



British Focusing Association NEWSLETTER

Issue 17: March 2020



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From the Editors

Gordon Adam



I want to start my editorial by acknowledging and appreciating the input (thought, ideas, content, editing and layout) made by Helen Bryant in this issue in her new role as assistant editor. It's great for me to have a collaborator who also brings ideas and inspiration to the newsletter, having edited the last three issues on my own! Helen has been studying Gendlin's philosophy with Rob Parker, and the Gendlin article 'The Body Speaks from the Inside' was her idea. It actually feels very good to include something that's 'from the horse's mouth' as the 'golden oldie' article this issue. I think this is the first time we've included any significant content of Gendlin's in the newsletter (apart from various quotes).

Whilst searching for some appropriate Gendlin bio material on his memorial website I found myself reading some of the many posthumous tributes posted there. The one by Peter Afford resonated with me and it successfully manages to bridge the gap between Gendlin's "weird philosophy" and how Focusing is "based on love"! This is my experience also – not only that Focusing is based on love, but that is an excellent practice for cultivating and engendering love and compassion, both in Focusing partnerships and in groups or gatherings of Focusers! So I have included Peter's tribute at the end of the article.

Peter Afford also appears in this issue in the form of his recently published masterwork 'Therapy in the Age of Neuroscience' which is reviewed by Philippa Bayley. It's great to see this book finally in print – I know it took a lot of work (understatement!) to get to this stage!

Finally, I'm pleased to be back in 'co-organiser' role for this year's BFA Focusing Community Camp which is coming up for its fourth successive year in August. The camp is once again at Ringsfield Hall in Suffolk – a venue that was much appreciated by all who attended last year's camp. Full details of the camp (including booking information) is on page four of the newsletter. www.focusing.org.uk/Gordon-Adam gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

Helen Bryant



I'm pleased Gordon accepted my offer to help with the newsletter as Focusing and the potential it holds has become intrinsic to my life since I found out about it (See my Practitioner Profile in this newsletter). I do not know that many Focusing people as yet but maybe being assistant editor will help generate more connections.

As Gordon mentioned, I'm in a study group for The Process Model with Rob Parker. It's very challenging and also fascinating so I'm hoping to, possibly, share some of my understanding of it with you along the way. One thing this study has generated for me is a strong pull towards investigating the etymological roots of words. The concepts underpinning the root of a word, I find, are often very different from my everyday understanding and thus a sort of circular process is generated with reading, investigating with, hopefully, a response from the body and a deeper intellectual understanding. Just as well I'm retired and have the time for this pursuit. Fiona Parr is putting on a weekend on Thinking at the Edge this month (see the list of courses on Events Listing pages) so I'm going along with my dictionary in hand!

Having enjoyed several of TFI's (The Focusing Institute) online webinars, I was very pleased to attend Peter Gill's on grief (see article and poem below). These online courses are another way to connect with others, this time in different countries. It's amazing to see how both how the practice of Focusing is so widespread and also the different but equally valid interpretations of Gendlin's work. helenbryant483@gmail.com

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News from the Sofa

By Kay Hoffmann and Peter Gill

Last November saw a change of sofa occupants, so firstly we would like to thank Helen and Carolann for all their hard work over the last two years and for a very efficient handover!

We began our sofa-sit by Focusing on which areas of BFA we felt drawn to developing. (Actually we had the sofa re-upholstered first and added a sound system and cup-holders, but don't tell anyone :)). Peter was already heavily engaged in designing and building the new website, so his priority was to move that work towards completion. Kay was keen to work on two areas:

(1) implementing a 'buddy system' to welcome new BFA members into the association, and (2) creating new ways for BFA members and other Focusers to connect for mutual support and inspiration.

The buddy system has now been trialled and put into operation and two online meet-up calls for members were arranged in November and December 2019. This year will see other BFA members arranging and facilitating online and in-person opportunities for peer sharing and collaboration around specific themes. Some of these events will be open to non-members too as we are keen to support all Focusers in developing their practice and areas of interest.

