



British Focusing Association NEWSLETTER

Issue 15: July 2019

Focusing and the Bigger Picture



CONTENTS

Page No.

Editorial	2
EFA Gathering—Aegina, Greece—May 2019 <i>by Patricia Foster</i>	3
A Non-Official Report from The International Focusing Institute:	
The Gendlin Centre and the Felt Sense Conference <i>by Ruth Hirsch</i>	5
The Felt Sense in a Challenging World <i>by Peter Afford</i>	7
Focusing as a Force for Peace: The Revolutionary Pause <i>by Mary Hendricks</i>	10
Is it Possible to Focus with the Enormity of Climate Change? <i>by Fiona Parr</i>	13
Book Review: 'Love and Imperfection: A Therapist's Story' <i>by Harriet Brown</i>	15
Poems: The Magic and Power of Loving Relationship <i>by Gordon Adam</i>	16
Our Bodies Feel the Bigger Picture <i>by Peter Gill</i>	19
News from the Sofa <i>by Helen Bower</i>	20
Workshops, Events, & Groups Listing	22
Focusing Resources & Information	23

From the Editor

Gordon Adam



An interesting and important theme has unfolded in many of the pieces in this issue – **the use of Focusing or the felt sense as a resource to help us to form a dynamic relationship with things that are bigger than ourselves.**

The 'bigger thing' could be a group or community, as in Patricia Foster's report of the recent EFA meeting in Greece, where the common ingredient of Focusing enabled many people to have experiences of 'connecting, reconnecting and inclusiveness'.

In 'The Felt Sense in a Challenging World', Peter Afford suggests that the concept of the felt sense, in the form of a 'felt sense zone', could be utilised more broadly outside of the narrow parameters of Focusing and the Focusing community. Peter writes "we could think of the felt sense as a reference point, a touchstone, for everything". Peter Gill also writes of how the felt sense gives us access to 'the bigger picture' in his blog piece 'Our Bodies Feel the Bigger Picture'.

Mary Hendricks' wonderful address to the International Focusing Conference way back in 2003, centres around a poignant personal example of how pausing and felt-sensing can be a way of retaining individual freedom within an oppressive authoritarian environment.

One of the biggest issues that all of us have to deal with is climate change, and Fiona Parr writes how she has found both Focusing and the work of Joanna Macy to be helpful in "responding appropriately to major world events that are beyond my control".

The 'bigger picture' theme also appears in 'News from the Sofa', where Helen Bower writes that she is "excited to explore more outward-looking ways of Focusing" and reports of the positive response from BFA members to 'Focusing in relation to others, the world and the context in which we operate' as a theme to explore at the next BFA annual gathering in October this year.

Harriet Brown's review of Clare Myatt's new book 'Love and Imperfection: a Therapist's Story' acted as inspiration for me to include some poems on the theme of 'Loving relationship'. Susan Jordan's wonderful 'Come with me' set the ball rolling here – Susan read this poem at a poetry sharing at last year's BFA AGM, which led to me buying her book 'A House of Empty Rooms'. I wanted to find some companion poems on the enabling and transformative power of loving relationship and the whole theme and commentary emerged at the last minute.

I hope you enjoy reading what I believe to be a rich and diverse newsletter!

www.focusing.org.uk/Gordon-Adam gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

Credits

Design & Layout: Gordon Adam

Photographs: Gordon Adam (cover), Pantelis (EFA group), Markus Spiske (protestors), TIFI

Proof Reading: Sue Akehurst

Website: Peter Gill

Distribution: Mailchimp, Gordon Adam

European Focusing Association (EFA) Gathering – Aegina, Greece – May 2019

By Patricia Foster



An annual gathering was agreed upon at the first EFA conference held at Loutraki, Greece in May 2018. The first of these gatherings was held at Aghia Marina, Aegina, from 24th–26th May this year. The meeting attracted 22 participants from 8 countries. The members of the EFA steering group had met prior to the gathering and discussed ways in which it would be possible to create the space for this meeting to be self-organising – allowing the dynamics of the group to direct the process, whilst at the same time for the group to be able to hold space for each participant to be really listened to.

We opened with a welcome introduction given by Patricia concerning practical matters, such as meal and break timings, information about the local eateries, the nearest beaches and archeological sites, and an outline of activities available such as early morning Qi Gong and Shiatsu massages. Many people had arrived early to enjoy the combination of a mini-holiday alongside the Focusing gathering, and they enjoyed a local tour of the island and its many sights on Friday morning. By Friday evening most of the participants were already becoming well acclimatized and relaxed, and enjoying the weather and welcoming surrounding nature of the pine forests and sea.

The meeting itself had no official agenda or timetable of workshops, discussion groups, Focusing partnerships or even a pre-arranged time when the AGM would be held – but we did have a facilitator! Cornelius gently but firmly accompanied and guided (when necessary) the group during those days, supported by Heidi, who very compactly and clearly wrote our wantings for the meeting on a whiteboard and various pieces of paper. The process, as always with Focusing, was unclear in the beginning, but as time passed and people were patient, the process and themes unfolded in their natural order... We did have three workshops, although none were pre-planned; we did discuss and make decisions concerning the next gatherings of the EFA and other outstanding matters; and we did end with five ongoing interest groups to be held and taken forward by five members of the group.

Further details of the meeting itself, its decisions and its ongoing interest groups will be available on the EFA website and in its newsletter in due course. AND a friendly reminder to anybody who has an interested curiosity – we encourage you to sign up to the EFA – membership is free and we welcome all with open arms and hearts... For further information see efa-focusing.eu

As I heard the other participants express in their own unique way how the conference was for them, I decided what better than that the report for the BFA newsletter should be a compilation of their expressions, some of which are outlined below:

For me, the gathering was a confirmation of how the Focusing community can find common shared ground and cultivate richer and more fruitful ways forward through sharing ideas and practices, whilst at the same time enjoying socially the interesting and joyful company of other Focusing people. Overall a thoroughly gratifying and heartwarming gathering. (Patricia, Greece & UK)

Thank you very much everyone who attended the EFA meeting in Aegina (May 2019) Thank you Cornelius for facilitating the process. Sunny ideas, new possibilities, new people, inclusiveness... in the beautiful island of Aegina...The European ideal/vision is moving on! Yes, there is European Focusing thinking... and practicing... (Nikos, Greece)

A great few days with Focusers on the lovely Greek island of Aegina (CP, UK)

This meeting was like the Focusing process, starting from something unclear and unstructured, ending up connecting and reconnecting and having more clarity, direction and flow. Thanks everybody (Sari, Finland)

