
Training Call #8: Feldenkraisian Learning & Intentional Human Movement

Irene (00:02):

Welcome, everyone. It is December 9. It's the 9th of December, year 2025, and we are on training call number eight. Wow. I was reflecting on how I'm always saying to folks, basics, the basics, review, repeat as I say these words, tune into your breath, maybe the environment. This is the 18th time we've run SmartBody SmartMind, and I never really get bored of the basics and these training calls, oddly. And so I hope all of you, if you're new here, you really take a moment to feel into the newness of this work and the importance of reviewing. And it doesn't mean that you have to come and attend every single call and get out the handout each time. By no means, that doesn't have to happen. But my colleagues and I, who have been at this for a long time, and we just had a moderation team meeting yesterday, and our end of year get together, to say hello, and all the people that answer questions, all the professionals that answer questions in the forums, we all talk about the importance of the basics in our lives, resources, connection to simple things, little tiny bits of social engagement, even if it's just having a nice conversation with someone at the bus stop, if you happen to do that.

(01:52)

Little tiny things.

(01:56)

And I was just walking the other day near here at a park, and an older gentleman with his little white doggy, I don't know what it was, looked at me, he's like, oh, another walker. He was probably in his seventies, mid seventies, with his little dog. I said, yep, I like to walk. And he said, yeah, not many people like to walk when it's raining. It was raining. And I took a second to just pause and notice that he was wanting to connect. He wasn't worried or anxious, he was just my dad's age, he wanted to talk about the weather and the rain, and that social engagement.

(02:39)

And I know sometimes we people do small talk, and how boring it is, and I want to get to the deep, important, meaningful stuff, but that's actually what babies need, at the very beginning. They need that basic connection. They need that knowing, that someone else is there, just wanting to talk about the fact that they have a poopy diaper, or they're hungry, or they're cold. And so just look for those little moments. I know for some of you, many of us, we live alone. We might not have a lot of good connections - that's healthy - for those that do have good connections, that's healthy, that's wonderful. But don't underestimate these little tiny nuggets of talking to a stranger about the weather, commenting on the fact that you're both out walking, what scone looks good at the coffee shop. Oh yeah, I tried that one the other day. Seems really silly. But these are the little things that give us a little spark and keep us connected and in the world of our online, where we're so connected to these digital devices, and not always in connection with people in the field, in the real live world, take advantage of those little ones when they come up. So thank you to the old man that I saw the other day.

(04:06)

He had to tell me that he doesn't walk on the trail when it's raining because there's bridge decks that are slippery. So he goes up to the campground where it's all gravel and hard. And I said, yeah, I do that too sometimes. And it's true, silly, very little things. So watch out for those, make note of them. Yeah, I wanted to share that. So the basics, and as you guys know, we're getting close to the end of this round - next week is training call number nine, where I'll get into sort of the integration of everything. There's still two more Q and A calls with Seth, and then we have a wrap up call, really leading up to that final kind of technical week. For some of us. We know that is the week of Christmas, others maybe not, but we'll have our final wrap up call soon. And then just for those that are new here, as alum, you'll become alumni soon, and you are welcome to come back the next round and join the calls and participate, and moderation will continue till mid-January. All the dates are on the site, and now that you all will technically have alumni status, the site will stay alive. The labs won't disappear for you. They'll all stay available and at your fingertips. So don't be afraid to go back to the basics. Review some Q and A calls, go back to the training calls.

(05:52)

And I really want to urge the reminders that we keep giving that this is about slowness and study and integrating. I was actually just talking to Rebecca this morning on text about the quickness, the quickness of quick fixes. And in a world of AI where you can get an answer about anything at any time, it is, I'm finding training our brains to not really drop into something for a while. I'm really going to slow that down and I want to have hope that you guys go back to the scholarly ways of sitting around a table at a library or sitting around a dinner table talking about theory and concepts. Some of us maybe didn't do that, but the SmartBody SmartMind curriculum, from what I've seen over the many rounds, works when we really treat it like a study. It is your scholastic healing experience.

(07:02)

It isn't just about - what lesson do I do to get out of this stress response. Now you might know that you have a favorite lesson that helps calm and soothe and resource. You do that, but the lessons are meant to grow your capacity in a very sequential way such that eventually, with time, for some of us longer than others, the regulation starts to build, and then you know how to move through a stress response, because the internal markers go, oh, this is when I take a breath, or this is when I feel the ground, or this is when I let my eyes actually go out of the body into the environment.

(07:50)

So we're really learning a complex language, but we have it all in us. I'm going to just land on that. You're all human and you're all here, which means you have the makeup to have regulation. Does that make sense? I see some nods. I see some sighs, I see some - right? I see some movement. I say that with all seriousness. If you're here and really able to just hear my words and nod your head a little bit, or maybe go, oh man, this is a lot. That's cool, but you have the makeup of a human, and humans are meant to learn, and we're meant to learn complex stuff. The survival stress just gets in the way. And so part of the learning is to grow capacity so that we're aware of that survival stress when it comes in, and we can work with it and let it leave and exit the building.

(08:50)

This comes back to the swimming pool and beach balls from training call one - bigger, bigger, and then you might rest and let that bigness solidify. And then, oh, I feel the ball in here. Now, the ball's in there. That means I better have a moment to pause and look or feel, or is there a tear, or is there an emotion, or is there a movement, or am I tired, or am I hungry? So I just wanted to take a second to really land on that, because I really want you to make use of your investment. It is one, and know that that can sustain for a long, long time, and the tools are there. You just have to really apply them and be a scholar of your system. So thank you for listening to my monologue. As we start, I'm going to have a little tea, and then we'll get into the first part on the handout, which is lessons and resources to review. So take a look at that.

(10:02)

So today I'm going to speak a bit more about Feldenkraisian learning. And the reason why this is so important, and it might seem strange to wait until the end to talk about this - Feldenkrais is embedded in every single neurosensory exercise you have done, even if it's not movement. And I'm going to just step back and talk about this for a second before getting into the bullet points. For those of you who have maybe done somatic experiencing, some of you maybe have with a practitioner, some of you, maybe some other form of somatic work, maybe some of you are somatic experiencing practitioners. I know that to be true for many of us here, that work is a very specific model. It's a wonderful model. When I'm in private practice, when I was, it's what I used along with other things. But there's nothing in that model where it's teaching verbally how to track the sequencing of how to notice a person shows up at a therapy session, if we just use that as the way of describing it.