We both feel the time is right for BFA to be re-enlivened! We are keen to convey to members that Gendlin's words, "You are needed here just as you", very much apply to being a part of this association. We are working our way through having a chat with each member individually, to hear what people would like to contribute and where their growing edges are. If you would like to arrange such a chat and haven't yet heard from us, do get in touch!



Kay Hoffmann has been sharing Focusing with individuals and groups for around 20 years and also runs BFA Practitioner and Teacher training programmes. She loves finding creative ways of teaching Focusing 'from the inside out' and believes that everyone can access their felt experience in a life-giving way when provided with a welcoming, unintrusive space in which to listen to themselves. Kay lives in Bedfordshire and runs courses and workshops around the country and online.

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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 Peter Afford in the UK. Peter is a BFA mentor and Focusing Institute Coordinator offering practitioner and teacher training, and he is also qualified in Somatic Experiencing (SE). More recently he has been training in nature connection with Wildwise and is apprenticing in holding grief circles with Azul Valérie Thomé in Devon. Peter lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire.

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BFA Focusing Community Camp 2020

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

15th-19th August 2020

This year's (fourth) BFA Focusing Community Camp will again be at Ringsfield Hall, near Norwich, in East Anglia. Ringsfield Hall is a family friendly country house with over 14 acres of woodland, gardens, ponds, animals, volley ball court and fire pits. It generally operates as an eco-activity centre for children. The venue was a great success with all who attended last year.

What happens on camp is co-created by the participants. It will be a space to come together as a community, to connect with ourselves and each other, Focus and have some fun. There will be times for Focusing each day, opportunities for workshops, presentations, group sharing, yoga, qigong, walking, playing games, skills-sharing, singing, music, dancing and anything else we materialise as a group.

The organisers (Ben, Gordon and MaryLouise) are creating the infra-structure, but we ask all participants to take some responsibility and to get involved with the everyday running of the camp – by washing up, cleaning, chopping vegetables, or offering workshops or fun events. Let us know in advance if you'd like to offer a workshop or other activity during the camp (to aid planning) – impromptu offerings are also welcome on-site on a day by day basis.

There is space for around 40 people on the camp (including children). There are great outdoor spaces for camping, and 13 bedrooms for singles, doubles or room shares. We'll have a marquee for outdoor activities, and indoor spaces where we can gather, have workshops and eat together. We have an excellent cook providing a vegetarian lunch and supper with a self serve breakfast, or you can choose to be self catering.

Prices (per person) for this year's camp are as follows:

Camping/Camper van	£180
Bunk room (multi-occupancy)	£220
Shared room (with one other)	£250
Single room	£300
Child (16 or under) (camping)	£50

There will be a discount of £50 if you wish to provide and manage your own meals.

Bookings will be taken through Brown Paper Tickets this year and there is an **early bird discount of 10% for bookings received before the end of April.**

For further information and booking <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4522714>

For general enquiries and workshop offers email us on focusingcamp2020@gmail.com

For venue details (and photos) <http://www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk/>

Some feedback from last year's camp at Ringsfield Hall:

"It was a wonderful venue, and the camp was compassionately organised. Open, warm, kind and skilled Focusers who taught me a lot. As a newbie to the camp I felt safe and valued. I appreciated the opportunity to extend my Focusing skills and was inspired to Focus more. The food was great!"

"I loved the place, and the way the space and time and activities were managed created a rich and nurturing, joyful space that felt safe, loving, compassionate, wise, playful, profound, inspiring and healing. The community of like-minded gentle warm people was gorgeous. There was some truly exceptional hugging and a copious, generous and seemingly inexhaustible supply of lovely food."

An Introduction to Relational Wholebody Focusing

By Ruth Friedman

What is Relational Wholebody Focusing?

If you are reading this you probably know what Focusing is, and you may also know what Wholebody Focusing is. In case you don't, Wholebody Focusing came about when Kevin McEvenue, an Alexander Technique teacher, discovered Focusing and recognised that the two processes belong together. In Wholebody Focusing there is more emphasis on the body, on the connection between what is happening in the Focuser's physical body and the felt sense. There is more space for the body to unwind, and to express itself. The Focuser's process is supported by the larger container of the whole body and the environment.

