right foot out to the side as far as it will go, and follow it with your eyes. With your foot as far to the right as possible without causing pain, lift your right knee off the floor and lean on your right big toe, and let your heel touch the floor.

Oh dear. Listen, be human! I said move your foot to the right and lift your knee, so why are you lifting your foot? I said move your foot right and then I spoke about your knee. Why are doing a thousand different things instead? Do what I say. In other words, listen!

Bring your right foot out to the side and your right big toe will press on the floor. (No, don't prepare the movement of the knee in advance; keep your knee on the floor exactly like before, at the same height.) Now move your right foot so that it is out to the side, with the big toe in contact with the floor as far to the outside as possible, and now lift your knee off the floor so that your heel touches the floor. The whole inner border of the foot touches the floor. Observe what do you need to do with the rest of your body? Try to look at your foot whilst making this movement.

10. Now have your knees in the normal position and try to turn your foot outwards and see if it goes better than before. Easier and more.

Do the same thing now with your left foot.

In other words, your left leg and foot turn out so that you can touch your big toe as far to the side as possible, and then lift your knee until the edge of your foot touches the floor along its whole length and look at it. See if your foot is beautiful! That's right!

Stop now and take a rest.

11. Come back onto your knees and pay attention: Have your hands on the floor in such a way that there is equal weight through all four limbs. Now lower your head and let it hang forwards. Look between your legs. Now lift your head up and let your belly drop so you feel a

hollow in your back. Look with your eyes as high as possible, but without straining. Now draw your belly in and lower your head. Start the movement over again, but increasingly soft each time.

12. Now continue with something a little bizarre. Do you notice how the stomach moves forwards, towards the floor, and puffs out when you lift your head? Do the opposite: each time you lift your head, round your lower back. Round your back and lift your head all together.

Do it again. And once more. It's difficult! It is something that one has to learn to do. That's right: when you lift your head, draw your belly in, and when you lower your head back down, let your belly down too. Lower your head once more and now, when you lift your head, and your belly would normally drop, do the opposite. In other words when your head rises the belly is drawn in and your back rounds in your lumbar region. Do it several times. When your head lifts, your belly lifts and your lumbar spine becomes round.

Now we will do the opposite of normal when the head lowers down. Normally you round your back. This time make the back hollow when your head lowers.

Now do the full movement. Your stomach and head do the opposite of what they would normally do. Be gentle, and do it many times till it becomes familiar and you can do so without effort. It's easy to make a mistake. Do the habitual movement once again, and that will give you the right idea. Do the opposite to what one would normally do. Normally when you lower your head, the stomach is pulled in. Now when the head moves the stomach should drop. It's the opposite to what we normally do.

Take a rest.

[Dr Feldenkrais starts speaking English]

You see, to develop your "consciousness", you have to differentiate the movement. The movement which you do by habit is a constant thing: for instance the head and the shoulder go in one lump, together; the eyes, everything together. Because we are used as soon as we are able to do something, to read, to shave, to drink, always: head and shoulders and eye go together and that's over nearly a hundred muscles. Go like one lump, like one big idiot. Now I say that if you..., that it is like a car having only one gear, you can't do it. You can't reverse it, you can't go faster, you can't differentiate it, you can't follow the road, you can only go with one speed. I say that if you now differentiate and make the shoulders and the head not go together but in the opposite direction, you suddenly discover that you can do it also with the eyes.

Look, I look at you now and move the head away and the eyes look at you. I can move that way and the eyes look at you, move there and the eyes look there. And when you have done that then you find that you've got a new dimension in your consciousness, and your awareness. That makes you like a car in which you reverse, you can go also in reverse. Then you go on to add another dimension and make it amphibian; then you can add another dimension and have wings. This all means that instead of being a lump of muscles that go together, you have now a human being with four dimensions of understanding.

Does everyone understand what I just said? I spoke English because he doesn't speak a word of French. He is from Chile. I'll say it in French for you later.

And if you think that that's a minor thing, I will show you. Look: I have four fingers and this finger is usually not differentiated from the others. This one you can move apart; but if I move this one, this one moves too. If you really are non-differentiated and if you can't move them at all apart, then you can bet your life that you can't play the piano, can't play the guitar, neither the fiddle or the flute or oboe, or anything. It means you are not a musical man. Now, you differentiate that finger, then you can either play the piano or play the violin, or flute. It means that having one finger which is un-differentiated makes the difference between a musical man and a deaf ear. Now imagine the difference in

consciousness it makes to a person who's a musician and the man who isn't, and the difference it makes to a man who can differentiate his head and his eyes and his shoulders, and not only this finger. It means that, as Gurdjieff said, you have seven degrees of consciousness and that up to the third degree are all the professors and bankers and everything. Four degrees: Jesus, Moses and Buddha and Lao Tzu and Confucius, and all the other big shots. Five is Gurdjieff. And six, and the seventh, you know who is the seventh? You don't know? You should know: because Gurdjieff didn't know me! It is me! [Moshe laughs, laughter in group]

[Dr. Feldenkrais reverts to French]

I was talking about the differentiation that we are now doing, about doing the movement in a non-habitual way, becoming aware of this limb, having a general conception, a kinesthetic sense, a complete image of oneself, not one made up of pieces. Because what we find today is that the sense we have is incomplete, except for the mouth, the anus, and partly the sexual organs. The majority of people are not sexual in the way that they should be. [Interjection from a student: How should they be?] How should they be? Come, I'll show you. [Further interjections from students]. That's right. Do the opposite. It is necessary to go and return, not just go. In mechanics one calls it 'in and out'.

I have told you about the importance of differentiation of the muscles and the limbs for non-habitual movements, but if you come across someone who is unable to differentiate the ring finger from the other fingers, you can be certain that this man is unable to play the piano, the violin, or the oboe, and never has been able to. On the other hand, there isn't a violinist alive who can't distinguish the movement of the ring finger from that of the other fingers. There isn't such a thing as a pianist who can not separate the movement. Any musician who plays an instrument can do it. Thus, you can see that the ability to differentiate the movement of a finger makes the difference between a musician and a non-musician. Just think what it could mean when the head is differentiated from the eyes, and the eyes from the head. The shoulders from the eyes, the hips from the eyes and the eyes from the hips, from the toes, and everything else! It's not too much of an exaggeration to say that differentiation is the making of an individual.

Good. Let's get back to the task in hand.

13a. Come back onto your knees and put your hands in front and once more try to move your right foot out to the right with your body like a single block. Take a look what happens. Look at the movement and its range now.

13b. Now repeat it to the other side, like a block again.

14. Now try looking at the foot on the side to which you are turning and sense the difference between the side which contracts and the side which opens wide. Do it to once side then to the other.

15. Now, try to see if you can come and sit on your feet, your buttocks on your heels.

You will see that some people have never done that; this may be the first time in their life to do it. Those who do not know how to do it, now do it better; and those who had difficulty now find it easier. You are sitting with your buttocks on your heels quite easily.

16a. Now come to lie on your stomach. Lift your head and eyes to the back, so you can see as high as you can without effort. That's right! Now place your hands on the floor to lift you up and do the same thing. Be gentle. Not strong. Raise your eyes to look up high, and you'll see that you have never lifted your head back like this.

16b. Be gentle. Now bend your knees, with your legs spread. Bend your knees whilst lifting your head and see if that let's you go further.

17. Now lift your head and look with our right eye to your right foot; turn your shoulders so you can do it. Now turn your left shoulder and look with your left eye at your left foot. Do the movement to this side, and then to the other. Pay attention: your shoulders need to be differentiated from each other. The one does the opposite to the other. Now look at one foot and then the other. Don't go down, look at what the shoulders have to do. See what the spine has to do.

18. Come back onto all fours now and lower your head and round your back. Then lift your head whilst rounding your back. Is it better than before? Do it a couple more times: lift your head and round your back. Good, that's enough.

19. Move your right foot out to the side and follow it with your eyes. Notice how far your foot goes. Notice how one side folds together and the other widens. Do it once to the right, once to the left.

20. Now stand up and walk around.

The man who had backache, how is it now? ("Yes.") Good. Thank you.

(End of lesson)

## Lesson # 3: Movements on four points

Duration of the original recording: 38 Minutes

1a. Please stand up with your feet apart and bend your knees so you can place your hands on the floor. Place your hands flat if possible.

Are you able to bend over like this in such a way that it would be comfortable? No, don't sit with your bottom on the floor, stay on the four points of contact. Your 'four legs' in a manner of speaking: two hands and two feet. Not with your bottom on the floor. Bend your knees to let your hands touch the floor. We will see that ...

These four points of contact are characteristic of all beings, no matter what. They are as distinct as the fingerprints or thumbprints that the police use for identification. So, try gently to see, because for the most part we are neither familiar with the position nor with the fact that it is unique for each one of us.

Stand up if you have to. You don't have to stay there too long. At the end of the lesson you will see that you know the four points that belong to your body and find that you can get there in one movement without the need for conscious thought. You will see that you can do things you never imagined were possible. That's what we will do at the end of the lesson. Provided you identify the four points of contact, it will happen for you and you'll be able to find those spots immediately. So try once more gently.

1b. Now, try lifting an arm, lift a hand. Not far, just enough such that it no longer touches the floor. Then replace it wherever feels comfortable. Now try with the other hand. Now lift the left hand and the right foot. Then lift the right foot alone at first. Lift your right foot and replace it in a position that is comfortable for you.

Now lift the left foot and replace it where you feel it supports your body well.

Now lift the left hand and the right foot. Then replace them so that you can lift the left foot and the right hand.

Repeat this several times till you discover how to bend your knees, how to support yourself, and where. Are your hands too far away, or too close? We'll find out shortly. We'll perform some movements in order to find that out.

1c. Lift both your hands simultaneously. Put them back down and now lift your feet off the floor. And again, two hands, then two feet. [*Laughter and comments from the group.*] Try to find a position that allows you to return to the point and each time your feet and hands touch back down in exactly the same place.

They shouldn't move. It should become ... Now, when you do this see if you need to have the feet or fingers separated wider apart. It needs to be comfortable for you.

Now lift your left foot and left hand. Bring them back down, and then [lift] your right hand and right foot. Do it several times, lifting and replacing. You have space enough in front.

Please stand up.

Lie down and take a rest for a moment.

Think about allowing your back to soften. Don't hold your breath. In other words sense that there is a constant flow of air through your nostrils. Consider that if there are elements which are not comfortable, where the knees don't bend ..., it is possible to have the feet like you were instructed to and that you continue to have them like you do now, where you should change their position so that it is comfortable ... if you continue to think stubbornly that the feet *need* to be like this or like that, it will be painful, and you won't be able to do the movement. It's like when you say you must always move forwards, always make progress. Then one day you come up against a wall and if you think that you absolutely have to make progress, well, you will end up with a bruise on your forehead. One has to be able to stop when stopping is the necessary action.

1d. Now, roll on your side and come back onto your four points. Everybody, please find the four points of contact with the floor that are right for you. In other words, do what we did before: lift a foot, a hand, an arm, the two together, then diagonally. The two feet together, and so on.

Carry on until you find the four points where your hands and feet come down in a position without any difficulty, in a way which is right for your body. Try to see if you need to move your arms away from your body or closer, till you find the four points that are the most comfortable for you, and where your four limbs share the pressure of your contact with the floor equally. Your four limbs, two legs and two arms, support the body equally. Oh dear; I can see some of you are suffering.

Stand up. Straighten up and stay there a moment. Let your belly be free. Don't hold it in. Observe the flow of air through your nostrils. Now try once more: place your hands on the floor, this time very slowly.

2. Place your hands on the floor and now this time, first of all listen so you understand, then you can do it afterwards. You are going to lift your right knee off the ground. What this means is that your right foot will come off the floor, but it is the knee that will make it happen. Your left foot and left hand form a line and between them there is space. You are going to lift your right leg, bend in the knee and turn your pelvis in order to sit on the floor, in a manner whereby your right knee passes between your left hand and left foot. This will mean that you will turn counterclockwise 90°.

Now stay there. Stay with your hand there where it is. Once more for those of you who have not understood... careful, be gentle... don't lift like that. Bend your knee; it doesn't have to be high because you turn your pelvis and pass your knee between your left hand and left foot. Place the whole of your right leg on the floor, and there you will find that you are sat on the floor. The knee, not the foot! The knee! We are not talking about the foot; it's your right knee which goes between your left hand and left foot.

Fine. Now for those of you who have done what I said, lift your pelvis, in other words your right hip, and bring it back to where it was, and your foot will return to its original position. Place it there on the fourth point.

Once more for those of you who didn't listen. It's not a question of... When a word enters your ear the sound itself has no meaning. I might as well say "Djongen djong" which means absolutely nothing to you. What happens is that the brain still needs to interpret the sound that the ear has heard, and then you understand. But if your brain is lazy and doesn't listen to what the ear has heard, then nothing will come of it.



So once more place your hands on the floor, lift [one leg] and turn your pelvis so you can sit with your right knee between your left hand and left foot, and now sit down on the floor.

Now you are sat down. There is no alternative. In this position you will see that the front of your right foot lies on the floor behind your left heel. You are now sitting on your right buttock. That's all. It's that simple.

Now place your hands where they were before and lift your right hip up and bring it back to where it was. You don't need to lift your leg like a dog by a wall! [Group laughs.] Simply bend your knee, lower down and lift back up in the same direction, with the same trajectory. You don't need to hold your foot in the air for no reason. Why? Because it serves no purpose. Just do what is necessary to move it, to feel it. There you go.

(Question from a student: Can the foot stay? It doesn't need to move.) You have to lift your foot because pivoting it is not the same. You will see that if you pivot the foot, you will stay stuck to the floor. It would be acrobatics.

3. Now, place your hands on the floor and try to do the same thing with the left foot, the left leg.

Can you see that the distance between your hand and your foot needs to be such that it doesn't render the movement impossible. You will sit on your left buttock. Now try it again, going down and coming back up.

If you don't turn 90° with your pelvis... No, your left foot should be behind your [right] heel. You should be sat on your left buttock only. On your left leg. Your left thigh. Your head and pelvis and everything turn 90°. If they don't turn it is because you have not done the movement. If you need to take your hands off it is because you have twisted your body in a way that is not human.

See if you can do it a bit more skillfully. In other words, breathe freely, and think of your left hip dropping down and coming back up, and it will become easy to do. If you pivot on your foot it is not going to work. First, it rucks up your mat, which gets in your way; and second, it serves no purpose. Try lifting the foot rather than pivoting. Lift just enough to be able to do the movement.

4. Good. Now lie down and think over what you have just done.

Create an image of the movement in your imagination, and then run through it to find out where the difficulty executing it might lie. In fact, there is none! The only thing is that it is an unfamiliar movement, so you seek, but you do not understand.

You two, please try doing it, so everyone can see. Everyone please watches. Put your hands on the floor and now put your right knee between your left hand and left foot and come back immediately. Simply sit down and return in the same sequence. One single movement: down and up. Just enough to touch the ground.

Now do it with your left leg. That's right. See, you turn 90°, your pelvis turns 90°, it turns, it's to the right now. Now try it again to the other side. Can you see now that your pelvis turns to the left?

