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33 OVERALL FI STRATEGIES

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A GROWING LIST OF IDEAS
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FULL Functional Integration® LESSONS
Of The *Feldenkrais Method*®

(The order of presentation is more or less arbitrary.

Each strategy can be used as the main threading approach for full lessons, but obviously, many lessons will rely on more than one strategy.

The **examples** are chosen for their simplicity and most of them are concrete movement abilities. My contention and experience is that all strategies and examples can be applied to greater behavioral requests, also in the emotional, interpersonal, collective, political, philosophical and ethical domains too... to be demonstrated eventually!).

STRAT. 0: Explore, observe, putt around, until an ATM "appears" or even, pre-select an ATM and transpose it into FI, hands on. Perhaps the single most useful strategy, and a background strategy to all the other strategies. (One can virtually choose any ATM for possibly any kind of request, though there is usually some kind of identification of an ATM more relevant to the person's request or need.)

Example : a person wants to be able to have a better control over their backhand stroke in tennis, and the practitioner chooses to teach hands on and verbally this ATM: side-lying, knees bent, arms extended in front, lift top arm to ceiling then to the other side, leaving knees together etc.

STRAT. 1: After receiving the person's want, determine what they need to know somatically and then create a lesson to give them what they need to learn in order to get what they want.

Example : if a person wants to be able to walk more comfortably after an operation to a knee, create one or more lessons to guide them through the hierarchical tree of needs that a person needs to learn in order to walk: weight bearing on one leg, then the other, weight shifting, standing on one leg, therefore moving from the trunk, bending a leg in order to slide it forward etc.

STRAT. 2: Three steps forward, then one or two backwards: from first observations, let oneself be attracted to one movement idea, then another, then another, backtracking on one's steps, until, looking backwards (or walking backwards to see what comes out of one's hands) a theme emerges.

Example : in sitting, move the person by the head, forward, then back (the movement is happening mostly in the neck). Move from the chest, forward and back, then with the hands on the face. Go back to first movement of reference. Then, lift the leg from the knee as the head goes down. "Test" again. A theme such as learning to "fold forward" may start to emerge.

STRAT. 3: Choose a movement, and expand this movement through the whole self, with a proportional distribution of movement through the joints (balancing proximal-distal, as well as postural and dynamic equilibrium, big joints making congruent movement with smaller joints) and a uniform distribution of tone through the muscles (small muscles making less work, bigger muscles making more work).

Example : a client wants to serve in tennis with more power, therefore create lessons to distribute a full backward spiral of extension and a forward-down motion of hitting the ball with "the whole self" idea as defined previously, proportional distribution of movement and uniform distribution of tone.

STRAT. 4: Change the orientation and/or the configuration to introduce a new idea then to be transferred back in the position of origin. (A position in space includes a configuration (the relationship of bones) and a relation to gravity and space (an orientation). Changing, the orientation, and/or the configuration is a classic of our method.

Example 4: a person has difficulty in tying their shoes. Present all the ingredients of bringing the hands to the feet and the feet to the hands in the side-lying position.

STRAT. 5: Use proximal touch for a distal intention

Example : as a person wants to improve the reaching to the piano keyboard, give a lesson where the touch is basically on the trunk and the shoulder blades to present the necessary learning for the center to accommodate the extremities.

STRAT. 6: Use distal touch for proximal intention

Example : to improve a person's ability to turn in their trunk, choose to touch them "only" from the arms and legs in order to give them an opportunity to invent the proximal accompaniment to the distal proposals.

STRAT. 7: Present a movement idea from a variety of points of view, mostly from points of view or body-parts seemingly un-related to the request as such.

Example: a boy has a hard time writing letters that include a circle. Introduce the movement idea of circle with his toes, his nose, his hip, his head, his eyes etc., eventually in the fingers and hands.

STRAT. 8: Propose a novel-needed idea, in an area of the body or from a point of view where there the pain, the attention is not fixated (sometimes at the furthest away part in the body).

Example: a person systematically hurts their right ankle through some strange use of their leg and foot. Where in the body is the part furthest from the right ankle?

The left hand! Therefore introduce new movement ideas from there, then from the left foot maybe, then from the right hand and when relevant from the right foot. Anyway, a hand is an analog of a foot!