What then is Relational Wholebody Focusing (RWBF)? In RWBF we take the time to find the 'We Space' that exists between the Focuser and the companion. This can also be called the Relational Field. We name what we experience in a felt sense, Focusing, kind of a way. We become aware of how we are experiencing this Relational Field. Of course, each person experiences it differently. Sometimes the Focuser and the companion have different words for a similar experience. Sometimes one partner names what the other is feeling but doesn't yet have words for, and then feels a resonance. It is also possible that each partner may have completely different experiences of this 'We Space'. Naming and acknowledging what is in this Relational Field, regardless of how you experience it helps to deepen the field, and making it more explicit brings more safety. This 'We Space' adds to the safety that is already being built by also drawing on the resources of our environment and our own physical and inner experience of the body. This expanded sense of self, enlarges the container for the Focuser's process to happen in.

Karen Whalen who trained me in RWBF, introduces it as a process that came out of her ongoing partnership over many years with Kevin McEvenue. They Focused together over many years and started to notice that whenever they met to Focus, there was always some kind of connection between the content of the first Focuser's work and the second Focuser's work. This happened over and over and eventually they realised it wasn't a coincidence – so they set up a process to help facilitate this happening, and they named it Relational Wholebody Focusing.

The Role of the Companion in RWBF

As companion, the role becomes much more about witnessing and being really present, than it is about giving any kind of reflections or guiding. As a companion your primary role is to look after yourself and to make sure that you stay grounded. Your own grounding also supports the Focuser to stay grounded, and that is an important job in itself. (As you may recognise as companion, when we ignore our own feelings or discomfort in the body, it is much harder to be truly present for the Focuser). Because the companion is grounded and present and in contact with the Relational Field, they can receive information from the 'We Space' that somehow belongs to the Focuser's process. When this information comes to the companion, it may be in the form of an image or a feeling, for example. You never really know whether it is somehow part of the Focuser's process – or not. The only way to find out, is to offer it – usually at the end of the session, but sometimes within the Focuser's process itself. The Focuser is in charge of this process, so they choose when to check out what is going on with the companion, if they wish.

Here is a small example to illustrate from my own Focusing, from a particularly dark day in my life! I had fallen into some old, and depressive thought-patterns, so I had asked for a Focusing session. In my session, I had the felt sense of a dark, dank pond, which I recognised as symbol of my past pain, and, my depressed state. There was a part of me that was worried that I would get dragged down into it and drown there. In my Focusing process I was able to modulate my experience of the dark pond. I brought my awareness back and forth between the pond, the whole of my body, my environment, and the support from the ground. Then my companion asked if I was open to hear from her, which I was. She shared that what was coming to her

was that near to where she lives, there are lots of those dark, dank ponds. She told me that, as I was Focusing, she was getting images of all the life that teems out of those dark ponds in the Spring. This image helped me to accept that, all of those challenging feelings were present, and at the same time, it brought me hope, and a curiosity. I wondered what new life might be teaming out of my own dark pond, and what new life might come out of all that darkness. This information was somewhere in my field but I did not have access to the felt sense of it, since it was outside of my awareness. Because we had taken the time to build a strong 'We Space' the information came to my companion. I knew it was part of my process because I felt the resonance.

This of course may raise lots of questions: is the image really part of the Focuser's process, or is it a projection? You can rest assured that every difficulty you have ever had in your relationships in daily life, will eventually show up in your Relational Wholebody Focusing partnerships. And yes, you can get into a lot of trouble with each other! This is why building the safety container is so important.

Actually, this is the good news, because building this safe container in RWBF can help you explore what this other person represents for you, what they trigger in you and so on. Perhaps, in daily life, a lot of people could trigger you and most of the time you may choose to ignore it – except that every once in a while you have an explosion to manage which appeared to come from nowhere. Similarly when we are Focusing, and the companion does a mis-step, as Focuser we might choose to ignore it – but consider what you might learn about yourself and your triggers when you turn towards the irritation. When I did my training we had a whole module on triggering, and it was challenging stuff! A lot of issues around relationship to authority came up for many in our group. This is why the need to build a sense of safety is paramount in learning RWBF.