Now try doing the movement once to the right then once to the left. Go slowly so that the organization becomes familiar. Lift your pelvis. If you lift the pelvis very high it becomes easier for the legs. Otherwise the legs have to work. Sit on one buttock – the whole thigh should rest on the floor. No, it's

not Japanese style. No, your knee isn't crossed over. That's better. Now with your left leg: sit on your buttock.

5. Now everyone together. Come onto the four points and try doing the movement to the right and the left as easily and quickly as you can, without rushing. What I mean is be quick but don't hurry.

Now if you want to do it quickly, why not try hopping as you go from moving one leg to the other? A little hop. There you go. And the other side, in one go. Hop and move. One movement – but make sure you sit down each time.

Take a rest for a moment.

Find a way to do it whereby it won't hurt either your hands or your feet. It's always possible to organize yourself in such a way.

6a. Now once again, roll to the opposite side to that from earlier, and come back onto all fours. Bring your right knee on the floor like before, across your left side. See which arm you can lift from the floor easily.

The left? For me it is the right. For you the left? Try it out.

6b. Come back to standing, and once more lower down and as you do so, lift whichever arm you can from the ground. Put the hand back down and lift your pelvis and turn your legs to the other side, in one continuous movement. Why are you making four movements? It's one single movement.

Clearly you can lift your other hand as it doesn't need to support you. And once again. How come you are not all doing it in the same way? Some are turning to the left and some to the right. But we all started together. Everyone needs to turn in the same direction.

Let's start again. Place your right knee, everyone look to the left. Lift your left arm. Don't lift it with a dramatic gesture. It's simply that it is not necessary to keep your hand on the floor, so basically when you sit down that arm frees up automatically. And the same when you turn to the other side, the hand which is not needed simply lifts off the floor.

Now try to lift yourself a little on your left hand and right foot, lifting the pelvis, and come back down. No, everything should lift up. Your left foot, your left leg. Several times lift everything off. Your foot and everything. You can't do it without pressing with your left hand. Press with your left hand and lift off the ground. That's it.

6c. Now stay lifted up off the floor and try to swing the pelvis and leg, back and forth. Turn your pelvis backwards like a pendulum and now sit down. Now try with your right hand. Lift your body and change sides, so you are on your right hand and your left foot. Lift everything off the ground and swing between these two axes, in other words the right shoulder and the left hip. No, you are not swinging, you are moving your hand and arm. Oscillate your pelvis, turn

it, and your legs will pivot by themselves because you can not turn your pelvis without the legs moving.

Lie on your back and rest.

Think about what you have done. That means think in your body, not with words. Sweep over your muscles and skeleton with your kinesthetic sense and sense your breathing and the five cardinal lines.

7. Now, gently roll to one side and stand up. Come onto the four points and pay attention. Be aware that you will place your right knee between your left hand and left foot. In other words, you will sit down. Now go ahead and do it. Put your right buttock on the floor and from there, lie down on your back. Lengthen out your feet, your legs, and your arms. Now lift your legs in the air and with one dynamic swing with your legs, sit up. Your right leg is flexed underneath and should be behind your left foot. Now stand up.

What are you doing? Okay, once more. Do exactly the same movement, the same thing. Don't try any other variations with your feet. Now once again lie down and then stand back up by putting your right leg just where it needs to be to allow your hands to be just where they need to be, and then bring your right leg to the fourth point of support.

Try again to do the same thing, but this time go down and come back up, without losing your momentum when you lie down. You will see that you can lie down and come back up with the same energy of your descent. It gets easier for you. Roll and lift your leg straight away, then come right back without losing your momentum. You don't need to give yourself another kick to make it happen. You simply need to go down and let your legs lift up as much as they need to and then in one action bring them back to standing and you will find yourself on your four points of contact. There you go. One single movement.

8. Now, from a standing position, place your hands on the floor, lie down, and come back up.

You will see that you can do it like this a hundred times and your pulse will barely change. It's completely different to an action such as when, for example, a cardiac patient needs to flex his knee ten times to effect his heart rate. When done like this, you could do it a thousand times without your heart beating any faster at all.

Be gentle. If you economize the amount of energy you use on the descent, the fall itself will give you enough speed to get you back up to your feet. It is not a matter of working harder. It should be extremely easy, even easier than sitting and standing from a chair. Don't pivot about the leg; lift it. Lift your foot. Notice that if you hinder the movement of your pelvis, you will need to put more effort in. So, don't stop your pelvis from moving. When you come up, send your pelvis 'up', and it will help you straighten your legs without making you in the least tired. Perfect.

9. Once more, bring your four points of contact onto the floor, and this time bend your left leg, roll onto your back, let your arms and legs swing so that you store up enough energy from the descent to come back up.

Now you are going to see that you can do this one hundred times, no matter your age, without becoming tired at all even though it seems to be 'work'. But it is not work, because you are using the energy of the descent efficiently. This is the reason we have done it thus. If you keep your feet together you would start to sweat because it is hard work.

10. Now, make the movement once to the right and once to the left.

I said 'the knee', not the foot. That's right. Once to the left and come back up, and now once with the right knee, and you will see that you can move with your head from right to left.

Now, pay attention: you don't actually need to come back up in order to get to the other side. Try that out.

11. Please lie on your right side and use your right leg to start. Come onto your back and swing all four limbs above your head in one continuous movement and come up. But this time, once you have got yourself into position, you don't need to come up, just change the legs without pivoting. Move your other leg, and you will find you can lie on your other side. Once more, stand up.

You're pivoting... some of you don't understand. There is a world of difference between pivoting and not pivoting. Do exactly what we did before, nothing else. It's just the same, except instead of straightening up completely, once you are on your feet your pelvis will lift with ease, especially if you use the energy of your own movement. Don't rush. Do just what you have been doing. Don't pivot on your foot. What that means is that your foot can lift off the floor completely.

Once more: roll onto your back, everyone, with one simple movement, not pivoting. Put your hands into position and lie on your back, then draw your four limbs in and in one movement come back and go to the other side. Each time you do it lift your pelvis the least amount possible, just enough to let you change position and direction. Can you sense that there is no point in lifting your pelvis all the way up? Don't pivot! As soon as you try to spare yourself effort, you all start pivoting. Do not pivot. The movement is the same whether you move quickly or slowly.

12. Please lie on your back. Try to sense your five cardinal lines now, especially the line of your spine. Observe if your body is lying flatter on the floor. Pay attention to the movement of air through your nostrils, and how your belly moves when your lungs fill. What can you sense happening there?

13. Now roll to one side and stand up. Try once more to find the four points on the floor. See if it is as difficult as at the start of the class. Now lift up your right hand and left leg a number of times. Now the left hand and right leg, two or three times. Now alternate diagonally, once this way, once the other. Now lift your left hand and left leg. Now the right hand and right foot. And so on.

If your feet are in the right place, you can balance to one side or the other. But if you strain or if you place your knees or are not on your four points it will be difficult to alternate your position and keep your balance. With your four points in the right location, you can change your balance at any moment.

Now lift both feet simultaneously. And now both hands. See if your feet and your hands come back to the same positions.

14. Put your left hand on the floor, bend your left knee and sit down, then come back up and change arms. Lift the arm that doesn't need to work quickly.

Now both arms on the floor and make the movement of your pelvis as fast as you can, with a little hop. A little jump. Just like that: Hop!

The movements are as quick as the moves of a monkey or a cat. See: you can do it in one single movement. Everyone look at how fast the movement can be.

15. Now stand up carefully and walk around in the room. Sense how you feel after all this work.

When you have rested a bit, those of you who did not struggle and are not tired, let's roll the mats together and put them to the side. Those who can, who aren't tired.

(End of lesson)



## Lesson # 4: Holding the chin

Duration of the original recording: 34 Minutes

The quality of the original audio recording deteriorates throughout. Some phrases are impossible to understand.

1a. Please lie on your back and start in the usual way to sweep your attention over your body, and how you lie on the floor.

Compare the feeling in your heels, in your calves, the crease behind your knees, your hip joints, and your floating ribs. Are they in contact with the floor? How about your shoulder blades? Your elbows? Now pay attention to the line of your body as it passes from your tail bone to your head; that's your spinal column. Where does the spine touch the floor? Which of your vertebrae do not touch the floor at all?

Now think about the five cardinal lines, in other words the line from your tail bone to your head, the legs, and the arms as they come from the seventh cervical vertebra which is the large one in the middle of the shoulders. Try to sense all five lines at the same time. Let go of each, and then return till little by little you manage to hold all five lines in your imagination, in your kinesthetic sense, and see them all at the same time. If it is difficult, think first of your spine then the legs, and when a part that is difficult to sense, let go of it and instead pay attention to the width of your shoulders, the length of your arms and so on. Try this for a minute or two,

Whilst you are doing so, see if you can sense the flow of air through your nostrils? It doesn't matter which way the air is flowing, but it should be in an uninterrupted and continuous flow: easy, smooth, and rhythmic. In other words, the air comes in and goes out. Now pay attention to below your belly button: as you breathe into your lungs, does this point lift up in a direction away from the floor? Does your belly expand?

2. Now roll to one side and sit. Place the soles of your feet together or sit in the oriental way [Translator's Note: cross legged] somehow but make it as symmetric as possible. And above all make sure that it is comfortable for you. Now put the right hand behind the head and take hold of your right wrist with your left hand. Now reducing the friction between your right hand and your head, try to pull the two hands towards the left.

Your left elbow will move downwards more and more as you do so, but do not do it powerfully. It is not a question of who can pull the hardest, or furthest. Do the movement simply, and repeat it over and over, slowly. The way in which you take hold of your wrist is important. If you don't hold it in the manner in which I am showing you, it will be difficult to do this action. Most of you are doing it correctly. You should take hold of your hand in the same way that you would if your hands were in front of you. Your left hand takes hold of your right wrist and then you can put them both behind your head. Continue this gently.

Note that your left elbow goes down and tends to move closer towards your chest, your ribs at the front. Let this happen. That's right. Pay attention to whether you breathe whilst you do the movement. Do you sense the flow of air in your nostrils? That's enough. Release the position slowly because as you continue doing the movement, there will be significant changes in the musculature of the collar bones and the shoulder blades, and if you drop your hands down too quickly it will be painful. So, each time, let go gently and with ease.

3. Lie down and bend your knees. Now take up the same grip that you just had. In other words, with your left hand grasp your right arm behind your head. Separate your legs so that they do not tip over. Separate your feet as you would if you were standing so that they are stable, with the soles of your feet on the floor. Now lift your head a little bit and pull your arm in the same way that you did before, reducing the contact between your arm and your head. In other words, you lift your head just enough to permit your arms to move freely. Continue with this, and then straighten your right leg whilst you pull on your right arm, and at the same time turn with your face, head, and body to the right.

Doing it this way, you will start to push. Pull, and push with your left foot, so your body turns. The floor will help your right hand, right elbow, and your right arm go further. However, for this to happen your body needs to be intelligent. In other words, whilst you turn, allow the floor to act upon your elbow.

Some of you understand whilst others need to be told how to do it. Pull your hand like you were shown, so that your elbow moves downwards towards your chest, and turn your body to the right. Now at this point the floor can help you so that your right arm goes further backwards.

Softly roll and return. Roll far enough so that your head touches the floor. Your forehead. Whereby there is nothing between your head and the floor. Your elbow is behind your head, and your left leg remains standing, with the sole of your foot in contact with the floor, without your knee falling to the side. When your knee comes over, you are not using your hip joint nor the leg muscles. This is like when a person does something, he uses his self to do it. His whole body needs to take part, not just one or two bits of himself, which would thereby do the exact opposite of that which he wants. Psychiatrists have a term for that: internal conflict.

Now remain on your side and you will see that if you push your head on the floor, and make sure that you do not rub your arm against your head, you will be able to lift your elbow a little bit without lifting your head. Be gentle, do not strain. Repeat the movement over and over until you can lift your elbow without lifting your head. That's right. That's enough. Take a rest there for an instant.

4a. Bend your right leg and bring it in towards your belly, and now take your upper body, head, arms and shoulder towards your right knee. Use your left leg to help and come into a sitting position whereby your left leg is behind you, all without letting go of your hands.

If you go too quickly it won't work. You need to move gently whilst lengthening your left leg and moving the elbow behind your head. As is usual, when you try to rush, it doesn't work. Do it gently and you will see that everyone will be able to do it, in spite of your being gentle.

4b Now once again, everyone starting from seated. Place your left leg behind and lie your right leg on the floor. Take hold of your right wrist with your left hand, just as you already did. Move your left elbow towards the left till your right elbow is behind your head, and now lean forwards. Try to lean far enough so that your right elbow touches the floor. You will all be able to do it if you are slow and repeat the movement several times. Once you have touched down with your right elbow, move your body to the left and to the right. When you come to the right, with the elbow behind your right knee, continue so you come to lie on your back. Bend, roll backwards, and lie on your back.

Go gently as you get lower because if you tip and fall it won't be possible to come back up following the same trajectory. If you lie down by means of rolling, it is easier to come back to sitting. But if you fall then you need someone who will supply the energy you need to get back up. Try it many times and remain delicate in your movements so that you can position your legs and body so that it works. No, if your elbow lifts off the floor you will fall and then that is that. You need to use your elbow and have



your head as close to the floor as possible, right to the moment when you lie down. A person in a hurry will be the last one to do it right.

When faced with learning a thing, it does not help to fix a date by which you will have achieved your goal, as one does when taking an exam. Those who focus on passing their exams usually end up retaining nothing about what they have learnt.

Take as much time as you need. As long as you keep your elbow in contact with the floor you will manage to lie down like in bed. Turn, with your elbow, touch it on the floor; lean with your elbow. Do three small movements and you will gently come to lying. And again. Touch with your elbow all the while that your body can not do it. Support with your back for as long as necessary whilst your musculature is not sufficiently well organized to hold your body with ease. So, use the support and you will learn quicker and you will have all the time you need to do it easily. Touch the elbow and the floor; lean on the elbow. Four times going down, and twice on the return, so that by the end you will be able to do it much better than you would ever have thought.

5. Please sit, with your left leg behind, and take hold of your right hand with your left [hand]. Now pull your left elbow, avoiding friction between hand and head, and then turn your face towards your hand, and take hold of your chin with your right hand.

You will see; everyone will manage to do so. Repeat the movement until it becomes easy and habitual for you. Gently. If you pull strongly you will stretch your muscles and suffer for it later. If you do it gently, your arm will become free and it will have been a pleasure. Go ahead, choose between the pain and the benefit. It all depends on how much of a rush you are in. Gently, slowly, and observe if you are still breathing? Does the air flow in your nostrils? If not, it is because you are going too fast and pulling too hard. So, for those of you who can, touch your chin, take it in your hand.

6. Now, take hold of your right elbow using your left hand (of course from behind your head), and help your right hand to come further towards your chin. Now place your left hand on the floor in front of you and lower down with your right elbow and your head, with the help of your left hand which can move towards your right, and now roll much better than before.

