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Moshé Feldenkrais in his book *The Potent Self* (2002) presents a uniquely Western approach to body and personality transformation that works strongly with spontaneous action. Seen from a Daoist perspective, his vision can be understood as a valid interpretation of Laozi's concept of nonaction (*wuwei*). Without making any claims about the original intended meaning of either *The Potent Self* or the *Daode jing*, I would like to argue that they each contain insights that illuminate the other and that their joint interpretation yields a consistent philosophy of action. [1]

Feldenkrais' Spontaneous Action

Moshé Feldenkrais (1904–1984) was a physicist and Judo teacher, who developed the so-called Feldenkrais Method. At first glance a set of gymnastic exercises, it is a subtle method of personal development that involves bodily movement and has philosophical underpinnings.

The subject of his teachings is maturity. Feldenkrais wanted to enable people to achieve potent, mature behavior, which means the ability to act spontaneously. Spontaneous action is perhaps the most important concept in his work. It requires careful explanation, "the idea behind it

[1] I use the letter "F" to refer to Feldenkrais's book, followed by the page number. "L" stands for Le Guin 1998, my preferred translation of the *Daode jing*. "L" is followed by the chapter number.

being *not* that spontaneity is enacting any wild urges that happens to exist, but that *all* action is spontaneous when it is not compulsive" (F153). Feldenkrais characterizes spontaneous action in a number of distinct points.

Spontaneous action is not compulsive. A large part of typical human behavior is governed by compulsion; most human behavior is learned and emotions are attached to certain forms of behavior through success or failure, praise or criticism. This phenomenon is particularly acute as most learning takes place during childhood, when the individual depends on grown-ups and seeks their approval. So we "screw ourselves up to do things" because our emotional well-being depends on it, and as a result the learned behavior becomes entangled with an emotional affect (F58).

When we learn to free ourselves from "the affect that is associated with every situation and action" spontaneous action becomes possible (F57). And indeed, by the time they reach adulthood, most people learn "how to dissociate emotion from patterns established under the stress of dependence and to fix the urge for action on what [they find] expedient" (F103). For Feldenkrais, this is the very definition of maturity: Mature adults have the ability to direct their emotions in a way appropriate to the intended behavior.

Often, however, there remain instances of behavior where this dissociation is not learned. The results are what Feldenkrais calls cross-motivations: conflicting motivations that give rise to compulsive behavior.

> At the root of all anxiety, where education has failed, lies inner compulsion to act or to check action. And compulsion is sensed when motivation for action is conflicting; that is, when the habitual pattern that the person can enact is sensed as compromising the person's security. The feeling of security is linked with the image of self that has been cultivated in the dependence period. Thus, for some people, their good looks – for others, absolute unselfishness, absolute virility, superman ideas, absolute goodness, and all kinds of imaginary, untestable notions, habits of thought and patterns of behavior – have served as a means of obtaining affection, approval, protection, and care. Compulsion is sensed when there is a threat of any of these means becoming ineffective; the person feels endangered and left without any means of protection. (F11).

Cross-motivations can occur on several levels, the physical as well as the mental. A few examples are the way people screw up their face when trying to cut carefully with a pair of scissors, the way in which great ambitions may be governed by a compulsory need to be praised by others, or the manner in which men may pursue sexual activities to prove their masculinity.

A more extensive example that Feldenkrais provides concerns an asthmatic: she continuously reverts to a special posture of chest, throat, and head to the exclusion of all other ways of aligning these body segments. This way of constraining herself is compulsive, and it is this compulsion that causes asthma, not her posture (which a well-coordinated person could assume without becoming asthmatic). The posture of the asthmatic is a natural reaction to all onsets of fear and, as long as she lives in constant fear of abandonment formed during childhood, this posture is her best choice. She can begin to act differently only if she learns to be emotionally self-sufficient (F109).

An important aspect of mature behavior is that a person has control over the intensity of their emotions and not vice versa: there is no conscious or subconscious emotional pattern that compels them to or prevents them from a particular action. However, this does not mean that the person controls their emotions through sheer force of will. On the contrary: "Whenever will effort is necessary, there is unrecognized cross motivation, and this is an extremely wasteful method of obtaining results. Only immature people need will effort to act" (F112).

The opposite of cross-motivated actions are mono-motivated actions, which are governed by a single motivation, where "all the parasitic elements that tend to enact themselves by habit, conditioning, and stereotyped motion" have been excluded, and where "the motivation to succeed" is not stronger than "the motivation to act" (F20, F193).