Thankful and connected are the two words that came up at the end of this gathering. I mostly enjoyed exchanging experiences and Focusing (Christine, Netherlands)

An amazing, special gathering of 22 Focusers, all devoted to Focusing as a personal practice and also as a way of being with others in community. I learned a lot and came away feeling grateful, inspired and already looking forward to our next gathering! (Ruth, Israel)

A wonderful rest from the stress of the world, slowing down, connecting, feeling heard and seen, and nourished by Greece (Jenny, Australia)

It's great to see how EFA is flourishing. This wonderful gathering shows how much life there is in this amazing project (Judy, UK)

It's been a wonderful opportunity to meet and share with European colleagues, and build friendships. I feel part of something bigger, and rewarded by a wider group of people who care deeply about Focusing. Lovely venue. Wish it was longer (Fiona, UK)

Perfect Place, kind people, interesting, touching experiences. (Christiana, Switzerland)

BFA and EFA – only one character away. (Hejo, Germany)

It's about connecting, with yourself, with the others...and then: act, just do it, if it brings you joy. (Cornelius, Germany)

I think that was the main outcome of the gathering, connection – action – joy... (Patricia, Greece & UK)



Patricia Foster

I came across Focusing in 2002 , a process which ultimately widened, deepened and expanded my life direction and continues to. From the world of business and finance I stepped into the therapeutic world , training as a Person Centred and Focusing Oriented Therapist and a Focusing Trainer. From 2010 TAE , NVC and Caring Economics became other natural steppingstones in my journey. For me, Focusing is an essential life skill, for both personal and social development, within and without, respectively.
www.focusinglifeskill.com info@lifeskill.com

A Non-Official Report from The International Focusing Institute (TIFI): The Gendlin Center and the Felt Sense Conference

By Ruth Hirsch *Certifying Coordinator, Member International Leadership Council*

For this edition of the news about what's been happening in the TIFI world I thought it might be interesting for readers to know something about the relatively new Gendlin Center and the Felt Sense conference: the history, goals and a few accomplishments of each.

To prepare for writing this article I consulted with Catherine Torpey, the Executive Director of TIFI who has been intimately involved in both endeavors.

The Gendlin Center

The seed of the idea for the Gendlin Center originated prior to Gene's passing as the Board was concerned about the continuation of his legacy. Wishing to honor and move his work forward yielded a number of ideas. Eventually it was decided that what he and clinical psychotherapists would want most would be serious quantitative research proving that Focusing is an effective therapeutic modality.

It was thought that high level academic research would ensure that Focusing and Gendlin's work in philosophy and psychology would have a place in academia as well as in clinical work.

The steering committee is comprised of five representatives from academia: Kevin C Krycka, Chair (Professor of Psychology at Seattle University), Akira Ikemi (Professor of Psychotherapy, Kansai University, Japan), Mary Jeanne Larrabee (Professor of Philosophy, DePaul University), and Rob Parker (Private Practice, New York). Leslie Ellis, the liaison from the TIFI Board, is also connected to academia.

A Request for Proposals was issued for the first Gendlin grant for original research in psychotherapy, and has recently been awarded to Siebrecht Vanhooren of the University of Leuven in Belgium. Siebrecht's research will address how experiential openness is related to the meaning of life, the experience of existential givens, and depression.

Funding for the Center is solely by donations made directly to the Gendlin Center. Possible future endeavors include hosting a conference and/or the creation of a peer reviewed journal. Please see <http://focusing.org/gendlincenter.asp> for more information about The Gendlin Center.

The Felt Sense Conference

Following the special Memorial service for Gendlin in May 2017 there was a sense of wanting to continue to gather in honor of Gene as well as to delve further into the philosophy. The conference's subtitle was 'Bridging Philosophy and Practice'. The intention of the conference was to highlight discussion of Gene's philosophy, along with a wide variety of ways in which it is applied. Another goal for this conference was to attract people who are new to Focusing, so it was marketed to them as well as to seasoned Focusers.

The idea was to hold these gatherings in the same place as the memorial in New York City. This setting and the gathering held a number of advantages. It served as an opportunity for those who'd not been able to attend the memorial to be able to meet. Further, costs could be kept down by having the conference be both non-residential and located in a relatively central location in terms of ease of access for those flying in from outside of NYC.

After the success of the first Felt Sense Conference in May 2018 it was decided to hold another such conference in 2019, with hopes of possibly making this an annual event if it continues to be so successful.

The theme of the 2019 Felt Sense Conference was Creativity. As an example of some of the presenters and their presentations in this conference the two plenary sessions included *Focusing, Creativity, and Being-Time* with Robert Parker and *In the Footsteps of Gendlin's Thought-Ways* with Evelyn Fendler-Lee.

Readers are invited to be in touch with Ruth with ideas for future articles.



Ruth Hirsch, MSW, MPH, CMT has been enjoying teaching Focusing internationally for over 25 years. Based in Jerusalem, Ruth is a Therapist and Focusing Trainer who shares Focusing online with therapists, coaches, and others as a life-enhancing practice as well as to enhance and deepen their work with clients. Besides teaching all levels of Focusing, she offers Guided Focusing Sessions and Focusing-Oriented Therapy to individuals world-wide both in-person and online.

www.ruthhirsch.com ruth@ruthhirsch.com

BFA Focusing Community Camp 2019

28th August – 1st September Ringsfield Hall, Beccles, Suffolk

There are still some spaces on this year's Focusing camp in Suffolk which is fast approaching. The first two camps sold out and it looks like this one will too. The camp is an opportunity to come together as a community in a beautiful natural environment, to connect, Focus and have some fun.

There will be 1:1 Focusing each day and opportunities for workshops, presentations, group sharing, yoga, qigong, walking, playing games, skills-sharing, singing, music, dancing and anything else we decide to create as a group.



2017 Focusing Camp at the Barns Centre

Ringsfield Hall, Beccles, Suffolk, East Anglia, NR34 8JR

See <http://www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk/> for photos and further details

For booking form, enquiries and workshop offers contact: focusingcamp2019@gmail.com

The Felt Sense in a Challenging World

By Peter Afford

If we're going to meet the challenges presented by climate change, plastic pollution and all the other environmental threats to life on planet Earth, we're going to have to get a lot smarter in how we live together. Focusing can help those of us who practice it, but might the felt sense have the potential of becoming a reference point for everyone else in negotiating what lies ahead?

