

Brain plasticity and Movement Improvement! - Josie Davenport, LMT LCSW

"I have long been intrigued by this subtle form of retraining the nervous system, which I currently recommend to patients whose movement has been restricted by injury, cerebral palsy, stroke, fibromyalgia, or chronic pain. (I find it to be much more useful than standard physical therapy.) I also believe that the Feldenkrais Method can help older people achieve greater range of motion and flexibility, and help all of us feel more comfortable in our bodies." Dr. Andrew Weil

Good news for kids with neurological challenges, artists, musicians, athletes and the elderly. Scientists have redefined our brains ability to change, create new pathways, and to keep learning and changing right into old age. Basically our brains love to learn as long as we set up the learning in an interesting and digestible way.

So how does the brain learn the best and easiest way?

Lets take an example of a child who can't sit up due to a neurological disability.

First of all if I just prop the child up, no learning occurs at all, or the child learns to make themselves rigid like a block or a triangle in order to keep from falling over.

But what if I help that child to feel the movement possibilities of all the bones that they have in relationship to a specific function. Beginning with the easiest functions like flexing or rolling, I help the child build slowly more complex movements. By moving them delicately and pleurably and not over-riding their system, the child can learn to feel the possibilities of movement in relation to the specific task that matches their interest.

I move slowly at first - and make it easy to do - children then get the feeling of ease and safety and can digest the movement into the possibility of a movement repertoire.

I help them to feel to let go of the powerful muscles around their pelvis and abdomen, they can begin to use those powerful muscles to their advantage which can begin to translate into sitting on their own. This learning to let go comes only through safe, small and playful - easily digestible movement.

Children with neurological difficulties can learn the timing of turning one vertebra at a time, they can learn to lean through their skeleton and use gravity to their advantage in order to feel light.

"Movement is the language of the brain." states Anat Baniel, And motor learning can cause increased learning globally - including verbally and cognitively.

Please visit Anat Baniel's web page and watch video footage of this work with Carter who has CP. <http://www.anatbanielmethod.com/>

Bibliography:

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Josie Davenport, LMT LCSW, co-owner of the Florida School of Massage since 1987, Is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner® and an Anat Baniel Method for ChildrenSM practitioner. Josie offers free children's clinics 3 times a year to give parents and children the opportunity to experience this innovative and gentle method.

Josie also teaches Transformational Movement LessonsSM for adults and elders including, musicians, singers, dancers and other professionals who would enjoy moving with greater fluidity, power and pleasure.

". . . The body reflects attitudes of the mind, improve the function of the body and you must improve the state of the mind."

Moshe Feldenkrais, D.Sc.

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