

## **INNER COMMUNICATION IN FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION**

### **The Larger Picture**

This text attempts to explore the wider implications of the lived experience uniting two human beings as partners in a Functional Integration lesson. On one level the largely nonverbal interaction unfolding between practitioner and pupil/client can be described as a **dialogue**: a subtle kinesthetic conversation in the realm of somatic experience. Having been told what the person wants to “improve” or “change” etc or/and observed what s/he needs to learn, the practitioner initiates this dialogue by inviting the pupil to move as in a dance. Through touch questions are respectfully asked about his/her willingness and capacity to investigate the range and quality of an existing (habitual) repertoire of movement and the potential of hitherto unrealized resources and new options.

As will become apparent, **communication** is a more appropriate word for the somewhat broader approach intended here. For this I am going to adopt a viewpoint that was seminal for Moshe Feldenkrais’s thinking. “*The person I feel I have most kinship with is Gurdjieff*” stated Moshe in an unpublished interview.<sup>1</sup> Only occasionally did he refer more or less explicitly to Gurdjieff’s teachings about humanity’s possible evolution<sup>2</sup>, but implicitly these teachings are reflected in everything Feldenkrais said and wrote with regard to his main concern: *Self-help is, in the final instance, the only way open to everyone.* (*Awareness Through Movement*, p.8)

### **Talking about the Intangible**

#### **First Approximation: The Anecdotal Aspect - Questions**

When Feldenkrais practitioners meet they often exchange wonderful stories about pupils or clients who achieved “the impossible”, quite miraculously learning to make the unattainable feasible, and ultimately easy and aesthetically pleasing. Used as illustrations such “anecdotal evidence” can often convey much, much more than any explanation when we are invited to write or talk in public about our Method and its distinguishing features.

The “stories” in my personal repertoire often gave rise to such questions as:

**What** is actually being communicated in a FI session and **how**?

What was *missing in the attempted dialogue* if I have to admit to myself that the FI had not been “successful” in the way I had hoped?

**Why** is it that *mirth* and spontaneous *laughter* are often shared, while sudden outbursts of *tearful anguish*, *despair*, *rage*, “irrational” *fear*, or a *spontaneous explosive release of pent-up “energy”* are not?

**Who is in fact communicating with whom about what – and how?**

Communication in the context of a FI lesson is experiential, involving all the aspects making up our somatic experience: moving, sensing, feeling, and thinking. The pupil experiences the practitioner’s hands, the quality and intention of touch; the practitioner receives guidance about how to proceed by experiencing the pupil’s responses. But many other aspects may also be communicated in subtle ways: moods, attitudes and values, unspoken judgements etc, etc. However much this complex experiential communication may be “shared”, ultimately each partner’s experience is very personal and therefore not easily described or discussed:

***“Communication, or the making common of what is individually experienced, involves a necessary falsification. We can communicate our experiences, but at the cost of robbing them of their essential uniqueness. For communication marks a threefold corruption. Words never adequately or unequivocally portray thought, and thought never fully corresponds to experience. In turn, the recipient can only interpret the communication according to his own pool of (unique) experiences.”***<sup>3</sup>

Despite the fact that the translation process: experience – thought – words – will never be very satisfactory, we may agree that first person accounts, or stories, are capable of revealing *something* about the mysterious realm of individual experience, as well as about hidden psycho-somatic communication processes – within each of the FI-partners and also between them. Here are two brief accounts as an introduction.

*“Life is a bitch, I tell you, life is a bitch!”*

When I was pushing Pete’s wheelchair to the treatment room in the Head Injury Unit where I was doing voluntary work – my official title in the hospital was “Movement Awareness Therapist” - , I heard him mutter: “*When I get hold of him I’ll cut his throat!*”. “Whose throat?”, I asked ill-prepared for the vehemence of Pete’s rage at being left paralyzed on his left side after a blood clot had caused brain damage directly after a simple knee operation...