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And there's almost this assumption that we know how to track, and be in our sensations, and be in our body, and be in the environment. Now, of course, a good practitioner knows that's not always the case, and they teach you how to be in the system, or how to be in the environment, or both, or track activation and release, but there was never a code or a set of lessons that we were handed to say, here, go practice these at night. So you get better at noticing your pelvis, or noticing your joints, or noticing your posture, right? I'll move my body

as I say this. So when I brought these to you all through these courses, I used my Feldenkraisian training to teach the SE principles in auditory format. I'll say that again. When I created SmartBody SmartMind and its lessons, I used my Feldenkraisian principles, and how you would teach movement, but I applied them to the somatic experiencing principles, but also to Kathy Kain's, work who taught me the kidney adrenals, the brainstem, the gut, the mediastinum, as well as Stephen Terrell.

(12:33)

So in those trainings, or if you went and worked with a practitioner, they're doing that with you, for example, but they're not teaching you how to do it. I mean, a good person, a good therapist, will make you learn how to find those things on your own. So I hope you're tracking me here, because what I want to say is even though Feldenkrais, we think, oh, that's the potent posture lesson, or that's the rolling like a baby lesson or that's the balance your back lesson. That's true. Those are more classic Feldenkraisian lessons. But all of the Feldenkraisian concepts are in orienting in the joints, in the diaphragms, in the way that you notice the kidney adrenals, the way you notice the brain stem.

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And I believe because while we've been doing 18 rounds of this, it still is new. This work is quite new in the concept of the world and humanity. But I think that's why some of this stuff can work so well is because you're learning how to shift how you feel about your sensations, and about your movements, and about your posture, what is happening with your breath when you even think about orienting. So all Feldenkrais inspired lessons are key. They're the more movement-based ones. Lab 10, which is coming up soon, is mostly all Feldenkrais movement, but you'll see that there's these, it's stitched into it, kind of like a tapestry, different threads of noticing the kidneys, doing some sound. So it's blending all of them together.

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So I wanted to start with that and really slow that down, because it is a very unique part of SmartBody SmartMind, and also the curriculum of, say, 21 Day, which are the lessons in SBSM. So those lessons are in SBSM. So if someone asks you in the future, how is - what 's Irene's teaching different from say other forms of brain retraining or somatic release, I have

come to see that that's one of the main differences. We all have the same theory under us for the most part. It's the manner in which the practices and the embodiment is taught that I think makes it different. I actually know it's different.

(15:21)

The third bullet point down on this first page, Elia's movement lessons. Don't underestimate the fun and silliness of his work. He is a master at Qigong and Tai Chi, movement, embodiment. He has been trained at a high level with body mind centering. If you guys don't know that's Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's work, who is a dame, she's an older woman that's been around forever teaching movement at a very high level. So just to note that Elia holds his own classes and programs, I don't get commission from him at all. So I'm just saying use him as a resource, whether it's within the movement lessons, that you have access to repeat those, repeat those. They're a great way of getting moving in the morning, or coming down at the end of the night, or getting a little energy during the day. And he also does his own classes, and he does private lessons, so you make use of him. And then all of our moderators, everyone's a little different, depending on their private practices and their availability. But on the site there's a lot of good resources if you want some added support, some added coaching. If you have a trauma piece that you're like, ah, I think I need a little help with that car accident, or this boss that I hate, or something like that, they're there as all very seasoned professional practitioners. And of course they know SBSM implicitly, inside and out.

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I have a drop in class I'm doing tomorrow. So that's something that you can join. You would've gotten the email for that. And then the Feldenkrais cheat sheet. So this is on the site under the resources, but we're going to go through it today. Also, cheat sheet just means a little review thing, quick review nuggets to remind you of some of the tactics of the Feldenkrais work. So we'll go through that today. Alright, so the first line here under the review is neuroplasticity, neuroplasticity, basics, sequencing, and rewiring, and Feldenkraisian learning. Turn on a light here. It's getting dark.

(17:43)

So I'm going to read this quote from - it's not from Moshe - but it's from Norman Doidge, who

wrote the book, *The Brain's Way of Healing*. And this is a great book on neuroplasticity. I would say both of his books are really solid books that aren't too difficult to understand. They have great stories in them, and it talks about just all the ways that we change how the brain can adapt, how the body changes, how we recover from neurological deficits. And so Doidge says, in reference to Feldenkrais work, and for those of you that don't know, Feldenkrais was a person, he died quite a while ago at a very older age. So he was ahead of his time with a lot of this stuff. So he says, slowness of movement is the key to awareness, and awareness is the key to learning. I'm going to say that one more time. Slowness of movement is the key to awareness, and awareness is the key to learning. This is on page one in the middle.

(19:00)

And this is so important, because I could show you, I could say, let's have fun here. I could say, everyone, just do this with me for a bit. I'm rising, good for the lymph, but this is just a - it's a movement. Of course, if you have a shoulder injury, be careful with it. But for the sake of moving, there's nothing wrong, for the sake of doing aerobic movements, feels good. Get the twists in with the spine, calisthenics. Nothing wrong with that. But what we're working with in the Feldenkraisian style is, I would say to you, I want you to think about a movement, and we're going to consider this movement of raising your arms over your head. Feel into this actually, right now. Use a little thought experiment. Start to raise your arms over your head, but don't do it yet. Just feel the thought of it, and just the thought of it. Does something change in your breathing?

(20:09)

And then maybe go the next step further, to consider starting the movement slowly, and move slowly, to lift the arms over the head. But is there one arm that guides? Does one kind of take over and lead the movement? Can anybody notice if the right or the left goes first? Can anybody notice if when you do that there's a shift in your breath? Do just the arms move? Do the eyes follow arms? Do you turn a little bit to the left or the right? Do you shift something in your feet? Now of course, depending on how you're sitting or resting, those questions may or might not hold.

