

George Krutz

Taking Time, Giving Time

It seems to me that the biggest challenge we face is that society's relationship to time has shifted dramatically. This is in a large part due to the development of information technologies, but the trend was certainly there before the internet. This shift has changed our relationships to each other economically, socially, and personally.

In the Feldenkrais profession, the economic challenge is perhaps most clearly felt. As digital reproduction and manufacturing get faster and cheaper, it becomes harder to make a living if you engage in a time intensive activity. We live in an age where fortunes are made and lost in hundredths of second. As Feldenkrais practitioners we are like video tapes or vinyl records that must be transferred in the original recording speed in order to be intelligible. Our method is analog in a digital world. We are not the only ones in this predicament, those who engage in crafts, art and music, and all of the healing arts are in similar circumstances. The good news is that Functional Integration could be one of the last set of skills to be automated. It remains to be seen if it will be more highly valued or abandoned. At least part of the challenge we face in this respect is to how to keep our work available and affordable to all can use it.

The social pressures from this new relationship with time mean that everyone is in a hurry. Email put a new urgency in communication, instant messaging has only heightened that. To linger on a thought or a problem means being left behind. Who has time to lie on the floor for forty-five minutes? While I would not deny that information technology has enriched our lives, and opened new possibilities, I would also say that it has a clear potential to truncate human experience. There is mounting evidence that time and attention are important for physical, emotional, and even spiritual health. At the same time it seems we may be, as a society, radically altering our relationship to them both.

Perhaps it has always been so and in any case, fruitless to try to stand in opposition, but we can continue to do what we do, which is to offer our time and attention with no apologies that it will require our students time and attention. Our work is, in an essential way, profoundly counter-cultural. That is both, our challenge and gift to the

world we find ourselves in. The challenge to us is to make our way in that world without losing that.