After fixedly staring at the ceiling in an ‘it’s-all-one-to-me’ attitude, Pete closed his eyes when I finally ventured to touch his spastic hand and wrist. As a degree of mobility began to emerge, his tight fist opened gradually and his breathing deepened. Then suddenly the most radiant childlike smile spread over Pete’s face and stayed there for the rest of the session. This was my second encounter with the 32 year old stroke patient, who only recently had still been running his own transport business and was renowned as a recklessly daring motorcycle champion. His newly born second son had been presented to him in hospital two days previously; he had also just been informed that his stroke had left him prone to epileptic fits and the danger of a *rogue* blood clot causing further havoc in his brain.

The following day a nurse came into the physiotherapy department where I was working at that moment and remarked: “*What’s up with Pete? He’s really changed; he even makes remarks at the appropriate place!*”

During our third session Pete and I had a conversation about his hobby *Scrambling*, and for a time Pete, the *patient*, revealed something about himself as a human being with personal enthusiasms, hopes, fears, and a lot of despair... There was great bitterness in his voice as he concluded our conversation with the words: “*Life’s a bitch, I tell you, life’s a bitch!*”

It seemed as if *something* had changed in Pete. Maybe he was beginning to face up to his fate and could thus interact more willingly with the world around. Although I was sure that the wordless process of somatic experiencing and kinesthetic communication during our sessions had something to do with it, this amazing shift of attitude remained a great mystery to me.

*“I was told something very important, but I can’t remember anything!”*

One particular session with Clare, a cancer patient in the Hospice where I also worked as a volunteer – this time in the role of “Massage Therapist” – left me equally mystified. Since Clare suffered from cancer of the spinal column I had to be incredibly careful as I tried to engage her nervous system in a dialogue about options in making herself more comfortable and breathing more easily. As with Pete, what fascinated me most, while listening with my hands, was Clare’s face. It remained utterly serene throughout the entire session, but her eyebrows kept moving up and down - quite theatrically I felt. Yet it was clear that Clare was in a *good* place somewhere deep within, at peace with herself. She looked exactly like a person lost to

the world while listening to music with closed eyes. “*Oh!*” she sighed contentedly when she opened her eyes again, “*I was told something very important, but I can’t remember anything.*”

*Who* had been talking to her?

Such experiences confirmed what had hit me as a real *conscious shock* when, as a student, I fully realized for the first time the power and unfathomable depth of the inner process that can be set in motion in a FI. This happened after my son’s first FI. When we got home after three hours of serene silence on the motorway, Andrew moved about the house, humming quietly to himself. Listening more closely, I could hardly believe my ears. My 21 year old son was humming a lullaby which I used to sing to him when he was a baby.

What magic had brought that melody up from the very depths of his being, reconnecting him with a time when life had not yet revealed itself in its *bitchy aspect*, as Pete would say? Andrew had only recently come out of plaster after a scooter accident, a traumatic event that had paradoxically freed him from the fear of dying young. (He had undergone a cancer operation two years previously.) How had Myriam Pfeffer managed to reconnect Andrew with the inner resources that would give him renewed confidence in himself and in life, and access to the tools he needed to live life as fully as possible? “*I have to live on the edge!*” he used to say, and “*I know I am a survivor!*”

The way in which videos showing Moshe Feldenkrais *play-working* with small children had touched me - like many of my fellow students often to the point of tears - had somehow prepared me for the shock of the revelation that the outwardly observable learning achievements in a FI process - reorientation, reorganisation, and astonishing self-correction - may be accompanied by a kind of deeper *healing*, in the broadest sense of *making whole by rekindling trust in life and self*.

Sometimes it was plain obvious that the child in the video had every reason to be frightened of adults. It always felt like a miracle that such a child would so very quickly trust Moshe and really enjoy intensely focused playful interaction with that extraordinary man in his late seventies whose attentiveness and patience appeared to be boundless, his presence total.

STOP! I would like to invite the reader to pause and take a kind of snapshot of her/his present bodily organisation, sensations, feelings, and thoughts.

Moshe Feldenkrais was familiar with the famous Gurdjieffian STOP-exercise which is occasionally used in trainings. You may want to repeat it once or twice while reading this article.