Spontaneous actions make effective use of self. Mature individuals are able to choose any action that they see fit in a given situation. They are of course constrained by their abilities and their environment, but they are not constrained by any emotional compulsion, conscious or subconscious, and they are not hindered by "parasitic" behavioral patterns. They "use only those elements of [their experience] that are expedient for the present moment" (F44) and are thus able to make the most effective

use of self. Indeed, Feldenkrais identifies mastery of any skill with the ability to perform it spontaneously (F86).

Spontaneous actions feel effortless. The reason is that the subjective experience of effort does not stem from the difficulty of the task at hand, but arises from cross-motivations that cause the individual to unwittingly struggle with one self, one motivation striving with the other. "The sensation of effort is the subjective feeling of wasted movement" (F111). When actions are mono-motivated the individual uses himself effectively and spends just the amount of effort that is needful, thus making the action feel easy. All feeling of resistance, physical, mental or emotional, is contrary to spontaneous action. "Correct coordinated action seems, and feels, effortless no matter how great the actual amount of work involved may be" (F86).

Spontaneous actions are optional. This means that the mature individual may choose freely to perform the action or not. Neither of the two options puts the individual under emotional stress, conscious or subconscious, as the action is free from the emotional affect that may have been tied to it in the process of learning. This does not mean that the least strenuous action is the most spontaneous. For example, if an individual is scared of speaking in public, this does not mean that avoiding a public speech is spontaneous. On the contrary, because the individual is not free to choose either way, neither action is spontaneous.

Spontaneous actions allow the possibility of failure. Any action, no matter how skillfully executed, may fail. An action is only spontaneous if failure, or the possibility thereof, does not endanger the emotional safety of the individual. This does *not* mean spontaneous actions have to be inconsequential. Even actions involving great personal risk may be spontaneous. The decisive factor is that for an action to be spontaneous, the individual may have a desire to succeed, but he may not feel emotionally *compelled* to do so. "The alternative of failure has no compulsive tension about it" (F193).

Spontaneous actions are reversible. A spontaneous movement can be stopped at any moment and reversed in direction without a significant increase in effort (F113). Indeed, to Feldenkrais, reversibility was one of the most important characteristic of spontaneous action in general, not only in regard to bodily movement. "The importance of reversibility is that it is possible only when there is fine control of excitation and inhibi-

tion and a normal ebb and flow between the parasympathetic and the sympathetic. The test of reversibility holds true for all human activity whether it is viewed from the physical or the emotional standpoint" (F114).

Spontaneous actions both follow and guide the ebb and flow of sympathetic and parasympathetic dominance. Feldenkrais identifies two classes of motivations. On the one hand, there are the motivations directed towards self-protection and self-assertion, which are connected to the dominance of the sympathetic nervous system. On the other hand, there are those motivations associated with recuperation, relaxation, calmness, contentment and rest, which are connected to the dominance of the parasympathetic nervous system (F144, F167).

Feldenkrais sees mature behavior as governed by a never-ceasing oscillation between self-assertion and recuperation. For either system to be stimulated fully, its counterpart has to be fully inhibited, and this pendulum of excitation has to swing back and forth between these two poles (F170). He notes, however, that the functions of self-assertion are typically overexcited. Thus these two classes of motivations become conflated which leads to cross motivations that particularly difficult to resolve (F215, F227).

Conversely, one of the most important properties of mono-motivation is that it separates these two concerns and allows the continuous "ebb and flow" between these two poles of human activity to run its course (F114, F169). Moreover, the mature individual is able to guide this flow either way as the situation requires.

The Feldenkrais Method

The main body of Feldenkrais' work is not the abstract description of spontaneous action and mature behavior, but the development of a method that can help individuals to attain this mode of behavior, known as the Feldenkrais Method.[2]

[2] Of course, this is not the only body transformation method leading to mature behavior. A major forerunner of Feldenkrais was F. C. Alexander, the founder of the Alexander Technique (see Alexander 1989). His main disciple and fol-

It has become clear that the spontaneity of an action is foremost a property of the emotional state of the actor. The Feldenkrais Method thus helps people attain a different emotional attitude.

