12/08/1998

The Principle of Judo
By Yochanan Rywerant

Founded in 1882 by Jigoro Kano, Judo is a self-defense method that is based on educational value and the benefits of the development of character and body (IJF.org).

Feldenkrais once said that "For Judo does not teach so many tricks, but rather inculcates in the mind and body a special sense of balance and action enabling the body to react to an unforeseen attack, smoothly, swiftly and in the most efficient way."

The principle of Judo is based on leading the opponent to their weakest point.
In Feldenkrais' method, the principle of helping lead the student to their comfortable point to inspire the concentration and thought without needing any self-defense, remained.
It gives him an opportunity to respond in a warranted manner and to learn additional options.

One of these options is called "effort substitute". This does not ask the student to use force, rather to let go and use support to direct his actions to different directions which he is not used to. This takes him away from a place that may bring him pain. In other words, do not focus on the issue, use non-habitual actions instead. This is a moment where he can listen to his breathing and connect breathing to action. The common denominator between these things is to create the possibility of prolonging the period between the intention and its execution which enables man to learn to know himself.

A clarification in thought is created. In the beginning, the student feels pointless and confused. But throughout the lesson along with the teacher, a cortical understanding between the motor and sensitive systems is created, so that the connection between "effort substitute", breathing, and response is clearer for the student. This leads to the acceptance rather than inhibition.

***Example - The student is tense and cannot separate the action between the shoulder blade and ribs. He is stiff and cannot move the arm freely. The teacher is intending to lift the students' right elbow to the ceiling. With the left hand, the teacher is holding the right elbow. With the right hand, the teacher is trying to confuse the students' thoughts and with a syncopation rhythm, the teacher causes the students' attention to find out "why is he pressing my arm down?". In this way, the teacher is clarifying to the student that on his own he can feel the differences between the shoulder blade on the floor or up towards the ceiling. The teacher freed the pectoral muscles in the front, the rhomboideus muscles in the back, the deltoid muscles in the arm and more muscles throughout the upper body.

The teacher uses the strength of the student and utilizes it in a positive manner (both response and action- up/down).

The students' shoulder cannot be lifted without force because of stiffness. In the principles of Judo, the teacher focuses his concentration on the idea that if the shoulder and scapula is not easily lifted, we help them to push down in the opposite way. Instead of lifting the entire arm to the (front), the teacher is directing the students' brain to focus on the ceiling. The ceiling is a very specific place in his environment. In this experiment, the student is exposed to many distractions that he was unaware of previously. One of them is the rhythm. Such as the rhythm between one action to the second and the breathing (slow then fast/inhaling and exhaling). For example, think of how a dog breathes (and like musicians of wind instruments).

Feldenkrais used to joke around (and Yochanan agreed) that you must take on the guilt of becoming injured when you walked exactly when the stone fell on your head.
(Pay attention to the way you develop consciousness).

When we learn how to let go, we can free the relationship between the arm, shoulder, shoulder joint, scapula, clavicula bone, neck and head, and the rest of the body.

The integration shows that the use of our surroundings and orientation is important when applied to a small action that was limited and affected our freedom.

The freedom of mobility in the body allows us to repeat actions that we have avoided and forgotten. They are kept in the sub-conscious.

An important principle:
Feldenkrais said that as teachers
we do not imitate actions, rather we fulfill principles.