If we wish to understand the secret of such deeply meaningful FI encounters and begin to fathom the complex issue of their very essence - the quality of wordless communication or shared experience of what is ultimately hidden and private - we would do well to remind ourselves of the opening sentences of **Awareness Through Movement**: “*We act in accordance with our self-image. This self-image..., in turn, governs our every act...*”

By his every video-recorded action, manifesting a tangible harmony between the four components of action: movement, sensation, feeling, and thought, the originator of our Method embodies a model – as a professional and as a human being – which seems to weld both these aspects together into an indivisible unity. In those videos Moshe Feldenkrais remains a living exemplification of his conviction: *As a man*

*grows and improves, his entire existence centers increasingly on what he does and how, while who does it becomes of ever decreasing importance. (ATM p.19)* This is the self-image of a mature human being. It is *never static but changes from action to action. (ATM p.11)*

If we wish to establish a profession worthy of the man of genius who gave our Method *his* name, those of us who know that our present self-image is still somewhat *smaller than our potential capacity (ATM, p.15)* need to do our homework and reflect on both our **professional** self-image, intention, and role as Feldenkrais practitioners, and our **personal** self-image as human beings. **Both** are crucial elements in the **conditions for learning** we create for our pupils/clients and the **communication processes** made possible in that context.

Striving to gain greater clarity about the complex inner communication processes taking place in any FI we say we “*give to*” somebody may, on the other hand, greatly enhance *systematic correction of the image* – our own and thereby indirectly that of the other person. As Moshe insists, such correction is *more useful than correction of single actions (ATM, p.23)*, because ultimately it is that image which determines the quality and effectiveness of everything we undertake.

### **Second Approximation: Answers?**

**Professional and personal self-image** as limiting or creatively liberating factors in FI communication

Those of us who were initially trained as **therapists** or **teachers** probably underwent a more or less acute identity crisis during our Feldenkrais training only to find that as qualified and ultimately experienced and ‘competent’ practitioners we still have to struggle, trying to emancipate ourselves from conventional medical or teaching paradigms with their impact on both overt and hidden communication with our pupils. I was confronted with this issue only recently when I found that the FI-process can have two diametrically opposed outcomes: “**You** put me down!” – “**I** surprised myself!”

*“You really put me down this time!”*

I thought this remark signalled the end of a seven year long FI relationship with Joan. During the session itself I had wondered *why* I kept exposing her to experiences that tested her capacity for trust in slightly insecure situations. Habitual fear reactions were triggered, and their bodily manifestations observed and registered as just about controllable. But in Joan’s subjective experience the emotional power of those reactions seemed virtually undiminished – after all those years of learning how to deal with them. Joan, now in her early sixties, had begun to learn how to prevent headaches from developing into full blown migraines. She had also found that compulsively tightening her adductor muscles was causing much of the discomfort in her feet, back, and neck. (Her tyrannical mother used to insist: “*Young ladies keep their legs together!*”) During that particular session a host of long-buried experiences of *being put down* seemed to have come up, probably too many at once...

It was clear to me that Joan, who had trained as a counsellor in recent years, was uttering a professional judgement and wondered in what way I had let her down by not fulfilling her expectations as a conventional client...

To my surprise Joan returned not long afterwards for another session in the course of which she burst into tears with the words: “*Why am I so hard on myself?*”

“*I really surprised myself!*”

Seven year old William was standing on a chariot, pulling the reins and whipping his horses in a wild chase across the prairie – all make-believe of course and entirely his own invention. I kept rolling the large rollers supporting the board on which he was ballancing with astonishing agility. The horse was an oval physioball, the reins a length of rope. Then William had the idea of adding a Houdini-trick. I had to bind his wrists together, using elastic material to give him a chance of extricating himself. All this seemed a bit over the top to me and I was extra alert and ready to prevent an accident. . .