One of Gene Gendlin's great contributions is the concept of the felt sense, the sort of feeling that's not what we normally mean by the word 'feeling'. Engaging with it can help in many situations where Focusing itself isn't going to happen. It emphasises the need to give ourselves and each other the time to think, feel and express ourselves, whether on small issues or big ones. Simply knowing about the concept is helpful since it encourages us to hold onto subtle inner things we might otherwise miss.

In recent years I've done two work projects that at the time felt among the most difficult things I've ever done: one was my contribution to organising the International Focusing Conference in Cambridge in 2016, the other has been writing a book 'Therapy in the Age of Neuroscience' which should appear this autumn. Being aware of my felt sense outside Focusing time helped me through the difficulties with both. For the book, I found many sections agonisingly hard to write, mixing complex science with my own reflections. Many times I lost my sense of what to write and had to tell myself 'stop, come back to this tomorrow' – the next day, my mind refreshed, my sense returned and new sentences appeared. For the conference, I found the complexity of it and the risk of losing a lot of money pretty stressful. But with the help of colleagues and spreadsheets, I was able to keep returning to my sense that it would all come together in the end – probably!

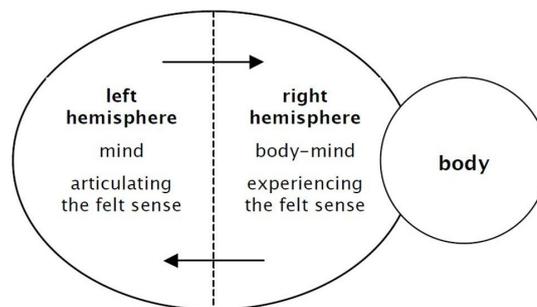
Gendlin distinguishes the felt sense from feelings that come with familiar labels (happy, sad, anxious etc.), and from emotions that are more intense and visible to others. He describes it as "murky", and how to articulate it as being "unclear". Sometimes he talks about a physical sensation (e.g. it's "a special kind of bodily sensation"), at other times he suggests something more ephemeral (e.g. it's "the source of what emerges"). Although the felt sense is by its nature tricky to pin down, I wonder whether he doesn't confuse people. Whilst we sometimes notice it as a physical sensation, at other times it can be a more mental experience which draws us inside, and which we can best hold in awareness by having our attention in the body. After all, the felt sense carries not only what we feel, but also what we think, that we can't yet articulate. Asking where in our body we feel it doesn't always help – who cares where it is? – it's everywhere! Why is there a physical sensation sometimes but not at other times?

The bodily aspect of the felt sense can be understood by looking at the brain. The right hemisphere has 'richer connections' with the body than the left hemisphere does. Although this gives us 'two minds in one' – one body-minded and the other independent of the body – the difference between them generally escapes our notice. Focusers know it implicitly, however: the mind that tries to figure out why we feel something, versus the body-mind that unfolds meaning when we pause to listen to what we feel. Also: the mind that tries to think, versus the body-mind from which fresh thoughts arise.

The right hemisphere is more interconnected within itself (and therefore 'wholistic') and with the body than is the left. It maps the inner state of the viscera (the insides of the body including the organs) and weaves together inner and outer worlds in the background (for example, by adjusting heart rate to what's happening). This frees the left hemisphere to focus attention on whatever is foreground. So right works as an ensemble with the body, while left is freed up to organise the world around us. And, therefore, we sometimes feel at one with our body, at other times disconnected from it.

Right hemisphere body-mapping provides the basis for the felt sense, making it a here-and-now experience involving the body that tends to change over time. Physical sensation is therefore one aspect of it, but may not be prominent when we're not emotionally aroused. The felt sense is a brain-body phenomenon: maybe it comes with bodily sensation, maybe it doesn't – it doesn't matter.

The right hemisphere's weaving together of inner body and outer world is the foundation of our lived experience. The left constructs edifices to overcome the deficiencies of human nature but the right, rooted in the body, always triumphs in the end. We try to understand things with our left, but to really understand we need the right's perspective, and the felt sense is the place to start. Hence the power of the concept.



the felt sense as a reference point for everyone

All this means that the felt sense is a normal aspect of experience for everyone. Some people are more attuned to it than others, and we live in a world that doesn't encourage such attunement – always rushing, goal-driven, glued to phone and computer screens, ignoring the natural world, and being blithely unaware of the imbalance of the mind and the hemispheres this creates. How can we encourage more awareness of the felt sense without having to teach everyone Focusing?

We could think of the felt sense as a reference point, a touchstone, for everything. People can find it as their 'take' on a situation as a whole, as what feels right and what doesn't, as the inkling of thoughts and feelings they need time to express. Everyone can benefit from it – in our inner lives, in our relationships, and in the groups we belong to. Similar principles for encouraging it apply in all these contexts: the need for psychological safety, a friendly attitude, openness to learning, willingness to make mistakes, pausing instead of rushing, and so forth.

The felt sense is the natural expression of the right hemisphere and its wholistic way of working, the unhurried way our minds implicitly put things together and come up with an orientation and a way forward. It resolves conflicts, finds common ground amongst people, and solves intractable problems. And everyone has it somewhere inside.

the felt sense zone

Inevitably, the felt sense is personal, so how can we engage with it outside Focusing – in our lives we share with others – and ultimately with everyone on planet Earth? One way might be to imagine a felt sense 'zone', a shared space where everyone can find their felt sense. In the zone, we have the time to sense where each other is coming from, and to allow fresh ideas to arise. People are in touch with their right hemisphere body-minds, and can be thoughtful and reflective.

Certain things seem to support our staying in the felt sense zone. We know about some ways that work in groups, such as checking we understand what others say before we respond with what we want to say. Other ways might be: keeping a space for the felt sense when strong feelings are expressed, using humour to create a good atmosphere, recognising that the individual may see what the group doesn't see, giving equal weight to process as to content (e.g. pausing to re-connect with the bigger picture when the group gets lost in detail), and remaining open to people we would rather consign to the outer darkness. Plus the principle that everyone's voice can be heard but not every view can be acted on. And so forth.

Much familiar human behaviour, of course, has little to do with anyone's felt sense. On the personal level, anxiety, highly emotional reactions, the inner critic and so forth, can all get in the way. On the collective level, repeating oneself, using slogans, arguing fruitlessly, polarising between opposite viewpoints, putting people down (plenty of all these in the UK political domain of late!) – these all detract from staying in the zone.

