



British Focusing Association NEWSLETTER

Issue 12: July 2018



Group gathering at the first EFA Conference, Loutraki, Greece. May 2018

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From the Editors

Gordon Adam



Although I didn't attend the recent European Focusing Association conference myself, I've managed to get a flavour of it through editing and compiling the 'EFA Conference Review' piece for this issue of the newsletter – this comprises the thoughts, reflections and experiences of six participants of the conference from different parts of Europe. It seems that everyone really appreciated the opportunity to meet together with others from different cultural backgrounds from across Europe and experienced Focusing as a wonderful tool for 'transcultural connection' and building community.

My own contribution to this newsletter – 'Focusing, Poetry and Radical Acceptance' – charts one dimension of my own Focusing 'journey' – which is my experiencing of Focusing and of Focusing with poetry, as powerful tools towards 'accepting things as they are' – both in myself and in the world. This feels like a great gift which I am pleased to have an opportunity to share!

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Pamela Carr



Dear Authors, thanks again for your varied and interesting contributions,

Dear Readers, hoping you will enjoy and feel enriched by this issue, and wishing you all a good summer...

Challenges seem to bring with them opportunities for Felt Sensing to inform our perspectives and the practical choices we make in our lives. Since writing my article about 'Focusing – A Natural Process,' I'm acknowledging some of my own recent challenges/opportunities: Multiple episodes of snowy weather spanning six months, between November 2017 and April 2018, followed by the hottest May since UK records began; planning a workshop that I'll be facilitating later this month about 'Mindfulness and Sensational Sourdough Baking;' and the anticipation of becoming a Granny on the arrival of my son and daughter-in-law's twin babies in the autumn.

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The First EFA Conference: Greece - May 2018: A Review by Participants

Patricia Foster, UK & Greece

Member of the local organising and the EFA Steering Group.

The conference was originally intended and arranged to honour the memory of Gene Gendlin whom we physically lost on 1st May 2017 – AND we can truly say that his memory and work was celebrated to the full with the experiencing that occurred in this multi-faceted gathering of 130 participants. A gathering which truly highlighted the multidimensional and enriching many-felt carrying forwards of his legacy.

The conference originated with a small group of dedicated Focusers back in 2009, when the dream began of building a European community. I write 'community' rather than 'association' – for me at least, this is implicit, as it holds the core felt meaning and felt result of what occurred in Loutraki. My own felt need came to the fore in Padova in October 2017, the need to honour such a precious life-serving gift from this wonderfully intricate human being. It was in Padova that this need tracked others' crossings and through that process, eventually found a way through to span and encompass all the possible multicultural difficulties that presented themselves as possible divisions.



The path to the conference itself was an initiation into the living forward of Gendlin's 'Interaction First' principle, crossing and carrying forward in all the many and various aspects: communication – organisation – open space – relationship – experiential listening – identifying and overcoming personal and cultural differences – and so much more... It illustrated and is an attestation to Gendlin that when we are able to pause, hold, and tap into that space where our differences lie, we may in actuality come to understand the depth and richness of what we share as human beings, and it is within this felt sharing that we are able to appreciate and celebrate our differences. The first EFA Conference, for me, was and is the celebration of the sharing of our differences – and long may we continue to celebrate them...

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Ruth Hirsch, Israel



Amazing is the word that comes when I remember this conference which to me was so much more than a 'conference'. Rather, it was a precious opportunity within which the Organizing Committee created a space wherein connection, deep communication, and creation could happen. The beauty of the setting, with the omnipresent sounds of the sea, flowering and fruiting trees, the warmth of the staff, the welcoming of the Organizing Committee and EFA Board members, and of course the presence of the 125 or so dedicated European Focusers, contributed to making this a unique experience.

One of the many highlights for me included sharing ideas about how to widen, enlarge and extend the boundaries for our own Focusing and Focusing teaching, as well as how we relate to others in groups of all kinds.

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Sari Pekki, Finland

It was easy to talk with everyone, to sit and have a chat with long-time trainers as well as to meet other Focusers from different parts of Europe, and to begin to have access to this greater community.

I gained a better understanding of the possibilities of Focusing beyond body-mind awareness, including applications in spirituality and health. The conference was also a reminder of how rich the world inside us is, and how being aware of what's inside can help us to experience more fun and playfulness, as well as making life more interesting. The conference offered the opportunity to remind us of the possibilities of Focusing, to make these concrete through experiences with various other Focusers, as well as gaining perspectives based on science.



Notes recorded from a conversation between Sari Pekki and Ruth Hirsch

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Alan Tidmarsh, UK



For me the EFA conference was about interactions – ones that reminded me of Gendlin's principle of 'interaction first'! It felt that my connections to the conference began warmly from the start. My initial lecture proposal contained a rather obscure German term, one that was important to me, but which I misspelled! Accepting it, the conference team noticed the error and had the kindness to gently set me on the right track.

This quality of interaction with strangers would typify my experience at the conference itself. On the first night I suggested a special interest group where strangers could offer Focusing sessions to each other. Through it I met people from different countries and continents. It gave me an opportunity to discover an implicitly prepared interaction between us – a place where what was most immediate and personal could be met.

A rather special interaction happened for me when I did my lecture session. Not being a confident speaker I was immediately struck by the warmth of the group that met to listen to me. Participants were very willing to share their experience and I am still working through the insights that came out of the session. It was as if the life experience of participants gave each a unique perspective to contribute. I felt as if I had an affinity with these strangers that had brewed (in our separate lives) for many years – a real 'interaction first'.

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Lucy van Praag, UK

I feel honoured to write here about our first European Focusing conference, which is a significant part of the realisation of the dream of a group of European Focusing coordinators who have been working together over ten years to create an association that will inspire and support collaboration amongst Focusers across Europe. Even though the group of coordinators has configured and reconfigured throughout this period, they have kept the dream alive.

The creation myth behind the EFA is grounded in two main things:

One - an awareness of the richness of thinking and practice that exists within Europe from the Focusing and Person-Centred worlds and a desire to find ways to better support those



of us over here.

Two - an awareness of Europe's troubled history, most notably during the years leading up to and during the second world war, and the sense of a desire to come together now, at a time when fascism is again on the rise across Europe. Then finding ways to reach out to one another and to build bridges across nations and languages, and to develop personal and professional alliances and networks, within which the core values at the heart of the Focusing attitude and philosophy can be nurtured, shared, and taught.

I was very moved by how many people came to the conference which included people from Greece, UK, Germany, Portugal, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Ireland, Finland, Russia, Israel, USA, Canada, and Australia.

The experience of being a part of the diverse community that formed over the 5 days that we spent together, and the threads of alive and deep connection that made themselves felt, across languages and cultures, will stay with me for a long time. I am very much inspired by and in support of the dream behind the EFA. Thank you to the dreamers.

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Eirini Davleri, Greece



The first European Focusing Conference finally really happened 2 weeks ago. I was one of the participants at the meeting in Padova last September, where it had been originally discussed and planned - as an opportunity for Focusers from around Europe to get together, to meet, to interact, to exchange ideas, pieces of work and Focusing experience. It was a great joy for me to participate in the actual event.

As I stated at the General Assembly, it is essential for me (and something I would like to contribute to) that a European Focusing meeting is organized every year (regardless of the name that we give it - conference, meeting, etc) in order that we may build an extended European Focusing community.

