

ENHANCING SEXUALITY THROUGH THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

taught by Donna Ray, M.F.C.C.

The Feldenkrais Method (originally developed by Israeli physicist, judo teacher, therapist, Moshe Feldenkrais) can be a valuable adjunct to traditional forms of therapy used in the **treatment** of sexual dysfunctions. Awareness Through Movement (ATM) lessons consist of slow, gentle, easy-to-do bodily movements that are designed to increase awareness and improve physical functioning. These lessons complement and enhance sensate focus exercises by creating a non-threatening situation in which the person experiences pleasurable physical sensations. ATM also increases overall sensitivity of the person and reduces performance anxiety by teaching the person to be involved with what is happening in the here and now. Most importantly, ATM reduces muscular tension, improves body awareness and body image so that sexual responsiveness and desire are increased.

Feldenkrais teachers have found that by improving body awareness, lessening muscular tension and developing freer movement, sexual problems are alleviated and people experience better sexual communication and intimacy, increased sensuality and heightened orgasm. Muscular tension not only limits movement; it also cuts off sensations. When Feldenkrais lessons release chronic tensions from the areas of the mouth, jaw, spine, pelvis, legs and abdomen, there is a tremendous increase in sensual feelings all through the body. Furthermore, without muscular blocks, orgasmic sensations are able to spread more intensely and pleurably through the entire body.

Feldenkrais techniques create the experience of free rhythmical movements that make a connection from the bottoms of the feet all the way to the top of the head, and from one end of the spine to the other. These wavelike movements are a natural part of sex, although they have been inhibited in most people. Once these movements are reexperienced and become integrated into people's sexual lives there is a significant increase in sexual vitality.

The improved body awareness resulting from ATM connects people to their innermost feelings. When people know more clearly what they are feeling, both physically and emotionally, they are better able to communicate with their partners. People then begin to respond more as whole persons and this increased responsiveness leads to increased satisfaction in sex and through all parts of their relationships,

The Feldenkrais Method emphasizes the importance of nongal orientation in order to increase awareness and thereby improve physical functioning. Generalized to the sexual sphere this means minimizing or even suspending interest in orgasm. Paradoxically, this nongal orientation can facilitate orgasm for those people who have not yet experienced orgasm and more intense orgasmic feelings for others.

The gentle Feldenkrais approach alters one's self image so that *sensuality and sexuality* can be discovered, explored and expanded. The quality of intimate relationships change, *becoming* more satisfying and deeply felt. Experiencing these qualitative changes in one's life leads to further curiosity and development, emotionally, intellectually and physically.