To work together in the felt sense zone, we need to pool our experiences and our ideas. To explore this further I am creating a new workshop, 'The Felt Sense in a Challenging World', with one eye on our response to the collective environmental threats we face. If we are to stand a chance of dealing with them,

we need to rekindle our relationship with the natural world. The inner version of the natural world is that of the body-oriented right hemisphere, of which the felt sense is the natural expression.



***Peter Afford** has been practicing and teaching Focusing for a long time. Based in London, he is a coordinator for the International Focusing Institute and a founder member of the British Focusing Association. He also works as a counsellor and therapist in private practice, and has been boning up on neuroscience for 20 years.*
focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

Gendlin on the Felt Sense...

"A felt sense is the wholistic, implicit bodily sense of a complex situation. It includes many factors, some of which have never been separated before. Some of those factors are different emotions. A felt sense contains a maze of meanings, a whole texture 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. It can 'add up to' or 'come to' a single further step. Then we know and can say 'what it really is', and saying this seems to carry the whole intricacy. Or, with a problem, sometimes we can say 'what the worst of it is'. One single thing, one statement, or one next step can arise from the whole of it all, if we allow it to form." *p.58*

"A felt sense has its own meaning, but it is usually more intricate than we can express with the usual phrases and categories. Yet it is very definite in that we sense immediately when something does not fit. The felt sense seems to object, to shrink, or to respond by being utterly unmoved or unaffected. The wrong words cause the felt sense to have a stuck quality. The felt sense does not stir in response to those words. In contrast, when the right words are found, the felt sense opens; it flows forward. Where before it was stuck, now it flows into the meaning of the words. These words become continuous with the felt sense. With them the felt sense moves and opens." *p.58*

"I must emphasise again that a felt sense is not simply there, underneath, before it comes. The central process is always ongoing, but only if one turns one's attention to it – and waits – does a felt sense form and come. It comes from (it is the felt sense of) what was there before, but one can feel its coming and feel that it was not already there as such. Its coming is a bodily change."

"The coming of a felt sense is a physical change, and there is a further change when formed experiences emerge from it. The words or images that arise are often unique, creative, and more intricate than common experiences are."

"The new words, images or emotions were not already part of the felt sense. They arise from it and yet they change it. We say that the felt sense is 'carried forward' by them." *p.175*

All quotes above from 'Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy' (1996) by Eugene Gendlin

Focusing as a Force for Peace: The Revolutionary Pause

By Mary Hendricks-Gendlin

This article is excerpted from the Keynote Address which Mary Hendricks-Gendlin gave as director of the Focusing Institute to the Fifteenth International Focusing Conference (2003) in Germany.

Focusing is a force for peace because it frees people from being manipulated by external authority, cultural roles, ideologies and the internal oppression of self attacking and shame. This freeing has to do with an ability to pause the on-going situation and create a space in which a felt sense can form.

When we know how to Focus we refuse to take ourselves or any other person as merely an instance of a culturally defined category or group. We don't say, "I am good, you are bad." Or, "I am a wife and mother" as though this defined the total of who I am. Or "You are the doctor, I am the patient" as though our interaction would then be governed only by the meanings of those roles. Or "I am a Christian or a Moslem" as though the ritual forms would then exhaustively define my spiritual life. We know there is always a rich detailed intricacy, a "more" in each person's experience.

I will tell you a story about pausing the cultural role level of a situation so that a felt sense can form. You will see that this pausing allows "the patient" to break the culturally expected role behavior of unquestioned acceptance of the external authority of "the doctor."

Example

At 1:23 on a Saturday afternoon a perfect baby girl was born to her parents after a short, uncomplicated labor. She was born in a birthing room at a modern suburban hospital in mid America. Her mother and she being free of drugs took a long deep look at each other, bonding for life.

The father rushed back to work to conclude a large presentation. The pediatrician the family had selected was not on call. His partner filled in. The mother was told by a nurse: "The baby is a bit jaundiced. The doctor wants you to stay overnight in the hospital so we can keep an eye on her."

Upstairs on the ward, a few hours later, a technician came into the room and took several vials of blood from the baby's heel. The baby cried out each time.

A few hours later, another technician appeared, needle and vial in hand.

Mother: "What are you doing?"

Technician: "We need to take blood for some tests."

Mother: "**Wait a minute. Stop.** You just took her blood. What is this test for?"

Technician: "To check on the jaundice."

Mother: "**Wait. I need to think about this. (She is quiet for a minute.)** If the results of this test are positive, then what follows from that?"

Technician: "Then we wait twelve hours and repeat the test."

Mother: "Humm. **(Quiet again)** So why do we need to do the test now, if the only result is that you wait 12 hours and repeat it?"

Technician: "To keep track of what is going on."

Mother: "We will wait twelve hours and then I will consider whether to do the test then."

Technician: "But the doctor ordered it now."

Mother: "I'm sorry, you do not have my permission to do any more tests on my baby."

An uproar ensued. The mother, quite tired from having just given birth and trying to learn how to breast-feed her baby, was visited by a stream of technicians, floor nurses and others. Most said, "You should do what the doctor orders!" A few said, "Good for you. You do what seems right to you."

At about 9 pm the pediatrician called the mother in her room.

Doctor: "If you don't have the tests I ordered, then I cannot be responsible for your baby."

Mother: "I agree. You are no longer responsible for her. I no longer wish to work with you."

The mother called another pediatrician who came early the next morning, examined the baby and said, "She is fine. You can go home." As the family prepared to leave, one of the nurses said, "Dr. _____ is doing research on jaundice in babies. He does blood tests on all the babies, for his research."

Twenty years later the New York Times reported findings that the threshold for pain is lower in adults who had physical pain as babies. Both parents were glad they had minimized the pain experienced by their child on the day of her birth.

TAE* process on "Wait a minute"

What was I doing when I said to the technician "Wait a minute. Stop" was pausing the on-going situation, making a pause in which I could let my bodily felt sense of the **whole** situation form. If I had simply responded as expected and said, "Yes doctor" then the situation would have carried forward, but only from **within** the routine pattern. By pausing the routine, I am able to form a sense of the whole, entire situation, not just behave from within the expected pattern. It was a quite complex situation and I needed to have all of it functioning so that I could make good choices. I had to weigh my ignorance of the medical side, the authority of the doctor's opinion, my own sense of my baby, my knowledge that routines govern much that goes on in Institutions, possible danger to my child if tests were not done. I knew I needed more information and I knew that I needed to understand the situation better before deciding what to do.