Furthermore as a member of the teachers group of EFA, I would like to share with you all my concern about the experiential level of the participants. The teachers group had a short but important (to me) meeting at the conference about this - 'what is experiential when I teach Focusing?' I feel it is essential that the teachers who run Focusing training programmes, focus on the importance of their inner experiencing and the process of it, so that they may offer it to their trainees through their teaching. I am very willing to work with others on this issue, so that Focusing can become an everyday living tool for everyone (as well as its many other applications), as it was originally 'designed' by Gene Gendlin.

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EFA conference programme <https://efa2018.weebly.com/programme.html>

EFA website efa-focusing.eu

EFA membership is free and the website carries a range of lectures and presentations



EFA Conference Photos

Photos by Pat Foster, Ruth Hirsch, Cornelius Gehrige & Svetlana Kutukova



How the Feelings and Needs Card Game can help us Teach Focusing

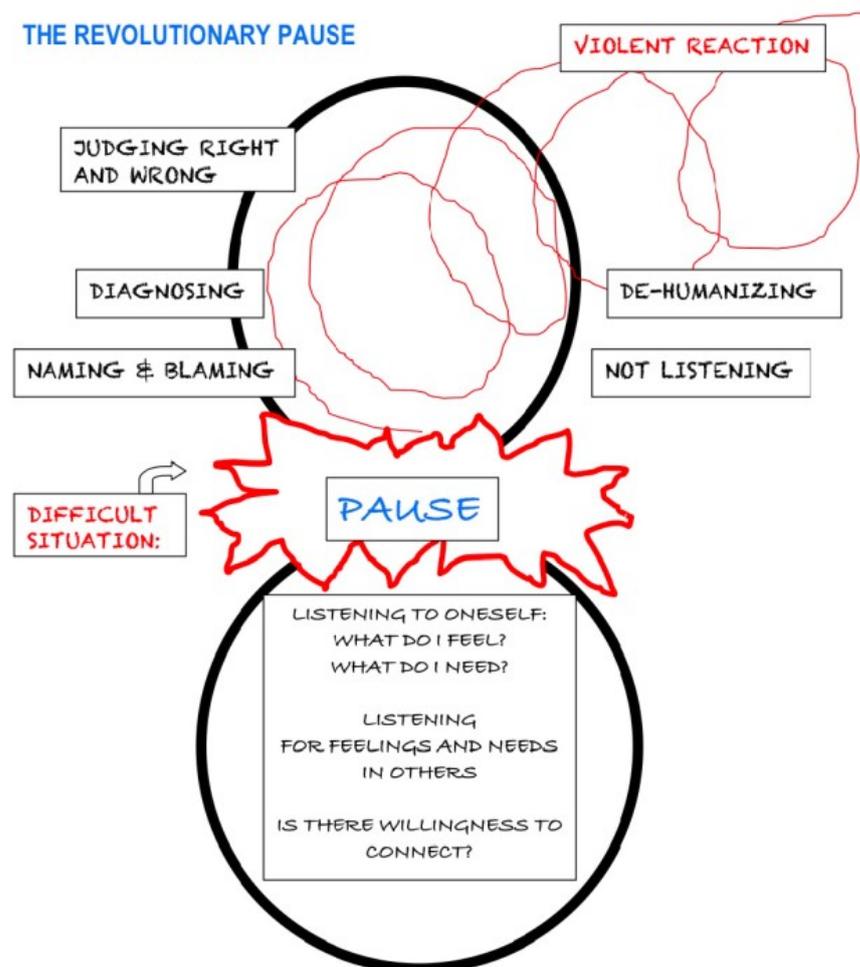
By Beatrice Blake

We would all like to see Focusing spreading out through society, yet Focusing seems to be conveyed more commonly as part of psychotherapy. Many of us struggle with how to teach Focusing outside the therapy room. How do you get to that point where you can invite someone to put his or her attention in the center of the body and sense how a situation feels right there? How do you give them the experience of Focusing? Do you demonstrate it on yourself, ask for a volunteer, or expect that participants will be able to get the feel of it in partnership exercises?

Nonviolent Communication as a Door to Focusing

I am not a Certified Nonviolent Communication trainer. However, over the last eleven years of experimenting with using NVC as a door to Focusing, my Salvadoran colleagues and I have found that the NVC Feelings and Needs card game is a reliable way to introduce Focusing in a group of people.

We have worked with veterans' groups, with prison staff, with helping professionals, with women's groups, in schools, and in many other situations. People attend our groups because their organizations arrange the training. They are not necessarily interested in personal growth, but they are interested in solving the problem of violence in El Salvador.



We start with a graphic of The Revolutionary Pause, designed by Focusing trainer Wendy Webber.

It illustrates that when a situation impacts us, we have 'a right' to pause. In the pause, we can either decide to go inside and notice what we are feeling and needing (known as 'giraffe language' in NVC), or turn outside, in order to diagnose who is to blame and why (known in NVC as 'jackal language').

Next, we show people a Partial List of Human Needs, so that they can familiarize themselves with the concept that all humans have needs and those needs are what motivate us to act. According to NVC theory, when our needs are met, we feel alive and happy, and when they are not met, we feel frustrated, angry, depressed, and so on. Often, in a conflict situation, there is misunderstanding because the people involved are trying to meet different needs, but they assume that the other person has the same needs in the situation as they do.

Then we play the Feelings and Needs card game, with one deck of cards that has a Feeling printed on each card, and another deck that has a Need on each card. This game was developed by NVC trainers Jean Morrison and Christine King.

Now we all know as Focusers that the felt sense is much more intricate, metaphorical and multi-dimensional than a single word that expresses a feeling or need. Because of this, Focusers are often disappointed when they study Nonviolent Communication because little or no space is provided for sensing the whole. NVC people are trained to give their best empathic guess about what someone's needs are, rather than giving the person the space to pause and let a felt sense form. However, the card game can set the stage for Focusing.

Teaching about Feelings and Needs in El Salvador

In 2007, I was invited by a community organization to teach Focusing in an area that had been part of the Salvadoran civil war (1981-92), but had since been given to farming communities as part of the Peace Accords. At that time, there was very little receptivity to "inner work", especially in the area where I was volunteering. There was a general unfamiliarity and impatience with 'anything having to do with psychology' and fear that if you sought the help of a counselor, it meant you were already 'loco.' In that atmosphere, people did not see any advantages to learning Focusing. I had taken a class in Nonviolent Communication just before going to El Salvador. Putting NVC theory into practice in my personal life had made a big difference for me. My friend Melba Jiménez, who had been a medic for the twelve years of the civil war, suggested that I share what I had learned about feelings and needs instead of Focusing. I noticed the difference immediately. People's eyes lit up. The simple games and exercises that I had learned in NVC held their attention.

Before going to El Salvador, I had also conversed with Harbert Rice, author of Language Process Notes. In his book, he writes about the similarities between Quaker practice, NVC and Focusing. He noticed that when people consciously dwell on their feelings and needs in a situation, that dwelling can provide the 'holding and letting' space that Gendlin refers to in A Process Model (1997, p.233). Gendlin says that this 'holding and letting' space provides the atmosphere in which a felt sense can form.

The Feelings and Needs Card Game

One simple way to experience this is through playing the Feelings and Needs card game. Each player in turn tells of an experience that did not go as they had wanted. The speaker is allowed three minutes to talk about this experience. The rest of the players have been dealt cards with an emotion written on each one. The players choose cards that represent the feelings that the speaker might have had and lay them in front of the speaker. The speaker resonates with the Feelings cards chosen by the players and discards those that don't resonate. Then the speaker goes through the Needs cards and lays down the cards that represent any needs that he or she had during the experience. Usually, the speaker ends up with at least fifteen Feelings cards and an equal number of Needs cards. Then a person to the right of the speaker reads back the chosen needs in a slow, empathic voice. If people are not used to paying attention to their feelings and needs, this game shows them that there is a lot going on inside, and usually piques interest in finding out more.