Titration

Another key difference between RWBF and other forms of Focusing is that we also work with titration. This term was coined by Peter Levine in his Somatic Experiencing work, and borrowed from chemistry. In this context, titration is the process of connecting with a place of pain or trauma, and then coming back to yourself in the present moment. You resource yourself by connecting to the environment, your feet on the ground, or re-connecting with the larger container of yourself as whole person held within the relational field with your partner. Then when you are ready, you go back inside, to feel a bit more of the challenging experience, at your own pace, and you go backwards and forwards until something else happens in a Focusing way. This titration process brings a greater experience of safety that can help to deepen the Focusing experience and the healing outcome. It often enables the felt shift to come more quickly because of this process.

Heartfelt Conversation

RWBF actually has two modalities. So far I have described the Focusing-style modality. The other modality is a more dynamic back and forth, and has been named the Heartfelt Conversation. In a Heartfelt Conversation we start with the same long grounding-process to build safety and connection with the 'We Space'. The topic can be pre-determined, *or* it may have come out of a quick check-in before grounding, or it may come out of the grounding itself. After the grounding and the selection of the topic a more dynamic and interactive form of Focusing then takes place.

Each person (and it can be more than two) connects with the topic and speaks from the felt sense in a Focusing kind of a way. When the Focuser is done for the moment, the companion shares what has been touched inside them, by what the Focuser has shared. Then they can go on to reflect on their own connection to the topic in a Focusing way. It then goes back and forth in a dynamic way.

One time, shortly before a training I was giving, I had a Heartfelt Conversation with a buddy who by chance was also was preparing to give a training of their own. The Heartfelt Conversation was very nourishing for me. It turned out that my buddy had a lot more experience in Focusing than I did at that time. Yet we had the same concerns and doubts in preparing for our respective trainings. I felt supported and encouraged when I had made space for my worries and doubt – knowing also that these doubts were similar to another person's in a similar situation. Had we just been talking in a more ordinary way it would have been harder to recognise the gifts of the shared experience.

Relational Wholebody Focusing is a standalone process. You don't need to know Focusing to learn RWBF. However for those who already know another form of Focusing, the two processes can be integrated – this is what I tend to do in my own Focusing and in my work with clients. From my perspective, each method has its strong points which bring value to the process overall. You can also use RWBF as a tool in challenging situations in daily life. I tend to draw on the 'We Space' grounding when I have to deal with a challenging relationship, or in the midst of a difficult situation. I find it supports me to connect with the 'something larger' that is looking after me.

If you have already learnt Focusing and then come to RWBF you may find that you sometimes have to unlearn some of the classical Focusing ways before you start over and learn RWBF.

If you are intrigued and would like to know more about RWBF, I will be offering an introductory series of online workshops in the autumn. Details will be posted on the BFA website in due course. If you are interested to know more please contact me (*email address below*) and you will be the first to be informed.



Ruth Friedman is a Certified Relational Wholebody Focusing Trainer with The International Focusing Institute and an Accredited Coach with the International Coaching Federation. She is from the UK and lives in Brussels, Belgium where she works. Ruth also works in London where she visits frequently, and online with clients around the world. Her professional background is diverse, and she has worked in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. She has been running personal development workshops for about twenty years. She is also bringing her work into companies, giving workshops on topics including: managing emotions, tackling procrastination, stress management and burnout.

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New Year Focusing Retreat on Dartmoor: Some Impressions and Thoughts

By Kim McMahon



It was already dark when I stepped out of the taxi from Totnes into the late Dartmoor afternoon, but Bala Brook Retreat Centre was warm and light and smelled of lilies, and my room, just off the meditation hall, felt comfortable and secluded. When I opened my window, I couldn't see the landscape – but I could smell the wildness of it and hear the rushing sound of the Bala Brook just outside.

A meal had been prepared and I sat down with the other nine retreatants for the first time (two more joined the next day). Part of me was fearful: so many new people, how could I possibly eat? At the same time my inner coach encouraged me to smile and engage as those at my end of the table discussed and mourned the election result. Afterwards we sat in our first circle in the spacious meditation room. I was still recovering from a long bout of flu and I was tired and there seemed to be a lot to take in, but something in me knew that here I could take things slowly and get to know the programme at my own pace. From the beginning there was a supportive, allowing and kind atmosphere that would become stronger with every day. This was so welcome to everything in me that felt afraid, and I went to bed knowing I'd be safe and find nourishment here. It took me a long time to sleep, as usual, but I was lulled by the constant shhhh, shhhh, shhhh of the Bala Brook outside.