Use your left hand as an aide. Move it wherever you need so you can roll without falling. This should be a roll. Find a way to soften your chest, to expel the air from your chest (...). And from there you come back up using your left hand. Use your left hand all the way right to when you go back down. Move your hand so it helps you, and the more you use the support, the more your body will become supple and the easier it will get for you. Now straighten your left leg (no, that was too late!). If you straighten your left leg your body will be perfectly in balance and you can dispense with all effort. When you straighten your leg at just the right moment, you won't fall. Your leg needed to move to the left. Your leg is like your mouth. It is like intelligence. It is a part of oneself. Your leg needs to be intelligent in order to feel. There, it's in your way. You need to move it there, and not with a sudden jerk as if it were a part of me but not of you. One more time and try to use your left leg as if it actually belongs to you! There you go; use your left leg and left hand and it works much better. That's going to be a perfect roll. Perfect.

7. Now please stand up. On your legs. On your feet. Walk around and see if you feel a difference between your left and your right sides.

Feel your legs, your head, your eyes, your head. Everything. Which arm feels longer to you? Turn to your left, then to your right. Notice the difference. Now lift your left arm up towards the ceiling and bring it back down. And again. Pay attention to the sensation. How did you lift your arm? Now try your

right arm. Is there a difference? Your arm lifts in a completely different way. The left arm moves your head and your right arm rises up high, as if it knew where to go.

8. Please lie down and take a rest.

Close your eyes. Try to compare the sensations in the two sides of your body, right and left. Seeing as there has been a huge change in your movement, you should be able to sense a difference in the contact of your body with the floor. On one side some places touch the floor more clearly, and on the other side, certain parts don't touch the floor in spite of the fact that you are lying down. What this means is that there is residual tension, which keeps your body off the floor. It means that there is a considerable level of effort present, not just a tiny bit.

9. Now please bend your knees and take hold of your left hand with your right, like before. Lengthen your left leg, close your eyes and, mentally, pull your left hand with your right, till your elbow touches your chest, and at the same you turn your body by pressing on the floor with your right foot so that the floor would come into contact with your elbow just like you did before on your right.

Maybe you can try to do it once for real, so that it is easier to do in your imagination. So, your elbow is still behind your head, and your head would clearly not be on your elbow.

Come back onto your back and think about this movement. Think about how if you pulled on your arm like before, your right elbow could come into contact with your floating ribs, those at the front on the right. If your left arm softened in your shoulder like the right arm just did, to allow you to touch your chin, you would be able to touch your chest with your right elbow. Try just thinking this. It's not worth making an effort. Do you still sense the flow of air in your nostrils? In your stomach? As you are making no effort with your arm, since you are doing all this in the imagination, let your arms rest. Reduce the tension in your arms, all that effort. In your face, your belly, between your legs. Everywhere. All this effort unnecessary for 'thinking'.

It is said that the brain is for thinking, but one doesn't think about movement with just the brain. Whether you want to or not, as soon as you think, the musculature of the body acts as if it were making the move, and you feel it.

10. Lie on your side now and do the movement once more and see if what you have thought has helped you.

There are still many of you who don't know what the legs should do. The leg remains standing because otherwise you can not use it to push. When the legs are lying, they can not push so they can not help you.

Rest like that now and mentally, remember, mentally try to roll the head onto the floor in front of you, and to lengthen your right leg at the precise moment when it would help you to sit.

Stop the movement with your right arm, place your right hand on the floor and now try to sit up for real. Now try placing your right foot behind and, taking hold of your left hand with your right, bring them behind your head and see if, mentally, you can pull, shift the pressure, drawing your left arm so that your right elbow comes into contact with your chest at the front. This is in your mind, so do not actually do it. Mentally imagine the easy movement and whilst you do so, feel each and every part of your body that resists your intention. Notice your stomach, your back, wherever you find effort that is futile for

the purposes of thinking. Think that you are turning your head, with your face towards your left hand, so that your left hand could take hold of your chin.

Now try it out. Do you sense whether you can hold the chin better than before?

And now place your right hand on the floor or use it to help you better hold your chin if you need. Then move your right hand a little to the left, then do nothing, just imagine how and where you are going to put your right hand in order to lie down on your back perfectly, in other words by rolling without having to fall in any way, with no interruption of your breath, no difficulties. Softly. Think, where should your hand go, what should you do with your back? Is it necessary to make an effort with the legs? Would you exhale or inhale? Which is called for? Once you've decided what you will do, move your right hand along your body towards the left until you come to lie on your back, and come back up. Do you see that many of you who previously fell can now roll perfectly? You can appreciate that there is nothing that can replace the power of the brain. Not even your buttocks!

Now once more take hold of your left hand with your right, take hold of your chin, and try lying down with the help of your right hand, just like you did before. And come back up in the same way. You will notice that it starts to be comfortable, because that is how work is. If you eliminate unnecessary effort it becomes possible, then when you pay attention to the suppleness, and sense your body as a whole, it becomes easy, then pleasant, and after that, beautiful to see. It is curious to note that Stanislavski said the same when talking about his theatre. The work of an actor is to make that which is difficult easy, and that which is easy beautiful.

11. Lie on your back on the floor. Pay attention to the changes that you have made to your body through this process. Bend your knees and sense in your spine if some vertebrae do not touch the floor. If there are still some not in contact, we'll carry on and do a bit more.

12. Interlace your fingers behind your head and lift your elbows and your head off the floor. Your hands should be behind your head, not behind your neck. Be gentle. Roll with your whole body back and forth. Lift your head a little forwards and backwards, but not powerfully, gently. Now lift your feet from the floor, with your legs apart. Now, make a little movement of your elbows and your knees in the same direction, in other words when your feet move away, your elbows and hands also move in that direction.

End of the lesson.



## Lesson # 5: The foot and the toes

Duration of the original recording: 45 Minutes

1a. Please sit down. Sit in a way that you wish in order to be able to hold your left foot at the ankle with your left hand and bring your foot to whichever position will let you take hold of your big toe with your right hand and pull it to lengthen it. Slowly, gently, not strongly, and twist it at the same time. In other words, turn it slightly and lengthen the big toe.

[Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais responds to a question] No, the big toe of the left foot. I said take hold of your left ankle. But don't turn it like this, I said 'lengthen'. I will show you: take hold of your toe and lengthen it like this and twist it. Bit by bit find a way for your legs to be comfortable. This will happen by itself and is a sign of the improvement of the organization of your body. At the moment there are some of you who are doing it very strangely, and neither they nor I quite understand how they do so. Not all of you, but there is quite a number. Now do several movements. Try this simple thing, to lengthen your big toe whilst twisting it around its base, around the axis of the big toe.

1b. Now move on to the second toe. Do the same with your second finger; the second toe if you prefer. Do the same thing with the second toe, pull it, but pull gently.

It's not a question of pulling it to tear it off nor to stretch it. It's simply necessary to do very gentle movements. What we are aiming for is a cumulative result of what we do, which will come about for physiological reasons. The cumulative effect will be there for you to see at the end and you will be rewarded for your patience. So, once more gently pull your second toe and turn it around itself.

1c. Now the same with your third toe.

[Translator's Note: comment from a student.] "I had an operation in which a bone was removed from four of my toes. There is one which is completely stiff. There is one that didn't fuse together properly. I don't dare do this because I am afraid ...". Slowly, slowly. The very reason [that I chose to teach this lesson] is because I noticed that there are lots of you who have foot problems, that's the specific reason for doing it.

1d. Now, go further, go lower, in other words do another toe till you reach the little toe.

2a. Now lie on your back, bend your right knee and bring your left foot towards you so you can hold the ankle of your left leg in such a way that you can see the sole of your foot. Now with each toe, try to pull it very gently and bend it in the direction of the sole of your foot.

You don't need to hold your foot in the air. You can rest it on your other leg. It seems fairly straightforward to me. Take hold of a toe once more. In humans the foot is built in a way that allows each toe to bend and touch the sole like the fingers do. Bending this, one can do that. Children who have not yet been ruined by wearing shoes and being made to sit on poorly designed chairs know how to do this without any difficulty. There are also a number of happy people who can still do it. However, the majority have lost the ability, so try gently and you will see that you will be able to do it again extremely

quickly. Gently try to bend without pulling. It's not a matter of pulling on your ligaments, which will cause you pain tomorrow but of reducing the tension in the flexor muscles which does not belong there. There is no need for pain. Taking a weight off your head is not painful. It is a relief. So, release this unnecessary contraction by making very, very gentle movements to bend each toe. Do the big toe a bit but concentrate on bending the other four toes to touch the sole of your foot. Do the movement again and again without force and let go. Let me decide because we are going to do enough variations to make it work for everyone.

So in one way or another try to bend each toe down, four, five, six times each, and pay attention to not letting it hurt. You will see that by lengthening each toe extremely gently, then bending it, slowly and little by little, there will be a surprising cumulative effect.

2b. Now change hands. The majority of you now have tired hands because they too are doing a lot of unnecessary work. So, change hands and try with your left hand to bend your toe upwards. Really flex it, flex it upwards, very gently, each toe, each toe very gently, several times for each toe.

2c. Stop now for a moment and straighten your legs and pay attention to the sensation, to the difference you feel between your legs. Move your foot and toes and compare the difference between left and right. If you are able to look and you will see that the color of your foot is different too; each foot has a slightly different color.

3a. Once more come to sitting. Lie your left foot on its side. In other words, open your knee and bring it [the foot] towards you, lie it on its side like that and then try the following: with your right hand take hold of your big toe and lift it, and with your left hand open the four smaller toes.

In other words, separate the big toe from the other four toes, very, very gently. Now you will see that in anatomical terms, the separation of the big toe from the others forms a right angle, which means the gap is big enough to allow you to put something between the big toe and the second. This is normal and you will see that a majority of you can do so. One could put a box of matches between the toes there. That's normal. There aren't many people who do that spontaneously.

3b. So separate there. Now take two toes with your right hand and three with your left, the little toes in your left hand, and then obviously separate the second toe from the third. Now take four toes in your right hand with just the little toe in your left hand.

Do three, or four. I see some of you are in a hurry. They have already jumped ahead to one. Or maybe they have one toe cut off.

4. Now do the same thing, continuing like this, stand your foot. That means the sole of the foot should be on the floor and you have one arm on either side of your leg. Now start again by taking the big toe in one hand and the other four... the big toe in the hand, and then separate them like you just did, fan them, and at the same time flex the toes up and bend them down, underneath. Do it very, very gently because upwards is easy, but downwards...

When you wear shoes and have delicate skin, and for us that means everyone, your feet are not well. We hide them. Everyone hides their feet, during the day inside their shoes and at night under the sheets because they know that they are not something to be proud of. That is the case for the majority of people. However, a beautiful foot is something to behold, if you see the feet of people who walk barefoot on sand like the Bedouin do, the feet are prettier than their hands. And not just that, but more intelligent too. You can do extraordinary things with the feet. I myself know a Bedouin cobbler who holds the sole of the shoe between his big toe and the next. He makes the upper and the shoe and then he holds them in place whilst sewing and hammering in the nails. Who amongst us can do that? He works like this every day, sewing the shoe, using his big toe and the second toe to hold the sole and upper together. If you tried to yank it out you wouldn't be able to. It's held like in a vice.

So downwards, go very gently so as not to tear the skin. Now take two toes in your right hand and repeat the action, in other words pull them apart, then flex them up and down. Those who have finished can lie down. Rest. Those who have not yet finished, finish up. Lie on your back, and those who are still at it, come to an end now.

Let me tell you a little about what we have done, and what we can expect as a result. Those of you who know something about physiology or a little neurology, will know that there are exteroceptive nerves in the sole of the foot, that means two nerve fibres which sense the pressure of the foot and the distribution of pressure across it. The body uses the information they provide to adjust the tonus of the body when standing. If you look at a modern physiology text, that's to say at least from the last ten years, not the older texts, you will see they reference a series of articles on the work of Professor Magnus of Utrecht in which he shows that in a decerebrated animal one can see the effects of what we are doing – by which I mean changing the distribution of pressure on the floor leads to, reorganizes, the foot in a way whereby it loses its habit, its habitual action of touching the floor, and that this impacts upon the rest of the body. You will see for yourself that your eyes, your shoulders, and other parts that I won't mention in case some of you are suggestible and say "Hey, he has tricked us, he said it and for that reason I am doing it", you will realize for yourself that this is what happens, that this leads to that change. As I say, if you take a decerebrated animal like in the books on physiology, a decerebrated animal, when you touch the edge of the sole of the foot, the foot stiffens as if the animal were standing on it. This is a result that can be reproduced again and again. One can conclude that pressure on the sole of the foot modifies the tonus of the rest of the body. Now we, ordinarily, are unaware of this fact. You will see that when we do this very slowly and change the musculature of the foot, the foot will then modify how it contacts the floor. You will see the incredible effect of this simple thing you are doing.

5. Before we go any further, stand up and walk around a bit and see if you can feel a difference between your right and right left sides.

Try to see how you place the left foot on the floor now, and the right foot; an on which foot you feel more comfortable. You will be more comfortable on one of them. Try to feel the quality of the contact with the floor, and now observe the tension in your right shoulder. And your left. You will see which shoulder is more relaxed. Try to see if you can perceive the beginning of a reduction in tension in your face on one side more than the other. We have used up some time convincing you, but now that we have done so, we can proceed more quickly.

6. Please lie down and attempt the same thing with your right foot.

Can you recall what you did to start with? You pulled on each toe, and you were sitting. Place your left foot standing on the floor and take your right foot like you did before and do it in the lying position. Pull each toe very, very gently so as not to cause any discomfort and twist the toe around its axis. Do it a little quicker. Do a few times slowly, but don't too many repetitions. Just five or ten at most, and it should get a little bit quicker but without rushing. I am not having you here to make you rush, but do it very gently and quickly because we have a lot to get through in order to feel the effect now and we

don't want to waste time on things that now ... As we are repeating something, we can go faster. This is merely preparation so that you don't tear your skin and to soften the toes. The real work will come later.

Now try to bend each toe downwards, just as far as you can. There are many among you who manage to touch the tip of your toes against the bottom of your foot. Then come and flex the toes upwards, each toe one at a time.

7. Please sit now. Place your right foot on its edge like we did before. Like that, straight or on the side if you prefer. Try taking the big toe in the left hand and the little ones in the other and separate them. But remember, as you have started by standing the foot, bring your hands to the two sides to allow you to separate them [the toes] several times. Then bend them upwards, and then downwards. So now stand your right foot with your sole flat on the floor, the heel on the floor, with your right hand on the outside of the knee and your right [left] hand on the inside of your leg. From this position separate the toes and bend them upwards and downwards. That's to say flex and extend them.

Now it is important that the foot is on the heel when doing the up and down movement, not on the side. This is because the muscle that flexes the toes is on the leg and extends up to the knee, doesn't it. That is where you will feel it. When you have the foot in the standing position the muscle has to lengthen, and the pressure on the heel allows this to happen. Meanwhile if your foot is on its side, you would need to really pull to make it lengthen, and that would hurt.

8. Please lie down. Let yourself spread on the floor. Then by recalling how you lay last time, try to see if you can feel that there are parts of the body, in the pelvis, in the shoulders, that touch the floor differently, with a clearer contact, flatter, softer, or glued to the floor. This means that there was excessive tonus in the musculature around the pelvis and maybe also in the dorsal muscles which has now disappeared, and the body can sink like it should do.