Emotional attitudes are subjective experiences. As such they cannot be communicated directly. All we can communicate through human language are labels associated with certain emotions. As each person carries their own dictionary for translating between words and subjective experiences, communication about emotions is both difficult and error prone. Moreover, if an individual has never felt an emotion or made an experience, it is almost impossible to evoke that experience in them through language. They will have to make that experience by themselves (F223).

Feldenkrais seeks to evoke new experiences in other people through physical movement. According to Feldenkrais, body, mind and environment form an indivisible unit (F149). One cannot be treated independently of the others. In particular, the emotional attitude of a person is reflected in their body and, conversely, changing the way people move will have an emotional effect.

The Feldenkrais method consists in guiding another person through a series of movements that evoke new subjective experiences of self and allow them to gain an intuitive understanding of this interdependence of emotion and movement. "This direct teaching of the person to understand subjectively the correct meaning of his sensations makes him see in his motivation more than he is normally aware of. The awareness of motivation is necessary before the person can learn a new management of motivation and thus change his behavior" (F153).

Take as an example the defensive attitude linked to a hunched posture, which is caused by tonic contractions of the chest muscles. The goal is to help the person relax the chest so that they can experience an upright posture along with the accompanying emotional change. Neither instructions to relax the chest nor repeated exercises will be of use here, as the person does not know how to relax these muscles. The movement required of them is not in the repertoire of motions they can intentionally execute. Thus they will try to change their posture by making substitute

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lower was Thomas Hanna, who developed Hanna Somatics (see Hanna 1988). They, too, have quite a few interesting similarities with ancient Daoist thought.

motions, such as contracting their back muscles, which increases cross-motivations instead of decreasing them.

The goal of the Feldenkrais method is now to make the person aware of the cross-motivations governing their movements and give them access to motions they could not intentionally perform. An instructor guides the student through a sequence of exercises designed in such a way that precisely those movements that could, up to now, not be executed intentionally, are extremely helpful for carrying out these exercises, while the compulsive patterns of movement are a hindrance.

The student is now encouraged to explore their repertoire of movement, observing carefully how each movement feels. The goal is to discover a *reversible* motion that makes the exercise feels as *effortless* as possible (F162). Students should use only a small part of their available physical strength for the exercise and they should not try to make their movements as large as possible, as physical strain decreases sensitivity, and awareness is crucial to discover new ways of movement (F135). Also, an ambitious attitude towards the exercises is strictly discouraged. Instead they should be performed with a playful attitude (F164).

This process of exploration is designed to help the student make the revelatory experience of (re)gaining access to movements they were not aware of. Compulsive resistance becomes superfluous and thus cross-motivations are resolved (F160). When the individual has made this experience a couple of times, they will be able to resolve other cross-motivations more easily as "one can sense that the tenseness and anxiety are due to something that one actually enacts and something that one knows now how to better deal with" (F148).

Thus the individual can learn to act spontaneously through careful and active self-observation as well as a curious and playful attitude towards learning.

Laozi's *Wuwei*

The phrase *wei wuwei* appears in many places throughout the *Daode jing*; it is most simply translated as "do not do." On the one hand, this is a word of caution, phrased in the negative, saying that you should not "do." But it is also a positive recommendation, when *wuwei* is read as a verb on its own, telling you to "do not-do" or "act by not acting." It is

useful to treat these two "verbs" as separate modes of action. In light of Feldenkrais, then, these two modes of action can be read as follows: "Not-doing" means spontaneous action. The "doing" that is advised against means compulsory action.

The first and foremost property of *wuwei* in the *Daode jing* is that by "not-doing" you can achieve everything. "Doing," on the other hand, turns against the actor (L3, L37, L64). These statements appear paradoxical in the *Daode jing*. However, when interpreted as referring to spontaneous action and compulsive action, they no longer appear self-contradictory.

There is much more in the *Daode jing*, though, that speaks in favor of this interpretation. Indeed, the text in many places relates the mode of action to the emotional attitude of the actor. To begin with, it identifies "competition" as a harmful motivation for acting: "The big winner does not compete" (L68). "Good people are not contentious; contentious people are not good" (L81).

The text further connects competition with the actor's attitude toward achievement. The desire to win must not be too great, and the hold onto the objects of desire, even on life itself, must be easy (L12, L16, L33). "Not competing, [wise souls] have no competitor in the world" (L22); "Whatever you lose, you have won. Whatever you win, you have lost"(L42). "Great power, not clinging to power, has true power. Lesser power, clinging to power, lacks true power" (L38). "The wise do without claiming, achieve without asserting, wishing not to show their worth" (L77). "To give birth, to nourish, to bear and not to own; to act and not lay claim; to do the work and let it go: for letting it go is what makes it stay" (L2). "So wise souls leaving self behind move forward, and setting self aside stay centered" (L7).

