

A Mindful Approach to Teaching Online

an interview with Fariya Doctor, GCFP

One of the benefits of the Feldenkrais Method® of somatic education is its ability to improve so many aspects of people's lives – even a meditation practice. At a time when more and more people are turning inward, the Feldenkrais Method can offer a “way in” for those who find stillness too daunting. In Touch recently sat down with Fariya Doctor to talk about her online class on Meditation and the Feldenkrais Method.

IT: What inspired you to create a course on the Feldenkrais Method and Meditation?

FD: I have been asked in the past if I meditate, and my answer is, “No, I do Feldenkrais. I find it very meditative.” There are many lessons that blend well with the form of meditation where very little movement happens, but the mind is focused and occupied with the task of guided attention. In fact all our lessons start with a scan. You could call that mindful meditation. It sets up students for a calm attentive headspace.

I teach at a Yoga Centre that provides a number of Meditation courses. I thought this would be a nice way to offer something unique as well as attract an audience that might not know about the Method.

IT: How did you develop it – themes, thought processes, reasons for different lessons?

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FD: I decided to market the course to people who pursue meditation for its health benefits, and those who do not feel confident meditating. Because Feldenkrais® lessons guide a person's attention for internal awareness, it would be easier to stay focused for the newbie, and a novel format for the experienced meditator.

I picked lessons that might resemble a guided meditation. Variations on Gluing the Lungs, AY #256 – Lines Crossing and Balancing the Body, and AY #112 – A Plane Dividing the Body. There are so many lessons to choose from. Since breath is a big part of meditation, one could create a series with Breath as a focus.

Because I am marketing to people who don't mind being still, and appreciate looking inward I have no concerns teaching these types of lessons in a series.

T: How did you decide on the length of the course, each segment?

FD: I wanted to teach something in August. Since people tend to give themselves permission to chill a bit in the summer, I thought this would be attractive. I chose to do three classes, one week apart, and avoid the last week of August as many people go to cottages. Each class is one hour long. I always have a bit of a chat and discussion before and after each class.

IT: What is your background in meditation practices, and how do you integrate that knowledge into the lessons?

FD: I have tried a variety of meditation practices in the past. The last course I took was Russell Delman's workshop in NYC. I loved his approach of combining Feldenkrais lessons with expanding attention to all the senses.

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IT: Have you taught online lessons before? If so, what lessons did you learn from your experience?

FD: I have taught a number of online Feldenkrais courses on ZOOM. I really enjoy the ease of it. When I started teaching ONLINE I steered clear of lessons that involved complex and big movements. I have taught breathing, eye lessons, and neck/jaw lessons.

I also have clients that live out of town and appreciate not having to drive anywhere. I have learned to make the classes more interactive so that it is less impersonal. People relax into the process of talking over the computer.

IT: What platforms are you using for registering, and teaching? Did you try others, and how has your experience been?

FD: I have only used [ZOOM](#) as a teaching platform. All the Guild meetings are on ZOOM so I am very familiar and comfortable with it. Guild Members are entitled to a 15% discount for a ZOOM account. And, some Regions offer a free ZOOM account for classes. I use [Eventbrite](#) for registering my events. Eventbrite links well with Facebook and [Mailchimp](#) so I can advertise the courses to different audiences.

T: What kind of follow up are you doing?

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FD: Since Eventbrite has an email feature, I use it to send reminders, add educational material, and to keep in touch with participants.

IT: Who is your audience and how did you find them? How did you promote your classes? How was your turnout?

FD: My audience tends to come from my email base, Eventbrite, and Facebook. I promote my classes using these avenues, targeting different pages and groups on FB. I also ask some friends if they would share my post on their page. I usually set up an Event on FB so that I can invite many people. Setting up a FB Event is a great way to get on people's radar and increase your reach. My ONLINE turn out is sometimes better than my onsite attendance. It ranges from 10 to 25 people.

IT: After people register, how do you prepare them for the actual event?

FD: The email contains the log-in credentials and directions, how to set up their physical space for the class, and how to contact me if there are problems. I also include articles I have written on the topic, and links to related YouTube videos to prime their anatomical knowledge with some background information.

IT: What advice do you have for practitioners who want to teach online?

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FD: I highly recommend it. It is a “way to increase your reach, especially if you are in a small town. Tell your regulars about it and offer them a discount if they register a friend. Eventbrite has a nice feature where people have to buy 2 tickets to get the “bring a buddy rate”. The more the merrier when it comes to helping people.

Also, make sure you have a website in place so people can learn about you first. That builds trust and rapport.

IT: Would you do it again? What is your biggest challenge?

FD: Definitely! One thing I am challenged with is planning ahead. I really need to plan way ahead for classes and offer a series such as a part 1,2, and 3 on a theme.

IT: Anything else you want to add?

FD: I have never teamed up with another FGNA Member to teach a course ONLINE. Give me a call if you are interested!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fariya has over 25 years of experience in dealing with the art and science of healing the body. She is an experienced Registered Massage Therapist and is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais PractitionerCM.

She continuously advances her knowledge, taking courses and workshops yearly.

Learn more about Fariya Doctor at <http://www.fariyadoctor.com>

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