Every day there were opportunities to practice qigong and meditation and to go for silent walks together. There were two Focusing sessions each day and a 'Focusing input' slot when we could learn about/discuss a particular aspect/form of Focusing. Each day we also met in two smaller groups to share how each of us was experiencing the retreat. I felt held by this structure whilst also being encouraged to sense for what felt right to do – I felt free to rest or be outside sometimes, rather than follow the programme.

There were many levels of Focusing experience and skill among us, and yet every session I had was wonderful in its own way. Even after Focusing for many years, I am still amazed by the simplicity and profundity of this process with its two core requirements (for me) – step one: to have someone willing to be in presence with me, and step two: to come into presence with whatever is in me and needs my attention.

Over the retreat I was able to Focus many times with the part of me that remains in survival mode and does not want me to feel anything. I was able to be with it in a way that was soothing and healing and that allowed exiled griefs to be felt, and then the part of me that is ready for change and growth could be felt. It was so fitting that it was New Year – a time of reflection and a time to sense for next steps. We had a memorable evening around the campfire singing and committing 2019 to the flames; and then some of us danced the New Year in. The next two evenings we shared poems and



songs. There were some beautiful and moving moments and quite a few laughs.

I felt that all our Focusing and the whole retreat itself was being held by the land we were on – how lovely to be outside and breathe the air of Dartmoor and to receive nature’s presence and its signs: the lonely tree on the hillside; a mighty white cloud touching the brow of the land; and always, the power and moving forwards energy of the Bala Brook.



Bala Brook Retreat Centre

I feel grateful to everyone on the retreat who helped me in so many ways and especially to Gordon and Jill for their work in organising the retreat with such care and attention to detail, and with such respect for our individual needs.

As the retreat progressed, it felt so precious to be a part of the group as we became more relaxed and attuned to each other. It was inspiring to see our faces soften and open and to feel the growth of trust and community, and to glimpse the possibility of a different, more loving world.

Kim McMahon is a Focusing Practitioner living in London (who loves to get out of London). Her other passions are singing, meditation and writing.
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Photos by Kim McMahon and Vicki Thomas



Editor (GA): I have been running Focusing Retreats at Bala Brook Retreat Centre in Dartmoor since 2009. The retreats run for 5 days and are limited to a maximum of 14 participants. The aim of the retreat is to create a safe, supportive and nurturing micro-Focusing community. Participants find that as well as Focusing itself, the group, the venue and the Dartmoor environment all contribute to the retreat experience. See ‘Focusing Retreats: an Unfolding Journey’ in Issue 4 (August 2014) of this newsletter for my own personal reflection on the retreats—available on the BFA website www.focusing.org.uk. The next retreat at Bala Brook will next New Year, from 29th December 2020 till 3rd January 2021. For further information gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk

Moving through the Forest

He's tripped up again
and this time it hurts.
The bleeding won't stop.
It spills over into thoughts
like a rumbling volcano.
Stoked by the critic,
awoken by stones
thrown by the neighbours
who hide in disguise,
not wanting to be noticed.
And then in the thick of fire,
light descends from the heavens
as the gigantic heart moves in,
having watched quietly from afar.
It steps up to the scene
with tender footsteps of peace,
bringing loving words of wisdom,
soothing the wounds and scars.
A healing voice of acceptance.
The neighbours bow down
behind fences of their making,
laying down their stones.
The critic moves into the shadows,
hoping for more lines in another drama.
The heart sees the perceived crime
as a beautiful expression
from that seeking attention,
lost in a moment of unawareness
in the forest of protection.

Russell Kendall

Focusing: The Body Speaks From the Inside

By Eugene T. Gendlin

Talk given at the 18th Annual International Trauma Conference, Boston, MA, June 20-23, 2007.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: Neuroscience, Attachment and Therapeutic Interventions

Transcribed from the audio by Jill Drummond

"There is no "body" apart from the environment. The body generates itself *in* the environment, *out* of environment. Between "environment" and "body," only human beings make a distinction."