Notice this odd phrasing in what I just said above: "I stopped the situation so I could get a sense of the situation. What does this mean? And why was I able to do this? It is because I deeply know something here-- That it is one of my deepest rights as a human being to free myself from any situation so I can form my sense of it. This is the kind of knowing that is a good start for a TAE process. There is something I know which I cannot yet say in any expanded way. A first sentence to say what I know is:

When a person can pause and go inside and say what is "**my sense**" of this situation, that is the thing that makes them less vulnerable to oppression.

Then I would underline "pause" and "my sense" and ask what I actually mean by these words.

I did a brief TAE process which I won't go over here except to say my "odd" sentences that I ended up with in later steps:

- When people are distinct from any other entity in their robust body, then they are less susceptible to oppression.
- The person who says "my sense" is discovered in the pausing and separating.
- Separating from the situation lets me have my sense of the situation.
- When people separate from situations and find their robust body, they're less susceptible to being lost in 'we' groupings or attributed generalities.
- Situations are inherently such that you must leave them in order to have a sense of them.

The Felt Sense Level Implies a New Ethics

Emotions are a narrowing of the body sentience of the whole situation. They prevent us from being aware of the whole situation. We all know the injunction when we are angry to "count to ten" before acting. This is because we are likely to ignore many aspects of the situation while we are angry and say things we will later wish we had not said. This is the popular understanding that emotions narrow our sense of the whole situation. Because it is part of the cultural pattern itself, feeling an emotion cannot change the pattern which gives rise to it. If we feel anger at an insult made to us in public and yell back, we may alter the situation by our yelling, but we do not alter the pattern that engenders the yelling in us. If the same insult in public occurs again, we again are enraged at it. Emotion is a huge change in our bodies and may also change the situations, but it is not a change in the pattern. Rather it is a change in us and in our behavior which the pattern itself prescribes.

As our practice of Focusing deepens, we make this discrimination more and more between what is an emotional, culturally determined response and what is from the wider sensing of the whole from which a right next step may come. We become reluctant to act in relation to another person from the cultural level if it would violate the particularness of "this person in there."

Each time we help someone find the capacity to pause and form a felt sense we increase the ability to think for oneself, and to not be emotionally manipulated by ideologies and rhetoric.

Mary Hendricks-Gendlin Ph.D. was the Executive Director of the Focusing Institute, and in so many ways the heart and soul of the Institute, alongside her husband Gene, whom she worked closely with. Mary has been described as "quiet, fiercely independent, and tenacious as a bulldog when she got hold of a potential which needed a champion". Mary died in March 2015, two years before Gene Gendlin, who died in May 2017.

This excerpt is reprinted here with the permission of the International Focusing Institute. The full transcript of the address can be found on the TIFI website at <https://focusing.org/social-issues/hendricks-peace>



Is it Possible to Focus with the Enormity of Climate Change?

By Fiona Parr

How can we live with the distress caused by climate change, Brexit and other major world events; with climate change being the biggest challenge to us all? My Focusing partner and I recently had a session on our responses to what's happening on a global scale. My experience is that I have lived with the anguish and distress all my life. It's under the surface much of the time. Periodically I turn towards it, and simply listen.



The deep ecologist Joanna Macy says: 'This is a dark time, filled with suffering and uncertainty. Like living cells in a larger body, it is natural that we feel the trauma of our world. So don't be afraid of the anguish you feel, or the anger or fear, because these responses arise from the depth of your caring and the truth of your interconnectedness with all beings.'

What comes is how much sadness and pain is there. Something in me finds it unbearable. And then the responses come; what am I doing, and what more can I do. I sensed how enmeshed I am, and how I live is part of the problem, and I thought about what more I can do to mitigate the negative impact I am having on the planet.

JM: 'You don't need to do everything. Do what calls your heart; effective action comes from love. It is unstoppable, and it is enough.'

As well as hopelessness, I also sensed and recognised the enormous hopefulness I feel; that there is a huge well of kindness, care, love and resourcefulness in humanity. I also feel embedded and enmeshed in this capacity for love and care.

JM: 'The biggest gift you can give is to be absolutely present, and when you're worrying about whether you're hopeful, or hopeless, or pessimistic, or optimistic, who cares? The main thing is that you're showing up, that you're here and that you're finding ever more capacity to love this world because it will not be healed without that. That was what is going to unleash our intelligence and our ingenuity and our solidarity for the healing of our world.'

So yes, I think Focusing can help us to find a way to be with the enormity of climate change. It helps you to be present and listen to how you are living with it, experiencing it in your life, even if it is underneath the surface. It helps you to be compassionate with yourself and with others. And this can drive effective action, which comes from genuine motivation, rather than being a guilt-driven or desperate response.

JM: 'The refusal to feel takes a heavy toll. Not only is there an impoverishment of our emotional and sensory life – flowers are dimmer and less fragrant, our loves less ecstatic – but this psychic numbing also impedes our capacity to process and respond to information. The energy expended in pushing down despair is diverted from more creative uses, depleting the resilience and imagination needed for fresh visions and strategies.'

It's important to find a way to be with the feelings; even touching into them for a few moments is helpful. If the feelings are too big for you to feel, you can find ways to touch into them lightly, without getting overwhelmed. Listen inside, and you will be surprised how wise the body is, and how it shows you creative ways of being with overwhelming feelings.

JM: 'We are capable of suffering with our world, and that is the true meaning of compassion. It enables us to recognise our profound interconnectedness with all beings. Don't apologise for the sorrow, grief, and rage you feel. It is a measure of your humanity and your maturity. It is a measure of your open heart, and as your heart breaks open there will be room for the world to heal. That is what is happening as we see people honestly confronting the sorrows of our time.'

What I find enormously hopeful in Macy's message is that I have the capacity to respond appropriately to major world events that are beyond my control. Rather than backing off, saying that I can't do anything about it, I do what I can, even when something in me says it's not enough. I know I can't stop climate change. However I can turn towards it with kindness and compassion, instead of turning away in anger and fear. And in that turning towards, I am embracing humanity and all of life.