By Kriscia Ramirez

Focusing and Nonviolent Communication support each other

I remember that in 2010, when I talked about my experiences at the Weeklong, Mary Hendricks was not interested in NVC because it is 'so explicit.' Yes, it is explicit. But in practice I see how looking at lists of feelings and needs can be like 'training wheels' for teaching Focusing, especially given that talking about feelings is a sign of being in Levels 3 and 4 of the Experiencing Scale (find out more in my article mentioned in Resources).

Right now, most Focusing training is filled with people who are interested in personal growth, self understanding and so on. In that sense, we are preaching to the converted. But I know that both Gene and Mary were very interested in "How to get out of our ashram." Teaching empathic listening for feelings and needs, as a door to Focusing, effectively harnesses the explicit to lead to the implicit.

In El Salvador, I found that what Harbert Rice had said was right. If you teach a person to identify their feelings and needs in a situation, you can *then* gently ask them how the situation feels inside, and they are much more likely to get a felt sense than if you ask them before they have identified their feelings and needs. You can then often lead them into a full Focusing session without having explained the steps.

It's nice to be able to say "What we were just doing is Focusing", rather than "Here's how you do Focusing."

I can see how the students in my classes really 'get' the difference between the lists of needs and the implicit meaning that arises from the felt sense. One of my students who is well-versed in Focusing and Nonviolent Communication said: "The most important thing I learned is to use Focusing in order to feel inside my needs, to feel personally how words from the list of needs fit with my body and my inner world. For example: I had a felt sense about my need for family. The word "family" was not on the Needs list, but I felt that there is a deep need inside me, understanding from the body what this need means for myself, not from the theory."

Conversely, there are many ways in which NVC theory can be of service to Focusers. Often, it is difficult to quiet down enough to get a felt sense when one is angry. In that moment, it is very useful just to look at the list of needs. It helps you identify what led to the anger. It also makes you more receptive to looking at the needs of others involved. Recognizing your needs on an initial level leads to a kind of settling down inside. After that, a Focusing session can give you more insight into the meaning of the situation in your life.

References

Rice Harbert, (2008) Language Process Notes

Free download at (<https://www.focusing.org/eShop/20Review.asp?ProductCode=DON-1-LPN>).

Gendlin Eugene, A Process Model (1997), The International Focusing Institute, www.focusing.org

Gendlin Eugene, A Process Model (2017), Northwestern University Press

Resources

NVC Card Game: GROK (\$28 plus postage)

Feelings, needs and body sensations list (free)

Available from <http://www.grokttheworld.com/products>

I have written a 7-page article that details the points where NVC can move Focusing forward and where Focusing can deepen NVC. Let me know if you'd like to receive a copy of the article by filling out a contact form at <https://possibility-space.com>

If you are already familiar with the theory of NVC, you are welcome to join my drop-in practice group in Generating a Culture of Peace, which will meet twice a month starting in July 2018. Find out more and sign up at <https://possibility-space.com/culture-of-peace/>. I will have new classes in how to combine NVC theory and Focusing in the fall of 2018.

Find out more about the people of Focusing El Salvador and how you can contribute to our community programs at <https://focusing-el-salvador.org>



Beatrice Blake first participated in societal change as co-author of an influential guidebook to Costa Rica. Her book encouraged tourists to visit community-owned lodges that support farmers in protecting their forests, preserving their culture and supplementing their income.

Beatrice became a Focusing trainer in 2000 and is now a certifying coordinator with TIFI. She first studied Nonviolent Communication in 2006 with Peggy Smith. Since 2007 she has taught 'Generating a Culture of Peace' in El Salvador, using Nonviolent Communication as a door to Focusing. She is currently taking a group of Salvadorans through the Focusing certification process. She also teaches 'Generating a Culture of Peace' online in English and Spanish and has an online drop-in practice group. She emphasizes the importance of felt sensing in one's native language.

Beatrice studied 'Thinking at the Edge' with Eugene Gendlin, Kye Nelson, Nada Lou and Evelyn Fendler-Lee. She gives one-to-one and group online classes in TAE.

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Focusing, Poetry and Radical Acceptance

By Gordon Adam

I first realised the power of Focusing with a poem by chance some years ago. I've had an interest in poetry for many years and have gone through phases of reading a few poems first thing in the morning while still in bed. One of my favourite and much read poets is Mary Oliver.

Mary Oliver

One morning I read several poems from her collection 'Thirst' – this is the first collection of poems that she published after the death of her long-term partner Molly Malone Cook in 2005, and there is a lot of grief and coming to terms with loss going on in the poems. I had a Focusing session later that same morning and during the session one of the poems came into my awareness and wanted attention. I decided to go and get the book and I read the poem in the Focusing session. Here is the poem ¹:

The Uses of Sorrow

(In my sleep I dreamed this poem)

Someone I loved once gave me
a box full of darkness.

It took me years to understand
That this too was a gift.

Mary Oliver

Almost immediately as I started to read the poem I could feel a tremendous, powerful energy moving in my body and it formed into a great outpouring of grief. I struggled to read the poem and wept profusely and deeply and for some time afterwards.

I understood then that the poem was resonating on a much deeper level than I had experienced on first reading it through earlier that day in bed. The poem was presenting me with a perfect mirroring of a certain dynamic/process in my life that I had not yet become fully conscious of – in short, the gift that suffering can bring. In my case the 'box full of darkness' has come in the form of repeated and prolonged periods of depression that I've experienced throughout my life since my teens. The last bout, several years ago, lasted for about 15 months and for the final four of those months I was unable to work and had to let go of many strands of my life – I was in 'survival mode'.

Connecting with the poem in a Focusing way was the catalyst for a sudden and rapid process of acknowledgement, recognition, acceptance and the allowing of a large 'body' of grief – all in relation to the many years of life 'lost' to depression. I didn't quite realise all of this at the time as the emotion was so overwhelming, but with hindsight I understand what happened, and that the combination of the poem, plus Focusing, enabled that shift to happen.

Since that time I have brought poems into my Focusing on many occasions – this has happened either intentionally, where I have chosen in advance to bring a poem into a session, or, a poem has presented itself, as in the initial instance I described above. Where I have brought a poem with me in advance to Focus on, it has generally been one that I have already experienced a resonance with and I have brought it with the intention of exploring the nature of the resonance in more depth.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Following my dramatic Focusing encounter with 'The Uses of Sorrow', one of the first poems that I deliberately brought into a Focusing session was 'Please Call Me By My True Names' by Zen Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh ². I knew and loved this poem already but wanted to explore if Focusing on it might reveal further riches.

Please Call Me by My True Names

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow,
because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply; I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
to be a tiny bird with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive in order to laugh and cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing
on the surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring comes,
arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond,
and I am a grass-snake who, approaching
in silence, feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve year old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the Politburo,
with plenty of power on my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay
my "debt of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labour camp.

My joy is like spring so warm
it makes flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears,
so full it fills all four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughs at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.
Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up, and so the door of my heart
can be left open, the door of compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Focusing on the poem brought me a strong embodied experience of acknowledging, feeling and 'knowing' the reality of the unavoidability of pain and suffering – and not as something that is 'wrong', but as an intrinsic part of the unfolding human condition. I realised that whilst in the animal world this is natural and unavoidable, in the human world we inflict pain on each other from a place of fear and ignorance, with our hearts "not yet capable of seeing and loving". This experiencing of 'is-ness' or 'basic truth' from a place of embodiment was both powerful and emotional – something that I already 'knew' took on a different experiential dimension!