STRAT. 9: Support a pattern, a posture in such a way that the person feels that they actually can get the "result" of their action without their own action.

Example: when a person has a strong pattern of mobilization to protect the solar plexus, give them a lesson in any position (configuration and orientation combined) where they have the protection without the active muscle contractions. In other words, with the help of gravity and supports, the joints are in a position such that the "protection" is granted without the muscle contractions.

STRAT. 10: Exaggerate the pattern of mobilization i.e. accentuate the person's actions and identify their self-image in action.

Example: a person lying down has a certain torque in the spine and the limbs. Make these characteristics clearer in order for the person to feel what they actually do.

STRAT. 11: Present a movement challenge where the person has to invent something new, and develop their skill, sometimes at the limit of their tolerance to novelty and unknown. (One variation of this strategy is to radically propose to the person a movement that seems literally impossible to do, even in their imagination)

Example: There is a wide list of movement challenges used in our method and obviously, no challenge is unique and usually challenges involve other types:

constraints (like wrap the arm around the head to come from supine to sitting),

balance (rollers, and other objects or standing on one leg, on the head etc.),

imagination (a kind of challenge where one must develop the ability to evoke movements in their minimal expression, in the imagination),

timing or co-ordination (for example, à la Gurdjieff, with the STOP practice),

orientation or re-orientation (spinning, quick turns etc.),

strength movements (coming up from squatting on one leg only),

agility, (squatting, putting both knees down on the floor in front of oneself without the use of the hands),

flexibility (backward bridge, on hands and feet),

focus of attention (to one and then more objects of attention), etc.

STRAT. 12: Give without tricks the treat the person wants. In other words, take the request bluntly, and create a context where the person gets a clear, on the spot taste of what they want.

Example: a person wants to relax, breathe better, cry, or whatever. Go for the request, unadulteratedly and wholeheartedly.

STRAT. 13: Identify a specific movement skill for which you make the following hypothesis: if the person new how to actually do this, their behavior could be different and their request could be satisfied.

Example: if a person knew when to stop the range and amplitude of their movement before stretching oneself beyond, their whole musculo-skeletal system could be protected, as well as their social relation network.

STRAT. 14: Find an aspect of a person's pattern of mobilization and spread this movement through the whole "long" self. In other words, what is this person trying to do and how can they do exactly that more efficiently and more comfortably.

Example: a person has a pattern of moving the head backward, therefore show them how to move the head backward with the whole self, and not only from the neck. Or, a person has a lot of para-vertebral contraction in the lumbar are. Show them how to arch the whole self backward and spread the local contraction in the whole spine.

STRAT. 15: Introduce a novel movement idea, a movement skill, a movement quality, that the person needs to learn.

Example: a person wants to reach more easily in the top shelves in the kitchen. They suffer from shoulder bursitis. Looking at them reaching up, it is obvious that they do not know how to move the shoulder blade and the ribcage in conjunction with the arm and hand movement. Introduce these "movement ideas" in side-lying, integrating functionally the movement of the hand with the movement of the whole self.

STRAT. 16: Choose a transitional movement, i.e. a change of position in space, for example, moving from prone to sitting, from sitting to standing, and teach all the details of it.

Example: a person has a real difficult time to transit from sitting to standing. They use there arms to push off or absorb the fall, and they have no somatic knowledge of using their legs, in weight shifting forward, bending at the hips, touching the chair softly etc.

STRAT. 17: Identify a reference movement in the first observation and try anything (almost) to influence this movement so that in the before-after test, the same reference movement is altered, a variation is introduced.

Example: noting how a person walks as they approach the FI table, the practitioner notices a stronger sound when the left heel contacts the floor, compared to the right. The lesson becomes an exploration of how this left heel ends up hitting the ground with more force, heel forward.

STRAT. 18: present a whole lesson idea only from one side of the body.

Example: with the person lying on their back, clarify the skeletal connection from foot to head but touching them only on the side where the head is more easily organized over the foot.

STRAT. 19: present a whole lesson idea only in one diagonal of the body

Example: introduce the idea of lengthening the whole self, from the right hand and arm to the left leg and foot.