Here is a link to the page of quotes https://www.azquotes.com/author/17779-Joanna_Macy

Fiona Parr is a BFA Recognised Focusing Teacher and Mentor, Focusing Institute Trainer, FOT, and Certifying Coordinator. She teaches in Devon and online, and offers individual Focusing and Focusing-oriented Therapy sessions. She teaches the Focusing Skills Certificate course, and professional trainings to Practitioner and Teacher level. Fiona travels to India by invitation of the Just Being Centre, teaching Focusing and Thinking at the Edge (TAE) on their Presence oriented therapy training courses. Fiona hosts a monthly Focusing practice group at her home in Devon. She is an active member of BFA, and also the European Focusing Association (EFA), and she initiated a special interest group for Focusing teachers in Europe. She has produced a downloadable CD called *Focusing for Everyday Life*, with guided Focusing exercises to use at home. www.fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk



Joanna Macy PhD, is an author and teacher, and a scholar of Buddhism, Systems Thinking and Deep Ecology. She is a respected voice in movements for peace, justice and ecology, and interweaves her scholarship with learnings from six decades of activism. Her wide-ranging work addresses psychological and spiritual issues of the nuclear age, the cultivation of ecological awareness, and the fruitful resonance between Buddhist thought and postmodern science. The many dimensions of this work are explored in her thirteen books, which include three volumes of poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke with translation and commentary.

As the root teacher of 'The Work That Reconnects', Joanna has created a groundbreaking framework for personal and social change, as well as a powerful workshop methodology for its application. www.joannamacy.net

Editor's note: this article first appeared as one of Fiona's 'Focusing Tips' and was sent out to her email list in April this year. It appears here with Fiona's permission.

"Of all the dangers we face, from climate chaos to nuclear war,
none is so great as the deadening of our response."

Joanna Macy

'Love and Imperfection: A Therapist's Story'

By Clare Myatt. Reviewed by Harriet Brown

Clare's book, 'Love and Imperfection: A Therapist's Story' is a deeply personal and honest exploration of how therapist and client can change one another. It is the story of work with a particular significant client, intertwined with Clare's own personal journey, into recovery and into love. We learn how both people can be profoundly changed by a therapeutic encounter. It seems to be the alchemy of two particular people together which may not arise in a different pairing.

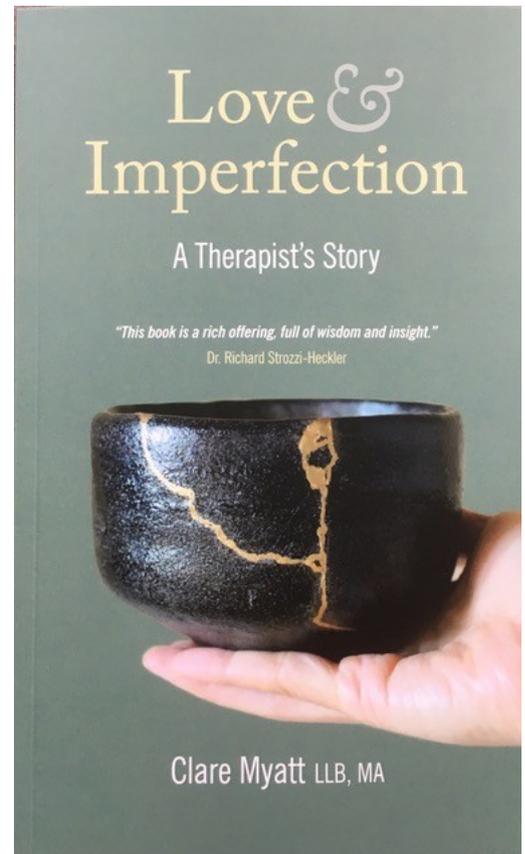
The prevailing therapeutic models might acknowledge the importance of the client-practitioner relationship, but Clare dares to take this a step further, and recognise that in the most transformative of therapeutic relationships a form of love is involved. Here we learn about *agape*, spiritual love, and how it infused this relationship.

'Love and Imperfection' explores profound themes while being accessible for both professional and lay readers. Theory is touched upon only lightly to illuminate the therapeutic work and context of the central figures. It has the openness of a personal memoir, a window into the therapist's side of the healing relationship.

I sense that many of us experience *agape* in our Focusing – precious, surprising moments, which open us up – fulcrum moments, where something shifts and change can begin. These are moments that we can't create, but which we can, perhaps, create the right conditions for. Being present for ourselves and another; listening to ourselves and another, being deeply honest in a way that creates connection can facilitate these experiences.

Clare's work shows us the power of love to transform. I finished reading this hoping that everyone might experience therapeutic work of this depth, be it in Focusing partnership or a more formal therapy setting.

Clare's book can be purchased directly (paperback version) from her website (as a signed edition) or from Amazon (UK or US). A Kindle version is also available from Amazon.



Clare Myatt is an experienced integrative therapeutic-coach, with a background in law and psychology. She is qualified as a Marriage and Family Therapist, a Master Somatic Coach and is a member of the BACP and Association for Coaching. Clare was certified as a Focusing Practitioner in 2018 and is a member of BFA. She maintains a coaching practice in London and works with clients internationally via the web. www.claremyatt.co.uk clare@claremyatt.co.uk

Harriet Brown is a Bristol & North Somerset based Focusing practitioner with an interest in addiction recovery, using Focusing to guide life choices and parenting. She is currently experimenting with Focusing with a baby present, and what this evokes in both Focusing partners and the child's parent/carer. She offers 1-1 and small group Focusing sessions. harrietlavender@gmail.com



The Magic and Power of Loving Relationship

A selection of poems and quotes... compiled by Gordon Adam

"There is life without love. It is not worth a bent penny, or a scuffed shoe.
It is not worth the body of a dead dog nine days unburied."

Mary Oliver (from 'West Wind 2')

Come with me

and I'll take you to places that weren't
until there were the two of us,
streets that turn to shingle underfoot
where the sound of cars becomes surf

before we've even reached the wave,
green hills that part in a rush of sea,
seals eyeing us as they flop
over kelp that a moment ago was grass.

We'll see sheep turn to clouds and lift
high in the air, gulls alight below them
in a descent of sky that washes us with blue
so we don't know whether to walk or swim.

We'll meet sunrise where the sun sets again
so fast it leaves us all the dark we need
for finding one another, sunsets that last days
so we can taste each colour of their light,

rain that falls into our mouths as sweet
and nourishing as fruit, storms that shake us
free of the people we thought we were
and set us down again beside ourselves.

Susan Jordan (from 'A House of Empty Rooms')

Be with those who help your being

Be with those who help your being.
Don't sit with indifferent people, whose breath
comes cold out of their mouths.
Not these visible forms, your work is deeper.

A chunk of dirt thrown in the air breaks to pieces.
If you don't try to fly,
and so break yourself apart,
you will be broken open by death,
when it's too late for all you could become.

Leaves get yellow. The tree puts out fresh roots
and makes them green.
Why are you so content with a love that turns you yellow?