Radical Acceptance

It was only on writing this article that I realised a connection between these two poems above – whilst *The Uses of Sorrow* is about the darkness of personal suffering and the gift that might come from that, *Please Call Me By My True Names* is about the interplay of light and dark, of creation and destruction, and the gift that might come from that also. This awareness leads to the possibility of accepting and embracing, rather than fighting or denying that reality.

Both poems are in fact infused with 'radical acceptance' and they have been important contributions towards my own gradual learning and appreciation of the power of radical acceptance, of accepting things as they are. This reminds me of another similar experience of insight on the same theme that came during a 'Radical Acceptance' workshop led by Barbara McGavin at the 2016 International Focusing Conference in Cambridge. I wrote about this in a previous issue of this newsletter:

*Whenever I'm not accepting things as they are, I'm fighting with reality, and thereby causing suffering to myself and to other people...and this comes from a need to try and control 'things as they are'... which in turn comes from fear, or lack of trust in existence.*³

I would say that as well as Buddhist meditation and philosophy (dharma), the ongoing practice of Focusing has helped me a lot towards gradually learning that accepting things as they are brings me a lessening of suffering and a sense of ease, well-being and freedom. I've found that through Focusing regularly for the last nearly 12 years, as well as learning to accept, value and appreciate whatever arises within me, there has been a sort of 'overspill' effect, and more and more I am accepting whatever arises *outside of me* in similar vein – this includes whatever is happening in the world.

This means seeing that maybe everything that happens is part of a 'becoming' and that maybe sometimes something 'bad' has to happen or is a prelude to something else that is part of a bigger process of unfolding healing evolution. So maybe ultimately *everything is a gift!*

Here is a snapshot of a sort of inner turning point in acceptance, captured in a poem I wrote in my attic bedroom on a cold, wet and windy January morning at the beginning of 2008, about a year after I started Focusing:

Weather

Wind and rain and early morning gloom on the outside,
surrounding and enveloping this place,
this space to be – to choose how to be, now.

No weather can wash or blow away that choice,
that freedom to embrace and welcome these nagging
stirrings of discomfort within, a certain bleakness
even, a dullness of heart.

I look for causes of this departure from buoyant calm
in my thoughts and actions and intentions—
'Why should this be?' 'What have I done wrong?'
But perhaps then I am failing to receive, to accept,
to realise the wonderful, precious gift of this moment.

Gordon Adam

Radically Accepting the World

It feels important to say that fully accepting things as they are does not mean detachment, complacency, resignation or inaction. It means that we can act from a place of depth and equanimity rather than a place of fear or anger or resistance, and I would argue that such action is more likely to be of long term benefit to the world and to our experience of living in the world. In Focusing, listening fully is one way that we accept 'things as they are', and I think everyone who does Focusing is aware of the power of such acceptance.

*We need to listen fully. This is the basis for all compassionate action. We need to listen not only to the voice of the person who is hurting, but to her bare feet, the baby wrapped in her shawl, and the stars in the cold night. Such full listening helps us hear who is calling and what we can do in response. When we listen for the truth of the moment, we know better what to do and what not to do, when to act and when not to act.*⁴

Mirabai Bush

Perhaps a further gift of Focusing is in the cultivation of our ability to listen to the world, as well as ourselves, from a place of acceptance – in fact perhaps this is one of the most 'radical' acts we can take on this planet, and one that may have significant impact on both our experience of being alive, and on how our human destiny unfolds.

Albert Einstein was once asked what the most important question facing humanity was – his response: "Whether or not the universe is friendly." Perhaps what this really means is whether or not we can form a friendly accepting relationship with the universe – and everything in it!

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1. Oliver, Mary. *Thirst* (2007). Bloodaxe Books
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4. Bush, Mirabai & Ram Dass. *Compassion in Action: Setting Out on the Path of Service* (2nd ed. 1995) Three Rivers Press

Gordon Adam lives in Bristol, and as well as having a passion for Focusing, he has a strong interest in helping build Focusing community. He runs introductory workshops in local communities, introduces friends and acquaintances to Focusing, facilitates an open monthly Focusing group, sends out a regular local Focusing newsletter, and is a co-organiser of the BFA Focusing Community Camp. Gordon has been running 5-day Focusing retreats on Dartmoor and in the Southwest for the last 10 years, combining Focusing with elements of Buddhist and other practices. He also works as a homeopathic teacher and supervisor and is co-editor of this newsletter.

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On Beginning to Deliver the BFA Skills Certificate Training

By Suzi Mackenzie

I have had the great pleasure of delivering the BFA Skills Certificate Training for the first time this year. Having delivered training in other capacities, I had a yearning to do this again. I also wanted to expand the role of Focusing in my life. It seemed to take a while for me to get up the momentum to start doing this, but now it feels like it has been a really natural way to integrate two parts of me.

From early on I was conscious of wanting to work out for myself how I wanted to deliver the training. I set out to devise the overall plan for the ten days' training and each day's content largely by reaching into my existing knowledge and experience of Focusing over the last ten years. I was aware of the part of me that is thorough and wants to do things right. That part could have had me poring over books and other people's handouts, trying to make sure I covered everything properly. But that didn't feel like the right way for me to approach this project.

I had a strong sense of my creative process needing space: I already had ideas about topics I wanted to bring in and ways to explore Focusing concepts and activities I wanted to use. I sensed that if I felt too influenced by how others teach this could squash something I wanted to discover inside myself – something that would teach me *my* way of teaching Focusing. I had to be brave enough to trust that my own knowledge of Focusing was enough – that I held it ingrained within me – and to risk appearing egotistical by not wanting to look too much at others' ways of doing things.

When explaining to a friend how I approached designing course content I found myself using the word 'reconstituting'. Although it may sound quite mechanical it feels like the right word. In this process I have sometimes looked at books and others' handouts but I have often written course content 'off the top of my head' from what I have absorbed over the years of learning, experiencing, practicing, reading and conversing. Over time that has been organically – and now more actively – 'reconstituted' inside me.

I tried to trust my instinct and follow my own sense of how I wanted to teach the Skills Certificate and I am really pleased to say that this has worked! Early on I was surprised at how little I criticised myself after delivering a workshop. It was quite a unique and amazing experience to feel I had done well and what I had delivered had been well received. I'm so used to noticing things I 'should' improve, over and above the things I've done well, that this was quite a revolutionary experience! Having delivered eight of the ten days, there are things I would tweak in future and I feel it will be an ever evolving process of re-designing course content, but I still largely feel happy with the way I've chosen to do things and what I've achieved. I'm not questioning myself in the same way that I do in so many other aspects of my life. Why is this? What has allowed this to happen?

Having been Focusing for a good while, I care so deeply about it and it is embedded within me... this brings some ease in communicating its value to others. Following my instinct and my creative process in terms of how to teach the Skills Certificate has meant that what I'm teaching comes from *within* me. This seems to help me relax and trust myself to facilitate a group. Having the support and trust of my BFA Mentors has really helped me to trust myself at those times in the planning stages when I have faltered. And, as one of my Focusing partners said to me, "you have an ally in Focusing." When we trust in the process of Focusing – it teaches itself.

I may have also benefited from an element of luck. The area in which I'm working seems to have a population already familiar with the existence of Focusing and I am already embedded in a network of counsellors to whom I've been able to advertise the workshops.

