Discussion

Angela 2 — Week 6, Day 4, Session 2 — 75 minutes

Summary: Russell invites a brief reflection on yesterday's focusing in threes, then the group shares what a shared subject opened. Talk turns to solutions finding them, inter-affecting, and choice. Russell links this with Feldenkrais — potent acture, dynamic stability, and a midline that can still move.

Opening

[Russell:] Just tuning into Robert, and hoping his trip is going well, and that his journey back today is — it seems interesting. Now more than interesting. Touching, and curious, that — well, I know some of the history of him as a father, and with his children, and now with his grandson, and that it's all happening on Father's Day.

So, for the two of you, I just wanted to tell you about yesterday afternoon. Oh no, you were here. I didn't think you were. Okay.

What you missed yesterday afternoon was, we were in groups of three. One person was using either something from that yellow sheet I gave out, or some reflection on a learning that's in process, or anything else to focus on. And one person wrote down the session, and one person was a companion, and the other two, in turn, used that subject for their own focusing.

So they didn't choose their own, except — could they find meaningfulness in that subject for themselves? Not about the other person's experience, but about themselves.

And we're going to spend some time reflecting on that. So maybe close your eyes for a few moments.

Yeah, just drop down. Ground yourself here on the spot.

And begin with just connecting, through your sensations, to the ground.

When you have a pretty good sense of the ground, you can open to the larger space for the sound, keeping the ground there also, or having it there.

Sensing how the inner space, or this spot, and the larger space can live together.

And perhaps notice that the moment, without effort — without great effort, just an orientation of attention — can include the breathing, and all that can be alive. Just as a kind of welcoming.

[Silence 32 seconds]

[Russell:] This present thing — we can invite a subject, or invite reflections on your experiencing yesterday, during your threesome.

And so many things go on there, in terms of your process. What it's like for the speaker, their process, and then that experience of returning to the same subject after something similar was investigated by others. How the field was influenced by that.

The experience of the second and third person. What was it like to find a direction of inquiry on a subject that began with someone else? Was there meaningfulness, easily available, not available? Some kind of connection to the subject.

Something inside not like that.

But again, how your own process, and whatever you're working with, is influenced by being with others around a similar territory, or at least a connected territory.

And of course some of the more specific phenomena. What you noticed. What you could learn about your way of processing from being with others, or from having somewhat of a transcript of the session.

Just take another minute to let all that kind of be there, as you're still either sensing the ground, kind of effortlessly, or returning to it intentionally, if the reflecting takes you away from just being here also.

[Silence 41 seconds]

[Russell:] So I'd like to spend some time learning from each other, reflecting together on what comes with all that.

[Silence 33 seconds]

One experience teaching another

[Participant 1:] One of the things that was suggested in my trio was that I had an experience where — well, the suggestion was, like in a Feldenkrais lesson, this experience teaching another experience.

I don't think that's quite exactly on topic, but that's what came up for me afterwards. Maybe within the process of focusing, one experience can help another experience learn something.

[Russell:] Yeah. Let me see if I'm getting it. I'll just give a possible example, to see if I'm following one way that might occur.

Could it be that someone has an experience, in a focusing process, of really being able to let go of something? That the experience of letting go might be able to generalize to some other situation, where they haven't had that yet?

[Participant 1:] Yeah.

[Russell:] So there's a way that our learnings are not just specific to situations. Although if we're not conscious, we can sometimes hold them to situations. I think it's a helpful reminder.

[Participant 1:] How the Feldenkrais work was — well, I was actually thinking in a couple of different ways.

One way that I experience the Feldenkrais work, as part of the ground that we're working with, is this. When our body is locked in habitual states, it's very easy for the historic self to feel solid.

When we do the kinds of movements that we do, that allow a kind of interrupting, even in subtle ways, of the way you hold yourself together — that allows, in this other situation of focusing, less solidity that you're running into. More permeability of the historic self. So maybe you could see something in a new way, because you're already kind of loosened up in your patterns.

You get it? So that's one way I see the infrastructure being prepared for learning.

Another way, which is kind of a subset of that, but not exactly the same. So often with the lessons, as so often in a focusing session, there's an experience of more space in the body. And we often will feel taller, more spacious. That sense of spaciousness, in my experience, makes us more available to something new that hasn't been experienced before. It's not so jammed in there.