Hello. I'm glad to be here. I want to thank Rob Parker, whom some of you know already, one of our people who uses Focusing with trauma work. He arranged for the three of us to come and didn't arrange for himself up here. So I need to mention him and thank him for all the work and coordinating especially *me*.

Then I want to tell you that Focusing, by itself, is not a "method." Focusing deepens everything that we do, unless we don't do it. So I tell people, "Don't do Focusing by itself, please." Do it *with* interaction and body work and every other thing. I agree with what was just said here: that we need to pull all the resources we can get together. Focusing comes from *inside*, so it fits in with everything you're doing. It will *deepen* whatever you're doing. It's not something separate—although when you learn it, then for a little while it seems like something *very* separate. But once you have it, it's no longer separate.

I want to introduce myself all over again, because I'm really a philosopher. My training is in philosophy. My degree is in the Department of Philosophy, and I've been doing philosophy all my life. It happens that the practical side of it got well-known. So I have to tell you this right away.

Philosophy is something that's very difficult to read. You have to read everything five or six times, sentence by sentence, like a crossword puzzle that you're solving. So most of what I have put out in print and published is not philosophy. It's coming *off* of philosophy; it's trying to be simple and clear. But a lot of what I have published you already know. So today I want to introduce you to the philosophy part of it.

Philosophy works with . . . *not even* concepts. It doesn't have *any* content. It's not about anything.

Philosophy is about the concepts, but *not even the concepts*. Theoretical people work on concepts. Philosophy works on *kinds* of concepts. This is a funny notion to most people. What I need to talk about is the *kind of concept* that we're developing, a *kind* of concept that's really different from all the concepts that we mostly use.

It's a kind of concept that comes from studying *living* things *first*. This is not done. Our concepts ape mathematics, which has been so powerful in making all of our technology. I'm certainly not criticizing it, putting it down or any silly thing like that. I'm talking into a microphone. I write on computers. There are lights here. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for technology. *But*, technology is not a good model for *living* things. Because it has to do with making separate parts and putting these parts together. Living things are not made out of separable parts. I'll get back to that.

There are two main points that I want to make. The first one is that for living things you need a kind of concept where you understand that nothing *is*. Everything we usually think about "is." Nothing "is" that lives. It always *is* and also *implies forward*. It *is-and-implies*. It never just *is*. It always *is* and *has an implying* of something that hasn't yet happened. And that something-that-hasn't-yet-happened is not fully structured. It's very, very (what Freud called) "over-determined." It's not indeterminate at all. It's very, very, very finely pre-structured and yet it's also open; it hasn't yet happened. Only things that happened are fixed in structure.

So my main point here is: there is no "is." It's always an *is-and-implies*. Secondly, there is no "body" apart

from the environment. The body generates itself *in* the environment, *out of* environment. Between "environment" and "body," only human beings make a distinction. And it's a very important distinction. It helps us with science and chemistry and neurology, and all those things that are very important and very helpful, and *make* things. But *living* things are not *made* things, made-out-of-parts-things. Living things are not made by a separation between us and what we see or what we work on. Living things are always already *both* body *and* environment.

So, no "is." Always "is-and-implies." And no "body." Always "body-and-environment." It's some next event in the body-environment interaction, in the body-environment unity. The next event that's implied is a . . . look at my hand. (Gene laughs) That's good enough there. It's forward and it's out here.

So, we have to both use, respect and also change the notion that we have of the body. It's *not* a structure that fills space and time. We need to *consider* it that way, so we can analyse it and have medicine and chemistry and neurology and all these very important things. But the body is *not* a structure that just "is" in the environment, in space, like you see me sit here. The body is where I am out here talking to you, where I'm all the way out there, and without this, my body wouldn't be the way it is right now. The words wouldn't come out right, if I weren't a body-environment unity, and if I weren't implying forward. So my words come.

Sometime you can wonder where your words come from, and how they come. People don't wonder enough. They open their mouth and the words come out. How *is* that?