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When you lift the arms up, do you lift just lightly, or do you reach like you're trying to stretch? So none of this is rocket science, but it's this asking if - can we slow it down, and be aware of how we do the movement? Now, if someone here exercises with shoulder exercises, it might be important to know that one arm is always leading the way. That would over time create an imbalance. If you're lifting dumbbells, say over your head, little things like that. But just that act of slowing down, okay, I'm going to keep breathing as I do that. Or what if I just went half the way? Could I just do that, and feel how they can be exactly matched, and I slow it down, I really feel the arms, and can I sense my butt on the chair, so I could ask that question? As you raised your arms, were you able to also feel your pelvis, sitting?

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What are your feet doing? That is just a little simple experiment to ask the question, are you able to stay aware of your movement, and slow it down, and notice all the other nuances? When you go to pick up your coffee mug or your tea mug, is it always with the same hand, when you go to the cupboards to put away dishes or grab dishes? Is it always with the same hand? Now, there's nothing wrong with always using the same hand, but think about this. Let's play with this. If you imagine going to your cupboard - so I have a tendency to, yes, always go with my right, but as you go with your right, there's always a turn to the left. You're using, usually, that spinal motion, whereas when you go with the left, you're obviously going to the right. So over a lifetime of always reaching with that one hand, it creates sort of a functional pattern. Some might even call it a scoliosis. It's not a bad scoliosis, but that's our preference. So another thing to play with is to see, okay, next time you go to put away the dishes, or go and grab a cup from the cupboard, or whatever, can you pause? And it isn't about being mean to yourself. Oh, dammit, I did it again with that right hand. But can you pause, feel your feet, and just actively, consciously move with the other hand. Now, as simple as that is, that teaches you to slow down and to pay attention.

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And this is something I had my mentorship students do for weeks last year. When you put your pants on, your underwear on, when you step out of your home, is it always the same foot

when you go up your stairs at home? Do you always lead with the same foot? So these are little things to notice and to play with. And this isn't Feldenkrais principle, this is just a principle of awareness and choosing a different action. So that's all in service of - how can we have awareness of our movement? So that quote from Norman Doidge, there second quote down there, it piggybacks off of, this is from Charles Sherrington. He is long passed. He was a physiologist back in the day, and he wrote, the motor act is the cradle of the mind. I picked this up from one of Peter Levine's books. The motor act is the cradle of the mind.

(25:24)

Motor act is just a fancy word for the movement, but our movement is written in our brain, right? When we move, there's something called the motor cortex. You can look it up online. And that is what gives us the brain information for movement. And so when we're able to really be with our movements, and get better at them, and more aware, think about how many joints are in the body. I don't remember any more - the number. There's hundreds of joints, right? I taught you how to work with the wrist joint in the joints lesson, but that can be applied to any joint in the body. You could hold your thumb, you could hold your elbow, you could touch the shoulder here. You could put your hands on your hip joints. It's harder to touch the hip joints, the only joint in the body you can't touch because it's deep in the hip socket, the knee, the ankle, lower back, the sacrum.

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And then as we've learned, as you've learned, joints hold emotion. They hold memory, they hold feeling. But when they're tight, and when we're not aware of them, we can't access that stuff. So this is, in my opinion, what actual somatic work is. It's not just moving the arms for the sake of moving the arms, feels nice, gets the heart rate going. We need that if - I'm not saying don't do that for movement, but real deep somatic work is, oh yeah, there's a joint, there's joints that I'm moving as I do this, and oh, I'm not breathing when I do that. Or I get a little scared when I go over to this side, wonder what that's about, and then, coming back and feeling these things. So this is, again, all what we would want to have happen if you were working with a somatic practitioner.

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These are the details that you would want to get help with. But don't forget you've got that detail here. You just have to work on it a little bit more for yourself. All right, so I'm going to go through the five stages of what I call neuroplastic healing sequencing. These are taken from Norman Doidge's book, *The Brain's Way of Healing*, and he lists these as very important steps in healing, neurological issues, stroke, chronic pain, and we could even say for the sake of our work, dysregulation of the nervous system. Now again, this is much more complex than just doing a movement for the sake of moving. So I have alluded to these in other spaces and places, but we'll review them today. So the first one there is correction. That's the first word, correction of general functions of the neurons and glia. Glia is just another fancy word for some neurons in your brain.

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I like to call this basic housekeeping and house cleaning. In Doidge's book, which he talks about, this, and I'll talk about it a bit more now. It's clean food. Healthy, clean water, clean water, not having toxins in our body. This was brought up the other week when we were talking about smelly scents and chemicals that aren't good for us. This would be ensuring that we don't have bad stuff in our environment. We could even go so far. Now, a big thing recently is not having crazy fluorescent light in our living environment, especially at nighttime, going back to the old school incandescent light bulbs that most of us would've grown up with, right? That nice yellow glow, low.

(29:36)

So anything that is around, what is around us, what we're breathing, what we're feeding us, feeding ourselves, what we're putting on our skin. Don't forget the skin. Huge organ. It absorbs what we put on it. And it's really nice to see people are becoming more conscious about not putting toxic lotions and soaps on their bodies. So this would be this idea of correction, these corrections that we make so that our nervous system is healthier sometimes. And he talks about this in the book. When people get rid of these toxins, a lot of improvement can happen. And some of you may be, have felt that with shifting your diet, et cetera.

(30:24)

So all of this, you guys, people are asking for recommendations for lotions and soaps. That's great, but let's keep the focus on the training call right now. The book here is referenced on page one and page two, so it's all there for you. Yeah, and there are so many ways of checking things to be healthy or not. The key is that you just want to go to YouTube. There's going to be tons of videos that teach you about what's healthy and not healthy. I would say anything, any lotion that you would buy in a safe way or a supermarket is probably not the best. Hate to say it. So you want to look for natural products. A lot of this stuff. Now you've got to order online, from what I've been seeing, but source out your local area. So number two, neurostimulation. So movement, touch, light, sound, visualization. This has been everything we've been doing, right? We've been moving, we've brought touch to our body with the voo, the sss, we've made sound.