And maybe more specific to your point. There's a modeling, from the physical body, that change is possible. That I'm not a solid entity, and that I experience some sense of plasticity. And that experience calls up — not even consciously thinking about it, but calls up the sense of, well, maybe I'm not just that. Maybe I'm not always going to be like that. Maybe there's something that can —

You get what I mean? So you have a kind of physical model of possibility.

[Russell:] Great. Thank you. That was helpful, I think, to bring that forward. Because sometimes that's a little obscure for people. I get that question a lot from people in the program. I love doing the movements, they're really interesting, but how do they connect to everything else? I guess I get more aware of myself. Is that what it's for?

And that's part of it. Part of it.

Shared life

[Participant 2:] What you just said is, to me, so important. Reinforcing that — that's something I've kind of looked for, that integration of these elements. He really integrated that beautifully just now, and personal. Kind of, for me, the key to what this work is about.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant 2:] But to go back to the original question. I think for our group, it was really easy, because the first focus essentially was dealing with life. Life is — the struggle, some of the struggles we go through in life. The three of us could all easily elaborate experience on that.

And what felt so valuable was the experience of shared experience, and the connection. I've been reflecting on the community-building aspect of this work, and how the focusing contributes to that, in offering this shared inner experience.

And how, like today, I feel really — people were saying yesterday, when did we get here? Arriving, and being with our lives, and getting reoriented, and struggling with that a little bit. I have felt that a lot of us are more consciously shining a light on that process than we have in the past. And I'm feeling really more here.

And how the focusing really contributes to weaving that container that connects us and holds us, through that shared inner experience. And it's not a metaphysical or spiritual experience. It's the life experience.

[Russell:] Yes.

[Participant 3:] The speaker asked us, the two listeners, she gave us both permission to comment, which was like, whoa.

And one of the ways — and she didn't know it — is that we followed her gestures. So there were just some different things happening, and how we were together.

I just share that. It allowed some tweaking of the process. Like, oh, I guess we can tweak this process.

[Russell:] Yes. I'm really happy to hear that. I want to underline that.

We've all had, whether we feel well-versed in focusing or not, enough experiencing with the language and with the attitude, that tweaking — to listen to what works for you, and to kind of experiment — I think is really healthy.

As you remember from the first week, I was saying I don't teach in a linear form. Any of the things that I do. Because I'm hoping for that organicness to arise, which underlies the movements, and the attitude of focusing, and even the sitting practice.

And that's what I'm inching toward. Not wanting a theory or a form to be in front of that, but to be behind it.

[Participant 3:] Yes. That's good to hear.

Solutions finding us

[Participant 4:] So I was the second person — sorry, first listener to the first person. And I found it kind of challenging, in a different way.

The first challenge was making sure that the first person knew that when I went into my reflection, which is built on their topic, I was really concerned that as I went through that, it would sound like I'm seeking my solution on that topic. That I would be implying it would be an appropriate solution for that person.

So I was a little nervous about going there, and saying, I'm not trying to indicate to you how you should deal with this. I'm just trying to figure out how. I felt a little constricted in that. I had to clarify that if it sounds like overlap, or if it sounds like I'm going there, that's not my intention. But I was conscious of it the whole time. It's like, how would anyone misread this? This is my process. I don't want them to think I'm being too undirected, or something. So that was hard for me.

And then picking the elements of the first person's topic that I would then pursue was a little difficult. It was easy to go to the easy one, the more emotional, and something like that. But I had to say to myself, you've already been there, so let's not go back there. Let's look a little deeper.

Very conscious of the fact that we didn't have a lot of time, and so you couldn't bounce around too much. So there are these two conflicting things. One is, I'm a little bit confined to staying somewhat with the thread. And a little bit concerned that it would be misread.

[Russell:] I just want to acknowledge that. That's touching. That you're carrying this concern. Touching for me, anyway, that what's living in you is really wanting to respect the other's process.

I would love you to find a way that that didn't feel like a constriction. But I respect the respect that you're giving, and the concern that you're giving there.

I do want to throw out something for your next process. Could it be very valuable not to look for a solution?

[Participant 4:] Absolutely.