Rumi

The Third Body

A man and a woman sit near each other, and they
do not long
At this moment to be older, or younger, or born
In any other nation, or any other time, or any other
place.
They are content to be where they are, talking or
not talking.
Their breaths together feed someone whom we do
not know.
The man sees the way his fingers move;
He sees her hands close around a book she hands
to him.
They obey a third body that they share in common.
They have promised to love that body.
Age may come; parting may come; death will come!
A man and a woman sit near each other;
As they breathe they feed someone we do not know,
Someone we know of, whom we have never seen.

Robert Bly

On the Beach at Fontana

Wind whines and whines the shingle,
The crazy pierstakes groan;
A senile sea numbers each single
Slimeslivered stone.

From whining wind and colder
Grey sea I wrap him warm
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending
Darkness of fear above
And in my heart how deep unending
Ache of love!

Trieste, 1914

James Joyce

"Your life and my life flow into each other as wave flows into wave, and unless there is peace and joy and freedom for you, there can be no real peace or joy or freedom for me. To see reality—not as we expect it to be but as it is—is to see that unless we live for each other and in and through each other, we do not really live very satisfactorily; that there can really be life only where there really is, in just this sense, love."

Frederick Buechner

See reflective commentary on the following page

Postscript – a few thoughts on Focusing as a loving relationship

I wanted the poems (and quotes) to take centre stage here and to speak for themselves, but I also want to make some commentary, to give some context for my choice of theme.

It occurs to me that the term 'loving relationship' could be applied to a wide spectrum of different types of relationship. It could be a marriage or committed partnership, or a parent-child relationship, a close friendship, or even a whirlwind romance. However in my experience it could also apply to relationships that could be described as 'therapeutic' – e.g. with patients (I work as a homeopath), with children I do reading with or care for... and also to Focusing partnerships!

In her review of Clare Myatt's book 'Love and Imperfection: a Therapist's Story' (reviewed in this issue), reviewer Harriet Brown writes:

"The prevailing therapeutic models might acknowledge the importance of the client-practitioner relationship, but Clare dares to take this a step further, and recognise that in the most transformative of therapeutic relationships a form of love is involved. Here we learn about *agape*, spiritual love, and how it infused this relationship."

Bala Jaison writes about the potential loving depth of therapeutic relationships in general, and Focusing relationships in particular, in her article 'Touching the Soul':

"When we experience this connected and attuned type of relationship, something in us connects with 'the more' (Gendlin, 1981) in ourselves, and consequently *the more* in others. In the field of metaphysics we might refer to this as *soul-to-soul contact*. It is an experience of being 'touched' so deeply, so totally by another, that in the actual moment of the experiencing, there are, in all probability, no words to articulate the complexity of multiple feelings that arise.

The experience is of seeing other people beyond their 'form', beyond their limitations as human beings. It is a seeing and knowing someone from such a *highly connected place*, that the heart feels as if it might explode from the ecstatic rush of connection, synchronicity, and unity. In the moment one feels totally *heard, seen, acknowledged* — at the deepest level of being. There is, in that magical moment, an *experiencing* of one's own *existence as a soul*, a space where we truly *see ourselves* clearly — reflected in the heart and eyes of another."

Towards the end of her piece Bala writes:

"In the Focusing community, there is a structure for planned time to be together in a particular kind of relationship called, 'Focusing Partnerships'. These are 'couples', some of whom have been meeting together on a regular basis for years, (usually weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly) to share time for Focusing/listening and processing, in equal turns. According to some of Janet Klein's research (on which she did her doctoral thesis) many of these relationships contain the fundamentals of a solid marriage (excluding sex): intimacy, caring, sharing, friendship, attunement, shared sacred space, comfort and ease.

To date, Focusing Partnerships have proven to be some of the most balanced, grounded, and contained-form of non-sexual intimacy that I've encountered so far — a model for *meta-relationship*."

'Love' or 'loving' are words that don't tend to be used much in the therapy world or in Focusing circles to describe a particular quality or aspect of the relationship, perhaps from a fear of sexual connotations or hypersensitivity to 'boundary issues'. Even Bala Jaison seems to largely avoid using these words in her article – but maybe it's time to come clean and, in a spirit of truth, authenticity and transparency, name things for what they are!

Reference

Jaison, Bala. (2016). *Touching the Soul: a Sexual Dilemma*. The Folio (2016). *This article is available online on the TIFI website: <https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/legacy/folio/Vol27No12016/Jaison2016.pdf>*

Our Bodies Feel the Bigger Picture...

By Peter Gill

Sometimes we have this deep sense something is wrong.... what is that?

Many times in my Focusing I have felt this, and without realising my assumption, expected it to be "about me"; some deep pain waiting to be heard (or so a part of me fears)... then after spending time with it, I sense that this wrongness I feel is about something bigger. Yes, it is about me, but me as part of a much larger process; processes in our world that we are faced with often without much choice. I was struck by this paragraph from the writer and activist Charles Eisenstein:

"A multiplicity of needs go chronically, tragically unmet in modern society. These include the need to express one's gifts and do meaningful work, the need to love and to be loved, the need to be truly seen and heard, and to see and hear other people, the need for connection to nature, the need to play, explore, and to have adventures, the need for emotional intimacy, the need to serve something larger than oneself and the need sometimes to do absolutely nothing and just be."

When I read this, something deep inside both relaxed and woke up!

That's what is wrong. So many deeply human needs are going unmet. He goes on to say how we try and meet those needs in unsuccessful ways: through social networking or consuming for example. We sense the pain of the situation, but fail to recognise the source, then try and numb the pain or distract ourselves from it with a plethora of activities.

I was listening to a talk about why more people are not doing anything about climate change (or you could choose any issue the world faces) and the speaker hypothesised that we simply did not want to feel the grief, the pain of how we are truly treating our collective home and each other. Again - this felt so true in myself. It is simply feels too hard to bear, yet so important to meet.

What we feel in Focusing is about us, situated in our lives, and those lives are woven into many, many larger contexts and situations. So... again and again I turn towards my experience with both curiosity and compassion. Turn towards the part of me that wants to pretend it's not happening, that part of me that sometimes feels hopeless or huge loss with what is happening in the world.

And from that simple listening and being with, something has changed... small steps come that bring me closer to what I deeply value. Some more courage comes to speak out more about what I care about. Some fire begins to awaken to try and change things, no matter how small a part I can play right now.

I still turn away a lot... but less than before.

