

Connecting Mind and Body Through the Feldenkrais Method®

Presented in partnership with the UA College of Fine Arts

Instructor: Prof. Andy Belser – Director, School of Theatre, Film & Television

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**UA Marroney Theater Stage
TUESDAYS, 5:00pm – 6:15pm
September 28 – October 26, 2021**

Overview

This series of five classes will introduce participants to The Feldenkrais Method®, a powerful and revolutionary approach to improving your life using gentle and mindful movements. Taught by certified Feldenkrais practitioner, Andy Belser, Director of School of Theatre, Film & Television, these classes involve slow body movements that will focus on mindfulness through movement while exploring topics such as mental health, chronic pain, relieving tension, and moving with more ease and efficiency. During these 75-minute sessions, Andy will offer insights into the neuroscience of how The Feldenkrais Method® connects mind and body to wellbeing by increasing healthy function, coordination, flexibility, and rest.

Materials/Dress

Each participant should bring to each class a yoga mat, two towels (to fold and use as supports), and a personal notebook/journal to write reflections and learning from each class. Participants should come dressed in comfortable clothing suitable for a variety of movements.

Course Schedule

Classes begin at 5:00pm, but students are requested to arrive 10 minutes early to arrange their mats in a space. Each class will be centered around a topic, and will include a brief introduction to the topic, a 45-minute Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement (ATM) lesson, and time for discussion following the lesson.

Week #1 - Tuesday, September 28

(re)Learning to Learn

This class will introduce fundamentals of how we can use the way our nervous systems change to learn new patterns that we can choose. Keys to nervous system learning include, slow and small dosing of movement, periods of rest, refining skills of awareness, and learning to trust the way the brain/body forms new patterns. These fundamentals will be reinforced through this five-class series, as they can seem paradoxical in today's world full of 'no-pain/no-gain' messages and focus on increased effort and strength as the way to maximize skill and capacity.

Week #2 - Tuesday, October 5

Guiding Your Dose Through Awareness

As we learned in week #1, Feldenkrais practice instructs us to move in small and slow ways. But how slow, how small? And it is possible to constrict oneself through a rigorous fidelity to trying to perfect the practice rather than attending to your own awareness. Taking ATM into one's own daily life means learning to trust yourself when you are going about your daily behaviors and actions. Sometimes, this work requires doing more than you might think an ATM exercise asks of you – doing something a bit faster or in a larger range, while also doing it with freedom.

Week #3 - Tuesday, October 12

Exploring Same Movements with Changing Orientations to Gravity

In this class, we will explore patterns of an ATM lesson in various positions including standing, sitting, walking, laying on the back. These changes help the nervous system to learn different aspects of moving through a particular structure. For example, carrying one's weight through the pelvis is radically different when walking upright than it is when sitting. These changes of orientation in relationship with gravity can become ways to carry learning from these classes forward into your daily life.

Tuesday, October 19

Exploring Comfort and Pain through Neuroplasticity

Many traditional approaches to physical fitness, physical therapy, and musculoskeletal pain management tend toward strategies of strengthening, stretching, and localized treatment. This work approaches these areas through the neuroplastic brain/body, and the possibilities for slowly retraining patterns through ATM practice. Increasingly, scientific research is validating the ability of the brain/body to change patterned learning. This class will include becoming aware of subtle but powerful differences between engaging in actions with attention to ease and comfort vs. attention to pain.

Tuesday, October 26

Habits of Movement/Habits of Mind

In the Western industries of movement training and practice, the body is commonly regarded as a machine with parts to be fixed, aligned, or strengthened. Contemporary neuroscience, and increasing areas of movement trainings including athletics, foreground the mind as the space ripe for the most improvement through training. This class will focus on each student becoming aware of their own habits of mind, and how those habits potentiate repetitive qualities of action, injury, tension, and skill levels.