STRAT. 20: Replicate on the easier side the limitations of the less movable side.

Example: as they lie on their back a person moved by their head allows easily the translation of the head to the right side, not so much to the left. Reproduce on the right all the patterns of holding and limitation that the movement to the left side evokes.

STRAT. 21: Clarify the skeletal feeling and or the articulations of the skeleton involved in a movement.

Example: to clarify the possibilities for a movement of reaching forward, touch the person with an intention of outlining the bones of the arms, shoulder, ribs, spine, pelvis, leg, foot and their joints. Or, for a dancer who believes that the hip joints are at the great trochanter, clarify the actual anatomical locus of articulation.

STRAT. 22: Give oneself a touch constraint or a spatial constraint.

Example: decide that the whole lesson will be given with the constraint that you will touch the person only from their feet, or not moving away from standing on their right side, along that specific side of the table.

STRAT. 23: Identify a distortion, some kind of specific movement characteristic that sticks out and harmonize the whole self to that "problem".

Example: a person has a clear difference of length between the legs, measured at the femur. Find ways to harmonize the whole standing to the service of this characteristic. Or, a person has no vision in the right eye. Harmonize the whole use of self to this characteristic.

STRAT. 24: Prepare the various movement ingredients and then put them together in the whole action.

Example: a person wants to turn more easily on skis. Analyze the movement of turning on skis, then introduce the various movement ideas, one after the other one, then put them together, perhaps in an ATM.

STRAT. 25: Propose all the possible movements in every joint and put them together with the optimal interface of joint surfaces.

Example: to learn to push from the arm, explore all possible movements of the fingers, wrist, forearm bones, elbow, humerus in the shoulder joint, shoulder blade, collarbones etc., then push from the hand (the person can also push actively).

STRAT. 26: Preserve and favor the integrity of the inner volumes of the trunk in 3D: tallness, thickness, width.

Example: to learn how to sit more comfortable and work at the computer, learn to feel inner the volumes of the chest and abdomen and keep these volumes in the picture of typing and reaching forward.

STRAT. 27: Highlight and amplify the differences in movement and sensation between the two sides of the body.

Example: a person working on a production line has to move heavy objects from right to left, then left to right. Their use of self is radically different in the way to move from right to left compared to left to right. This corresponds to different feelings of space and mobility in the trunk. The practitioner will emphasize these differences.

STRAT. 28: Clarify the lines of force transmission.

Example: a weight lifter would like to improve his ability to hold the weight longer over their head. With the person supine clarify the line of transmission of force from the hands to the feet.

STRAT. 29: Clarify the skeletal container of an organ.

Example: for a pregnant woman, clarify the chest, spine, pelvis surrounding the uterus and baby within.

STRAT. 30: Propose a movement idea on one side of the body or from one side of the body, then find some way of "crossing" the learning to the other side.

Example: working with a woman recovering from a stroke affecting her left side, present from her right side the skeletal connection towards standing, then crossing the right leg over the left, the right arm touching to the left etc.

STRAT. 31: Alternate between hands on movement done by the practitioner and verbally guided movements "à la ATM".

Example: with a person who tends to "help" a lot in manually guided movements, the practitioner choose to alternate his own movements with the autonomous movements of the student, sometimes asking the person to actively push or pull against the practitioners movement.

STRAT. 32: Almost regardless of the request, and sometimes right to the point of a request, find ways to improve the person's breathing volume, rhythm, quality and efficiency of the breath

Example: a person has trouble in digesting and eliminating their food and or in the amount of "energy" they feel they have available for their daily life. Whatever learning position and context, the focus can be on improving the quality and efficiency of the breathing process.

STRAT. 33: Relaxation. A somewhat controversial strategy in the Feldenkrais orthodoxy, but actually a very useful and common one: give the person an opportunity to relax, let go and do nothing but enjoy a good moment, not learning anything specific or exciting, just relax! This strategy can actually create a potent paradoxical learning effect and can be used as a preliminary to establish learning conditions or as a direct response to a person's request.

Example: a person comes with a request to not learn anything, not be challenged, not be interviewed on their need nor focused on some learning issue: just be taken care of for a few minutes and feel better. Why not give it to them when appropriate!