(31:36)

You've visualized. Can you think about what you visualized with lots, the kidney, adrenals, the gut, the diaphragms, the brainstem. While you know that stuff is there, you can't see it directly. If you haven't ever looked at an anatomy book, I find it's a nice thing to have. Even a basic - one of the funner ones that I had in my university degree was the coloring book. There's an anatomy coloring book. It's fun. There's also one for physiology - teaches you about how your digestion works, and your kidneys, and your heart. There is something really good, I think about us getting to know a little bit about our anatomy. You don't have to have a university level, but it helps us when we have to navigate the medical system, too. The moment you can speak a little more intelligently about your body, I find at least the nurses and doctors and even the triage people perk up a little bit, and they can't be as lazy with us. So knowing some basic stuff about your joints, your ligaments, your cartilage, and just look up anatomy, a coloring book. Super easy. Super easy.

(33:02)

So we're stimulated, stimulated a lot. You're being stimulated now with hearing and learning, writing down. I'm big for writing down, using tactile to learn. So let's go to page two. And just to make this really contextual, I again always go back to the baby. What does a baby need?

They need stimulation. They need to be talked to. They need to be held. They need to be rocked. That helps develop the inner ear. Babies should not just be strapped into something and left, right? They need to move. Remember, Baby Liv, the video that was shown to y'all at the beginning, with the rolling, and the looking, and the pushing. So we need stimulation to grow. Number three, neuromodulation.

(34:03)

Neuromodulation. So this is also a way of saying neuro regulation. I'm just servicing Doidge's adaptation, adapting it to his pieces. He doesn't say neuro regulation, he says neuromodulation. But to me it's the same thing. Regulating the brain, the nervous system, bringing it out of activation, out of panic, out of chaos, or out of shutdown. It's both, right? We also don't want to stay in that deep shutdown and dissociation. We don't want to stay high in activation. We want to find that baseline where we have a little bit more ease. Now of course, as you've all learned, sometimes to move through old traumas, we have to hit a high activation to express the fight flight energy. That would be the, I feel like I need to run, or I feel like I need to hit, or I need to scream, or I need to puke, for the toxic shame responses.

(35:08)

So we want to have neuromodulation, and to get there, we sometimes have to hit these thresholds, which you've been learning about. And I have no doubt Seth has been talking about in the Q and A calls, that stored tiger, or the many little tigers, or the big tigers, if she didn't get to hit or roar or run. We need to slowly find ways, again, grow capacity so that those can come out of us safely with containment. That is the essence of say, somatic experiencing in Peter Levine's lineage is getting out of that stored, trapped energy, in getting it out, as you've been learning. Of course though, to get to that, we need to build capacity first. So that's all about neuromodulation. It's not just settling the brain and the nervous system. It is that, and to get to that, we need to do this other stuff. Number four, neuro relaxation, the word is relaxation. So this is rest that restores that repairs, heals, sleep, getting more quiet.

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This would've been talked about when I talked about the vagus nerve in detail, and I talked about that low tone, dorsal of the parasympathetic where the cells repair, the tissue repairs,

the gut repairs. We need that so that the system can recover. Now, as you all know, sometimes we can sleep and sleep and sleep and rest, but if our system is caught in that high tone dorsal, that deep shutdown, we don't go into true rest and digest when we sleep. And this is another portion of our work is growing our capacity, getting those tigers out of our body so that the system doesn't have to go into shutdown and collapse. Because when it does and it lives in that way, that's why we can't repair and recover. And this is the hallmark of autoimmune. This is the hallmark of chronic illness. This is the hallmark of cancer. There isn't recovery. The immune system isn't going in and saying, danger, danger, bad cell. Got to get rid of that cell. Now, I know there's a lot of other ways that we could explain this in many different lineages of how things heal and don't heal. But when we come back to just this nervous system, when our nervous system has that good regulation and we're not stuck in chronic survival stress, the system can heal.

(38:26)

And then when we do sleep, when we do relax, it actually repairs us properly. And anyone here who has had sleeping, we know if you don't have good sleep, or you have a string of nights or years where you don't sleep well, you feel terrible, you are inflamed, your digestion ain't good, you don't have the energy, your skin doesn't look so great, your hair isn't so great. That's all about cell repair and regeneration, right? I think a lot of the aging that we see prematurely, at least in the human race, is due to this high, high level of survival stress, and our system is not repairing. It's a huge reason why we have so many industries in the medical world focused on all these different types of problems when a lot of it comes down to this dysregulation of the nervous system, not all of it.

(39:29)

Because if we go back to number one, correction of general functions, if we're feeding ourselves really bad food and lots of toxins and things that aren't compatible with our human system, that's not good either. But as you know, who here has heard of, oh, that old uncle of mine smoked and drank and ate nothing but bad food and candy and he lived to 110 and had his mind sharp. And then you have the person who is the organic, healthy everything eater, no toxins, and they weren't so well. So there's this level where we have to also be human and

have some fun with some of the things we eat. Don't be complete saints. But a lot of the time we need to ensure that our system is healthy. For most of us. We can't be that uncle that eats everything and smokes and drinks and lives to be 110.

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Those stories do happen, but I think it's rarer than what we may be put out to say. But stress is a big thing too, because a lot of times those generations who just, ah, whatever, I'll just do what I want. They're not stressed about what they're putting into their body, and that also makes a huge difference. So we also have to be aware of how much we're worrying about whether or not something is healthy or not. So I've seen folks go so crazy that when they're out, they won't even eat anything out. They don't want any bad chemicals, seed oils, it all has to be organic. Now that's fine, but it gets really difficult to be out in the world if you're worrying about every single thing that goes into your mouth. Now, of course, if you have an allergy, I get it. But this is where you have to kind of be like, I'm going to have that burger.

(41:23)

I don't care if it's got seed oils, fried all through the french fries. They taste good. And we know that when we worry about something, that adds more to the issue. So just something to consider as you move through your own healing journey and choosing practices and lifestyle habits, to lighten the load on the stress that you might put around things. And especially if you have kids, if we're really worried about them to the point where they feel the worry, then they're going to worry and then they're going to eat healthy food. And even that's going to be problematic because they're worried, eating that healthy food. And I've seen this, I've seen this where I've seen the healthiest families have some of the worst problems, and it's the stress around that, right?