Reference

Eisenstein, Charles. (2013). *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*. P.147

This article comes from Peter's blog <http://www.livingfocusing.co.uk/blog.html> (25/3/16)



Peter Gill became a Focusing teacher in 2005 and is fully qualified with the British Focusing Association (BFA) and the Focusing Institute in New York. He has trained with Ann Weiser Cornell in "Inner Relationship Focusing" in the USA and with Peter Afford in the UK. He is also a BFA mentor and Focusing Institute Coordinator offering practitioner and teacher training. Previous to this training, he spent 12 years practising and teaching awareness and meditation skills to groups and individuals in a Buddhist context. He is also qualified in Somatic Experiencing (SE), a short-term, body based approach to healing the effects of trauma. More recently he has been training in nature connection with Wildwise and is apprenticing in holding grief circles with Azul Valérie Thomé in Devon.

www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

News from the Sofa

By Helen Bower

I imagine that many of us muse on the question of how inner work relates to outer changes, and conversely, how the outer world impacts on inner change. The increasing openness to discuss climate change in the media in recent times, for example, adds a whole new dimension for me. It also emphasises how inward-looking Focusing can become. I am excited to explore more outward-looking ways of Focusing. Does felt-sensing have the capacity for this...?

We received a positive response from BFA members in the membership email group to bring this bigger picture theme into this year's BFA community gathering and AGM in October – 'Focusing in relation to others, the world and the context in which we operate.' This context may be one's family, community, work, or a larger ideal or movement.

While we look forward to exploring this in October, BFA also welcome ideas and contributions from the wider Focusing community on subjects like these, and in other respects. Do get involved and use BFA as a community resource for any needs and ideas you may have.

This newsletter is an important way that Focusing can spread – as well as experienced Focusers, it is read by many people who are new to Focusing and who are not a member of any Focusing organisation. We on the Sofa are very pleased with how successful and well-written it is. I particularly loved reading the articles about regional groups. Focusing groups play an important role in supporting people to Focus regularly, find Focusing partners, and in helping build Focusing community at a local level. I imagine those articles also form a good manual and inspiration to anyone who would like to set up or develop their own group. Highly recommended! And thanks Gordon for your hard work on both the newsletter and by introducing so many people to Focusing in other ways!

Some updates since the last AGM:

- We now have a buddy system so new BFA members are better looked after and are less likely to stay on the fringes, especially if they don't attend the Annual Gathering. We aim to widen this well-being work.
- After further consultation with the membership, we now have a clear brief for an exciting new website with quotes being collected from web developers. We hope to get that built before long.
- This year's Focusing camp will be happening at the end of August at a new venue in Suffolk – and with a new organising team which will bring a fresh flavour to such a key community event. I hope to see many of you there!

Helen Bower is a BFA Focusing practitioner. She works as a work-based tutor in the care sector and lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire.
helengoeswalkabout@yahoo.co.uk



Forthcoming Workshops & Events

July & August 2019

Companionship (BFA skills certificate Level 3) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Thursdays. 4th—25th July. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

The Felt Sense in a Challenging World weekend workshop with Peter Afford (*see Peter's article on p.7*)
London (Clapham). 6th/7th 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. 13th/14th July. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

An Introduction to Thinking at the Edge Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr
Devon (Liverton). 13th/14th July. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Introduction to Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 2) with Paula Newman & Elizabeth Smith
London (Stanmore). 16th/17th July. www.paulanewmancounsellingservices.co.uk

Experiencing and the Body (BFA skills certificate Level 3) with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 20th/21st July. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

BFA Focusing Community Camp 4-day residential camp
Suffolk (Ringsfield Hall). 28th Aug—1st Sept. focusingcamp2019@gmail.com

Whole Body Focusing One week residential workshop with Alex Maunder
Findhorn, Scotland. 31st Aug—7th Sept. <https://wholebodyfocusing.org/> alex.maunder4@gmail.com

September & October 2019

Introduction to Focusing and Listening (BFA skills Levels 1 & 2) online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Thurs 12-3pm. Starting 5th September. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

No Holding Back—Being Fully Alive 12-week online course with Peter Gill
Online. Starting on 11th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

A Helping Hand—Guiding (BFA skills certificate Level 3) with Peter Gill
Bristol. 14th/15th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Creativity & Criticism (BFA skills certificate Level 4) with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 21st/22nd September. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

The Essence of Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr
Devon (Liverton). 21st/22nd September. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Introduction to Focusing (BFA skills certificate day 1) One-day workshop with Suzi Mackenzie
Brighton. 28th September. www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

Listening to Yourself (BFA skills certificate Level 1) Weekend workshop with Liz Orrell
Warwickshire (Kenilworth). 28th/29th September. www.lizorrell.com lizzie.orrell@gmail.com

Walking into Mystery One day outdoor event with Peter Gill
Gloucestershire (Stroud). 29th September. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

BFA Practitioner Training Course One-year course with Kay Hoffmann
Warwickshire (Nuneaton). First residential retreat 3rd—5th October. kay.hoffmann@homecall.co.uk

Let Your Body Make Your Mind Up (for experienced Focusers) Weekend workshop with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 5th/6th October. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

The Essence of Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Tuesdays. 8th—29th October. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Untangling the Knots (BFA skills certificate Level 4) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill
Bristol. 19th/20th October. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Being a Focusing Partner (BFA skills certificate Level 2) Weekend course with Fiona Parr
Devon (Liverton). 26th/27th October. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

November & December 2019

The Art of Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 1) with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 2nd/3rd November. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

The Dreaming Body—Exploring Dreams with Focusing 5-week online course with Peter Gill
Online. Monday eves. Starts 4th November. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

The Path to Wholeness (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill
Bristol. 16th/17th November. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Blocks and the Inner Relationship (BFA skills certificate days 3 & 4) W/e workshop with Suzi Mackenzie
Brighton. 23rd/24th November. www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

Intuition and the Implicit (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 23rd/24th November. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

Path of the Focusing Practitioner 3-day retreat for practitioners & trainees with Kay Hoffmann
Warwickshire (Nuneaton). 29th November—2nd December. kay.hoffmann@homecall.co.uk

Focusing Partners (BFA skills certificate Level 2) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Tuesdays. 3rd December—7th January. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Focusing Partnership (BFA skills certificate Level 3) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Thursdays. 5th December—2nd Jan. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.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>

Sheffield Focusing Group. Meets weekly at Sheffield Central Library on a Saturday morning/afternoon or Wednesday evening. www.solar-active.com/focusing_group Contact: david@solar-active.com

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 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 2019. The deadline for receiving contributions for this issue is **20th September 2019**.