The "self" to be left behind reflects the grim, competitive hold on life that "lacks true power." It is precisely the compulsory emotional attachment to the ends of the individual's actions that, in Feldenkrais' view, stand in the way of mature behavior. Just as the mature individual has to learn to separate the emotional affect from the object of action, so the wise soul has to "let go." "Trying," "claiming," "asserting," "losing," "winning," and even "holding"—these are all emotionally charged modes of action, and both Laozi and Feldenkrais argue against this emotional content. For whenever you "try," "claim," or "assert," the end

looms larger in your mind than the action, you feel compelled to succeed and failure appears threatening. The wise soul or mature individual, on the other hand, may compete, but they are not competitive, as losing is a possible result of action and one that they do not fear any more than winning. Because they are not compelled to prefer one course of action over the other, they are free to choose as the situation requires.

Laozi clearly talks about compulsion when he writes, "So you come to the deep sameness. Then you can't be controlled by love or by rejection. You can't be controlled by profit or by loss. You can't be controlled by praise or by humiliation" (L56). "To be in favor or disgrace is to live in fear" (L13).

The outcomes of your actions – "love" or "rejection," "profit" or "loss," "praise" or "humiliation" – have the power to control you, only if you feel compelled to achieve the former and prevent the latter. Indeed, by definition, behavior becomes compulsive whenever emotions exert control. Note that in this interpretation neither Laozi nor Feldenkrais advise against feeling emotions, only against feeling compelled by them. The wise soul or the mature individual feels, but as far as their choices are concerned, their emotions do not hold power over them.

The rigid, compulsory quality of "trying," "claiming" and "clinging" is perhaps best summarized in the fundamental human experience of "wanting." Laozi explicitly warns against the dangers of wanting and extols the merits of not-wanting (L37, L64). "The greatest evil: wanting more. The worst luck: discontent"(L46). "The unwanting soul sees what's hidden, and the ever-wanting soul sees only what it wants" (L1). "To follow the Way is not to need fulfillment" (L15).

In this regard, Laozi sounds more drastic than Feldenkrais. Feldenkrais does not argue against wanting *per se*, only against compulsion. Yet, there is no contradiction here. First, Laozi's "wanting" can be read as compulsion. Second, if the mature individual truly allows the possibility of failure in all actions as Feldenkrais writes, then this entails a "stillness" of soul in the spirit of Laozi. I would argue here for an interpretation that lies somewhere in between. The mature individual may want, but his wanting never takes on a hard, clinging, claiming quality. As Laozi writes, "Invulnerable, unlimited—you can do what you like with material things. But only if you hold to the mother of all things will you do it for long" (L59).

Laozi not only describes how the wise souls behave, he also gives concrete reasons why they should do so. The wise souls do not do, not because of some moral or divine imperative, but, simply because not-doing is most effective. They "win without competing," "achieve without asserting," "do without doing," and thus, "get everything done." In this manner they may "live on, needing no renewal." Moreover, to do otherwise leads to disaster and the opposite of what was intended. In this regard, Laozi and Feldenkrais are in complete accord. To Feldenkrais, spontaneous action is the most effective way of using one self and conversely, "the best intentions when enacted compulsively yield opposite results" (Fxxxvii).

There are two more aspects to this observation. First, both Laozi and Feldenkrais are not merely interested in effective use of self; they both aim beyond, at an ideal mode of action. Where Feldenkrais' goal is mature behavior, Laozi speaks of the power (*de*) that can be attained by following the Dao. "So the wise soul, without great doings, achieves greatness" (L34). "So the wise soul, by never dealing with great things, gets great things done" (L69). "To have without possessing, do without claiming, lead without controlling: this is mysterious power" (L51).

Second, both Laozi and Feldenkrais observe that ease is a characteristic property of not-doing and spontaneous action. We have already seen this in Feldenkrais' work. The *Daode jing* demonstrates this in all the negations it employs ("not doing," "not claiming," "not holding on"), as well as its advice to "let go." "The way of heaven doesn't compete yet wins handily, doesn't speak yet answers fully, doesn't summon yet attracts. It acts perfectly easily" (L73).