William had come to me when he was three. The doctors had not given his parents a very hopeful diagnosis at birth. As it turned out, his symptoms of cerebral palsy due to hydrocephalis were not seriously incapacitating, but the bright little boy often felt extremely frustrated. Initially it was impossible to touch him since some well-meaning physiotherapist had hurt William while trying to encourage his left arm to extend by pulling it away from his chest. So I learned from William how to play with him. A breakthrough came when he was pretending to gallop on a horse – supported by my hands from behind of course: He suddenly turned round and said solemnly: “*Ilana, You are in fact touching me!*” From then on we were friends.

I was truly amazed how this child, who had once been very insecure in his relation to movement and space and had gone through very traumatic times – such as sitting at the top of the stairs unable to move for fear of falling; or facing a corner in tears, hitting his left arm shouting: “*I hate you!*”- was twisting and turning to free himself without losing balance on his continuously moving chariot, still whipping his horse and holding on to the reins.

Once he had jumped off - to my shock and delight landing skilfully straight on his horse’s back – he exclaimed: “*I really surprised myself!*”-- adding after a little reflection “*I thought I couldn’t do it, but I knew I wouldn’t fall off!*”

Those two lessons happened during the same week and gave me much food for thought: Had I really been putting Joan down in a lesson whose course was dictated, as I felt, by what she needed in order to take a step for which she appeared to be ready? Maybe her judgement revealed something about the communication process within herself as she kept struggling hard to overcome fear-induced holding patterns which had their roots in early childhood and adolescence? The fact that Joan came back for another lesson seemed proof enough that whatever had been stirred up in her was part of a meaningful evolutionary process.

The Houdini-trick session with William showed me once again that I was on the right track with him, despite all the questions about conventional expectations which had occasionally assailed me since I began *play-working* with him: Should I not insist more forcefully/decisively on the fact that he was coming to me in order to learn how to use his left hand more skilfully etc? In fact that session was just another opportunity to acknowledge how much William and I had learned in the course of four years – especially about setting up a learning environment which allowed the little boy to keep surprising himself. That of course included regaining the trust he had lost so early in his life, and giving me permission, courage, and skill to do all

sorts of formerly scary things, such as extending his arms in order to pull him gently and playfully in any conceivable direction...

### **Unacknowledged and unconscious intentions**

Few colleagues will have thought more deeply about the impact of the Feldenkrais practitioner's professional role/self-image than our late colleague Patrice Auquier, a former physiotherapist and anatomy teacher, whose untimely death is a tragic loss for our entire community. According to Patrice (see November 2001 issue of Feldenkrais-France Newsletter) the practitioner's **intention** determines whether s/he acts as a therapist, giving treatment in order to relieve pain, restore movement, improve a particular function, etc, or as a Feldenkrais practitioner, creating learning situations and organizing lessons tailored to the capacity of the pupil's nervous system.. The effects brought about by the Feldenkrais Method may appear to be therapeutic. Emphasizing such effects as a goal is pure therapy. Improvement of a particular function, and development of better awareness and quality of movement in a particular body part, may, however, serve to exemplify an organic process which we can all utilize in order to attain a more conscious, richer, and more mature level of overall functioning.

If our self-image is determined by the therapeutic intention, we can easily turn our FI pupil into a *patient*, a role characterized by helplessness, dependence, and often lack of human dignity. The attitude typical of this role: *“There is something wrong with me. I hope s/he can repair that. I know I can't do anything by myself.”*

However, there exists another trap; and role play during our training, preparing us for our new role as Feldenkrais practitioners, seldom teaches us how to avoid falling into that trap. Clients who are used to playing the patient or obedient pupil with real skill will persist with great tenacity in projecting their one and only expectation onto us: *Make me better or show me how to do it right!* If we fall into that trap, all communication between us will ultimately only reinforce two conventional roles as we go through the habitual routine: The *expert* knows what's right and wrong, the *ignorant and helpless other* has to be shown what's right and wrong. Luckily this kind of dismal scenario is usually alleviated thanks to the practitioner's competence and/or personal quality as a more or less mature human being.

STOP! As a variation of the previous exercise the reader is invited to pause for a moment and consider the question “Who am I?” while observing the intermeshing patterns of physical organisation, sensations, feelings, and thoughts.