[Russell:] Solution finding can be wonderful. I'm not against solution finding. But I'm just wanting to stand up for solutions finding us.

Not that that's the only way. But I want to encourage that in your possibilities. That your light itself creates an environment where, from the witnessing, from the presencing, the right action unfolds. It calls you toward itself.

And sometimes solution finding short-circuits that, because you go to what you already know to solve the problem, rather than something you never thought of having the space to find you.

[Participant 4:] Well, you're also bringing old language and old vocabulary.

[Russell:] Yeah, there you go. That's what I mean.

[Participant 4:] Have to learn the words.

[Russell:] It's practice. And it's great when we hear our old language not quite saying what we mean, to pause and go, oh, let me shift that. That doesn't feel just right. Because in that moment, your inner life feels heard.

And it's like we're affirming the inner life, not just when we do a focusing process, but just talking to people.

It happens often with Linda and me, when we're having our tea or coffee in the morning, and we're sitting there, just beginning our day, where there's a little tweak. How my first way of saying something doesn't feel just right. And I go, well, that's not quite it. Give me just a second. It's more — and sometimes it's just another adjective added to it, or a slight tweak on the word, that lines up. And then it feels whole. Then there's a wholeness inside.

And that wholeness is what I listen for a lot. A sense of, that feels kind of complete for that moment.

You had something.

[Participant 5:] So, my idea was, solution is finding us. I was second, and the first person's word was backspace.

[Russell:] It was what?

[Participant 5:] Backspace.

[Russell:] Backspace.

[Participant 5:] I didn't really relate to it, and I didn't even remember working with it. But it was just so — a very influential, slow flow. It was the perfect word. As a metaphor, as an actual movement, as a way of understanding, as a way of going into my process.

And yeah, it was just — and I can speak for the other two. It just flew nicely around. It was beautiful.

[Russell:] Yeah. It was really interesting.

[Participant 5:] I loved the process. The word was a surprise. And the process flowed. It was really interesting.

[Russell:] Great. Yes.

[Participant 6:] I have the same opinion, I would say. At the end of the process, my thought was, this is brilliant.

We are perfect speakers and perfect listeners. And the fact that we are speaking about the same topic and not the same topic, with our lives — it makes it live as a whole for the person. And it was really, more than interesting, it was really touching, how the first person spoke the second time. And it evolved quite naturally. And it's really brilliant.

[Russell:] Imperfect listeners.

[Participant 6:] And it's very powerful, I think. This way we picked a topic that is the same topic and not the same topic. It's really helpful, to go elsewhere in our feelings, in our sensations, in the thoughts.

[Russell:] Yeah. Beautiful.

[Participant 7:] A couple of things. I want to echo Participant 6. For me, focusing is always brilliant. And I have a very disciplined practice with my partner. And I'm so grateful for the process. It brings me to my knees every week, either listening, being present, or focusing.

So with that being said, I was the first speaker. So I experienced speaking twice, which I didn't hear was going to happen. So when we went around the whole circle, they're looking at me and saying, okay, go again.

And just backing up to my unfolding. There was no agenda. It was just going into my body, and whatever arrived was my situation. And it wasn't rehearsed. It wasn't something I had thought about before. I mean, I thought about it. So that's cool. I love that so much. It just comes, and it's perfect.

So twenty-five minutes is quite a bit of time with two new people in your life. And that vulnerability — focusing with people I've never focused with before, and yet the comfort, the safety, the trust that I experienced was really profound. I noticed it. So it was easier for me to just unfold this situation.

And then my experience, after going through my process, was I was looking for a solution. I have a situation where I'd like to find a solution, right now. So I appreciate hearing, maybe look at that a little differently.

And I'll just speak up here and say that my experience of the other two people in my group, processing after me, was that they got something stirred up in them that was completely different from my stuff. And it was yet so connected. We were all looking for a way to figure something, feel good about, or just understand more about.

And then lastly, speaking again. It was as if the solution just had to come. Like, okay, I have to do this again, so I better have a solution. And not that I was saying that to myself, but as I look at it now, I see that I'm eager to find a solution. And here's a solution, because problems have solutions. And that's my will. That's my will.

So I just want my group to know that I reflected on it later, and it's not the solution. There's another problem.

[Russell:] Good. Well, part of the solution did find her.