(42:15)

All right, that was my little rant. Just be careful with your lifestyles. Don't worry if you slip, slip every now and again in totality, you want to look at a month, my overall, pretty good this month. And if you have a little bit of oopsies, c'est la vie. Yeah? Neuro differentiation. So differentiation is that word. It's a bigger word. It basically means having more refinement in our bodies. So I'll use a very basic example. You have a newborn. They have these cute little

hands, but they're kind of clunky. They don't have this. So everyone, do this with me. You can point and you can pinch. Some of us might even be able to do some sign language, or think about the conductors at the symphony, right? Have you done the bell hand lesson yet? Some of you have, some of you haven't. So a little baby cannot do this.

(43:23)

They cannot take a little pen and draw their name. They're not differentiated yet in their sensory motor nervous system. It's so cute when you see toddlers and they grab, like a paw grab, that's just a lack of differentiation. They're young, they're not refined yet. So, refining skills, here on the handout, growing options, and choices, we want that in our motor movements. And then we want that in our regulation, and we want that obviously in our spine. Humans are so tactile. We use our hands. It is incredible that we text, and can do those things so quickly, and typing.

(44:13)

Think about, though, having that for the spine, having that differentiation in our ability for our eyes to see far and close. All of our visions are suffering because of these screens always being so close. Whereas we need to get out and look far and allow the lens of the eye to experience more than just what's in front of us. This is the other reason why orienting is so important. It helps our eyes relax and see different spaces. So differentiation comes after we have a bit of the other stuff on board, right? A baby isn't going to learn detailed skills in a way that is really infused in their body if they're constantly living in fear. Now you can train a human to have differentiation, but it's often conditioned. Did anybody learn piano when they were young? But if you were to ask to play anything right now, you wouldn't have any idea what to do. I'm that person. You learn it through repetition, and there's nothing wrong with that. But if you were to just be given a sheet of music, or just freestyle, and create, that might not be there.

(45:38)

And so we can teach humans a lot of skill by force and threat. Uh-huh, makes sense? And sometimes, okay, maybe we needed to learn that skill. But this comes back to the learning. That first sentence that I read out, the quote, slowness of movement is the key to awareness. And awareness is the key to learning. So how can we teach ourselves these new skills of

movement, and learning about our nervous system, not out of stress, but out of interest in differentiation? How does that concept of being in fight flight freeze, how can you notice that in others? You notice that in others, these days. You guys, sometimes ignorance is bliss, right? But now you see all the things. How can you see that stuff and stay regulated or stay grounded? There's a thing that happens when you start to learn this work where you want to preach from the top of the mountaintops, and tell every single buddy to the point where you stuff it down their throats. And you have to learn this. You have to learn this. And as you're learning, a person has to be ready to take this information in. The best way to teach people is to live by example. All the mothers and fathers here, I'd love to know it, and I'm sure you're feeling it. As you get more regulated, you might be seeing that your kids are shifting and you're not having to tell them to do things differently. They're feeling the difference in you.

(47:28)

So this is a level to differentiation. In this case, I'm going to talk a bit more about Feldenkrais in a sec. It's about this ability to differentiate our pelvis from our spine, from our head, from our eyes, from our blah, blah, blah, whatever it is. But the more you can differentiate in your body, the more you can be out in the world, and be like, that's not my stuff. I don't need to get attached to that drama. I'm me, and I have my regulation, and I can watch that stuff and not get triggered by it, or not get over attached to it. And this is a huge thing right now in our world. We've got to really find our own lane, and let other people deal with their stuff, and work with our immediate family. If you've got kids, they're the most important thing, right? You've got a partner, they're the most important thing, and the care of your home and all that stuff. So differentiation is a fun word. It's a big word, it's a big concept. When we learn it first in our body, it can then take us and teach us how to be in the world in a differentiated way.

(48:42)

The fancy word in the somatic experiencing and trauma fields would be coupling dynamics. So we want to have healthy coupling dynamics. I'm just throwing that out to those who know those lingos. But when we're over coupled or under coupled, we don't have differentiation. So we need to be able to really discern our stuff from their stuff. Remember, last week we ended with me, you. I'm not you and you're not me, but we're each other. We're unique, and how can

we relate to each other in a differentiated way? I'll give you one more example of differentiation. When you're in a romantic relationship or a really intimate friendship, you want to have differentiation. Otherwise you become unhealthy in codependency.

(49:45)

There's no separation, and that is hell. Over time. Not to mean that you don't long to see your person, you miss them when they're away. But to be able to hold your own and know I am my own person and I'm whole and they're their own person and they're whole, and then we're together in our wholeness. We don't need to be whole with the other. We don't take their's to be whole. And we see this in breakups that are horrific, where people feel like they can't live because of the breakup or the loss - does not mean that you don't grieve a loss, but the higher level of differentiation we have in ourselves, the healthier the relationship. And then of course, we all have to do our own work. So when you're in those relationships, you also have to understand that person's doing their personal work and I'm going to keep doing my personal work. And sometimes people have to take turns, right? Sometimes someone has more of a crisis, and you've got to help 'em a bit more. And that's cool. And then I find the next time we're in a bit of a crisis, and then they have to help us a little bit more. That's positive.

(51:08)

So that's another place where differentiation is important, is in relationships. We need that. And hopefully as you grow in a relationship, your differentiation improves. It improves. Alright? All right, next line. This is a quote from Moshe Feldenkrais. So he says, the delay between thought and action is the basis for awareness. The delay between thought and action is the basis for awareness. So it comes back to our example of the arms raising over your head. Can you think about that again without actually doing it yet? Just that idea of raising your hands over your head. And of course, can you think about that, and breathe, and not restrict the idea of the movement, and then be like, okay, I'm going to lift them up just a little bit.

(52:15)

But that ability to hear something, think about it, wait, and then do, that concept of being reactive versus responding. It's a nice statement, but we can still respond without awareness. So this ability to really stop and pause, but not pause in a sense where we're shutting down, or

we're holding our breath, or we're getting strained, right? How are you pausing? Is the delay ease-ful or is there like that waiting to pounce, right? You can pause and still be stressed. So it comes back to can you have that delay and be a little bit more contained, a little bit more connected to the ground? Think about what it is and then do.