### **A natural alternative?**

Instead of theoretically considering how to make sure that our practice ultimately matches our overt intentions, I would like to remind the reader of Moshe's assessment of acquired “professional” methods, since anybody involved in a “*Professional Feldenkrais Training*” is more or less consciously and continuously confronted with this issue; and then go on to quote a remarkable personal account of an FI. *We may observe how natural practices have gradually given way to acquired methods, and that society in general refuses to allow the individual the right to employ the natural method, forcing him instead to learn the accepted way before it will permit him to work. (ATM, p.27)*

Food for thought in planning new training programmes...

Something about Moshe Feldenkrais's *natural method* whose secret we are trying to understand and make our own comes to life in Paul Doron-Doroftei's description of his first lesson with the master:

*"Every touch was a surprise for me. I was amazed about the extent to which this other person was capable of feeling my whole being, of empathizing with my physical situation. In a way I experienced divine love during that session. I couldn't help bursting out laughing at each touch of Feldenkrais's hand. It was as if he were playing hide-and-peek with me and kept saying: 'I'll find and catch you in any corner of your being!'"* (Feldenkrais Journal U.K. NO.3/Spring 1992)

Paul was an adolescent at that time and seriously incapacitated by cerebral palsy. Not long before a famous neurologist had informed his mother, looking and talking straight past the young man who was sitting in front of his desk, that Paul was too old to benefit from any surgical intervention. After the session with Feldenkrais Paul's mother anxiously asked whether her son could be helped by Functional Integration. Moshe's answer set the scene for a complete change in Paul's self-image and world: *"Ask him if he can be helped!"*

In one of the Amherst videos Feldenkrais himself gives a graphic account of what he means by *natural method*. He is visibly moved as he talks about a personal FI experience that had improved his painful hip by changing his entire self-organization. Somebody had placed their forehead against his and invited him to a kind of contact-improvisation style dance. In that context Moshe summed up the essence of the FI communication stressing, as so often, that it *is not about doing something to a person, or helping them perform better. Instead it is about linking yourself to the other person so that your two nervous systems become one. It's like a shared melody – like a dance in which you can't help but move together because it is no longer possible to determine who is initiating the movement. This experience results in a feeling of extreme happiness and comfort that no money can buy, which is the foundation of life itself. This is present in every living creature and is so strong that all negative feelings you might have had towards each other simply fade away.* (Quoted from personal notes.)

Moshe's passionate and poetic words reminded me of another equally passionate video-recorded attempt at getting across to the students at Amherst a vision that seemed to defy words. On that occasion Moshe talked about the breathtakingly beautiful and mysteriously unified movements of shoals of fish and flocks of birds suddenly changing direction like one single organism – giving optimum shelter and protection to each of its individual parts.

Sometimes a promising taste of this kind of harmonious unity is picked up by a FI pupil. Miranda, for instance, a young woman who had come shortly after William's memorable session, found simple words when a sense of painfully frustrating fragmentation within herself gave way to a feeling of increased harmony and oneness. As she felt for the first time that she could intentionally reduce the tension in her neck by allowing other parts of herself to move a little, she exclaimed: ***Now I understand! It's all about trust! I am learning to trust you. But there is also something else! The different parts within myself are learning to trust each other!...and to work together!***

This was an important break-through for Miranda who was suffering from the accumulated impact of several whip-lash accidents and also struggling with an acutely felt chronic sense of not being properly *grounded*. This probably originated

in the hospital incubator where Miranda had spent the first weeks of her life as a premature baby. In quest of that elusive sense of groundedness she had explored many different activities such as dancing, yoga and Awareness Through Movement. However her enjoyment of such activities, and of life in general, always seemed to be interfered with by an enormous expenditure of will-power and useless effort.