9a. Now bend your knees, bend your knees, bring your left foot close to you on the other and try the following: in the same way that one can interlace the fingers, starting from the bottom, introduce one finger of your right hand in the space between your toes, then with your other hand, the other hand, help pull your fingers and toes and look [at what you are doing] so that they look orderly and regular, so that there isn't one toe that sticks up and another down, or that the toes lie bizarrely.

Try very gently to pull each finger and each toe until you have them interlaced like two fans, just as you interlace your hands. It looks pretty. Try gently, It's not that easy. Now look, almost everybody has interlaced their fingers in such a way that the poor little fifth toe is left on the outside. Do you see? One could try to do it differently, wait, leave it as it is.

9b. Now take your ankle in your left hand and use your right hand to bend your toes up and down. Now try to turn the whole foot from the ankle joint. Hold the ankle, the foot above the ankle so that the movement takes place in the ankle.

As you will certainly be able to see it is a particular type of rotation when you have the toes separated. This is something we rarely do. The majority of people can not do it. Gently.



9c. When you have done five or six or ten movements as you wish, change the direction of rotation.

10a. Now stay there as you are, but try to do it with your other hand, your left hand: interlace your left hand with the toes, this time with your hand coming from the top of your left foot obviously. This time interlace your fifth toe too; your little finger will be on the outside of your little toe.

No, no. Use your right hand to organize the toes and the hand. Pull on each one in turn so that there is just one toe between two fingers, and one finger between two toes. Make it pretty. Look at the tips of your toes and make sure they are attractively arranged and regular.

10b. Now flex your foot downwards and upwards. Flex your toes, extend them, flex them again.

11a. Come to sitting and do the same thing with your other foot whilst sitting. When you take hold of your foot try to introduce your left hand from underneath, underneath, that's right underneath the sole. Arrange them so that they are even and regular. That's right. Now if it is easy to do so, bend your toes downwards, upwards, and after each movement straighten them up again so that they are even, just like two hands would intertwine, like interlaced fingers.

11b. Now do the same with your right hand from above. Interweave the fingers. Observe that in the sitting position it is not possible to rotate the foot. So do it like you do. Then after you will lie down, do it like that, flex the toes up and down.

12. Lie on your back and now thread the fingers of your left hand from below. The fingers of your left hand between the toes. Arrange them like Japanese flowers. Take hold above your ankle, above the ankle, with your right hand and circle the articulation of your foot in one direction a dozen times.

Don't use force. Make the rotation of your foot smooth and regular at all points of the circle. There are some points where you sense the movement is easy, but in others you need to pull strongly. Try to reduce the effort in your leg to allow for a smooth circle without straining.

13. That's it and sit up. Separate your knees, place your feet on their edges, close to each other, then interweave your right hand with your right toes from above, and your left hand from above with your left toes. As it is a tight fit you can use the one hand then the other to get them in. That's it. Very good. Make the interlacing regular and neat, and once you have it, if you have a good hold you can lift one foot in the air, lift the other, both legs lifted, and try rolling onto your back and open your legs, and return by bending your knees.

If you open the legs and then close them coming back, the majority of you will be able to do it after a couple of tries. Your arms should be between your legs, otherwise you won't be able to open the legs.

Gently. As you roll onto your back you need to open your arms and legs as much as possible and let your pelvis lift. Then bring them back together very quickly but without straining, and the body will come to sitting quite easily. If we do it a few times everyone will be able to do it.

14a. Good, now sit. Now try to interlace, to join your toes like you would interlace your hands. Try putting your right big toe on the top, the right toe above, then work each toe into place. That's right. Pull them straight and arrange them neatly. Now put the hand behind you and try to lift your legs like that, then come back to sitting. If you are able to, go as far as to lie then come back to sitting without letting go of the toes. Straighten your toes if necessary and do it again. Try it. Move and try to see.

14b. Now change the position. Take your left big toe and have it above the other.

If you are getting cramp it just goes to show that you should have done this two years ago. Try gently to lift your legs again. Lift. And correct.

15. Now stand up and before you do anything, you'll see that you have achieved something that has nothing whatsoever to do with me. Try to bend and touch your hands to the floor, and see if it isn't much easier than normal.

If the answer is yes, go home and try to work out how you managed it. If you ask me I can tell you, later. I won't tell you before you try [working it out] yourself. So I would ask each of you to observe whether you bend more easily and go further than usual. I see some of you can touch the floor quite easily. Some of you can't but can still bend lower than normal.

16. Good. Thank you. Walk around and see how your shoulders feel, how you feel in your back. Are you more erect? Are you more upright? Is the floor is softer, more comfortable? Not as hard as normal?

(End of lesson)

## Lesson # 6: Holding the foot with the hand

Duration of the original recording: 40 Minutes

1a. Lie on your back. Lift your right leg and then bend your left leg to help you so it is not uncomfortable, and take hold of the arch, the sole, with your left hand.

Hold with all your fingers together, including the thumb. The thumb and fingers together. It's like you are carrying a book in your hand, or like a monkey, all the fingers together. Your left foot is on the floor.

Now bring your right hand behind your head and very gently lift your head and your leg in the direction of the ceiling. Lift them both together, bend, stop, and do it again.

Do it as softly as possible. Don't push. Don't pull on your leg. Don't lift your head. Just make the movements soft and simple.

1b. Now change your hands over. You are going to take hold ... Change your hands, not your legs. It's just the hands that change. That means hold with your right hand, but in the same way, your thumb with the fingers, the fingers all together. Now lift your head and your foot up many times towards the sky, very gently. Not towards your head; towards your feet. The two. Lift the foot, lift the leg, lift the head, all towards the ceiling. Make the movement very, very gentle.

2a. Now try to pass your knee to the outside of your right elbow as you come back down, then the next time bring it to the inside of your elbow. Your hand stays where it is, on the outside, just where it was before. Now whilst lowering your leg bring your knee once to the outside and once to the inside of your elbow but keep the fingers and thumb together.

2b. Once more change your hands over, just your hands and do the same thing.

Lift your head and bring your knee to the outside of your elbow, to the outside of the elbow, and to the inside. It is difficult. Do it gently. Some of you will manage it. If you can't it doesn't really matter. What matters is that you try. You need to bring your head to the left, your shoulders – sorry: to the right. That's right. Now twist your neck a bit and try one time, very gently. There you go. That's right.

2c. Stop. Leave it, stop, and take a rest.

3a. Now try the same thing with the other leg, the other foot.

That means first take hold of the inside of your foot using your right hand, thumb also on the inside, and your [left] hand behind your head. Your other foot is on the floor, not stretched out [the leg] and now lift everything up towards the ceiling, very gently.

Now change hands. Your hand will be on the outside obviously, not the inside. Try to lift and lower.

3b. Now each time you lift your knee, your hand, bring your knee once to the left of your elbow and once to the inside of your elbow.

Behind your head is not behind your neck. It is not the same thing.

3c. Now change hands and try doing it with your other hand. Do the same, those who are able. And all of a sudden someone can do it when a moment ago they couldn't.

3d. Good, cease, stop. Rest a moment.

4a. Now please sit. Roll to your side and come to sitting. Try with your right hand to hold the four small toes of your right foot, from the outside of course. Put your thumb between the big toe and the second toe and take hold of the four toes like that. Do the same with your left hand.

Obviously with your left foot, not from underneath. Just bring your thumb between your big toe and your second toe and hold the four small toes well.

Now try lifting one foot, then the other. Do it many times. Be gentle. Go slowly.

5. Now try to bring your elbows to the inside of your legs. That's right: both elbows to the inside the legs. And then both elbows to the outside of the legs.

Now gently try to find a way to balance and then do both feet [knees] at the same time, to the inside, to the outside.

6. If you roll onto your back stay there, do it on your back. Now, on your back, open your legs like that, open them wide to the sides and then bring them together and you will come to sitting. Lower them, repeat it several times until you manage to come to sitting.

If you do it softly and the movement of the feet is quick – obviously don't have a chair behind you - don't use force, it won't work. If you use brute force, you'll hurt your back, nothing more. If you can't do it, you don't need to. And any of you who have zips or buttons in your clothing that you have to roll over don't need to do it either.

7. Now stay on your back and take hold of the inside of your left foot with your left hand, and the inside of your right foot with your right hand. Try the same thing again, opening the knees and bringing them back closer together. Your knees move towards each other. No, your hands stay. Try.

Can you bring your knees inside your elbows? *How?* Obviously, it is possible, that's right, be gentle, without force, because you could demolish your knees. *Your back?* If you move gently like I am asking you to do, your back will be fine. But, if you do it no matter the cost you are sure to demolish everything, not just your back but the room too. You need to develop within the realm of your capabilities, and you are the sole judge of that. I am not going to tell you, '*don't do it like this*', or '*do do it like that*'. I give you complete freedom to follow your own sensation. If you have no sensation, too bad.

Please lie down and rest calmly, relax.

8a. Please sit. Once again take hold of your right foot with the four smaller toes in your right hand, and now try to lengthen your leg and your foot on the floor. In other words push your heel in the direction that it wants to go. Now as you do so, lower your head, and each time you stretch your foot away, [Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais addresses a student: "*No, don't make your leg tense like that*"]. Shorten and lengthen very gently, without force, and bend your head but in a strange way, once as if with the intention to touch your mouth to the area below your knee. Don't actually do it! Just have the intention to do so.

Bend to touch your mouth below the knee, below the what's it called now [*in French*]? '*Patelle?*' Kneecap. That's right. Simply think about touching your mouth below your kneecap. There's absolutely no need to actually do it. As you do so, make a movement with your head so as to allow your body to lengthen and bring your mouth to below the knee.

8b. Now make a second movement with the intention to touch with your chin.

8c. Now make a third movement where your intention is to touch with your head, your forehead. Pay attention to the differences each time you change your thinking.

8d. Continue. Now your intention is to touch your right ear below the kneecap. Do two such movements. And now your left ear below the kneecap. That's right.

9. This time take hold of your right foot with your left hand. Not your toes, hold underneath the sole of your foot like we did with the right hand so it is easy. Lengthen your foot like you did before with your head lowered and with the same intention touch your mouth. Don't force the movement. You simply need to think about lengthening your back so that your head is far away from your tail bone, whilst having the intention to touch the mouth below the kneecap, then your chin, then your forehead, then your right ear and your left ear.

10. Now bring the right hand to the inside of the foot and try lifting your leg in the air. Observe if it lengthens a bit better than before?

Your left hand is on the floor. Try and see. You'll see that many do not understand, don't know that for a knee to straighten it needs to turn to the inside. You will see that people who can straighten their knees do as follows: the knee is to the outside, they straighten it and at a certain moment it turns to the inside. If the knee does not turn to the inside you risk tearing your hamstring – how do you say “hamstring” in French – the muscle behind [the thigh] which is hurting right now? It is “hamstring” in English. Well, it doesn't matter. Don't force. You won't succeed through force. The celebrated Oxford anatomist Arthur Keith<sup>1</sup> discovered that the knee turns to the inside when the knee joint closes. Since his discovery all surgeons have known this fact. But most people don't.

11. Very good. That's enough. Lie on your back, bend your legs, and now take hold of the four toes of your left foot with your left hand. That's right. Have your hand behind your head. Try the same thing as before: lift your foot like that. That's right. Now lift your head and think about touching your mouth to below the patella. Below the patella.

It is not a question of *doing* it. It is not worth forcing yourself. Simply do it by thinking about touching your mouth below your kneecap. Continue twice with your chin, then twice with your forehead. Pay attention to changes in the way in which you contract the belly, the muscles of the throat, the neck. It is different to the [*inaudible*] we think. Now imagine touching your right ear. Now your left ear.

12. Sit once more. With your right hand hold the inside of the left leg, your foot. Keep your fingers all together, lean on your left hand on the floor and try again: lengthen your leg on the floor, with your heels on the floor. Just observe if it lengthens easier now? Now think about touching your chin to below your kneecap each time you lengthen your leg. Now your mouth, your forehead and then your right ear and your left ear. Lie down and rest for a moment.

13a. Bend your knees and lift your right leg in the air. Now with the crook of your elbow take a hold behind your knee. Behind the knee with the crook of your elbow. Do the same with the other hand and hold both elbows with your hands. In other words, your right hand searches out the left elbow and vice versa. Now try to straighten this knee a little, lift your head and try to touch your mouth below your kneecap.

Don't make a big effort. It's wasted. Your left foot stays on the ground. You don't need to actually touch [with your mouth]. It's when you don't want to touch that it will touch all by itself. That will be good but if you try to make the movements, an effort of will, you will injure your back, nothing more. And your leg! Do that which is easy for you. Leave the rest to me.

13b. Now straighten your leg only as much as you can without effort, imagining touching your mouth, your forehead, your right ear and your left ear. Your right ear and your left ear.

14a. Now, if you can, try to lift your left leg and swing your body to come to sitting.

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's Note: poor audio quality renders the name almost inaudible, but it would appear to be Arthur Keith, whose book 'The Human Body' appeared on Dr. Feldenkrais' reading list for the 1970 Amherst Feldenkrais training course as well as in the bibliography of several of his books.

Some of you can do it. The majority should be able to.

14b. now, you have your leg in that position and, if the floor is slippery, slide your right heel forwards. If the floor is not slippery step your heel forwards bit by bit. All the time touch below your kneecap, once with your mouth. Each time your heel moves forwards gently and without force, let your body go down lower.

Lengthen your body from the pelvis. In other words, let your head be long, let your back be long in order to make it easy. If you don't think about length it will simply be a stretch. Touch your chin, touch your mouth, your forehead, your right ear, and your left ear.

14c. Now try lifting your leg to see if you can actually touch your mouth to below your kneecap.

You see that all of a sudden the majority of you can do it. Look around. Almost everyone.

14d. And try to touch with your right ear, and your left ear.

15a. Come back down to the floor again. This time switch your arms around. There is one arm in front, the other behind; bring the arm behind in front. Once more try sliding your heel away and see if you can now press your arms to the floor. If you get your forearms onto the floor, can you touch again below the...? Try the whole series, this and this and this [mouth, chin and so on]. Now stay where you are, as low as you can manage, and see if you can lift your heel off the floor.

No. Not with your body. It is the heel. In other words, straighten your leg in order to lift the heel up. It is fine if it only lifts a millimeter. It has to do with your quadriceps. That's right. But you have to have your hands on the floor. Now make the smallest movement possible. A big one is impossible in any case. Do three or four movements like this straightening your knee. In other words, lift your heel from the floor just enough to allow you to remove a playing card. Do it two or three times. That's enough.

15b. Now, try, with your right hand take hold of the inside of the right foot, lean on your left hand, and try to straighten your leg to see if it straightens for most of you a bit better than before.

16. Good. Do the same thing: Lie on the floor, bend your knees, take hold of your leg, your knee is straight with both hands behind the knee crease, the left knee. You've done the right. The left knee. No, we've done that one. The same thing. Take hold like that. Now from this lying position try to lengthen your leg and lift your head with the intention of reaching below the kneecap, below the kneecap.

You need to straighten your leg somewhat otherwise you won't be able to think about 'below the kneecap'. It is not a question of 'touching', but of 'thinking correctly'. Touch your mouth under the kneecap, your chin, your forehead, once your left ear, once your right ear.