There have been moments of soul searching and challenge. The learning I've done whilst deciding how to teach has involved – sometimes painful – questioning of my own personal and professional practice of Focusing. How do I work with the Critic? Do I give enough attention to Self in Presence? Recognising these possibilities helped me personally with my Focusing practice and meant I was able to teach in a more 'rounded' way. I also had to accept as part of the process that sometimes I would produce something, realise it felt really wrong, then have to chuck it away and start again.

As well as the challenges of managing time and group dynamics, I recognised I had to let go of my need for people to 'get it right,' just as I had to let go of trying to 'get it right' when I was learning Focusing myself. Wanting people to Focus in a certain way was more about reassuring myself I had done my job well... but I recognised that just as everyone Focuses in a slightly different way, the learning process happens in a different way for everyone. I chose to value what was good that was happening and trust my students' learning processes, and I feel really proud of my first group of students. I feel proud of myself too.

I wanted to bring creative aspects into my workshops and I have enjoyed making use of pictures and tactile objects where I could. I am really stimulated by contact with beautiful or interesting things to look at, listen to, smell, taste and touch. Indulging these external senses can help people get attuned to their internal senses. It brings a part of me alive to indulge in love of colours and textures, so I trust that this part of me has something to bring to my teaching.



[Talamanca Hummingbird](#) Mick Thompson/Eastside Audubon

One weekend I delivered particularly involved engaging with sensory items and this felt risky. I brought in things of my own that I thought were interesting or attractive – but would anyone else think so? Would they think this was childish or silly? The risk seemed to pay off – people seemed to appreciate the experience. Perhaps this is where there is the greatest potential for learning and connection: If I am prepared to make myself a bit vulnerable in this way, to push myself to my own growing edge, I trust this has some value to my students.

This process of beginning to teach Focusing has given me something for the rest of my life – it has indeed brought Focusing into my life more and brought a real sense of the rightness of me teaching. I love meeting new people who are interested in Focusing and learning from them too. I feel so privileged to be part of someone's Focusing journey. When I ask myself "Why didn't I do this sooner?" I know that this is a sign of a right thing for me to be doing.



Thank you to Kay Hoffmann and Fiona Parr who have been my mentors through this process, and thank you to Peter Afford and John Threadgold who have trained and supervised me in years past.

***Suzi Mackenzie** is a Person Centred Counsellor and Focusing Practitioner with a keen interest in mental health and wellbeing. She is available for one to one and group Focusing training in Sussex and London.*

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Focusing for the Therapist

By Dr Greg Madison

Unbeknownst to most clients, psychotherapy remains governed by many theories and boundary 'rules', the actual purpose of which may be to protect the therapist from his or her own anxiety. In this short piece, an existential therapist uses Focusing to attempt to remain open to the difficult experience of being with a dying client. Through this example of his work in an acute hospital setting, Greg suggests that Focusing can be a crucial aspect of redefining therapy as a human relationship rather than an expert one.

The medical and nursing team called me to meet Loyola, a patient who was refusing to accept her terminal diagnosis and return home. Walking onto the ward I became aware of a nervous feeling in my stomach. Although feeling nervous is not unusual for me, I decided to focus on this particular 'nervousness' and it soon became clear that it was about carrying the staff's expectation that I would convince Loyola that she had to go home. The nervousness was that she might see my ulterior motive and realise that she could not trust me to hear her experience. But finding the meaning of my nervousness at that moment felt exciting and it suddenly became easy to set aside the staff's expectation. I approached Loyola feeling open to her and much freer to really *meet* this new person. When I entered her room, she was sitting up in bed and her short hair and slim figure gave her the appearance of a young boy rather than the 54-year-old grandmother that she was. She responded to my openness and with a broad smile indicated that she was happy to talk with me.

The senior charge nurse offered us his private office for our session. As I closed the door, Loyola asked simply and directly, "What can *you* do to help me?" Somewhat taken aback, I took a seat and replied with the usual banality "Sometimes talking about your feelings can help." This sounded trite in the circumstances and I was aware that I spoke from some sort of 'therapist script' rather than from a deeper sense of our situation – it alerted me again to the presence I needed to maintain in order not to retreat into a therapist role. As Loyola began to speak of her current 'trouble' and her mastectomy three years ago, a look of pain crossed her face. She tapped her remaining breast saying "Now this one's gone all hard. They are giving me medicine to fix it like they did the last time."

Although she was insisting on more treatment, Loyola seemed somewhat unconvinced about the possibility of a cure. She concluded our session with the statement "I know this is not my time to die. Medicine and God will cure me." I asked Loyola how she felt about talking to me and she paused to check her feeling (yes, a natural Focuser!), then announced "I like you, can we meet again?" I left feeling excited and looking forward to our next meeting. I hoped that the next session might present the opportunity to naturally introduce Focusing to Loyola, but not as a technique that I could hide behind.

In traditional therapy, often the therapist remains more or less anonymous, a friendly face showing little sign of struggling to live a life of his or her own. Some theories of therapy insist that certain practices are crucial in order to elicit and interpret the client's 'unconscious' defences and anxieties. If Loyola and I were to truly meet, it was evident from the outset that our therapy would be based upon a shared 'unknowing' rather than an 'expert' analysing a 'client'. I was also aware that a large part of our therapy would depend on my ability to remain aware of my felt experience and 'that part of me' which was terrified of witnessing Loyola's struggle to live. I also knew that 'something in me' wanted more than anything to remain fully present to this person, almost as an ethical call to acknowledge her as a legitimate person, not a problem to be solved. In doing so, it became increasingly clear that I was being challenged to open to my own mortality.

As I arrived on the ward the next week, the medical team stopped me and reiterated that they could do nothing for Loyola and they were anxious to discharge her to community care. She was resisting this as leaving the hospital would amount to accepting that she was dying. There was talk they would have to call security to escort her from the ward if she continued to refuse to cooperate. Could I 'help'? I said I would check whether she fully understood the situation, that's all I could do. This time as I approached Loyola, our relationship brought that old nervousness together with a tinge of responsibility. The feeling needed some kind of action.

Loyola smiled from beneath her oxygen mask when she saw me. Her breathing now made even a short walk to the nurse's office difficult, so I pulled a curtain around her bed and sat down next to her. I asked if the doctors had spoken to her about her condition. She confirmed that they had, but she didn't understand why they wouldn't help her like they did three years ago. "If it's all they can do, then I want them to just chop it off," she said, motioning to her remaining breast, "I don't want to die, it's not my time."

I became aware of something in me that wanted to recoil from *all this* and comfort itself. I wondered if there was a part like that in Loyola and I felt a surge of gentleness towards her. While acknowledging this, the image of Loyola, terrified and uncomprehending, being wheeled from the ward against her will, guided me to pay attention to the nervous responsibility, which now had words. I asked gently, "Loyola, how do you know it is not your time *now*?" "I'm certain of it, God would not want to take me now." "So it's up to God?" I asked. "Oh yes, He made me and He'll save me." I heard a pregnant open place in me say, "Yes, I guess it's only up to God now since the doctors can't help anymore."

Loyola stopped pulling at her bedclothes and stared at me. Her eyes were fixed steadily on mine and after a long pause, she asked "You mean they can't stop me from dying?" We were silent. Her expression drained from her face. My body felt totally alive, every detail of the moment, the moment many of us dread, was vibrant. I had a felt sense of life that encompassed not only Loyola and myself, but everything. After a long silence, she slowly looked up, right into my eyes, and said "Then it's up to God. I will pray for a miracle. It's not my time yet, I know that." Her faith allowed us to retreat from that apparition of non-being and paradoxically I felt a little dulled, though relieved.