(53:15)

So again, this is the hallmark of how you would learn the Feldenkrais work, at least that I teach. And the way I teach, I always try to just think about this. Imagine, and if you already did that movement, that's okay. Just come back, pause, and just imagine this, of the head, or the movement of the pelvis, or imagine going forward or back. And then wait, and then do it with thought and awareness. Okay? Speaking of which, see if you need to shift your body, you have a little bit more to drink. So like I said, I call this the Feldenkrais cheat sheet. It's not really about cheating, but it's some concepts to remind you of what we're playing with when we are doing the more Feldenkraisian based lessons, where you're moving, where you're moving. So the first bullet point there, experience, the experience of the movement. So it kind of seems like a given, but rather than just doing the movement for the sake of doing the movement, can you really sense, feel, be in how you experience the movement?

(54:54)

And can you think of ways that you can actually add that in your day to day? I find that the simplest daily things, doing the dishes, folding laundry, putting away things, putting laundry into the washing machine, cutting vegetables, putting away the groceries, all of that stuff is an opportunity to feel your movement and your body. Making your bed in the morning, showering, brushing your teeth, putting on your makeup, putting on your earrings. How many times do I hold my breath when I'm trying to put on a necklace, right? Can you pause and sense? We're always, for the most part, moving. Even if you're watching a show, you shift your weight, you reach for your cup of whatever you're drinking, you cross your legs differently. So it's not about being obsessed in this constant state of hyperawareness, but consciously ask yourself, a couple of times a day, when you're doing your general tasks, can I just experience this? Can I not think about the next thing? Can I not listen to a podcast? All the things that we tend to do these days, can I just be in that moment?

(56:30)

Someone asked me the other day on a YouTube comment, had a little bit of victim energy to it, but that's okay. We all have that. It was like, Irene, how are we supposed to do any of this work when we have to work a job during the day and take care of our kids? And like, yeah, that's hard. And you can also pay attention to a lot when you're doing that. I once worked with someone who couldn't leave her job even though it was really toxic. She was a single mom of two kids. And so rather than being victim mode about it, she used it as an opportunity to just notice her physiology all day long. And she took breaks in the bathroom. She went for a walk outside to her car, used it as a way to really practice speaking up for herself to her boss.

(57:28)

A lot can be worked on even when you're in a situation that isn't the best, but you have to have that awareness to shift the pattern of, this is horrible, I've got to get out of it. Versus, huh, I just lost contact with my feet as I was doing this. Or I am clenching my jaw every time I type an email. So this comes back to your own awareness, of noticing yourself in situations that aren't - maybe not the best, but you can do a lot of self-work with that kind of awareness, even if you're in a situation that is not the best. Now, of course, clearly if something is abusive and toxic, you don't want to do that for too long. But sometimes we need to do things that we don't want to do, like doing the dishes at the end of the night when you just want to put your feet up and watch a show.

(58:23)

So again, how can you go into those and decrease the stress level? Feel the breath, all those, feel the movements. Okay, next line. Kind of already said this, so it's a repeat. So notice how you do first - do is the word. Notice how you do first, then and only then start to self-correct, shift and change. So if I use that simple example of putting your dishes away into your cupboards, next time you do that, and my sense is all of you will do that at some point today, do what you do, and then pause. And then when you put away the next thing, pause and feel the spinal movement, and how it's different doing it the other way. So notice what you do first, huh? Interesting. And then do it the other way. And notice, self-correct, change. Breathe, feel your feet.

(59:29)

Third bullet point, it's not just about the movement, that's the word. And you guys know this. It is about the process, process of improving your neural connections, your neural connections with your actions. So the movement is important. We definitely want to move. We want to improve our body movement. But it's the process of noticing, because again, I can get you guys to do this movement until the cows come home. But what if you're not paying attention to a pinch in the shoulder? Or what if you're not noticing that you're overdoing it on one side, and you're holding your breath the whole time, and it's actually creating more tension in your neck, and in your trap muscles. So this ability to move, but notice the process is super important.

(01:00:32)

Slow. I think this is a given. Slow. Make it slow first. That's so important, because the slowness allows us to notice the trajectory. It allows us to notice the tightening that might be starting in the gut, or in the groin, or in the legs, or wherever it might be. If we go too quickly at the beginning, our awareness, our awareness, can't catch these little discrepancies, then speed up. So I do - have here - slow. Make it slow first, then speed up. There's nothing wrong with speed as long as it's not hurried and rushed.

(01:01:28)

Back to those of us who have a skill. We can type really fast and be at ease. I see someone knitting here. You can knit. You get really good at that. It's like watching water flow, right? It's like, wow, how do you do that? One of my best friends is a pilot. He was a pilot in the military and I went flying with him once. It was so cool to watch how quick he could do all the thingies with all the gadgets and just be chill, right? So there's nothing wrong with speed and skill, but the question is, are you doing something quickly with stress? Goes back to putting away the dishes. I have no doubt you can do that quickly. Some of us can do it, like, speedy. We know where everything goes.

(01:02:19)

Can you do that quickly, and breathe, and feel, and make it a dance, right? Notice the support. So next, line down, the support. Notice the support from the environment, the ground, the carpet, the grass, the ice, the snow, your way of acting will change to accommodate that

specific environment. Welcome the change. So for some of us, we're going into winter months. For some of you, you're maybe going into summer, but noticing the environment is so important for our survival. I've said this before, but you walk out the door, and if you're not paying attention to the fact that the air feels a little cooler, or that there's a frosty glistening on your deck, and your mind is somewhere else, you're not going to feel that the friction is different under your feet. And before you know it, you slip, right? So the moment you feel, if I use ice as an example, you're going to change your whole physiology, to go lower, to go slower, and to modulate your posture.

