

Article

Feldenkrais Research Ideas

Russell Delman

CFT, Delman Associates

Abstract

There are two paths of research that I feel could be of great service to our community and to the world. The first is moving away from emphasis on objective, physically based criteria and toward subjective “whole person” reporting. The second involves sorting through our collective experience to help define the personal qualities that are predictive of success for the Feldenkrais client.

Keywords

Feldenkrais Method, subjective, focusing, therapy design, perception

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FELDENKRAIS RESEARCH IDEAS

Russell Delman CFT
Delman Associates

There are two paths of research that I feel could be of great service to our community and to the world. The first is moving away from emphasis on objective, physically based criteria and toward subjective “whole person” reporting. The second involves sorting through our collective experience to help define the personal qualities that are predictive of success for the Feldenkrais *client*.

In the former, I am imagining incorporating and connecting with some of the scales of development that are already used in other disciplines that sort for qualities of inner development such as autonomy, open-mindedness, capacity to deal with adversity, flexibility in problem solving, curiosity, concern for others (compassion index), sexual satisfaction, intimacy in relationships, etc. Our most important assertion is about the indivisibility of the human being and the prediction that a general maturing of consciousness would result from engaging in our work. Other theoreticians have developed subjective scales for “self-development”, “maturation”, “moral development” for examples. Can we tap into some of the questionnaires that are in use and have a track record from other domains and apply them to ours?

In the second question, I am reminded of the early work of Eugene Gendlin that led to his model called “Focusing”. As a clinical psychologist, teacher and philosopher, he wanted to determine if qualities in the *patient* were predictive of a successful outcome irrespective of the therapists’ methodology? He taped thousands of hours of therapy with a variety of therapists. Graduate students were enlisted to listen to hours upon hours of sessions. Success was determined by: 1) the patient thought the course of treatment was successful, 2) the therapist concurred and 3) the listeners, through both evaluating the tapes and reviewing profiles written by the patients, also agreed. All three perspectives had to say that the therapy was successful.

Gendlin and his colleagues found that the basic perceptual skills of the successful patients were so clear that they could predict upon listening to the first session whether the course of treatment was likely to be successful. He claims that it actually became easy and obvious to identify the patients who spontaneously had the skills needed to derive lasting benefit regardless of the specific theoretical framework of the therapist.

While we in the Feldenkrais world enjoy claiming that all people “with a brain” can derive benefit from our work and while I believe this is theoretically true, I wonder if certain skills/orientations of perception, thought, inner processing, kinesthetic awareness are consistently predictive of positive outcomes. As a corollary, are certain perceptual

orientations predictive of a low likelihood of success? Are the skills that are positively correlated with success learnable (this was Gendlin's great discovery)?

Thank you for your interest.