Note that "ease" here does not mean that it comes easily to anyone or that it is to be taken lightly. Indeed, as Laozi writes, "since taking things too lightly makes them worthless, and taking things too easy makes them hard, the wise soul, by treating the easy as hard, doesn't find anything hard" (L63, L70).

Instead, the characteristic ease of not-doing refers to the subjective quality of not-doing. This subjective quality is also evoked beautifully by the poetic imagery employed by Laozi. One recurring image is that of water. "What's softest in the world rushes and runs over what's hardest in the world" (L43). "Nothing in the world is as soft, as weak, as water; nothing else can wear away the hard, the strong and remain unaltered"

(L78). "True goodness is like water. Water's good for everything. It doesn't compete. It goes right to the low loathsome places, and so finds the way" (L8).

The "low loathsome places" mentioned in the last quote, pose somewhat of a problem at first glance. Why should the wise soul seek them out? The answer lies in the connection to non-competition. In a world where the sense of self is tied to success, a state of mind where success and failure are approached with the same stillness and without resistance must seem like a loathsome place. Note that in this interpretation, the "low loathsome place" is not failure, but rather the truly spontaneous mode of action.

Another important image is that of the infant who has "soft bones [and] weak muscles, but a firm grasp" (L55). It serves as a metaphor for the wise soul holding on to things, the mature individual wanting without compulsion. To Feldenkrais, the infant is also a metaphorical ideal insofar as it is still free from cross-motivation or compulsion, but this ideal is not absolute, as the infant has only few abilities. Like the *Daode jing*, Feldenkrais proposes that the individual achieves the abilities of an adult with the mono-motivated unity of an infant. "Being full of power is like being an infant" (L55).

The final image I would like to address is that of cycles. Cycles of life and death, growth and decay, strength and weakness abound in the *Daode jing* (L36, L55). Together with the pairs of opposites that co-arise, one side depending on the other, it is these eternal cycles, that often serve as justification for Laozi's advice to do the opposite of what may appear desirable, not the least of which is the advice to do not do. There is, however, a more fundamental truth here. Dao itself is governed by cycles: "Heaven and earth act as a bellows: empty yet structured, it moves, inexhaustibly giving" (L5).

This image of the subjective quality of Dao is strikingly similar to Feldenkrais description of spontaneous action: the cyclic motion of the bellows between heaven and earth mirrors the ebb and flow between the sympathetic and parasympathetic system, between self-assertion and release, between yin and yang.

Laozi does not mean complete passivity and the elimination of self when he recommends not-doing. Rather, a balance between self-assertion and release has to be found that is not governed by compulsion.

"The most difficult cross motivations to recognize are the self-assertive ones, mixed up with the recuperative ones" (F215).

Feldenkrais observes that "on the social level, this is the age-old unresolved conflict between society and the individual, namely, collectivism and individualism" and he goes on to point that there is no absolute solution to this problem. Instead, we have to look at the problem from a fundamentally different point of view (F216). To this end, he puts forth the concept of spontaneous action as a means of realizing a dynamic ever-shifting balance between these two poles. However, this fundamental change of perspective also has a mystical quality that we are going to return to in the next section.

Further Similarities

Both Feldenkrais and Laozi identify education and morality as the most important factor preventing people from not-doing or spontaneous action. While Laozi's assertions to this end often appear paradoxical (L2, L3, L18, L19, L38, L49, L81), Feldenkrais offers a rational explanation: The conflation of action and emotion which gives rise to cross-motivations is inherent in the human process of learning, but it is aggravated through education, the approval and disapproval of grown-ups and, especially, absolute imperatives for behavior (F44, F52, F162, F200).

The avoidance of absolutes is also reflected in the skepticism and caution with which Laozi and Feldenkrais treat language, as they both realize that not-doing and spontaneous action cannot be explained. Their ways of dealing with this problem differ widely, however. Laozi is a mystic who uses paradox and poetic imagery to hint at deeper meanings. Feldenkrais on the other hand is always the western scientist who draws on theory and empirical experiments to explain his ideas. At the same time he is keenly aware that subjective experience is at the heart of the subject matter, and he developed the Feldenkrais method to communicate subjective experiences through bodily movement.