In our following sessions, as Loyola's life began to shrink around us, we became increasingly connected to each other. On a Thursday afternoon, I arrived at her bedside as usual. She was now very weak and removed her oxygen mask to whisper something to the relatives gathered at the foot of her bed. They nodded, looked at me and left us alone.

I pulled the curtain and sat down with Loyola. Again, the silence descended around us and I felt a deep love for this woman I had known less than three weeks. I know it was my Focusing awareness that enabled me to feel this, rather than the usual 'professional relationship' of therapist and client.

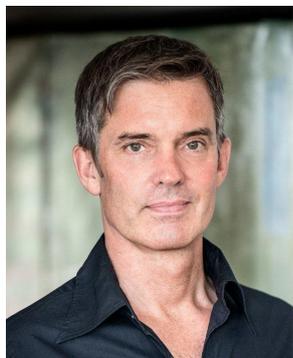
After a few minutes, I said "You've not been well the past few days so I haven't been staying very long." She nodded. There was nothing more to say. She struggled to remain conscious and every few moments managed to stare hard into my eyes, as if to say, "Please look at me," which was the hardest thing for me to do. But I did not look away, or analyse, or diminish her with platitudes. I had spent time after each of our sessions Focusing on my response to her situation, learning and preparing myself to be as open as I could to any eventuality. Now this was her dying, unexpected and unwanted. During those silent minutes I imagined my head on that pillow, struggling to breathe. It felt like we were children who had accidentally strayed too far into the woods, and only one of us would make it back. Perhaps we are all children in the face of death.

The following morning a doctor called to say that Loyola had died shortly after I left.

How should I refer to that time Loyola and I spent together? Was it therapy? I did not diagnose her with a mental illness, pathologise her 'denial', give her advice or homework, or interpret her behaviour. I did not

fight with her defence mechanisms, encourage her to think positively, or to realise her full potential. Instead I used a Focusing awareness to try to remain open in myself to the mystery of what was happening to her and between us. Perhaps it was only when Loyola saw my readiness to grapple with my own death that she felt our therapy, and her life, could come to an end. Perhaps it was really my therapy after all?

Note: This article first appeared in *The Focusing Connection* (November 2003)



Dr Greg Madison is an existential psychologist, lecturer and author. As well as a private practice in London, Brighton and online, Greg travels frequently to contribute to professional trainings where he teaches Focusing and Experiential-Existential Therapy. He founded The London Focusing Institute for professional and public courses in embodied listening and relating. He is originally from Canada, is active in progressive movements and has special interests in the experiences of belonging, not-belonging, home and homelessness. Greg edited two volumes on Focusing Oriented Therapy, featuring Focusing Oriented Therapists from around the world.

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Focusing – A Natural Process

By Pamela Carr

Gene Gendlin spoke and wrote prolifically about Focusing. You may not have come across this extract from an interview with him about his early life. I want to share it because, even though it's several years since I first read it, the words continue to strongly resonate with and inspire me. He speaks about how surprised he was to observe his father listening to a feeling inside and trusting it enough to act from it, and how he later became curious about that feeling.

In Cologne my father took me with him to "the address." It was in the Jewish quarter—poor, grey streets. It gave us an uncanny feeling that Jewish people simply continued to live here, as if nothing had happened. The Germans were not as wild as the Austrians. Already since 1933 the Jewish people had been staying voluntarily. In Vienna, on the other hand, there was danger for life immediately, and all Jewish people wanted to leave Vienna on the spot. We found the right house and an apartment on the upper floor. There, my father went into a room with a man, and I waited maybe for a quarter of an hour. When my father came out, he was pale and said: "Let's go." Outside he explained that he could not trust this man. My father said that his feeling had said "no" to him. My father had already said this many times: "I follow my feeling." But this time I did not understand that he trusted his feelings. We were in a strange city and without any way out. We had put all our hopes on "the address," and now this hope was destroyed, only because of what he had "felt."

I was surprised then and also asked often myself later what kind of feeling it is which tells you something. Sometimes I tried to find such a feeling within myself, but I could not. But that I started to look for it had its effect in the end. Forty years later when I was asked how I could discover Focusing, I remembered these circumstances. (Korbei 2007).

My own father worked a 100 acre mixed farm and I'm realising that he also listened to and followed his feelings. He sensed the weather, followed the seasons and observed the 'comings and goings' of nature. These helped to guide the timing he chose for sowing of crops into warming earth, the making of hay when the grass was ready, harvesting before the storms arrived and sensing when a ewe was about to produce lambs and might need some help, as they often did, during the night. He did ok, but it was a hard life on the land and there was no opportunity for him to learn about Focusing.

Gendlin termed that "kind of feeling...which tells you something" a Felt Sense and described how this is much more than simply a conceptual knowing. He gave many explanations of a Felt Sense and I particularly like the imagery he uses in this one:

A felt sense is the holistic, implicit body sense of a complex situation... A felt sense contains a maze of meanings, a whole textile of facets, a Persian rug of patterning – more than could be said or thought. Despite its intricacy, the whole felt sense also has a focus, a single specific demand, direction or point... One single thing, one statement, or one next step can arise from the whole of it all... (Gendlin 1996)

What Gendlin had discovered was that Focusing is a natural ability we are all born with, but only some adults continue to use. It seems that as children we may have tried to speak and act from a Felt Sense, but were often ignored, directed towards the value of concepts, or even humiliated. As we made less of the Focusing type of moves, we mostly forgot how to do it and instead became conditioned to a particular way of thinking and being that was imposed by others.

I've been asking myself: When did I first use Focusing or observe someone else using it – this listening to a feeling and acting from there? Was it before I heard the term 'a felt sense,' before I knew about the process that Gendlin discovered and called Focusing, before I read his popular book 'Focusing,' met a teacher or watched a YouTube video about Focusing?

I was introduced to Focusing when I was in the USA by Abbe Blum, a Focusing Practitioner and student of Ann Weiser Cornell. Her guided sessions affected me profoundly and were the beginning of my own extensive experience, studying and sharing of Focusing, of almost a decade so far. But my knowing how to Focus, that was definitely much earlier. Some instances come to mind.

Learning how to live with 'what is'

One morning I caught sight of a gecko dashing behind the large picture hanging above my bed. Not an unusual find on retreat in rural South Africa, but I noticed some panic: "Oh no, I can't sleep there, he might fall on my face during the night." I stood for a few moments, acknowledging the fear and realising that I couldn't move the heavy bed and I didn't want to harm the gecko. Then I sensed a solution, to re-make the bed so my feet faced the wall. An inner "Yes, that would work," came as I checked inside and was followed in moments by the action being accomplished.

Time and Space to learn

My son was clearly upset when he announced "I don't want to learn to drive, I'm not having any more lessons." I could sense how vulnerable and scared he was feeling, and sensitive to the dangers of driving a car in busy traffic. We sat down at the kitchen table and I took a pen and paper. I listened and wrote down what he was saying and then we both acknowledged what I had written. I asked him "What do you need, is there a way to learn that wouldn't be so scary?" It became clear he needed to go more slowly, to have less pressure and more time and space to learn to drive. We agreed I would speak to the driving instructor and that my son would not apply for a driving test before he felt he was ready. It worked. My son passed his test, gained his full licence and became a competent and confident driver.

Making a New Commitment

Following my divorce I needed to find a new home and the prospect was pretty scary. When a friend reminded me about 'feeling the fear and doing it anyway' there was a shift in my attitude which enabled me to engage with the necessary house hunting. A few months later I looked round my current home for the first time. I remember how light and welcoming it felt, and I seemed to walk with ease and almost flow from room to room. There was a strong body sense, a knowing that "I could live here." I valued that feeling and committed to the purchase and have enjoyed the benefits of that choice ever since.