17a. Now swing your other leg to sit up. Try again; lengthen your heel away, slide the heel in front in a straight line, many times, and each time try to touch underneath your knee crease [kneecap] with the movement and the series that follows that we now know.

17b. Change hands. The front hand should go behind. That's right. Continue to do the same thing and when you feel your forearms press try to lift your heel off the floor. Do several movements. Try to straighten your leg to allow the heel to lift off the floor.

It doesn't matter if the movement is imperceptible as long as you are trying. Obviously, each time you try to do it you should think about touching the knee with a different part of your face.

Obviously, there is a difference between one leg and the other. One doesn't work, the other works well. This proves that it is related to nothing other than bad habits, to how you manage your body. Otherwise, we must have been born with two legs that are different. If we aren't born with different legs, but they become different over time, then it must be that bad movement habits make one leg develop more or less normally whilst the other is stopped [in its development].

18a. Now lie on your back and take hold of both legs at the same time with your hands. Like that, the knees, like before. Both knees together, bring your hand there like that, then hold your right elbow with your left hand. That's right. In other words your knees are tied together. Now do the series of movements again; try to think about touching.

If you think about touching below your kneecap your legs will straighten a bit even if they do not actually become straight, still they make a movement to straighten. If this isn't the case then you are not thinking about touching below the kneecap. You are thinking of touching the knee or the kneecap instead, but not below. If you think 'below' then you will see the heels move in the air.

18b. Of course, also do your forehead. Your right ear. Your left ear. Change hands, your forearms, then try to see if you can come to sitting like that.

Make some slow movements with your legs. If your knees do not bend you won't be able to do it. Try it again. Start over again as often as you need till the swing goes in the right direction. Otherwise you will simply end up demolishing your hip. Be gentle. Now try ... If your legs don't go down, you are wasting your energy. Your legs need to make the movement of flexing downwards, they will straighten then quickly bend. That's all. You need to straighten your legs then bend them quickly. Bend them. If you don't bend them it won't happen. Bend them quickly. Without effort. Bend first, that's right, as soon as you swing them bent you are lifted up.

19a. Good. Now move your heels away from you. Your heels, and it is fine if you step them away from you one after the other if your mat is not slippery enough. Then think about touching your mouth to your leg beneath your kneecap with your heels in front.

The heels forwards, the heels must go forwards, not the toes. The heels! That means that your feet will be flexed if you are thinking about the heels. Gentle, be gentle. It is important that you think about lengthening your body so that your mouth comes below the kneecaps, on the right, on the left, in the middle.



19b. Do the same thing with your chin. The same with your forehead. Your right ear. Your left ear, then rest there a moment.

19c. Try to lift your heels off the floor three times, three times.

No, the heels. It won't work unless you press on your hands. Your hands should be on the floor. There is no point in trying this if you don't have your hands on the floor.

19d. Now separate your legs, bend your right knee and hold your right foot with both hands. Can you interlace your fingers? Then with your mouth on your knee lengthen your foot on the floor, the heel. See if the leg straightens completely with your hands [like that].

Softly, without power. Try 'supple'. Lengthen your right leg. See if you can lengthen it with your hands clasped together behind you right knee<sup>2</sup>. The right knee, the right knee lengthens. That's right. Now think of touching your mouth, your forehead, your right ear, your left ear, and then your chin below your kneecap.

19e. Good. Now do the same with your left foot or leg. Bend your knees and take a hold of the left one.

Try it very gently. Look how many of you, the majority of you, can lengthen your knee completely on the floor with your two hands [holding on]. You will see it for yourself.

19f. Now touch with your mouth. Bend your leg if necessary, so that it is not painful and carry on, touching another of your forehead, another part of your ear, the other ear.

20. Good. Now stand up. Stand up. Stay still for a moment. Observe how you are. Now try touching the floor. You touched the floor at the start of the evening; now try touching the floor and see if there has been some improvement compared to what you managed before.

Don't bounce. Go down to wherever you can with ease. What is important is that there has been lots of improvement; you don't need to be the world's best ever! If you can be the world champion at the first, try it implies it has no worth. It's not worth trying. However, if it is much better than at the start of the evening, better than what we did with the toes, that's great. Do you see that the majority of you can now touch the floor easily? Some of you can even place both hands on the floor; not just the fingers, the hands.

21. Now if you wish, try spreading your legs wide apart and bend down and try to touch your elbows to the floor. Your elbows. Spread your legs.

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<sup>2</sup> Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais may have meant foot.

Separate your legs and touch one elbow to the floor, then the other elbow. You can bend your knees. Bend your knees to touch one elbow, then bend your knees to touch the other elbow, then little by little you will see that you can do it with the knees [straight]. That's right. Do you see what can be achieved with three quarters of an hour of methodical work?

Stand up. Walk around. Sense how you feel after that. Walk and see how you feel.

Thank you.

[End of the lesson]

# Lesson # 7: On the side, differentiation, twisting and zenith

Duration of the original recording: 90 Minutes

1. Lie down on your right side. Place your left leg on the floor in front of you with your knee on the floor, and make sure it is comfortable. Don't let your leg be too high or too low, just to be clear. Now place your right hand in a position that helps your head. That's right. Now place your left hand on the floor so you could push on the floor as if you wanted to get up.

You want to get up now so what are you going to do? Your left hand should help you get up. Therefore, place your left hand on the floor, press on the floor with your left hand, with your elbow in the air. Now, you are lying on your right side, and your right arm should not... Some of you are already lying on your stomach. You should be on your side, your right side, not on your stomach. I for one still know the difference between side and stomach.

So, push in this way and now very, very gently, very gently, move your left shoulder backwards with the help of your left arm. Move the shoulder backwards.

You will notice that for the shoulder to go backwards, the hand needs to be in front of you, and not too far down. Turn your fingers in the direction that is possible; your fingers should be ... Mmmh ... If you keep your elbow close to your stomach and push your shoulder will do something, but it won't move backwards. For the shoulder to move backwards your elbow needs to be in front of you and at a right angle. Right angles to your chest. No, a right angle! For those of you who don't understand what a right angle is, it's the same as the angle between a wall and the floor. That's a right angle. To be at right angles your elbow must be in front of your shoulder, not lower. It is difficult to understand. You have to be a kind of Poincaré<sup>3</sup> at least. Let's continue. But there are still a number of you who have not put the elbow in front! The elbow should not rest on the stomach. It should be in front of the shoulder, forwards from the point of view of the shoulder. It should be in the direction that you look with your eyes and your nose.

Gently, gently push your left shoulder backwards with very small movements. Organize your hand. Have your fingers turned in a certain way. It is fine if you are uncertain because when you first place your hand it might not be the right position for you. Turn your hand as if your fingers are like the hands of a watch and find a position that is more comfortable, as comfortable as possible for *the* wrist that *you* have. If your wrist is crooked, your hand position will be different from everyone else's. And if you have rheumatism it will be in yet another position. Each of you needs to find the position that is the most comfortable for you. Now very gently move your shoulder backwards. Press on the floor and move your shoulder backwards with very small movements.

It's not a question of doing a big movement, nor a beautiful one. It's about paying attention to what you use to do it. What happens? What moves along with the shoulder? Be gentle. Make the movements small. Don't lift your wrist off the floor because if you need to lift the wrist it means your hand is not well positioned. Try to find a direction for your hand where you don't need to lift your wrist in order to push your shoulder. That's right.

That's enough. Rest like that.

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<sup>3</sup> Henri Poincaré, French mathematician and physicist, 1854-1912.

2. Now very gently move the ribs of your chest beneath your armpit, on the side that you just moved. Push your ribs backwards, nothing else.

Just your ribs on your left side, not your shoulder. Only the ribs. What do you need to do in order to do so? Can you see that you need to move your head as if to touch your knees with your head? But don't over-exaggerate the movement. There is no need to push your ribs further than you can do with ease. Do it gently because for some of your ribs if you force now, they will hurt for a fortnight. Gentle. Small movements.

Observe, what are you doing that you did not at all anticipate? What is your left knee doing on the floor during the movement? Does it make some sort of movement on the floor? Do you have the impression that your knee is moving on the floor? Continue to move your ribs and allow your knee to move upwards a little to facilitate the rib movement. When you do so the ribs will move more. Do you notice your head and nose moving on your arm? Let your head and nose move as much as they need so that the rib movement becomes more pronounced, but don't actually lift your head. Your head can rest on its support without any need to lift.

Now look. You contract the stomach muscles on one side only, which you wouldn't usually know how to do. You know, yogis do *navli*. This is when they make their stomach muscles turn in a circle by contracting one side after the other, left and right. You see this is what you are doing now. You are contracting the muscle on the left side of your stomach but not on the right. The one on the right is less contracted. Do it gently.

Now, does your lower lumbar region move backwards when you do this or not? Be gentle. There is no need to lift your knees from the floor. There is no need to lift your knees to ... You lift your knees only when you move the shoulder and the ribs in an undifferentiated way. It is just the ribs that should move backwards. Your knees can stay still on the floor, even if they do a little movement, because the pelvis moves a little relative to the head doesn't it? So, whilst it is necessary to do a movement that is actually visible, it is not actually necessary other than to help the ribs move. Otherwise one doesn't need the hands to move the knees.

3. Now gently do this and move your left shoulder forwards. Do the same with your ribs: your ribs backwards and your shoulder forwards. In other words, your ribs backwards and your shoulder forwards. That's right. Gentle. That's right.

Ribs backwards, shoulder forwards. There you go. Observe what is happening in your back and stomach now. There is no need to lift your head up. Your arm or the floor should provide support. Either your arm or the floor. Or both. There is no need to lift it. Just observe what happens when you do it, what do you do with your pelvis? Imagine that you have a key in the backside. In the anus. What happens then? What movement? Try it. What movement do you do?

Good. It will be very gentle; stop it now; stay where you are and stop working. Observe what you feel.

4. Now move your shoulder backwards and see if it moves differently to before. Is the movement bigger and easier? Now try moving your ribs forwards whilst bringing the shoulder backwards.

The ribs in your left side forwards whilst your shoulder moves backwards. Make the movement as small as you can. Very gently. Observe again: what are you doing now? What are you doing now that you didn't think you would? What are you doing with your lumbar muscles, those of your back, on the right and the left sides? What are you doing? The movement is as if you wanted to show someone your behind. Be gentle. There you go.

When you do this, does your left hip move towards your armpit, or away? The left armpit obviously! Does your left hip move to the left armpit or away? Be gentle.

Stay there a while and do nothing.

5. Now in this position just think about bringing the left shoulder towards the left hip. No, not the foot, the hip. The left shoulder towards the left hip. Make it a small movement.

Your elbow stays like before, but your left shoulder..., that's right. You will see that you can not make the movement without raising your left hip a little, or in other words the whole pelvis. Gently. Allow your hip to come closer and you will see that your anus lifts a little off the floor and looks upwards. Gently, gently. These are unanticipated movements and if you do them too fast you will have cramps. Move gently as this should do you good not give you pain.

Your elbow should remain there where it was before, in front of you. Your elbow should be in front of you and not on your stomach. In front, at a right angle to your body. Your elbow should be at a right angle to your body just like before. A right angle. That's right. Now move your shoulder down towards your hip, and your hip towards your shoulder. That's right. So all the ribs on the left side should bunch together otherwise you won't be able to do what you want. That's right. Gentle. Very, very gentle.

Please stop now and do nothing.

6. Now bring the left hand above the head and take hold of the right temple. That's right. Now do the same movement of the shoulder and hip, moving them towards each other, and lift the head as you can, the minimum possible.

*[Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais addresses a student]* Look at your right hand. Why does your hand get in your way? Isn't it better to lie your head on your arm with a straight elbow, so you are not bent at the elbow? Your head can't lie there. Put your arm under your head. *Oh là là*. It's difficult. Look..., seriously you would never do it like that because your hand is resting like... Gently.

You are lifting your head too high. Too high. Too high. Do a small movement. Just observe what you do in order to do a small movement. Then stay there with your head lifted a centimeter from your arm; rest with your head lifted.

7. Now pull the stomach in and flatten [expand] the chest, and then the opposite: expand your stomach and compress your chest. Do it like a seesaw: make your stomach big and your chest flat, and then the opposite. Like two pans of a weighing scale.

That's right. Now what is your hip doing as you do it? Lift your head a little and do it again. Observe where certain movements happen that you did not previously anticipate would happen? Some of you are now making very soft movements almost like making love. Very softly. Good.

8. Let it be. Take a rest where you are, or if you want lie on your back to see how it feels.

Pay attention to which parts of your body lie flatter on the floor than before. Which parts are flatter?

9. Come back onto your right side please and do it again. Now put your..., no, the left leg is in front of the right like before. Now bring the left hand somewhere, either on the floor or else behind. Somewhere where it won't get in the way and where it feels comfortable. Now position the right shoulder, elbow and hand, the arm in front of you in such a way that you can bend [the elbow] and have your right hand towards the ceiling. The right hand towards the ceiling. Bend your elbow and have your hand towards the ceiling. It must be in front of your face; nowhere else is possible. If it is at right angles it can not be under your face. It is in front of your chest. So, your hand towards the floor [ceiling], your fingers towards the ceiling. Your fingers. Not your wrist. Your fingers. Now with very small movements push your right elbow into the floor.

Make the movements very small. Don't do anything with the rest of your body. Do it very, very slowly. Push the floor with your elbow with tiny movements. Observe in which direction your hand, your palm and your fingers need to be turned. Rotate your forearm with the fingers around its axis and explore how far you can turn in one direction and in the other, then stop in the middle. Rotate the hand around its axis and stop at the middle. There you go, at the middle. Good. Now push the floor with your right elbow with small movements.

Can you do it without allowing your spine or your left shoulder to go back a bit? Or your head? Don't move your left shoulder deliberately. The movement of your right elbow causes something to move? What is that something? Your entire spine. And this moves your head in such a way that your head and nose turn a little to the left each time you press with your elbow. Press with your elbow.

10. Now press like that with your elbow and stop at the end of the movement, and then repeat the seesaw movement of your stomach and chest.

What do you feel in your left shoulder when you do this? It will depend on what you do with your left hand of course. On how you have it positioned.

11. Stay where you are and put your left hand in your right elbow crease, whilst your right hand stays where it is. Now, very gently, use your hand to press your right elbow on the floor, and you'll see that your left shoulder moves backwards.

No! The left hand is in the crease of the elbow. The crease of the right elbow. Press the right elbow into the floor and you will see how the left shoulder moves backwards. That's right. When the shoulder goes backwards it causes the shoulder and the spine to turn too, and the head too, and the turn to the left will be more than it was before.

12a. Now interlace your fingers, in your normal, habitual way.

Interlace your fingers. When you do so your arms will be in the same plane. *Oh là là*. No. No. When you interlace your fingers, your fingers are not turned to you, but away. No, that is towards you. Never like that. Good, now interlace your fingers and stay like that.

Now very softly press the floor with the right elbow, like you already did, and when you do so, move the left elbow away from the right. Don't force, but simply press the right elbow into the floor. And move the left elbow away in such a direction as you can, let the wrists open and separate and the only contact that remains is the interlacing of the hands.