[Participant 7:] Part did. And knowing that if I get lost in looking for the solution, that's going to be in my way. So those two things are steps on the way.

[Russell:] Yeah. And can I give you one more hint?

The place in there that really wants a solution is a valuable place. It's not to get rid of it, deny it. It's just not to merge with it. Let it have some room in there also.

Also is a really important word. For me, anyway. You may not find it so.

I notice that in my inner life, and very often when I'm speaking to people, especially when there's some sort of inner conflict about something — knowing that it's not, I have to get rid of that in order to have that. This also has the sense of and.

And without the also, often it feels like I'm in a straitjacket, because I gotta choose this or this. And when the inner life feels, well, there's room for the place that wants the solution — also — implicitly, when you hear that, space opens. Because it's there, but there's more than that there. Also already implies the larger space.

It's a very helpful little word.

[Participant 8:] Yeah. If you only have two choices, you're stuck. It's not a choice. It's not a true choice.

[Russell:] Yeah, and that's pressure.

[Participant 8:] I was just thinking — if you're hungry and you don't want a sandwich, it's a problem.

[Russell:] So that may not work for you. For me, that's been very effective.

No. He really meant that true human choice begins when you don't feel a this and a that.

And you're pointing out, well, if it's this sandwich or this sandwich, I do have a third choice. I have a choice not to eat. But that's not what he meant, in my experience of Moshe. So then in this case, maybe it would be the fourth choice. Then he would say, it's really at least the third, fourth, or fifth, when you can really see — if we're dealing with real human situations of what do I do — to keep opening up the sense of possibility. That's what he's pointing toward.

Acture

[Participant 7:] One of the other people had this vision of a field of openness. And when I went again, all those possibilities that were in little kind of bubbles went into the field, and just kind of went up into the air, and sort of expanded out into a larger field. Which is exactly what you were saying. It starts to get smaller, and then it gets bigger, and then it gets really big. But the possibility is.

[Russell:] Yeah. And was it conscious for you, right now, that when you were saying, I could go forward, I could go back, I could go left, I could go right — that that was very specifically something that Feldenkrais talked about?

Okay. So here again, going back to that first point. How the Feldenkrais work is a model. You demonstrated it.

Really. Because what he said was — what he looked at as effective acture. What is acture?

Well, he didn't like the word posture, because posture is based on the word post, which is to be still, to be posted. And he's saying, any engineer looking at the human body is going to say, it's designed for movement. You don't have this teeny base. A teeny base means your center of gravity is high and your stability is low, but it means you have a lot of potential energy.

So when you have these kind of pyramids sitting on their point — three pyramids — you have a very high center of gravity, and a very unstable equilibrium. And that's why, if you read some of his stuff, he taught the ability to turn around the central axis. Like a matador can do, can let a bull get really close. That ability to turn like that, or to shift in a new direction, is what we're designed for.

And then he would say, in usual language, potent posture. But he didn't like the word, so he invented one, which is a good thing to do. He invented a word based in action. He called it acture.

So potent acture, or in traditional language, potent posture, is the ability to move in any direction without a prior reorganization. In other words, you're not so biased to one side that to get off that side, you have to do something in order to move. You're ready to shift.

And that's what you said. I could go forward, I could go back, I could go right, I could go left. So you didn't know it, but you knew it.

And you brought up one of my other points already. Listening for more. Prior reorganization. You're ready to shift.

Let's just pause a second, because I don't want this to go by too quickly. There's a lot that we're touching on, that if we go a little slower, it's not just heady material. It can drop in a little bit.

So we're looking at choices, whether you think of it as three or more, or two. The point is, how can you move from where you are? Do you feel some kind of authentic sense of possibility from your situation, or do you feel trapped in the way you're carrying your situation? Trapped in the options?

And where also was coming in, at least for some people — may not have been for everybody — is the sense of inter-affecting and inter-connecting. That a subject for somebody is a subject for everybody. Maybe. Another one of my favorite words.

And in that inter-affecting, more is brought forward, maybe for everybody, potentially. And that more includes solutions finding it.

And sometimes — and this is a supposition of mine, I alluded to it yesterday — the best way to work on something is not to work on it. But to go inside, maybe with a different subject, but let the field open.