Miranda's frustration and discomfort illustrate what Feldenkrais stressed time and again: will-power, which is ultimately a brutal and destructive force, only adds to our problems. As he continues to explain in the "More Flexible Feet" ATM I am referring to: "*We have a nervous system which has been taught to do certain things and certain others were neglected, and those that were **neglected give us trouble all our life** because **they are part of us and want to live and participate and they can't**. So there is inhibition in the brain, conflicts, difficulties, and those parts suffer physical injury and trouble.*"

### **The Terror of the Situation : Man Cannot "Do"**

#### **Feldenkrais and Gurdjieff**

There are obvious parallels between that quotation and our present situation: worldwide upheaval and conflict of views in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks perpetrated by individuals belonging to neglected, increasingly deprived, and radicalized sections of humanity, amounting to millions of people. Whatever our personal opinions about the eruption of terrorism in our world, we will probably be ready to agree with Feldenkrais: If we wish to protect ourselves effectively against any life-threatening aggression we need to put ourselves into our attacker's position, arguing his case with skill and conviction, even if he is a Hitler.

If we accept that such an increase of conscious awareness may give us the quality of attention, agility, and adaptability we need in order to master our hazardous existence, we may understand how important Gurdjieff's work was for Moshe who wrote: "*I believe that we are living in a historically brief transition period that heralds the emergence of the truly human man.*"(ATM, p.48)

This is not the place to give an overview of Gurdjieff's stupendous cosmology or to inform the reader about this extraordinary Russian (often simply called G.), who, like Feldenkrais, was ahead of his time. As in Moshe's case, many of G.'s ideas are only now being discovered by contemporary science.

A few aspects of Gurdjieff's teachings may, however, be of relevance in connection with the subject of this article.

*The terror of the situation*, according to Gurdjieff, resides in the fact that human beings are victims of amazing self-delusions. Most seriously, they are under the illusion of being conscious and therefore capable of acting consciously. Yet virtually everything they do shows that they are merely reacting to life – mechanically like automatons.

As a three-brained animal equipped with what G. called *Movement, Emotional, and Intellectual Centre*, man has the task of learning *consciously* to permit harmonious coordination of those three centres or brains. As long as one of these systems habitually and often compulsively dictates a person's reactions, that person cannot yet

be considered a fully evolved human being. Beyond that we are capable of evolving much, much further by realizing the potential residing in the *Higher Emotional* and *Higher Intellectual Centres* on the level of our *essence*, which could be equated with our inner master. But most of us are immersed in ephemeral and shallow *personality* preoccupations instead, or as Feldenkrais writes: *The great majority of people live active and satisfactory enough lives behind their masks to enable them to stifle more or less painlessly any emptiness they may feel whenever they stop and listen to their heart. (ATM, p.7)*

Gurdjieff's basic differentiation of the three centres corresponds more or less exactly to the three aspects of every action initiated by our nervous system: *moving and sensing; feeling; thinking*, which, as Moshe insists, need to be functionally integrated in everything we do in order that the *quality* of our life as a *continuous process (ATM, p.33)* be improved. He also stresses that improvement of this process requires not trying to suppress the animal in ourselves. The reptilian brain, responsible for instinctual behaviour, self-preservation, including healthy aggression, and reproduction, has to be granted its legitimate function; so does the limbic system, which is the primary site of complex emotional and social behaviours. Even though the neo-cortex or rational brain, the most recent development in evolution, distinguishes us from other animals, this centre only uses a minimal fraction of its potential capacity at present. If alienated from the more "primitive" centres, which are more closely linked to the intelligence and wisdom of embodied Life, or, on the other hand, overwhelmed by suppressed "primitive" urges, our only partially functioning rational brain may endanger both ourselves and life on earth.

According to G. another aspect of man's tragic delusion is that he thinks he is *one undivided whole*. In reality he is *fragmented*, made up of many different, often highly antagonistic "I"s which are effectively separated from each other by apparently impermeable *buffers*. As a particular *I* takes over in certain situations, usually in reaction to some habitual trigger, we *identify* so completely with it that we remain unaware of the fact that at other moments, in other circumstances, we identify with a totally different *I*.