That's right. But when your elbow moves like that, why do you lower it onto your ribs? The left elbow. With your arms in the same plane, increase the separation between your wrists. That's right. No, you're showing your hands to me. That is not correct. It is false. If you stay in the same plane your hands can not turn around. Move your left elbow away from your right and press on the floor with your right, in order to open the wrist. Not your interlaced fingers, just your wrist, the base of your wrist. That's right. They should be in the same plane. Your hands will not turn.

Good. Now continue to push gently against the floor whilst at the same time you bring your left elbow backwards. In other words, the plane in which your arms lie is going to alter. There. That's right. And now that you have moved your left elbow as far back as it can by pushing the floor with your right elbow..., no, don't undo your hands.

12b. Continue. Press the floor with the right elbow and pull the left elbow towards the left. The hands move towards the chest whether you want it or not. Because if you really open the elbows the hands will touch the chest, and with the interlacing away from you. You can not turn your wrists around in a different way. So now do it, touch the chest, wherever you can.

That's right. Stay like that, touch your chest at the moment when your elbows are separated as widely as they can be. Touch your chest, there where you can. Touch with your hands, interlaced. Your left elbow should not be lying on you; it should be behind. The left elbow behind. If it is behind it should be the highest point of the body, not lying on you.

Now that you are in this position: place ... touch ... move your elbow away; the plane in which the arms lie should be the same. Now your palms touch your chest somewhere don't they? Now, in this position in which you are lying, your head can not possibly remain where it was can it, considering that your whole spine has turned? Yes, your chest has turned. [*Translator's Note: Dr. Feldenkrais addresses a student*] How can you have your head forwards like before? Only by doing something that hurts.

12c. Now stay with your head turned where it is and do the seesaw movement of your stomach and... [*chest*]. In and out. That's right. In other words, flatten your chest then flatten your stomach one after the other. That's right. Do it gently.

13. Now place the left hand behind you, somewhere, wherever you wish, but on the floor behind you. There, where you are able to. Does it rest differently to before? Once more bring the right hand towards the sky, the ceiling. And again, press against the floor with your right elbow.

Observe what you are doing in order for this to happen. Do you see that your right [*left*] knee lifts off the floor? Change the position of your right knee – sorry, I mean your left knee – so that it remains in contact with the floor throughout even when you turn and when you press on the floor. Now observe what your left knee needs to do and to stop doing as you push. Let your left knee do whatever it does. That's right. That's enough.

14. Lie on your back and observe the change. Observe the difference in sensation in your body from having lain on your right side.

What do you feel now, and in which part of your body? Which parts are flatter...?

15. Roll onto your right side like you were before and put your elbow like it was before, like before. There. Now bring your right arm under your head and rest your head on your right arm. Gently, with your left hand on the floor, at a right angle to you obviously. Have it at a right angle like you had at the very beginning. Now gently move your left shoulder forwards. In other words, move your elbow forwards very, very, very gently. You will notice that when you do this your chest will move forwards too, which is self-evident. Do this with your elbow and now push your ribs backwards, in other words in the opposite direction.

You need to do something with your chest so that your ribs move backwards; your left ribs go back whilst your left shoulder goes forwards. However, let the movements be as small as you can, as light as can be. As you do this observe what your left hip is doing.

16. Do this for a moment. Move your left hip, ribs, left shoulder as if they were frozen in a freezer. One piece. Stuck.

Do what you need to do in order for your knee to stay on the floor throughout. Move your left hip, your ribs and your left shoulder and head, all as one. No, there should be no movement in the ribs relative to that of the shoulder or the hip. Listen, your left shoulder, ribs and left hip go backwards and come forwards as if they are one frozen block. Therefore, there is no relative movement at all, not in your elbows, not in your shoulder, nor your chest or hip. Everything goes as one. Gently.

No, there should not be any movement of your shoulder relative to your ribs, nor your ribs relative to your hips. For this to be the case, your left knee can not remain static. Those of you who are holding your knee immobilized will not be able to do this movement. When you return [*forwards*] your left knee will need to do something too, on the floor. What does it do? It is always the same: it goes forwards and backwards. Nothing else. In so far as your left hip moves forwards and backwards, your left knee can not do otherwise. Gentle. Everything together.

Now we have three things: the shoulder, the ribs, and the hip. And the knee must not lift off the floor. You need to organize yourself in such a way that your knee stays in contact with the floor in spite of the movement of the hip. This means the knee has to move constantly. Your knee needs to rise, relative to the face, and go forwards. To move away. To go forwards. Your knee should be alive like the rest of your body is alive, not a dead weight that you lug around. Gently.

17. Now there are two or three things to try. Try immobilizing the elbow and hip and moving just the ribs backwards again.

That's right. See if it is clearer now. Are you aware that something has changed? Clearly when you do this your knees and head must do something seeing as your spine changes in length when you bring your ribs back. Stop when your ribs are as far back as they can go and stay there.

18. Now see if you can alternate the movement of your chest and your stomach, all the time keeping your ribs backwards.

You can do it, but there is something different from before. That's right. Do a dozen movements alternating the chest and stomach flattening one and then the other in its turn.



19. Now gently bring your ribs forwards and your shoulder and hip backwards. Your ribs now move forwards. That's right. Repeat the movement several times. The hip and shoulder behind, the chest and left ribs forwards.

Now observe: what do you have to do with your head? What do you have to do with your right leg? And your head? Seeing as your pelvis moves backwards, what happens? No! If you lift your right knee off the floor it will be different to what I have said. If you don't grasp this idea of having your body do what is necessary but instead you let your legs dictate what your body does, well, a leg is stupid and it'll dictate stupid actions. Especially if they [*the legs*] are not well.

Now try taking your left [*right*] knee backwards with your foot, as you are without changing your position, and bring your ribs forwards. Oh, I meant to say your right knee. Your right knee and your right foot without changing. Just as it is. If you have your leg in a stupid position it will stay stupid. Your knee! Look: the majority of you have the right knee bent but some of you have the leg straight. It doesn't help to have your leg straight. Bend your right knee and stay there. Bend your right knee. Now bring your right knee backwards, which will take your leg backwards obviously. Bring your ribs forwards. This means your head will go backwards. It can't be otherwise. In so far as your left ribs go forwards and your right leg goes backwards, your head will also move backwards because you have to contract all the muscles of your back.

Do small movements, be soft. Very small movements. The majority of people are unable to bend in their back whatsoever. Don't lift your legs in the air. That's not what we are doing. They should remain down on the floor. Softly. A small movement. Your ribs forwards, that's all. Your head and your knees will move back all by themselves. Now don't go so far that you feel pain in your back or try so hard you end up holding your breath. Do the movement softly and make it small. Your ribs forwards, your right knee and head backwards.

When you are at your furthest position backwards stay there, with your head on the floor. Your head is back, everything back. But your ribs are forwards. Head back, knee back. It's not true: you have it in front of your chest! It is not actually possible to do it any other way. If you do it in a different way, you are doing a different thing.

Good, rest there and now alternate the movement of your chest and stomach. Chest and stomach. Several times. A dozen times. Each time softer but with greater clarity.

Good. That's enough.

20. Now bring your left shoulder backwards and your left hip forwards.

Have your hands exactly as they were before. Simply let the shoulder come back, and the left hip come forwards. Forwards! The direction of your eyes, your nose. Forwards is always the same, as if you were standing. So your left shoulder is a bit back, and your left hip is a bit forward. And reverse it. That means your hip goes backwards and your shoulder comes forwards. The elbow will always be in front, not at your side. There you go.

Leave that and put your right hand, your right arm, under your head. Rest there a second, as you are. Rest calmly. Observe what has happened with your breathing. What do you sense in your body that is different to before?

21. Once again with your knee forwards, rest there. Your left knee is in front, not your right. The left in front just like before. Now very gently move the knees away from each other and bring them back together.

Move both knees simultaneously, in the same way, the same amount. Separate your knees and bring them back towards each other. Your knees should follow the same trajectory. If the movement of one is greater than the movement of the other, you will end up lying on your stomach. That is not what we want. Let your knees make the same movement, the same distance. In other words, if your right knee moves five centimeters, your left knee should move five centimeters. The people don't understand! Hey, there, the left and right knees follow the same trajectory. Softly. Make the movement small so that you are aware of what you are doing. Softly. A very small movement. There. And what does one do with one's back for this?

22. Now continue this movement by moving your heels away from each other. Your knees and your heels.

Now think about your heels: they should separate, but both by the same amount. If you move your left heel back five centimeters, your right heel should also move five centimeters, not thirty. That's right. Gently. Your left elbow should be as you had it before. Not on the floor.

23. Now stay there with your knees and heels separated and your left hand as it is. Now also bring your right elbow in front to touch your left hand, your left wrist, just where it is, and point your fingers towards the sky. Now press your right hand [*elbow*], your right elbow on the floor ten times.

Your right hand is not dumb. The palm doesn't hang towards the floor, it's the fingers, the fingertips [that point upwards towards the ceiling]. Press the floor with your right elbow, do some movements like that, ten small movements one after the other, and as you do so just observe what you do with the rest of your body. Be gentle.

Notice that your left shoulder moves backwards, whether you want it to or not. Also, your chest moves, your spine turns, whether you want it or not. Your head turns, again whether you want it or not. So continue as you are making the movement, and look further and further to the left, but always softly and gently. In other words, let your head turn with your spine, neither more nor less.

Clearly your left hand needs to be in such a position that it can follow the movement. You can not put the fingers of your left hand just wherever you want. They should be where they can be. You need to turn your hand, you need to find out that maybe you can place it differently. Perhaps it can be done better.

24. Now roll like this, pressing the floor with your left hand and your right elbow, with small movements. Gently. Turn your head and shoulders to the left. Head and shoulders left. Now as you do this, draw your right knee underneath your left knee, but with small movements. Each movement is a small step until it becomes easy.

You will become aware of how you lift the knee and put one knee on top of the other. The back knee. The right knee underneath the left knee. Gently. You have all the time you need so you don't have to rush. Then arrange your legs one on the other by pushing your right knee underneath your left.

You don't need to lift your foot, you just need to lift your knee, and when your right knee has found its own way under your left knee, your feet will rest one on the other just like that. Do it gently, and then rest where you are.

25. Now straighten your left arm towards the sky, have your fingers towards the sky, and continue pressing the floor with your right arm, your right elbow.

You don't need to lift your head. No need to lift your head. Press with your arm, with your right elbow, and let your eyes and head follow your left arm. Your elbow does not need to be stiff, nor does it need to turn. Your left elbow is allowed to bend. Gently. Make the movements gentle.

There, now rest where you are with your left arm as far to the left as possible without [*being painful*]. You mustn't lift your knees! That's not clever!

26. Rest there and once again alternate the movement of your chest and stomach.

27. Very, very gently place both elbows on the floor, your left one behind you more or less where you can. If you can't manage it, turn so that you are lying. Bring both your hands towards the sky with your elbows on the floor. Your arms are in a straight line with each other, but you may turn your pelvis as much as you need to allow you to be in this position. Now, make sure that your elbows are in a straight line with each other, and now gently press with your left elbow against the floor, very gently, then press with your right elbow. Once with the left and once with the right. Gently.

He is making a big effort, but I can tell you that I am making you work less hard than you think. Yes. Like that. Lie down. Lie down and be comfortable.

28. Good. Now turn a little bit onto your right side so that you are comfortable. Just a little, whatever you need.

In fact everyone has the same understanding: whenever a person turns he thinks 'this is to my left, and this is to my right'. We act as if we are the center of the world, don't we? This is a manifestation of the omnipotence with which we come into the world. When we stand, we say 'this is up, that is down'. 'This is below my feet, that is higher than my head.' We divide the world up using ourselves as the reference point. Now let's see if each of us can rediscover this omnipotence and at the same time understand how small we are, and so understand our insignificance in the big scheme of things in the real world, the galaxies and the billions of years. Now fancy that, just imagine!

29a Now lie on your back for a moment and imagine: you know some geography from when you were at school. But this is strange geography. Imagine that you are lying on the equator with your head towards the north and your legs towards the south, and that the navel, or the back behind the navel, lies on the equator. Can you picture it? Being like this, there is a plane which transects you, which runs through your nose, sternum, navel, genitals, and in between your heels. This plane continues all the way to the ends of the earth, the North and the South Poles. The plane divides the world in two: this is to my right, and that is to my left. You may close your eyes. You can't see the plane anyway, you need to imagine it! Now if you looked at the plane you would see it descend below the horizon towards the South Pole, and to the other side above the head, it would also descend below the horizon towards the North Pole. Now try seeing it with your eyes. It is a semi-circle that cuts through the whole world, the sky, the heavens, and dips down towards the North and South Poles. See if you can follow it.

[TN: Dr. Feldenkrais makes a remark in relation to what he sees someone doing.] In order to do this, you should not have your head to one side. If your head is to one side, you must be asleep already and not thinking of anything at all! You need to pay attention to whether you are in this plane, or not. You can already see that some of you don't know that the world is to your right and to your left, because if the head is already to one side you can not know where is right and where is left. It's not clear from the start. OK.

Now don't correct anything, just close your eyes. You can bend your knees or not. I am not going to torture you! I am just giving you the possibility to change because now is the moment when you are omnipotent. No one can tell you what to do.

29b With your eyes closed follow the arc from the North Pole, and see what you can see. Do you notice that you can not see as far? Look above your head, your forehead, but don't do anything with the world. The world needs to move relative to you, not relative to me. You are the most important thing. One constructs one's world around oneself, so it is the world that needs to do something, not you. But do you see that at the moment you can't do it any differently?

[TN: Dr. Feldenkrais remarks on what he sees someone doing.] Your feet should not be together because when your feet and knees are together your adductor muscles must be working and that stops the world from being kind to you. Separate your feet in a normal position so the world can support them. Be gentle.

29c. Now, before you lift your hand or something else up, follow the plane till you can see just in front of your eyes. How far up can you see, with your eyes closed? You can come back to the North Pole. Gently. Do you skip over certain points or can you continue following the imaginary arc like that from the North Pole to above your belly button? Opposite your navel is the highest point of the arc, of the semi-circle. Then carry on down towards the South Pole.

Do it again once or twice. Go at your own pace, at your own speed. See whether you can follow this, see this world, this plane which separates the world into two halves from your perspective. The whole world. Observe which spots you jump over and can not perceive, even in your imagination. When I say *your* I mean *everyone's*, it is in our imagination.

30. Good. Now we'll do the other part. The planes which go to the right, which descend there, in the West, in America or, I don't know, wherever it is when you are lying in the position that you are.<sup>4</sup> If you are actually lying pointing to the north, America is on your right. It's Africa [*sic*]. It will be South America or North America. Wherever the equator runs, close to Panama or somewhere. On the left will be Australia, whatever you want. So, picture a plane like that, like you did before, running from our right to our left. Obviously, this plane will cross the plane that you constructed earlier and separate it in two, right above your navel. Now try looking to the right beneath the two planes to the point where it disappears below the horizon to the right. And the same as it disappears below the horizon on your left. Then scan from left to right like this by lifting your eyes up from the horizon to traverse the whole arc, right up to the highest point, which is above your navel, before continuing gently to the right where it descends below the horizon.