And you can have something in the back of your mind that you're kind of putting out, in your dream life or in the world. I call it asking for guidance about something. And so it lives in the background, and then maybe we bring attention to other things that begin to inform what's in the background.

It's an interesting way of working, not directly on something. It's very Feldenkrais also. Of not working on the problem, but working around it, near it, in other functions that include it.

There's a very similar notion here. It's not that we would never work directly on something that's troubling. It's that so much value can come working near it, around it, also.

Thank you. Let's hear from the next person.

Many perspectives

[Participant 9:] Yes. Totally. Don't be intimidated. It's fantastic. Take that experience from me.

I was either the recorder or the companion. What I came back to was two very different, and wrong, perspectives. And so then I had three perspectives. I'm very enthusiastic about my own, but I felt like I was holding all three of them. So the fourth perspective.

And that was made possible by the structure. Having to listen to them, and not necessarily agree with it, or even adopt it, but sort of entertaining their perspective, which in our case differed dramatically.

So I really wish a first-speaker experience for everybody.

[Russell:] Yeah.

When I first came up with this process, actually a couple of years ago, I was waiting for a sixth week to introduce it, because I thought it needed some more listening skills and stuff like that. Although in one group I've introduced it in the fifth week.

But it began in graduate work, and then some of the — one of the graduate people is more connected to the focusing community, and began introducing it to her focusing partners, who loved it, and brought it to some other focusing partners.

And so I was telling Gene about it. And he's really excited about the community aspect of this kind of work, and the sense of the inter-affecting. And he's really curious to get reports, which I'll give him from my research here, on what happens to the first person. Because he had never thought of that kind of model, that in the same space you could be informed by all that. Because he knew that the whole field would get affected.

[Participant 10:] I was in Participant 12's group, and it's such a funny experience for the three of us.

The way the whole thing started is, someone comes in with your yellow sheet. She says, what is this? There's something on here I've never heard of. What is this? Neutrality, zero point, whatever. And he goes, oh good, let's pick that.

At which point I go, oh shit. I had such resistance. Deep. Like, he really wanted to focus on something that's important to him, not just because she picked this up.

So he was sitting there, and I'm trying, okay, I'm going to be present, I'm going to be present, I'm going to be present. It comes around to me. And I dropped in, and I realized this morning in meditation, it was huge for me. It was huge. It was like the most important thing that could have been picked.

[Participant 11:] The third person is sort of an odd angle. And I think someone illustrated — I mean, I was a timekeeper, writer, not quite sure what to write, not quite sure. And yet it's a remarkable place. And I'm so glad I got to hear this, because my reaction was that. It was a reaction. And I hadn't intended that.

But I had two exquisite images, as Participant 12 said, and Participant 14 said. Very different. And I brought them into my focusing, and it's like, wow, here, look at these. And it just rejected them. Completely.

And it was very much what Participant 7 said. It was so wide, it was so vast, which I now realize, or I think I realize, was because of all the Feldenkrais movement. I mean, it was so huge in there. And so voices came out of far corners and depths, and just stated their opinion of what this neutrality meant. And it was a color.

And so anyway, that was a very different thing that I brought. Not the synthesis I'd expected, but this other. And then there was less need to whirligig these things around, which was exquisite.

But there's the third-person view.

[Russell:] Well, there's your view. And you were the third person. It may be other third-person views, but it's yours.

And so, did anything come from that, that got some more for you? Some more direction, or understanding, or something?

[Participant 11:] Yeah. Something gets. Not to be agreeable is good.

[Russell:] Yeah. And you were really surprised that it hit such an important place, right?

[Participant 10:] Yeah. It was really huge. It is huge. So I mean, I'm happy to share it, but I don't want to share it.

[Participant 12:] That essence of the word. Inter-affecting. I was informed. Like, wow, somebody doesn't have to be positive and enthusiastic about this. I understand it very differently. All these other connotations.

Not assuming so much about other people. What it has been, what it might be, and what it is right at the moment. You don't know all the time.

And you get to know somebody more intimately. I'm fine.

[Participant 13:] Can I ask you — you said corrected, in the best way, but how did you know you were corrected?

[Participant 12:] I meant correction like following a course in the water, and you're deviating, and you have to check the navigation chart to get back on course. I meant corrected by — not right or wrong. I mean informed. And the course changed as a result.