It's interesting to notice that each of these three examples included making changes and taking action, these seem to have been integral in the natural process that happened. When he first published his book 'Focusing' in 1978, Gendlin suggested six steps in his Short Form and didn't include a Seventh Step, an Action Step, but he did acknowledge it:

Steps of Focusing and steps of outward action often alternate. Each aids the other. (Gendlin 2003)

In the 2008 edition of the Folio, Atsmaout Perlstein, and Bilha Frolinger, wrote this:

In the past decade, Eugene Gendlin has emphasized the importance of bringing an action step to the Focusing Process. According to Gendlin the Focusing process without an action step is like a car with its motor running, but not moving. (The Folio 2008)

As for the structures I was given when learning Focusing, including Inner Relationship Focusing, Whole-body Focusing and Domain Focusing, these have brought me valuable understanding and helped me develop my skills. They continue to support, inspire and empower me as a Focuser and a Focusing teacher. I can more often and more effectively use Focusing moves when needed. Focusing skills and approaches, plus understanding – together these make a potent team. When challenges happen, I can choose to pause, acknowledge and sense for the response to "Ok, what's needed now?" When joy comes, I can notice and choose to fully experience it in my body, and so on.

Remembering some occasions through my life, when I successfully used a Focusing approach, before I understood Focusing, is helping me to appreciate why Gendlin called Focusing: 'a natural process.' It's

clear to me that there have been many times I have used a natural ability to Focus since I was a child and I'm interested to discover what I can learn from those natural moves I knew how to make back then. Those experiences were valuable at the time in their own way, as well as being important now. They show me the value of continuing to use these simple, kindly and slowful awareness moves in my daily life.

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Pamela Carr is a certified Focusing Practitioner and Teacher and is co-editor of the BFA Newsletter. She loves to introduce new people to Focusing and is also enthusiastic about crossing Focusing with Healing, Mindfulness including Walks in Nature, Relaxation for Living and Creative Writing. Pamela enjoys meeting people and exploring new opportunities and places – always supported by and sharing Focusing along the way.

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News from the Sofa

By Carolann Samuels, Helen Bower and Fiona Parr

From Fiona Parr

I see my role as being a support for Carolann and Helen. I feel that I am stepping into the role of an elder, having been a member of BFA since 2002, and have attended most AGM meetings. I have a sense of the history and development of BFA.

Towards non-hierarchy

It is often all too easy for me to look up to, and defer to those who I see as being more senior, such as Peter Afford, Barbara McGavin and Rob Foxcroft, the founder members of BFA. I want to counteract our tendency to create hierarchy, seeing some people as being more powerful, or carrying more weight than others. I want us to continue to work towards and develop a truly egalitarian and non-hierarchical organisation.

I feel I have a responsibility to pass on the knowledge I have about BFA, and to actively support and facilitate newer members in taking their place as empowered individuals in a supportive organisation. I have found that actively doing something for BFA has really helped me to plug into it, and I have gained enormously from that. I can take ownership of the organisation, and I feel that it is as much mine as anyone else's.

From Helen Bower

The sofa is feeling comfy! It has been enjoyable connecting to the wider potential of BFA, along with the ongoing details. I care about making BFA more accessible and effective. It is exciting that BFA is growing, but it is becoming a less intimate organisation and it is harder to get to know other members, particularly if we miss the AGM. We want there to be ways that members can support each other as well as responding to needs and project ideas. An idea has formed of creating a BFA wellbeing hub (see Members Update below). We will be communicating with members for suggestions and support with this.

From Carolann Samuels

Comfy sofa, non-hierarchy, accessibility and potential of BFA, support for members – these are all reflections and ideals that I support. And I would like to see Focusing known more widely in the world. We BFA members know what a useful life skill it is, and how wonderful it would be if more people could have access to Focusing. Many members are introducing new people to Focusing skills, and I hope that we can share ways of making Focusing more accessible, and generate new possibilities. The World Day of Listening was a success; can we build on this and collectively find new ways of bringing Focusing and Listening skills to our communities?

BFA Members Update

Helen and Carolann have settled into their roles on the sofa, and Fiona has joined them in a supportive capacity. They are forming deeper and more supportive connections with the various working groups. There is a sense of appreciation for this from the people in the groups and it is also beneficial for the sofa to be more connected, increasing the speed and efficiency of adaptation and change. We are grateful for the hard work of the groups and individuals who have been contributing this year, especially for the Newsletter.

BFA work in progress includes:

- organising the AGM gathering weekend. We are excited to have found a venue in the middle of the country, that is accessible for most people. We have created a good early bird discount, towards addressing the issue of cost. We look forward to seeing you there!

- a Wellbeing Group is just starting to form, which could be a hub to increase the responsiveness of the community and offering support where needed. This could be for peer support, inclusion, potential gatherings, policy, mediation etc. We are very open as to how this develops and who will be involved. We will be asking for your ideas, skills and involvement.
- putting forward ideas for re-doing the web site, as well as developing better, searchable Focusing content. There is a very small team who would love some support and input with this. If you would like to be involved please contact Rob Matthews robcmatthews@gmail.com
- Gaggle, a new forum for email sharing, replacing the Yahoo group
- supporting the team who are setting up this year's Focusing community camp
- reviewing data and confidentiality in line with the new EU regulations

You might wish to join one of the groups, have an acorn of an idea that would be useful, or want to know how the projects are progressing. The project teams and sofa would be delighted to hear from you; we want to be sure that the energy of each team is focused in a direction that is best for all.



Carolann Samuels teaches Focusing 1:1 and in small groups. She incorporates Focusing into her own Yoga practice and teaching and each is enriched by the other. www.carolannsamuels.co.uk csamuels@carolannsamuels.co.uk



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Practitioner Profile – Addie van der Kooy

Looking back at my journey into Focusing, I can now see how much of it was shaped by the chronic pain condition I suffered during those years. My main Focusing teacher at the time was Kevin McEvenue, founder of Wholebody Focusing (WBF), but the physical pain was also my trainer – a rather harsh but very effective one. Both taught me in depth about three “inner postures” which were vital in revealing the underlying layers of deeply embedded trauma in my body. These inner postures enabled those layers of suffering to unwind, release and dissolve or integrate.

One of these inner postures is **Letting Your Experience Be** – a letting go of the notion that you know what should happen in your momentary experience and trusting that your experience in this moment is as perfect as it can be. Each time I was able to let the physical pain be as it was, it would point me to deep trauma places in need of my Focusing attention, before it would recede into the background (job done!).

The second inner posture of **Resting in Presence** gave me a strong sense that there is so much more to me than the suffering. **Resting in Presence** means allowing yourself to be nourished by a body sense of being supported by your surroundings and the body sense of being alive and present in this moment, separate and unaffected by whatever is going on inside and around you.

With both these inner postures in place, I would often become aware of both a felt sense of the suffering and a felt sense of Presence, sitting side by side within my body. I noticed that if I was able to let both be there and respect both equally, a whole new dynamic with new possibilities would be created in which deep healing shifts would take place. To let both be there in such a way is the third inner posture of **Holding Both**.

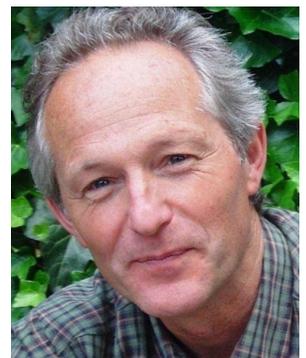
These three inner postures have strongly shaped the way I now teach Wholebody Focusing and I find it most rewarding to see deep healing changes taking place in others as they practice and adopt these inner postures in their Focusing.