The first step out of imprisonment in a shallow *personality identification* with any habit-ridden *I* haphazardly taking charge of our life consists of seeing ourselves as we truly are. G. called that the first conscious shock. That gives us an opportunity of saying: "This is not I" to all the - predominantly negative - emotions which we cherish so much in our self-dramatisations, to all the rationalizations suppressing the voice of gradually awakening conscience, and to the fantasies helping us cope with fear and a sense of impotence in the face of Life's constant changes, threatening to deprive us of the comfort and security of the habitual (known in the Gurdjieff system as *self-calming*).

One of the key-concepts in this system is *Self-remembering*, helpfully defined as: *...the potentiality which exists in man of becoming conscious of his own existence and of his relation to the surrounding universe.*<sup>4</sup> Among the concepts which Gurdjieff expounded is *The Law of Reciprocal Maintenance*, which binds all living creatures into a single integrated and harmoniously functioning organic whole. *The Law of Three* states: *all phenomena that exist arise from the interaction of three forces. One is described as of an active or creative nature; the second passive or material; and the third as mediating or formative....The characteristics of the three forces depend,*

*not upon the phenomena through which they manifest, but upon their relation to each other.*<sup>5</sup>

This third force is also known as the *reconciling* or *neutral force* and is related to what in ancient Hindu cosmology is called *sattva*, a concept linking *being and consciousness* as two aspects of the same reality.

Our cruelly polarized world is suffering from an acute lack of *Third Force* - as human beings are experiencing all over the globe at present.

Ultimately the presence of this force seems to be the secret underpinning any process of meaningful inner communication within Functional Integration as intended by the originator of our Method – at least once this method has become so *natural* to us that we can say, like Moshe, that our best and most satisfying FIs are those when we have absolutely no idea what to do or where to begin. Steadfastly and innocently practising “*beginner’s mind*”, staying in *neutral*, listening carefully for a *shared melody* as we explore possible initial steps in the potential *dance* together, waiting patiently that our two nervous systems *become like one, trusting* in their intelligent interaction: all that is a manifestation of *third force* in action. This kind of attentive and creative openness towards the intelligence and wisdom of the **One Life**, embodied in its particular way in each one of us, guarantees continuous refinement of the nervous systems of both “practitioner” and “client”. Our potential for evolution is thus given a chance to emerge and surprise us. When this happens *loving one’s neighbour as oneself* becomes not only feasible but easy since it is experienced as *becoming conscious of the other person as of oneself*. In this sense every FI is ultimately about humanity’s much needed transformation and can be seen at the same time as a modest contribution to this general evolutionary process.

Finally, but not necessarily right now, you might like to explore another version of the STOP exercise: Take 10 or 15 minutes, think of “giving” a FI and just keep asking one and the same question, listening and somatically experiencing the answers that arise within you: *Who am I when I am in touch with a clear space in my work?*<sup>6</sup>

Ilana Nevill, La Ruzole Christmas 2001

1. Dennis Leri “Mental Furniture” # 7, 1997
2. For those who are interested in introductory literature on Gurdjieff here are a few titles.  
To his most senior assistants Moshe recommended Ouspensky’s work  
***In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching.*** New York. Harcourt Brace and World, 1949  
***Meetings with Remarkable Men,*** New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987, Arkana, 1985, is the most accessible book written by Gurdjieff himself  
***Gurdjieff: Making a New World***, Harper & Row, 1976, constitutes a very readable general introduction. The author, John G. Bennett, was one of the scientists with whom Moshe had many meaningful encounters during his time in England.  
A more recent collection of interesting ***Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching: Gurdjieff*** was edited by Jacob Needleman & George Baker, Continuum, New York, 1996
3. **Friedrich Nietzsche and The Politics of the Soul – A Study in Heroic Individualism** by Leslie Paul Thiele, Princeton University Press, 1990, p.36

4. **The Theory of Conscious Harmony** by Rodney Collin, By The Way Books, Sacramento, 1998 p. 206
5. *ibid.* p. 209
6. This is a slightly adapted version of an exercise which produced unexpected and astonishing insights during the “Trainer and Assistant Trainer Academy” December 5-9, 2001, in Switzerland.