[Participant 13:] But how were you informed?

[Participant 12:] That it could have profound, disturbing implications for somebody else. My take. My images.

[Russell:] So, dealing with this issue, if I have it correctly — I see the confusion on your face. Something about this neutrality and zero point being perceived as, not that. Sort of like that?

Right. And that was a surprise for him. A delightful surprise. So he could have his, but that could add. That brought more to that.

So we're talking about the fact that this one subject that everybody's got to play with isn't necessarily fun for everybody. It can look great, but it's not the same for everybody.

So you didn't go into a situation? You stayed with the word? Or you went into a situation?

[Participant 14:] I went into my situation of growing up in Sweden, which is neutral, and where neutrality is highly valued, and you have these superpowers on either side.

And then it also, for me and my body and my historic self, there's an experience of neutrality as this kind of controlling weight on top of whatever people are feeling. And that's really holding things in place, until they've had enough alcohol that it blows.

But what's amazing is, I stayed with it. I actually realized that from the midline work — again, the ATM informing me — that actually I completely depend on a sense of neutrality, but it's now an embodied neutrality. It's like a midline, where I'm drawing on the two sides of myself to actually inform, moment to moment, the dynamic.

[Russell:] Beautiful. Yes. And that ability to move in any direction is not neutrality like, I stay stuck.

[Participant 14:] Right.

[Russell:] Going back — I love the way this interweaves — going back to acture. Feldenkrais, again, as an engineer, would speak about different kinds of stability.

And the old neutrality was stability at a low center of gravity. It doesn't have much mobility. It's stuck in its place.

This other, what he called dynamic stability, or dynamic instability — or there was another, mobile stability. There's another term, with the instability, that's very helpful, connoting a positive instability. That's not just all over the place, but it can move. It's neither stuck nor unstable. It's a dynamic stability.

[Participant 14:] And what was so interesting too was, I got two body images that were so potent.

The first one, with that sense of being pushed down with this weight of enforced neutrality. I had the feeling of my midline kind of shooting out zig-zaggy energies, like it was trying to go somewhere but couldn't really go anywhere.

And then at the end, when I sensed, okay, so maybe neutrality — there was the sense of the midline, and then all these energies kind of flowing into the midline from both sides.

[Russell:] Oh, yes. That's a beautiful transformation of image.

Can you feel that in your body at all? Can you feel that difference between something getting squeezed and getting squished out, or something coming to its midline and gathering?

Maybe some of us can receive from her something in our bodies. Again, it's a maybe.

Is it possible that we don't only have to rely on our own research, but someone else's research can actually inform our bodily knowing? Not just, oh, now I can use that image when I'm teaching, but actually inform how we are when something feels pressed and stuck.

And we feel like we're trying to maintain neutrality in a situation where something really wants to jump up and down inside, but we're trying to stay neutral, because we think being neutral is a good idea.

And what it means to really have a different kind of midline, that isn't just reactive, but it's not squished either. It's got the sense of possibility and movement.

These are real, living, somatic wisdom, we could say, that we can receive from each other when they connect for us.

So let's just take another few moments to invite that, so that it has just a few more seconds to resonate.

Think of your midline right now, as you're sitting here. Actually going a little bit to an ATM, where we've returned to that, and so it's perfect.

Just have that picture of the place where — it's actually deeper than even the physical body — the place, that neutral line, where left and right are possible, where front and back are possible.

And kind of implicit in that midline is that sense of length in the central axis. So we have the ground, but also that upward attraction. Without trying to do it physically, but just having that inner sense of up, and ground.

Always more

[Participant 15:] Entertaining another participant's perspective was very much appreciated, in the community, on a number of levels.

It was this kind of trying on someone else's experience, and seeing where that kind of landed. And there was also something, to me, really lovely about it. It was like expanding into community. It was a chance to get away from the safety of just one-on-one, and expanding a little by adding another.

And there being something really kind of precious about also being witnessed by another. The companionship of being witnessed by another, as the companion.

I was kind of curious, coming from this, how we explored the scribe's role. Because I couldn't quite remember. Did we do something with what was written?

[Russell:] Different people did different things with what was written.

[Participant 15:] I felt the time was a little squashed for that to be explored.

[Russell:] Right, for that last part.