(01:03:39)

Has anybody been walking on a trail and you don't realize that you're angled the wrong way and then you lose your footing? It's not, not strong. You haven't readjusted your body weight for the angle, right? I'm sure someone here has experienced that before, but it's also the same with the ground under us. So these are just little things. It seems like. Why do I have to know about traversing ice? Some of us might never do it, but it's that sensory perception. Every single joint in our spine changes when the ground is slightly different. You're walking on a slippery surface, and all of a sudden you're walking on gravel, everything. Oh, it soothes, because you don't have to be as on guard. Because of my knee injuries, one of the surfaces I can't stand working on, walking on, really shiny floors, at banks and malls, when they've polished them. Actually it feels icky in my knees. There's no friction. Whereas I'd rather walk on something that's a bit grittier and has more texture. So these are little things to notice. Final word there, recalibrate. This is sort of what I've just been saying. Recalibrate moment by moment, pause when needed. Stop when needed. Wait, reorient, then move a little more. So this is in service of doing a Feldenkrais lesson, but you can take the Feldenkraisian concepts and apply them to anything you do that involves movement. Anything, and that's kind of cool about it.

(01:05:43)

Page three, top of the page here. Create different constraints, meaning do it differently. So the first word at the top there is constraints. So this is what I was saying about putting something in with one arm hand versus the other. You're providing a bit of a constraint, so maybe look in a

different direction. Open your eyes. Close your eyes. So look in a different direction. That's the word. Open your eyes, close your eyes, smile, frown, practice in the morning, at lunch, right before bed. So these are all just things I'm throwing out at you because you have access, to put a smile on your face. You can do that or you can get really lumpy and frowny and you feel the difference in the body, right? There's research that has shown when you shift the affect on your face, it does change the chemistry inside. Eyes open. I tend to always, like you guys, when you're doing Feldenkrais movements, to have your eyes open. I should say that, at times, during the lessons, the reason why that's important is we want to build our sensory perception with the world being visual to us. For those who've had babies, this is pretty much a guarantee when they move and roll and play on the ground. Are they doing it ever with their eyes closed? No. When they close their eyes, it's when they rest. But when they're active, they're looking.

(01:07:38)

So we've gotten into this habit in a lot of the mind body space of sensing, and we close our eyes. And again, there's nothing wrong with that. I'm not saying you couldn't close your eyes, but you want to practice with your eyes open. And then if you feel that it's too much, that's a sign. I need to take a break. Just like the baby takes a break. When it's had enough playing, they look away. When they've had enough contact with mama, I've had enough mom, stop. And that's them saying, I need to downregulate. I need a moment.

(01:08:17)

So I share this because it is something to pay attention to. When you go back to some of the Feldenkrais movements, notice if there's this tendency to keep closing your eyes, and can you keep them alert and open? And I would even go so far to say, if you have to keep closing them, then do even littler, littler, is that a word? Do less, do five minutes. And then it's like I've got to close my eyes and have a rest. Then just lay there, and breathe, and feel, have a nap. This comes back to neuro relaxation. That might be enough stimulus. Five minutes of Feldenkrais. This is one of the reasons why I believe Feldenkrais hasn't gotten more popular. It's an amazing practice. But when we have more dysregulation in the society, this high level of differentiation can't sink into people, because there's too much survival physiology running the show. But when you get this right, and you can titrate, and just do a little bit, you're actually getting really

good medicine by just doing five minutes of Feldenkrais. So do not, again, do not feel like it's bad that you can only get through five minutes of, say, rolling like a baby. Five minutes, done well, and with eyes open, and awareness, is way better than white knuckling it through 30 minutes. You've got to get it done, right?

(01:09:47)

Next one, enhance your skill. I kind of just said this, enhance your skill. That's the word, not your will. Brings in the old stuff, old, the old habits, skill brings in the future and the present moment. So I just said this in terms of, I would rather you do five minutes of a lesson. Doesn't have to be Feldenkrais. It could be the joints, it could be the diaphragms, with presence and awareness and good breath. And I'm here, I'm engaged. And then as soon as you find your attention floating, that's a sign. Stop, pause, get up, move around. Have a nap.

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So that is enhancing your skill. The willpower will press you to do it, to be a good student. Do not go to that temptation. It will not serve you. It will put you into old survival stress and patterns that maybe got you through medical school, got you through high school, got you through the job you needed to do to make ends meet. But when you do this, there is no pressure to do the full thing. Now, some of you have asked in the past, well, Irene, why don't you make the lessons all five minutes long? Imagine only teaching a child their ABCs.

(01:11:17)

There needs to be a length to the practice so that we get better and better and better at going longer. But by you actively being okay with just doing a little bit, it's teaching you the titration. And that's what you have to learn. You have to learn how to titrate. We can't say just do seven minutes. What if you actually need 12 minutes? Or what if you only need one minute? Right? And this is again, where you've got to put your directional cap on and really direct with our guidance through the lessons. Next line, reduce the effort. Effort is the word. Reduce the effort. Distribute the work through the body. So this is more classic Feldenkrais in that, we'll go back to this example with our arms. We can just move the arms, but we could also move the body with the arms. And I'm turning on my chair, I'm moving my legs left to right. Now we want to have both, right? If we're in a confined space, we're trying to reach up for that shoebox

on the top shelf of whatever. We want to be able to do that. But we also want to be able to go, ah, I'm going to move this thing over here with my spine to distribute the effort.

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Remember, people used to say, when you lift up things, lift, what do they say? Lift with your legs, not your back. You want to lift with all of it. You want to have distribution through everything. Right? And so again, it's this ability to feel how you can use your whole body, but we still need to be able to use parts of our body in a differentiated way, right? When we drive and we go to a shoulder check, we can't do this, right? We can't turn. We have to stay facing with our hands on the wheel and look. If we aren't differentiated - Have you ever been driving with someone, and they look, and they do this?

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Seth does that sometimes, true story, but that's a sign of someone not aware that they're driving with, they're not feeling it. They're just looking, right? So you want to be able to have this differentiation, but you also want to be able to have the effort and the distribution of your work go through your body as well. All right? There is typically, what's the word here? Typically, not a right or wrong way. Now, this is in regards to, again, Feldenkrais, because sometimes there is a right way, and this is something that I would get deeper into when I do in-person workshops, but mechanics of, say, how we use our spine. If I was teaching you all Olympic lifting, where you see the guys and gals in the gym, and they've got those big barbells, and they're doing those squats, and they're putting them over their head, there is a right way to do that, because if you don't do it the right way, you harm, you can harm your back. So for example, when you're doing a squat, you actually don't want to hold your stomach in.

