

Russell Delman January 2023

## **Life is Movement: Small Steps**

*Student: "How do you walk through mud?"*

*Teacher: "Stop walking".*

*Student: "Just stay stuck?"*

*Teacher: "Pause, Breathe, Listen, Wonder... Step"*

Dear Friend,

How is life unfolding for you?

From many interactions with people throughout the world, this seems to be a particularly challenging time. Clarity of direction and inspiration is elusive. While this might not be personally true for you, for many this is a time of uncertainty, inertia, and confusion - a sense of being stuck, of walking through mud.

Does this resonate for you?

## **Life IS Movement**

Moshe Feldenkrais' essential teaching can be summarized in his oft quoted phrase: "*movement IS life, life without movement is unthinkable*". It is not that life **has** movement in it, rather that life and movement are inseparable. This means that your life will unfold until you die, with or without any intentionality on your part. While so much happens beyond the forces of our will or choice, often our awareness can generate new, impactful movements/actions.

How can awareness generate movement/action, especially when feeling stuck?

## **Getting Unstuck: Stepping out of Mud**

## **CLICK**

**Below watch two short videos from Linda and Russell describing two new events.**

Here I think of another great influence on my life, Eugene Gendlin, creator of Focusing.

Like Feldenkrais, Gendlin saw that embodied awareness was a key for positive forward movement. He saw that life always seeks new life. Our personal life is part of a greater force called LIFE, a moving energy that **MUST** unfold. Even obviously negative, life-destroying behaviors come from misguided choices intended to ease suffering and increase fulfillment. How can we step out of the mud and into life-giving actions?

### **Embodied Awareness and Stuck-ness**

When we feel frozen or lost in repetitious, unfulfilling circles, bringing embodied awareness to the whole moment ignites a powerful process. Start where you are, saying hello to “what is”. It is not enough to just be aware of our feelings or ideas. Before focusing on your emotions or thoughts, your bodily sensations are surprisingly important sources of support and guidance. Bodily sensations come from two overlapping sources: the physical body and what we call the “feeling body”.

In our usage, the physical body focuses on the rather neutral bodily sensations like feeling full after a meal or the sensations of sitting and breathing. We use the term “feeling body” to focus on our inner sense of the moment, including our reactions and emotions. For example, listening in our chest and belly to the experiences of anxiety or joy, we can sense how our body “carries” these moments.

One key to embodied awareness is learning to bring a neutral, curious, awareness to the feeling body. This attitude immediately impacts how the situations are living in you.

Taking this further, we learn to allow **the physical body, feeling body, the thoughts, images, and the external situation** – the entirety of that moment - to blend. When all these aspects of the living moment come “online” together, you are having an integrated, “felt-sense” experience that will naturally unfold further. This deep listening is not only internal. We can learn to let go into “the larger space, beyond separate self” and ask for help.

A word about our relationship with the “larger space, beyond self and asking for help”. This is a big subject that I will elaborate in a future writing. For now, it is enough to say that most of us, consciously or unconsciously, have the sense of connectedness to “larger than self”. Whether called - Spirit Guides, God, Buddha, Higher Self, Angels, Love, Life Force, Larger Space, etc. – including the possibility of guidance from beyond our limited selves, opens new possibilities.

## **Small Steps**

Putting together “**Life is Movement**” and “**Embodied Awareness**, the power of Gendlin’s oft quoted “*small steps in the right direction*” is revealed. From listening in this integrated, “felt-sense” way, often a small step can come to us. Sometimes our direction emerges spontaneously without the need for much further investigation. At other times, the specific step is less clear, and we need to consciously choose a small step.

How do we know it is the “right direction”?

**This is the remarkable paradox – it does not need to be right, to be right!**

Even a small movement gets the wheels of life turning, bringing new breath, new energy. If it is not immediately “right” or helpful, the feedback from life, i.e., what happens, will show you where to go. Life often unfolds zigzag, not in straight lines. Think of all the times you ended up in the “right” place, yet it unfolded in a surprising, non-linear way. The key is to let the process unfurl by **encouraging forward movement, through your active participation, with awareness.**

When truly listening, there is no need to worry about making a mistake or going in the wrong direction. As a Tibetan teacher once said:  
*“The bad news is you are falling from an airplane, and you have no parachute. The good news is there is no ground”!*

**Small is powerful** to get your system moving.

Often, we are stuck because the situation, the problem seems too big.

- Let’s say your house is an annoying mess and you can’t find the inspiration to clean. Choosing one very small project in one room might mobilize you in surprising ways.

- A student spoke of an unwanted distance with her partner. Ideas about what was wrong in the whole relationship overwhelmed her. A small decision to cook a special meal made a real difference.

- Recently, I was asked to write an article and found it impossible to get going. After some helpful listening to my “felt-sense” of the whole situation, I decided to just write a few random sentences. Letting go of writing the whole piece allowed creativity to unfold.

**How about when it is all just too much?**

Bring your warm-hearted awareness to the suffering places living in you at that moment. When you remember **that unconditional kindness is already living in you** (often just below habitual judgments), even the most stuck state can begin to melt in the warmth of your love.

Wishing you an inspired, fulfilling journey.....Russell