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<sup>4</sup> Translator's note: the lesson is taking place in Paris

The point where the two planes cross is the zenith, the highest point one can see when looking above oneself.

31a. Now turn a little to your right so you change position. Just a little, not too much. Have your legs however you want. Now, with your left and right hands; no, let's start with the left. Try lifting your left hand, but do not move it.

No! That's no good. You raised your hand like someone who is most definitely not omnipotent. He who creates the zenith, the North, and the left would lift his arm in the way that can be seen in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. God reaches his arm out to Man. It is painted in such a way that the entire world can see how the power of creation passes to Man. So don't *move* your hand. Don't *move*. Do not *move* your hand! But let it lift like that of the most powerful man in the world. Do it like Our Father above. No, don't *do* it. You don't know how God does it. Nor do I, but there is a way of lifting that conveys the impression that this person, this arm lifts in order to give life to others. There. Gently.

Try and see. Imagine that your left hand lifts to point towards the North Pole. Gently. Don't *lift* your arm because when you lift your arm with the elbow straight, ... don't lift. Do nothing. Listen first. We are going to learn how to lift. If you lift your arm now like you lifted it yesterday when you picked something up, it won't resemble the arm we see on the ceiling of that room, which we all know about. Good. Gently. Close your eyes.

31b. Now bring your hands onto your chest, but easily and comfortably. Find a position that is comfortable for you. That's right, your hands can be wherever is comfortable for you. Now with your left hand, see if you can lift your index finger to point at the North Pole. Your North Pole. How would you do that? Try it. Try moving your index finger a tenth of a millimeter as you exhale. Exhale and lift your index with your hand as if you were going to the North Pole.

The index finger. Not the little finger. The index is the finger you wag when you say 'No, no, no! That's wrong. You will be punished.' The index, and the hand, like this. Take your hand in that direction. Lift by the minimum possible amount whilst exhaling.

31c. Now carry on but pay attention here: don't move. Simply inhale and see if your in-breath can lift your finger a little further, even if it doesn't want it. In other words, by expanding your chest as you breathe in.

Observe. Hold your hand there where you are, exhale, then inhale and sense if your hand is lighter when you lift. Now, little by little observe if it is the same for your elbow. Can you follow with your elbow in order to bring your index finger up to point to *my* North Pole? Very gently. Inhale as you do it. Each time you breathe out just hold without continuing the movement.

Now you can begin to realize that when you have done it many times, your arm, your hand, your inhalation and exhalation, all of which are *yours*, are also a part of the life of the world. It is when you inhale and take what you need for .., in other words you are aggressive: you take air that belongs to me. You take air into your lungs and that lets you bring your hand towards your North Pole with greater ease. Aggression is a part of our life, generally of all life.

Close your eyes and continue to observe as you let the air out. You will see that it is not that simple. There is a way of breathing in whereby our whole being breathes. It's at this point that we can move our hand like Michelangelo depicted. Without this a hand is impotent. Some of the great musicians can play using their hands like this. When they do so they feel like the master of the world. And they are right.

Gently. Observe and you will see that you only move your fingers when you feel the thought itself, that you do nothing in order for your fingers to go towards the North Pole. Just like one can play music having to 'do' it. This is how the painter paints. How children are born.

Gently. Take as much time as you need to find your North Pole in a way that makes you think 'It is me who is doing this and no one has ever done it like me. Because I feel my own subjective nature with great intensity. I am certain that I am different to others. That 'I' is different to 'you', to 'him', and that that which I have done is omnipotence.'

For those of you who have not read it, I suggest you try reading Martin Buber's "Le Moi et le Toi" [*Translator's Note: "I and Thou"*]. You will learn that he knew all about what we are doing here, even if he did it with words. However, he had the idea. He understood. Be gentle.

Good. Leave it there. I see that no one has really done it but what you have done is enough to understand, which is good enough.

31d. We have been doing this with the in breath; now observe whether on the out breath you contract. And when you inhale do you become bigger or smaller? As you exhale try to observe whether your legs move closer together and whether your head has a tendency to lift up a bit. You are folding a little bit, contracting, there on the side as you are lying.

Try it and see. Inhale and you will see that, whether you want it or not, there is an expansion that occurs. An expansion. That's it. Sense how you breathe.

31e Try the following: as you exhale and the air goes out hold your breath and swallow your saliva. Then allow your body to do what it will. In other words, just do what you want. You will see that when you breathe like this... try again and with the inhalation following the action of swallowing your saliva, and you can lift your finger with a different quality of movement. Try. Try. Wait for the end of the exhalation and the need to inhale, then swallow and see if you can lift your left index to point to the North Pole.

And then when you do it like this and your arm is held there, do you feel that it continues to move, or is it stopped? If it is stopped, your thinking is also stopped. Don't *make* it move, simply continue thinking. Your arm will move by itself. You don't need to do it on purpose.

32. Now your right foot, your right leg. Imagine that your right leg is going to move like your index finger did and point towards the South Pole.

Think how your right leg will straighten in order to point towards the South Pole. You can change position; do whatever you need so you can imagine this. You certainly don't need to *lift* your leg. Everything should be supported by the floor. You can stop with the left hand; don't bother with that now. Your left hand is finished with the North Pole for the moment. Try with your right leg. Find the plane in which you are, then go and look for the South Pole.

No, don't do it all in one movement. If you do it all in one you are not a god. God took seven days to achieve everything. Your movement now creates your own world. Go slowly because creating a world isn't a quick job. Up till today all mankind has marvelled that it was possible to create the world in just seven days. How about you give it at least seven seconds or seven minutes. So, your right leg points towards the South Pole.

Do you see it far away, or close by? I see there are some of you who can not close your eyes. You know that light was not made on the first day. There was a world with closed eyes for each of us. There was no light so there was nothing to see. How can it be that you can not close your eyes?

Observe again when the breath enters: do you feel yourself swelling up? Becoming more important? Voluminous? And exhaling you contract.

Try it on the side, on your right for the moment. Do the bare minimum to allow you to follow the contraction of your self as you exhale. And see what exhaling really is. Why do you feel your body shrink?

33. Now observe as you are doing this, where do you sense ‘me’? ‘Where am I? Is my hand ‘me’? Is my breast? My knee? Or is there up ... Look at the two planes, the right and the left, the north and the south, crossing at the highest point, the zenith. Notice that your contraction and expansion are the clearest sense of a ‘me’, because it is the sole point that stays unchanged whilst one contracts, whether one expands or shrinks or thinks or whatever.

I saw that as soon as I said that one of you placed their hand on their body somewhere. Now someone else has done so too. You don’t need to let me know. You will see for yourselves that as soon as one knows where one is, the surrounding world becomes more agreeable. Because I am ‘me’, around me is a world which I can make my world. And others exist for me. That is omnipotence!

Observe how it is for you. For your ache, for your pleasure, for your fantasy? There was a man born, God knows where in Russia, who travelled through God knows how many countries. He learned, he knew things, he did things that were good for him and also for others. He travelled a long way and has come here just to allow you to learn a bit more the sense of yourself<sup>5</sup>. You see how important *you* are, each and every one of you? How do you know that this is not how it is?

Every child knows that the world turns around herself. That the world exists for her. If this were not the case, she would never be able to grow up and become something. It is only by continuing like this that you begin to understand too that this is also immaturity. We need to be able to accord importance to ourselves in our own private world. There is nothing more important than oneself. As long as I am alive the sun shines for me, and you are born for me. Everything I see, everything that mankind has ever done was done for me. In my personal world there is nothing more important than me. And in your world there is nothing more important than you. You can change your husband, lose your children, have others, but it is your world. It is each of our worlds. In that world there is nothing more important. The whole world turns around us, the North Pole is above us, the South Pole is there, relative to us. The right is to one side relative to us, and the left. When I exhale I contract and the whole world contracts. When I inhale, look, I become more significant, I increase in volume. I know how to do it. Now, outside there are other worlds. But in my world I am the most important thing. That you need to know. The world needs to turn around us. But as we live in a society, there are other people also with their own worlds, and in comparison with the whole world, we are insignificant. Nothing.

You have to ensure that your world, our world, is acceptable to the others who are here with us.

34. Turn a bit onto your right, er..., on your left please. Just a little, not much. Place your feet so they are comfortable. Now use your right hand to point towards the zenith, the highest point. Gently. Don’t lift. Gently. See if your arm lifts like in a dream as you inhale. Be gentle. If it won’t lift by itself, don’t make it lift.

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<sup>5</sup> Translator’s note: this phrase might also be understood to imply a feeling for the meaning of existence

I don't know if you ever read the archery book by Herrigel<sup>6</sup>, who learnt how to shoot a bow and arrow in the Far East. His master showed that he could hold the bow without aiming and without reflecting. He simply fired the bow and shot the arrow which went exactly where it should and where he wanted. Then he closed his eyes and shot a second arrow that struck the first. How did he do this? Well, in the same way that you have just done. It's a case of moving one's hand and organizing oneself in an extraordinary way, the optimal way for our system.

Now try very gently with your right hand, point to the highest point with your index finger. In other words, at the point above your navel where the two planes north-south and east-west cross. Note that if you make a mistake, you find that your world is also mistaken. And the world of the people around you too. There is no particular reason that you will make a mistake, because if you simply do what you want to do, you will be a part of the living world and as correct as all other living beings. You can not do harm in your world. It will be correct, however move gently.

If some of you feel you want to ... that you are falling asleep, you couldn't give me a higher complement. Don't worry. Continue to the highest point with your finger like that, whether it is clear to you or not. Don't look at the others. It is your world. Be gentle.

Change position so you can feel that you can do what you wish. It doesn't matter how, but simply to allow yourself to do this, this easiest of tasks. What comes into your mind, what you think, the way in which you move should be your way? Try very gently. Observe if, in breathing in, your hand doesn't just lift and lower as if the air you have drawn in is lifting it. As it comes back down with your exhalation observe, it comes down a little bit, and you can breathe out again slowly and make it come down, and inhale and make it go up.

Now search throughout your body for any parts that will not obey your wishes. You can observe that a great number of the things that prevent you from reaching your hand out or doing as you wish are found within the in-and exhalation. And that is the reason that your legs are strange. Everyone has a different pair of legs and a different world. That's right.

35a. Leave that now. Place your hands and arms as you wish. Lengthen your legs, lengthen them. It doesn't matter how, just have them long. Observe how you feel. I see some of you have crossed your arms. Cross your arms on your chest.

Cross your arms. Don't interlace your fingers, just cross your arms in your normal way. Cross your arms. Cross them on your chest like someone who has got nothing to do. Some of you have crossed your arms but they are not *crossed*. They are not crossed. They need to be crossed. One hand should be in the crook of the elbow. One hand in your elbow. Well, fancy that, some of you can't do it.

35b. Now very, very gently, inhale and try to move your head in this plane, to lift your head as if you wanted, with your eyes closed, to look at the zenith, the highest point. If you wish you only need to lift your head one millimeter. At the same time bring your hands, as they are, to touch your forehead, but also just one millimeter. Just observe what needs to happen.

Do you need to inhale to do it, to do it like God would? Do you need to inhale or to exhale when you think about touching with your arms, moving the forehead like that? Your arms move together just as they are. They lift off your chest so as to touch your forehead. At the same time your forehead wants to touch your hands. But there is no need to *actually* touch. It's enough to think 'I am going to do it', just like your hand earlier did not actually need to go to the North Pole, but could just indicate that you knew what you wanted.

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<sup>6</sup> Zen in the Art of Archery by Eugen Herrigel



Now, gently with the arms crossed, with your hands hidden in the crooks of your elbows, like a person loafing around thinking he's got nothing to do. No, *your* arms are not crossed. Your left hand is .. oh dear! Not like that! Just cross your arms like normal. There you go. Gently.

35c. Now lift your arms and in your thoughts touch them to your forehead like that.

36. Now that you are there, you ask yourself, 'who is this me who goes..., where is this point in my body, in my self, in my ideas? Where is "me"? In my hand? In my nose? In my eyes? In my head?

(End of lesson)



## Lesson # 8: Clock in three positions

Duration of the original recording: 45 Minutes

1a. Please sit down. Sit facing the front. Sit in the oriental way [*cross legged*], in one way or another, and arrange yourself so that you touch the sole of one foot to the other as if you wanted to clap with your feet. The soles of your feet touch. Now lean on your hands behind you on the floor and fill your stomach to the front. That's to say, your *hara*. The lower stomach expands forwards.

Your stomach weighs heavy and hangs in front between the legs. You notice that for this to happen your body straightens up, your head straightens. If you do not straighten up it won't happen. Your body might straighten, maybe by itself. There you go. Your spine lifts and a hollow at the base of your back appears doesn't it? It increases and your spine emerges from between your shoulders.

1b. Now draw your stomach in. Draw it in completely.

See how your back becomes rounded and your head drops between your shoulders. Draw your stomach in. That's right. If your hands are too close you will not be pressing with them. If you press with your hands your back will round. This is whilst drawing your stomach in. If the stomach doesn't pull in enough we'll make it do so.

1c. Now start the movement again, continue with it. Once with your stomach forwards..., don't lift your head deliberately. Continue to draw your stomach in and push it out, to the front.

Clearly, we also work with the lower back muscles, in the lower part. So, carry on with the movement.

2. Now imagine you are sitting on the dial of a large watch. A pendulum clock. Sitting like that, twelve is towards your feet isn't it. The clock face is in front of you so twelve is towards your feet and six o'clock is towards your hands behind you. Continue with the movement, drawing your stomach in and expanding it out, pushing it forwards and downwards. That's right.

And notice that when you push your stomach forwards the points of maximum pressure on your sitting bones move towards twelve o'clock? When your stomach moves forwards the pressure on the underside of your pelvis, on your ischial tuberosities, in other words the two bones upon which one sits, the two round bones at the bottom of your pelvis, this pressure moves towards your feet, in other words towards twelve o'clock. And when you draw in your stomach and round your back the pressure moves back, towards six o'clock. To make this movement one could equally well say "move from twelve to six o'clock. Twelve to six." Do it more and more simply. Notice how at twelve o'clock your head lifts up out from between your shoulders. And at six o'clock your head sinks between your shoulders. It's quite funny: at midday everyone sticks their head out to see what is going on and at six o'clock everyone tucks themselves away. That's it, observe what happens with your shoulders, what you do when you lean on your hands and your stomach moves forwards. At twelve o'clock you press with your hands more strongly. But don't do it on purpose; it just happens that by shifting your weight in a certain way, pressing with your hands becomes necessary. That is how it happens. You don't need to press deliberately.

Now continue watching what happens from twelve to six. At twelve, the knees open. Look. The head comes out and the knees separate a little. At six the knees close. They come closer together. This is another way of differentiating. As you can see, your legs rest on the floor and you move your pelvis in order to create movement in your hip joints. The movement is in your hip joints but without any need for your legs to make an effort because normally we make movements in the hip, in the hip joints whereby the antigravity muscles, the extensors, are working but flexor muscles aren't. The adductors work, the abductors don't. But lying like that the legs do nothing. The pelvis does the movement on behalf of the hips. You will see the effect of this. You will learn something that you didn't know before.

3a. Good, lie on your back.