[Participant 15:] At the end it was a bit squashed, and I felt that last possibility, of exploring together what we experienced, is important.

[Russell:] Yeah. Even if we choose not to use the time. But if we do, it's nice to have the space to explore. Have a little bit more time.

[Participant 16:] And just my experience. Certainly as someone who sat at a desk for far too many hours, and then discovered Feldenkrais, and was very hidden, and still has to watch out for that.

Just thinking about your question, and coming to your Esalen retreats. I was bowled over by the fact that there were a bunch of new people in that retreat who'd never meditated before.

And it just really reinforced to me how important the Feldenkrais is, because it allows you to come to find out what this is. Especially for people like me, but also to just inhabit that, allowing the senses to be woken up and to be available.

And I have never seen new meditators come back like that. And if you've been to Esalen, you know that you come out of this rarefied environment of a retreat, and go into a noisy, vital, lovely dining room, full of people who are not from your retreat, but from all sorts of workshops. And it's alive, and it's going.

And to come out of a retreat setting, especially as a new meditator, and into that — normally people get back into their heads. But then I thought, well, this is interesting. Let's see what happens afterward with these new meditators. And boy, because of the Feldenkrais, they went straight back in. And I've never seen it before. I'm now convinced it's this body of work.

[Russell:] Right.

[Participant 16:] And the only other thing I wanted to say was about six possibilities. For me, it's so moving, because it cultivates the whole state of investigation. There's always more.

[Russell:] Oh, there's always more. What else is there?

[Participant 16:] And a participant and I had this wonderful conversation on the first night, and we both shared the fact that we both wanted to look over the horizon, and what's around the next corner. And oh, I can't go back from my walk, because of another bend. I'll just see what's around that bend before I come back from my walk. And there's that territory for me, so keeping alive. Okay, so I found a fourth. Oh, what else is out there?

[Russell:] Yeah. You sound like somebody who should be traveling around the world.

Better get used to the word maybe.

[Participant 17:] I have a feeling that comes up with what Participant 16 is pointing to. And I thought I remember hearing something about Feldenkrais talking about the challenge of too many choices. That three kind of opens it up, but if it's not contained within something, then too many choices.

[Russell:] That wasn't Feldenkrais. That was me.

And what I like to go back to — it's always paradoxical. The freest choice is when you have no choices. When it's just this. When it's just this.

So there's the sense of, when a solution finds you, or when right action occurs, or when the loving action reveals itself, there's a sense of, well, of course, this is the next.

Now, it sounds logically like, oh, so you're saying now we're getting rid of the whole idea of a lot of choices? No. The territory is big enough that all those choices inform no choice.

The phrase that I've been fond of for a long time is, the absence of choice, the presence of freedom.

[Participant 18:] That was presented to me, and I think it gets expanded. But the most concrete way that I understood it was that the nervous system will always choose the most efficient choice, given many options.

[Russell:] That's survival. That's how we've all gotten to where we are in our abilities.

[Participant 18:] So what you just said to me meant, if I'm acting optimally, the choice would be obvious. So it's not that we're overwhelmed. We shouldn't be overwhelmed. Because if we're in tune, if we're there, present, it becomes revealed.

[Russell:] Right. Well, yeah. That would, again, without getting too abstract about it, that's another way of pointing to not knowing.

It's another way of saying that. But not knowing is not at all going to sleep. It's actually actively investigating, shining light, bringing forth, calling up possibilities. But it's not the kind of, oh, I gotta find a solution.

How do we encourage it to come forward and not just become a muddle? Well, you better have a midline, and a ground, and a sense of getting simple, and then call it all up, and then have some way, every day, numerous times a day, of not thinking about it.

Something's working. Something's coming.

[Participant 19:] Okay, so that was confusing. For me, from my personal experience of this, that is allowing space for a solution. That makes me available to make the decisions that need to be made.

[Russell:] Yes. Thank you. That's right. Great. That's a good idea.

[Silence 53 seconds]

[Russell:] Yeah, and actually I think that's probably enough words for now. We've touched on so much, and we'll start obliterating what's occurred if we go too long.

So let's just let whatever has moved you — it's there, and is working through you.

And we'll continue at eleven. We're going to do a movement lesson, and explore this midline in another way.