Paul Rubin

For the past fifty years my academic and professional life has been within the organizing principles of the Feldenkrais Method. Dr. Feldenkrais was my "trainer" and my PhD supervisor. His influence on my thinking and on my practice was profound. I participated in the formation of the first professional associations, the first "Training Accreditation Boards", and the IFF.

In 1975 I brought the idealism of a young person to my vision of how I hoped the Method would develop as whole over the years.

In 1976 Dr. Feldenkrais told me a story of his own involvement in Judo as a Judoka and as promoter of its spread and its underpinning philosophy. I had started the conversation to ask him where I might study Judo. Rather sadly, he said that Judo had regressed from its broad philosophical, artistic, and intellectual bases to become "mere wrestling". He said that he knew of only one teacher who taught in the "old" way, his classmate Keiko Fukuda.

Then he delivered an insight that I resisted and defended against within myself. "You will see that the same thing will happen to our work." He said this without bitterness, with some sadness in his voice and face, but as a simple observation of how there is too often a regression of fundamentally new and radical ideas to the old norms of the cultures that will not support it.

Jumping forward to 2019, I was fortunate to spend important time with Mia Segal privately in her home in Santa Rosa, California. Our conversations were of people we knew, of our families, and of our own growth over the 45 years we had known each other. We spent hours piling through the boxes of her papers and the papers of Dr. Feldenkrais that had just been delivered from Tel Aviv. Many stories flowed from her.

In a special moment, she abruptly asked me if any of my students were "getting it" – getting the underlying philosophical, psychological, and pedagogical ideas and processes as she had received then from Dr. Feldenkrais. I thought long and hard before answering. I told her, yes, I believed that some – perhaps many – were practicing the Method as something much deeper than a "mere" physical series of techniques.

She was quiet for a few moments as she finished preparing tea for us. Then she said, "We should focus on those who 'get it'. They are the ones who are important to Method having a future."

I worry that the Method has become overly commercialized, that commercial concerns such as retaining students in training has led, in part, to softening the challenges that Dr. Feldenkrais posed as a matter of pedgogy years ago. I worry that providing easy solutions has replaced Dr. Feldenkrais' insistence that his Method is not one of providing answers but, rather as he said is "a Method of Inquiry". I worry over the number of graduates who are completely unfamiliar with the difference.

So in response to the question I was asked, as an elder, to write about here: I do not see a rosy future for the Method as whole. Still, I know well and have faith that individual Feldenkrais Teachers who "get it" and who remain as students of the underpinnings of the Method will always and individually make great contributions to the people they teach by touch and by word. It will be those

who make their way by dint of the quality of their work rather than carefully constructed personae pushed in advertising and on social media that carry my hope that the core values of the Method will survive.