Daoism, of course, was always tied to a practice of physical exercise and it is still taught this way today (see Chen & Silberstorff, 2006; Chia 2005; Littlejohn 2009). There is a striking similarity in the ways of using one's own body that are to be learned in both cases (F163). The main difference lies perhaps in the approach to teaching: Where Feldenkrais en-

courages playful experimentation and views corrections on part of the teacher as counter-productive, repetition is the key element of tuition in the Daoist tradition and it is held that students cannot find the way on their own, but are dependent on the constant corrections of their teacher.

In the *Daode jing* itself, there are many warnings against learning and knowledge, but these warnings are directed against an overemphasis of intellectual pursuits, the desire for accomplishment, the proliferation of rules and against taking words too seriously. The Daoist development of self is described with adjectives like "closing," "shrinking," "blunting," "dimming" (L4, L48), at first contrary the exploring curiosity required by Feldenkrais. However, the point is not that you must not be curious, but rather that Dao is free from ambition and all the other causes of cross-motivation, "without compulsive seriousness" (Fxxxix). Nor does the *Daode jing* contradict the active development of self (see Palmquist 2010).

Both Feldenkrais and Laozi deal with language, learning, and the body to communicate the inherently mystic matter of subjective experience. But Laozi goes one step further when he writes about "deep sameness," the "One," the "unnamed." There is a "deep mystery" at the heart of the *Daode jing*, on which the entire meaning of the text rests. How can Feldenkrais' work, firmly grounded in the empirical world of manifest things, be compared to such a thoroughly mystical text?

First of all, the image of unity or oneness plays an important role in Feldenkrais' work from an entirely empirical point of view: mind, body, and environment are interdependent. Therefore, to change one is to change all three. This logical argument provides an important insight, but it does not address the revelatory experience that changes the world, which is the subject of mystery.

Indeed Feldenkrais avoids writing about mystery precisely because it cannot be written about (F161). And yet, he writes about it briefly, calling it "maturity" when he describes the experience of a man who recovers from a medical operation. "He may get an insight into his own insignificance in the general scheme of things, and his unique importance to himself and to those who depend on him. In short, maturity may suddenly catch up with him, and he will get up a new man" (F150). Then, remarkably, Feldenkrais goes on to explain this experience in terms of his theory of spontaneous action: "Recognizing our insignificance, the

unimportance of what we think, do, or cannot do, we find ourselves in full mastery of ourselves to the potential limit of our ability. That sort of unstable equilibrium that is abandoned in each action and recovered for the next is the essence of human maturity" (F216).

While Feldenkrais steers clear of mysticism, he combines the description of subjective experience with reductionist explanation and logical argument to communicate what Laozi seeks to evoke through imagery and paradox.

Conclusion

Wuwei means spontaneous action. Read with this simple interpretation in mind, Laozi's *Daode jing* and Feldenkrais' *The Potent Self* reveal striking similarities. In fact, they can be interpreted as referring to the same thing. The merit of this common interpretation is that it allows either text to be viewed in a new light.

If *wuwei* is interpreted as spontaneous action, many of the paradoxes and mysteries of the *Daode jing* suddenly become clear. Feldenkrais manages to point to the subjective experience of spontaneous action using scientific explanations and empirical experiments. He does not remove the subjective and somewhat mystical quality of this mode of action in favor of an abstract interpretation, but instead makes it lucid through abstract argument and playful experimentation. Using his work, the mysteries of the *Daode jing* become accessible from a rationalist point of view, revealing their meaning without losing any of their magic and wonder.

At the same time, this reading also challenges Feldenkrais' theory. Although Feldenkrais takes great care to steer clear of the mysticism Laozi rejoices in, the Daoist perspective dares him to fully explore the mystic and philosophical aspects of spontaneous action. What does it mean to want without compulsion, to accept the possibility of failure in all actions? What is the unstable equilibrium between self-assertion and release, individualism and collectivism? Spontaneous action provides clear answers to these questions on the small scale of bodily movement and everyday behavior. Laozi asks how these ideas fit and feel on the grand scale of life itself and connects them to the social and political community. As Feldenkrais suggests, spontaneous action holds answers

on these levels also, but the challenge is to make them as plain, simple, and accessible as those on the microscopic scale.

Western intellectual pursuits of observation, analysis, abstraction, and experiment have led to major technological progress. Nonetheless, science has failed to provide significant insights about the realm of subjective experience, which remains the province of sport, art, religion, love, and – ultimately – life. Feldenkrais' ideas show how every individual can make new subjective discoveries through "scientific" exploration: by regarding the interplay of both realms with playful curiosity.

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