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Now some of you're like, what? When you're doing a squat or when you're sitting up, as some of you are, you're using your back muscles. If you weren't, you'd be falling flat in your tea or in your computer. Your back muscles, your bum muscles are engaged. When you do a squat movement or you're sitting up, the extensors, this bit of anatomy, the extensors are working. So if you hold in the belly and you tighten it, it creates a curving. So it's counteracting the extension in the length that you want with your spine. This is more biomechanics that we're

working with here. I share this because sometimes, as I say here on this third bullet point from the bottom, sometimes there is a right way that is biomechanically sound. Just like I take my pen, I drop it, it's going to drop, gravity is going to take it.

(01:16:03)

There's no questioning of that on earth. So for our body mechanics, I'll just give you this little thing, is if you are having back problems, and you find that there's always tension in your spine, and you are always holding your belly in when you sit or when you squat, chances are there's counter forces going through your spine that are actually putting more strain on the spinal joints. So I want to share that with you because it's something to pay attention to, especially when you sit. Now, you don't want to sit slumped, but there needs to be this ability to sit on your pelvis, have the belly be soft, and the spine have a little bit of activity in it. This is kind of what I would teach again in an in-person workshop where we really work on biomechanics. It's also something that you could learn with, say, a Feldenkrais practitioner, usually physiotherapists. They tend to teach a holding in of the belly and a tautening of the pelvic floor, with movement.

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Now, this doesn't mean that we wouldn't strengthen the abdominals. This doesn't mean that we wouldn't strengthen the pelvic floor, but in the action that it's meant for. So if you were to do a sit up, right? If you were laying in bed and you want to improve the strength of being able to sit up, then you would want to use the abdominal muscles and strengthen them, but you don't want to hold them in when we are walking, when we're sitting. So just a little biomechanical piece there. And second one from the bottom, explore, play. That's the word. Be curious.

(01:18:05)

So again, this comes back a little bit to what I said a couple pages ago where we want to be serious, but we also don't want to be serious all the time. We want to have a laugh. We want to watch some comedy, lighten up, and bring that, again, children. Children love to play. We've got to let them play. Animals love to play. We are no different as adult humans. If anything, we need more of it. So this ability to find ways to play, be curious, do something in your life that

isn't just about healing or mind body work. It is incredibly important. And I also realize that sometimes we have seasons where we have to be a bit more diligent with things, but even watching an old episode of something, things like Seinfeld, and I don't know, old sitcoms that are just silly, and are just, there's not a lot there, but some funniness and laughs and people tripping over things, and find ways to do that. And then the final one there, make mistakes in your learning. Make mistakes in your learning. For so many of us, when we made mistakes, when we were young, we were punished, we were reprimanded. It sucks. That was the past. So move on, deal with, of course, work with the feelings of that, the anger, the rage. Yes, all that is true. All that is true. But no, if you make a mistake, if you break that glass, if you forget something, the final word there is you won't die.

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But if we were taught from a young age that when we made a mistake, we got punished, our stress physiology is going to think I might die next time. Does that make sense? If we were punished when we dropped the milk or we didn't get our math homework done perfectly and we were abused, screamed at, hit, the little person is like, I might die, so I'm going to shut down and I'm going to be perfect. If I'm perfect, then I won't have this punishment. So I know many of you have maybe been brought up with that, and you want to heal those wounds. But then now as an adult, you want to find, how can I do some things, and not be so perfect? How can I mess up a bit and know that it's okay?

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It can take a long time to rewire that. So be gentle with yourself, too. There's something about learning a hobby. And as an adult, if you do learn something, or a skill, learn something that's less intense, like don't try to learn the tango. Go square dancing. Do something that has less precision, something that can be a little bit more creative, to see what that feels like to have less constraint. And then a few last quotes here from some books that are not based on healing, more on self-development. So this one here, I really love this one from George Leonard. It's a book called Mastery. So I'll just read it out. He says, the essence of boredom is to be found in the obsessive search for novelty. Satisfaction lies in mindful repetition, the discovery of endless ritual richness and subtle variations, unfamiliar themes.

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So what that's really saying is that we tend to obsess and search for novelty in new things. But back to that thing I said at the very beginning about the importance of repetition. And when you repeat the old lessons, as I said, I've done these training calls many times. I don't think I look bored, right? It's always new. So how can you go back to the thing that is super familiar and be interested in it, just like you brush your teeth every day, right? We know we have to do that, but can you just be with that? Be in it, feel it. Feel your teeth. Feel your breath. Next line. This is from an author named Ryan Holiday. Oddly, this is a book about marketing, but I thought this was really good. He says, deep complex work is built through a relentless, repetitive process of revisitation. Lots of r's there. So repeating, being relentless, revisiting, coming back.

(01:23:21)

And a lot of us - we do this, some of us have favorite foods. How many times have you made your favorite food over and over again, right? It's like there are these things that we do that are quite repetitive in our lifestyle and our routine, and we don't think twice about them. We just do them. So think about these lessons like that, just don't think twice so much. Just - how can you do? How can you notice? How can you be with them? But then, look at them with beginner's eyes all the time. All right. Next week we're going to do a little bit more on this concept of neuroplastic healing. I'm going to break them down even more, in relation to lessons that we've done throughout all of SBSM. So it'll be a bit of a monologue, and a sense of we did this for this, and we did that because of that, and this is how it all comes together, right? So that's number nine. So, theory, practice, application, integration. Thanks everyone for hanging out. Yeah, I see some people recommending funny shows.

(01:24:36)

Who's the Boss? Oh, I forgot about that one. Young Sheldon. All right. I've heard Ted Lasso is really good, but I haven't watched it yet. So there's a lot of fun things that are out there. I'm sure if you Google top funny sitcoms that are just good for a laugh, you'll find lots of blog posts telling you what to watch. So maybe that could be your homework for the week. Look for something fun and easy and light to watch. And Seth will see you guys on Thursday for Q and

A. Thanks, Rebecca and Susan, for being here, and we'll see you all next Tuesday. Bye, everyone.