One thing that strikes me with **Resting in Presence** is that people often need a lot of encouragement to give themselves permission to savour, rest and be nourished by the felt sense of that deeper dimension of Being in them. In our culture, simply doing nothing other than resting in a body sense of being present and alive seems to be quite challenging.

It made me realise that these inner postures do not just drop out of the sky during a Focusing session, but that they are like inner muscles that need to be exercised and toned before their strength can come into play. That’s why I always encourage the practice of **Letting Your Experience Be** and **Resting in Presence** in people’s daily lives, sometimes even in the form of giving daily assignments (yes, homework!). When this inner postural core strength is there, our Focusing skills can really come into their own.

Addie van der Kooy is an International Focusing Institute (TIFI) Certifying Coordinator in Wholebody Focusing. He has been working for 18 years with WBF founder Kevin McEvenue, with whom he produced a workbook, called ‘Focusing With Your Whole Body’. Addie offers individual sessions, a WBF Foundation Course and provides training for the TIFI recognised WBF Trainer Certificate. Addie lives in Marlborough in the South West of England.

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Forthcoming Workshops & Events

July & August 2018

Healing the Fragmented Self (Deep Bodywork and Wholebody Focusing) 3-day workshop with Alex Maunder and Greet Blanckaert

Belgium. 6th—9th July. www.wholebodyfocusing.org alex.maunder4@gmail.com

Let Your Body Make Your Mind Up (for experienced Focusers) with Peter Afford

London (Clapham). 7th/8th July. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

A Companion on the Journey (BFA skills certificate Level 2) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill

Bristol. 7th/8th July. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Reminders (BFA skills certificate Level 4) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr

Devon (Liverton). 14th/15th July. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Experiencing & The Body (BFA skills certificate Level 3) Weekend workshop with Peter Afford

London (Clapham). 28th/29th July. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

BFA Summer Focusing Community Camp 4-day family-friendly camp (nearly full!)

Gloucestershire (Toddington). 8th—12th August. gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

September & October 2018

Applied Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr

Devon (Liverton). 1st/2nd September. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

'No Holding Back—Being Fully Alive' 12-week online course with Peter Gill

Tuesdays. Starting 11th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Untangling the Knots (BFA skills certificate Level 4) 5-week evening course with Peter Gill

Gloucestershire (Stroud). Starting 11th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

A Helping Hand—Guiding. (BFA skill certificate Level 3) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill

Bristol. 15th/16th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Intuitive Parenting. 4-week online course with Peter Gill and Kirsty Pakes

Tuesday mornings. Starting 18th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

The Essence of Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr

Devon (Liverton). 22nd/23rd September. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Listening to Yourself (BFA skills certificate Level 1) Weekend workshop with Liz Orrell

Warwickshire (Kenilworth). 23rd/24th September. www.lizorrell.com lizzie.orell@gmail.com

Introduction to Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr

Tuesdays 2-5pm. Starting 9th October. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

The Dreaming Body: Exploring Dreams with Focusing. 5-week online course with Peter Gill

Wednesday evenings. Starting 17th October. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Untangling the Knots (BFA Skills Certificate Level 4) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill

Bristol. 27th/28th October. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Being a Focusing Companion (BFA skills certificate Level 2) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr

Devon (Liverton). 27th/28th October. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

The Path to Wholeness (BFA skills certificate Level 5) 5-week evening course with Peter Gill
Gloucestershire (Stroud). Starting 30th October. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

November & December 2018

Thinking with the Felt Sense (for experienced Focusers) with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 10th/11th November. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

Introduction to Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) with Paula Newman and Elizabeth Smith
London (Stanmore). 19th/20th November. www.paulanewmancounsellingservices.co.uk

Blocks and the Inner Relationship (BFA skills certificate days 3 & 4) W/e workshop with Suzi Mackenzie
Brighton. 24th/25th November. www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

The Path to Wholeness. (BFA skill certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill
Bristol. 24th/25th November. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

The Power of Presence (BFA skills certificate Level 2) Weekend workshop with Liz Orrell
Warwickshire (Kenilworth). 24th/25th November. www.lizorrell.com lizzie.orrell@gmail.com

Introduction to Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 2) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Tuesdays 2-5pm. Starting 4th December. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Companionship (BFA skills certificate Level 3) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr
Devon (Liverton). 8th/9th December. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

New Year Focusing Retreat (for experienced Focusers) (5-day residential retreat) with Gordon Adam
Devon (Dartmoor). 28th December—2nd January 2019.
www.balabrook.org.uk/focusing gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

Local Focusing Groups

Brighton and Sussex Focusing Circle. Meets monthly in Brighton, usually on the fourth Saturday of the month from 2-4pm. Contact: Anna anna@workpsychologyhub.co.uk

Bristol Insight Focusing Group. Meets monthly in Bristol on the second or third Sunday of the month from 10am-1pm. Contact: Gordon gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

London Focusing Circle. A list of people in the London area who are available for Focusing partnership. £5 joining fee. <http://www.focusing.co.uk/circle.html>

South Yorkshire Focusing Group. Open group which meets monthly. Contact: Hugh hugh-knopf@rocketmail.com

Stroud Focusing Circle. Meets monthly in Stroud on the first Wednesday of the month from 7.30-9.45pm. Contact: Peter livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Resources & Further Information

British Focusing Association (BFA) www.focusing.org.uk

For further information about all matters relating to Focusing in the UK, including list of practitioners, articles, events, training, resources, etc.

To see past issues of the newsletter click on 'Resources' on the home page, or www.focusing.org.uk/resources and scroll down till you see 'Newsletters' and click on the button.

To sign up to receive this newsletter regularly go to the home page of the BFA website. Enter your email address in the subscribe window on the right below the pictures .

BFA Facebook Forum www.facebook.com/groups/206601209671323/

An easy way to quickly connect with other UK Focusers and to see and post events.

The International Focusing Institute www.focusing.org

The International Focusing Institute (formerly The Focusing Institute) is the 'world HQ' of Focusing and is a source of all sorts of information about Focusing. The website gives access to the Gendlin Online Library as well as lots of articles on a wide range of subjects by other Focusing teachers. The website also carries nearly 100 (30-50min) audio interviews conducted by Serge Prengel with a wide variety of Focusing teachers that have been recorded since 2008—these can be streamed or downloaded from the website.

The European Focusing Association (EFA) efa-focusing.eu

Newsletter Involvement & Contributions

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome and invited. This includes articles, poems, book reviews, photographs, news, event & group details, etc.

Articles should generally be in the range of 500—1200 words. Inclusion of articles will be at the discretion of the editors. Some contributions may be held over for inclusion in a future issue. Please feel free to contact us if you would like to discuss an idea you have for an article.

Help in producing the newsletter is also welcome and we invite anyone who would like to be involved to get in touch—this could be editing, design & layout, proof-reading, distribution, etc.

Feedback & Ideas

Your feedback is invited! We would really like to know what you think of the newsletter and if you have any suggestions or ideas for its development. Please send an email with feedback to Pamela or Gordon. We hope to add extra features in forthcoming issues.

Forthcoming Issues of the Newsletter:

We currently aim to publish the newsletter 3 times a year and would appreciate receiving your submissions as soon as possible for the next issue in November 2018. The deadline for receiving contributions for this issue is **20th September 2018**.