Now see with differentiation..., some of you are rubbing your arms..., look, you were supporting yourself and sitting down, [*but*] people's shoulders and arms are in such poor condition that they can't support themselves on their hands for three minutes without getting pain in their elbows and shoulders. This is because our experience of our own bodies doesn't even amount to ten years' worth. Personally, if I drive a car for ten years I know it better than that. All of you know your own bicycle better than that. Well, organize how you are sitting the next time we do it so that you can put your hands in such a way that you can sit for at least five minutes without hurting. I believe that one can remain seated for half an hour without it hurting, providing that one knows how to use one's shoulders, arms and hands and back in the way that we are made to do.

3b. Good, now lying down, try the same movement from twelve to six o'clock.

No, just as you are, lying. Do the movement twelve - six o'clock. Observe: at twelve your back arches. You don't need to breathe loudly; breathe freely. You see that the pressure in your back goes downward, towards your feet, towards twelve. At six o'clock your stomach moves inwards and the pressure on your pelvis rises up towards S1 [*the 1<sup>st</sup> sacral vertebra*], the lumbar region. Pay attention to what happens to your head. Notice how your head moves like your pelvis does. Twelve o'clock and six o'clock. At twelve your chin lowers. At six o'clock it moves away from your throat. Your head also moves on a small clock face, moving between twelve and six o'clock, but with a smaller movement.

4a. Good, now put your legs..., open your legs and touch the soles of your feet together. That's right. Bring your arms beside your body, with your palms on the floor. Try to move twelve-six, twelve-six.

Notice how your head also moves from twelve o'clock to six o'clock.

4b. Now continue to do this whilst thinking about how the movement of the pelvis comes as far as the head and makes it move in exactly the same way.

Where? Notice the movement of your pelvis. Follow the movement as it passes through each vertebra to reach the atlas and axis vertebrae which move the head. The whole body is moving via your chest as it rests on the floor, seeing as your ribs are touching the floor and press on it with their weight, the weight of the body. So, the spinal column goes through and moves each and every joint between the ribs and the vertebrae. In other words, all twelve pairs of ribs move like that.

4c. Now increase the speed of the movement.

Do it with the soles of the feet together. Accelerate the movement. Simple but faster.

4d. Stop for moment but move the head in just the same way. You will notice that if you move your head like this your pelvis will move whether you want it or not.

Otherwise the head will slide on the floor but if you do the same movement as before with the pelvis, like before, your head was pressing on the floor and it didn't slide. Now you could make your head slide! So, do the movement with the head and the pelvis will also do it, but clearly with a smaller movement than before. Don't let the back of your head slide on the floor. Let it press like before.

4e. Good. Continue with the twelve o'clock, six o'clock movement with the pelvis and let the head do what it will, what it can.

4f. Lie down and observe what you sense new in your contact with the floor. What you didn't feel before.

5. And now lift your shoulders and head high enough to allow you to rest on your forearms and shoulders. Excuse me, your elbows and forearms obviously. Now, more, more..., now place your elbows neither too close nor too far away so that they can support you well, which means the shoulder will be directly above the elbow. If the shoulder is vertically above the elbow it is the most logical, the best, the simplest [*position*]. Now bend your knees towards..., open the knees and press the soles of the feet one to the other. Now start to do twelve o'clock-six o'clock.

Once again notice how the pressure moves towards twelve and towards six o'clock. Observe your head now: it is not doing anything. For the head to move you need to do it on purpose. Continue doing the movement. Notice now how, when you move to twelve o'clock, your lumbar region, the arch of your lower spine, your lowest ribs, the whole of your lower spine, and the lower part of your thoracic cage are all far from the floor. There you go. Pay attention to how much the knees open at twelve o'clock, and how much they close at six o'clock. You don't need to do it on purpose, it happens all by itself. One can not move the pelvis without there being movement in the knees. Even if the legs lie passively as they are now. Notice how for many of you it is difficult to stay in this position with your head. It starts to hurt at the sterno-cleido-mastoid muscles at the front [*of the throat*]. This proves that your spine is not supple and that your rib cage is not what it is made to be. You will see that at the end of the lesson you will be comfortable staying like this. It will be pleasant. In other words, we will have improved something.

6. Now lie on your back and think about how we have done three different positions so far: one seated, the next half way to lying down, and the third lying. We did them in reverse order, well not exactly. We did the first, then the third, then the second. Now notice which parts of your body touch the floor more clearly than when you did the first movement.

The pelvis. The hollow of the back. The shoulder blades. Then pay attention to the breathing. The chest will definitely be suppler than it was before and the breathing will be somewhat different as a result, much softer, much less evident in spite of the fact that it is probably deeper now.

7a. Now, lying like you are, open your knees and touch the soles of your feet one to the other. Now push the stomach down towards twelve o'clock, then from twelve to half past two. That means towards the right femur, the right thigh, in such a way that the right knee moves towards the floor. To do so you need to tilt your stomach. Push the stomach forwards in the direction of the right thigh several times. Several times. And again.

Continue to do it. Observe that the right knee moves away from the shoulder as you do so. It doesn't just move to the right but it also lengthens away towards the foot, away from the head. Continue doing this until you sense a movement of the left hip lifting off the floor. Your left hip joint lifts off the floor. The left side of the bone needs to work much more than the right so that the knee can start to move towards the floor. Just notice that when you do this one shoulder slides on the floor in a different direction to the other. Which one goes up and which is pulled down? One shoulder is pulled downwards, the other pushed upwards. One downwards, and very clearly so. The legs can move with the pelvis obviously, otherwise it is not possible to touch the right knee to the floor. Little by little the knee will come closer to touching the floor. In other words, the movement of the pelvis will be such that the knee can lengthen away from the head enough to be able to touch the floor.

7b. Now do the same on the left.

Gently, observe your first movement. How was it and how much did you move on the right, and see how it differs to the left now? Try again to the right. Just once to the right to remember how it was then carry on with the left. Continue to the left side only. Notice that your head and your face turn to the left too. Which shoulder is pulled down now? There is something in your shoulder blade which pulls towards the feet. Not a lot because the shoulder blade can't move as much as ten centimeters, even if there is almost a moment when it could move this much.

7c. Now compare your two sides

Pay attention to the foot first. Some of you have the foot a kilometer away from your crotch, for others it is in their crotch. Both are wrong. Move the foot as close as possible to the body to the point where it is no longer very comfortable. So this is what you should not do because it is not comfortable. Now move the feet away from you, more, more, more, till it becomes less comfortable. Now find a way to discover a position that is comfortable for you. Well there you go: one has to force people to find the position that makes their own life easy. They are more inclined to complicate their own lives. Psychoanalysts say people exhaust themselves. I believe that people don't know what is good for themselves.

Good. Continue to do the movement to the right and left till you can see that there is a difference, that one knee moves towards the floor more easily than the other. Continue and see which one it is. There is an appreciable difference for the majority of people because the spine and pelvis are not symmetrical. Looking at you here I can see that for myself. For a lot of people one knee moves much easier towards the floor than the other. Easier. Now if you.... Sense it. If you can find the place where this difference is produced it will resolve immediately. At what level in the spinal column do you sense that there is a difference? On which side are your ribs more supple and allow the movement? On which side are they stiffer?

8. Now come up half way to sitting, in other words rest on your elbows with your feet as they were before. Make the movement to half past two and half past ten [*Dr. Feldenkrais modifies this in the next line*], to the left and the right. If it is two thirty on the right it must be nine thirty on the left.

Observe how one of your knees will move towards the floor more easily in this position too. Also observe how now you will push on your left elbow in order to move your right knee to the floor and note also how the movement of the right knee, in other words the right hip, pulls your left shoulder which then presses on your left elbow. How is it [*the force, or the movement*] transmitted from your right hip to your left shoulder? Follow your spine, the musculature. I have pointed out a diagonal line. Now observe the other one and you will see whatever it is that stops both your knees moving the same. In other words, you are straightening the slight scoliosis that you may have. There. You will notice how one knee moves more easily than the other. You'll notice that you don't push through your elbows in the same way, that you don't use your shoulder blades in the same way, nor the intercostal muscles nor your back muscles. If you learn to feel this, you will be able to straighten it at once. There you go.

9. Now please sit. Sit and bring your feet one to the other. Your soles. Have your hands behind you on the floor and repeat the same movement. Half past two and half past nine.

Notice how in spite of the difference you need to learn each thing. Your knees don't touch the floor. It is the same about how you pay attention to how you use your arms, shoulders, your muscles, and the effort that you are making in general. Without all this the knees will not go down just by themselves. Also of course one should be able to see [*open*] the mouth; show the teeth. You see the teeth of people who smile. Athletes say "cheese"<sup>7</sup>. You know "cheese"? "Fromage"? When you say "cheese" you have to show your teeth so photographers always go "say cheese". That means "smile". There, it is much easier to work when people smile. There's no need to grin like an idiot! When a smile comes easily, when you can smile at the smallest stimulation, then the face is relaxed, otherwise not. Why are you like that? Has Death come knocking? What are you doing?

10. Good. Now would you like to stand up and walk a little to see how you sense your hip that we have worked? Walk a bit.

11. Good, now sit on the floor again. Bend your knees and bring the soles of your feet into contact with each other and lean on the floor behind with your hands. Note how the majority of you are now leaning more than before, your hands are further back, but not too far. Your weight is uniformly distributed between your hands and your pelvis and so there is no discomfort. Now would you like to make the movement of your stomach towards twelve, and now make a circle. In other words, the point of pressure on the floor needs to go from twelve to one o'clock, to two o'clock, three o'clock, four, five, and to six o'clock where the stomach is drawn in. From six o'clock continue with the movement in a clockwise direction.

Just observe how the contact on the floor sketches a circle like a clock face. That means the point where the pressure is the most. Now bring your attention to the following: do I move past each hour on the clock in the same way? It is possible to go from three to six in a straight line rather than an arc. That may happen with those whose pelvis and spine are not supple or where there is a scoliosis or some other deformation in the spine. Rather than tracing a true circle they may follow the hours where the spine allows it and a straight line where the spine does not. That's it.

Notice how, when you do that, one shoulder lifts and the other descends, how you press more on one hand than the other and how your lowest rib moves away from your elbow on the one side. When you pass three o'clock your left ribs are at their furthest separation possible from your left elbow. Look. Continue. There.

12. Now do the same in the other direction. In other words, move in a counterclockwise direction. That means start by going to eleven o'clock, ten o'clock, nine o'clock, and so on.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Feldenkrais uses the English word

Now make two movements.

13. Lie down. Pay attention to how your pelvis lies on the floor and how your feet turn outwards.

Note how even your toes are separated to their optimal possible. Pay attention. None of you have your feet together like you did at the start when you were lying and many had them together. Do you see also that your legs are opened equally? That means they are equalized in the sense that the joint allows the leg muscles to be long.

14. Now bring the soles of your feet together and do a circle to the front, twelve; to one o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock, then observe.

Continue with this but now pay very close attention as you go around the higher hours on the clock, by which I mean around six o'clock, five o'clock, four o'clock... Some of you are doing one side and are going from two to three to four, whilst others go straight to nine o'clock without having passed seven or eight. Well, continue and as you do so notice how your head also moves around hour by hour, as long as you neither stiffen your chest nor make any useless effort. The head does exactly the same movement, hour by hour, but on a smaller scale. Lift, observe how your head describes the same circle as your pelvis and your chin too, only smaller.

Over there is someone whose breathing has improved so much that she has to yawn constantly. That's good. It is proof that it is working well.

15. Now change direction.

By which I mean counterclockwise. Open the knees, open them. If you hold them together no one could get them apart. For those of you who are not clamping your legs together on purpose you can now open them far more than before. Unlike those who are holding them closed, those with adductor muscles..., *Oh là là*. Like for you. [*Translator's Note: Dr Feldenkrais addresses an individual*] God is protecting your valuables there. Your feet should be half way between far away and close by. Go on. Correct your feet if you need to bring them to a comfortable distance which will allow you to open your knees.

16. Lie down for a while and rest. Just pay attention to where there is now contact with the floor.

In California there are thousands of methods completely unknown in the rest of the world, but each with its adherents. There is a whole school of yawners. They yawn all day long. You can look at the people sitting there yawning away. They feel it does them some good. Not just do they think it does them good, they also think it develops their brain. At any moment, before a meal, after a meal, anywhere, they open their enormous mouths wide like this and yawn, constantly, constantly. They yawn so much that it becomes contagious and then afterwards you feel ridiculous with all the others and so you cease to be able to yawn. [*Translator's Note: the group laughs*]



17a. Good. Now please sit semi-reclined, by which I mean rest on your elbows and hands, and touch the soles of your feet together. Touch your soles together. Now make a circle in a clockwise direction, from twelve to one o'clock, and observe if it is different here.

See how there are only a few people who can make the movement completely freely and for whom their hips are free enough that when they pass two thirty, their knees touch the floor. Good. A little, just a little. This person should be able to do it too. You see, for certain people their knees are not opening enough to permit them to do the whole circle on their elbows. Whatever you do don't hurry. Aim for uniformity in the movement. That is the most important thing because uniform movement rebalances your legs and straightens out your spine, and equalizes your breath in the lungs. There is always one that is dominant over the other. And one hemisphere of the brain is also dominant.

17b. Change direction.

18a. Now stay as you are, seated. Rest there with your feet to the front as usual. No, your hands are behind you on the floor. Now do two quick circles in one direction, and two in the other direction.

Just observe how much more your knees are open now when compared with the start of the class. Observe how they are open.

18b. Now on your elbows: two quick circles and two in the opposite direction. Uniform. Uniform. That's right. Two circles in the opposite direction; quickly; easily.

18c. Now lie on the floor and do the same thing

Fast! Notice how when you do it fast the circles are no longer uniform, how all the imperfections become apparent. Ah! That's why one has to do it slowly in order to learn. To improve one has to do it slowly. It is necessary to see what goes wrong. When one does it fast one sees the mistakes. Then it is necessary to slow back down in order to correct and improve that which becomes apparent when done quickly.

19. Now just a second longer. Bring your feet together again. Make one slow movement, in a clockwise direction, and circle your head in the opposite direction. Turn your head in a counterclockwise direction.

You would need a whole lesson to learn how to differentiate this movement. Do you see your legs? Do you see what we still have to do? Differentiation of the movements of the body for most people, for the majority of people, one could say for virtually the whole of humanity, is equivalent to that in childhood at about three or four years. This is the reason that we can not live together free of war, without slaughtering each other. Such is mankind's shame. But what do you expect when one's head is undifferentiated, when one has the desires of a child of four or ten years old, when one uses one tenth of one's capacities? What we do is already very nice, but some animals have more sense than us and are better able than us.

21. Stand up. Walk around and see how it feels after all that.

How are your legs, your hip joints? What do you feel in your feet? Are you more erect than normal? Your body should be comfortable, easy. Only for me personally I find that it is a bit too much work for one day. That's what people tell me off for, that I work too much and that the people who come here also have to. They work the whole day and then come back in the evening to work some more. Then someone says to me "you work too much", and the lady who said it is not listening. That's just the way it goes!

(End of lesson)



Moshé Feldenkrais

**Eight Lessons in  
Awareness through Movement**

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