And then if they don't come out, what do we do? Well, we say, "Excuse me, I don't mean that. Wait a second." And then what do we do? Well, we wait and hope and then some more words come out, and hopefully they are right.

OK, so those are my two points. No "is", and no "body."

The next thing I want to say is that there has to be an understanding that we are *not only* human. We're also animals, and not only animals; we're also plants. We're *tissue-process*. And it's the tissue-process that has developed the capacity to be an animal. There are no animals without tissue-process.

But there's something very mysterious about animals: they *behave*. All the studies of ethology for a hundred years now have shown that the complexity of behaviour is what they call "built-in. Animals learn, of course. They learn a lot. But even what they *learn*, like little kittens learn how to jump on mice, they learn that when the adult cat demonstrates it *once*. So even learning is based on built-in capacities. And if you stimulate certain brain cells, you get the jumping anyway without any adult cat. And so forth.

A squirrel that's raised in a metal cage will bury nuts in a metal cage at a certain age. If you give it a nut, it'll scratch the metal cage and put the nut there. The whole complexity of animal behavior is *built-in*.

But *what* is "*built-in*"? What does it mean? A physiological understanding of the body does not *permit* behavioural complexity to be built-in the body. *You* have to *think* it, with a different kind of concept. You have to think that the tissues are not just structure and space, the tissues imply forward. And they are not just tissues within the skin; they're tissues in the environment that it makes itself out of, to have even a skin. You have to understand that the body, our body, *your* body sitting there, is tissues that have the animal behaviour complexity.

You can read that human beings don't have instinct anymore, but that's ridiculous. "Instinct" is just a word for this "built-in." "Instinct" is just like "built-in." Somebody says, "Yes, I recognize that there's this *huge* animal complexity, but I don't know how it's 'out of the body.' These animals don't have concepts and all that. So how do they do this?" Well, "by instinct," we all learned in school. And then they didn't *tell* us what that is. Right?

Well, the tissues develop this extra capacity to have an external environment in which they behave. And *then* only come human beings. And we are *completely continuous* with that. Just our *science* of human beings is separate. We study culture and history and all these wonderful things as if they came down from the sky. But obviously they came up from the earth through us, into where we are now. So the hu-

man level of culture and patterns and making and technology, *all that* comes as a *bodily* process. Where does a scientist get a new hypothesis? They *never* tell you. Once in a while someone will write, "Oh, I developed the double helix from a dream." Or somebody will say, "I got this in the shower."

So those three levels you're sitting there being. And they're familiar; just the concepts are new. We need a new kind of concept. I worked these out over the last forty years. It's not easy to read, but I invite you to look at it. It's on the web; you can find it. It's called 'A Process Model'¹ and you might like the first few pages, even though it might take you a while to read them.

Now, what I'm really here to say is that there's a fourth level, on top of the plants and the animals and the human beings with culture. Not the *emotions* . . . the emotions are *within* the cultural patterns. When you get mad, when you are disappointed, all these things are within *cultural stories*. You don't get mad unless you are treated in some way that the culture teaches shouldn't happen. As long as everything runs routinely, you don't get mad. In another culture, you *would*, being treated like that. But in *that* culture, they have different stories.

So emotions are always *within* the stories that we learn. Culturally, we're *made out of* stories. That's why we *dream* them at night, you know. Stories are not just told. Stories are very deeply culturally patterned. Human beings are not only cells, they're not only animals, they're also cultural stories.

But there is now another level. The other level is where *Focusing* comes from. The other level is that *the body* is capable of giving itself still another kind of object. I should have mentioned objects, but it's too complicated. At each level there are different objects. The world is not made of objects. The world is made of living interaction. And it has living things in it. They tell you the world is just burning gas, but that's only from the outside, observed by mathematics. From the inside, the world has *us* in it. The universe has *us* in it. And the universe is *at least* as much as a dog or a horse or you and I. It *includes* us, since we're here. They can't tell us we're not here, you know that much.

Since we're here, there are these capacities of the living thing. And there is one more. The body can *give itself* an object that is in a different space and in a different time. It can give itself an object of a situation, of a whole situation. But this happens in a funny, different space. It's a different space where that happens. A person usually starts with a discomfort that's diffuse. Like, I'm angry and "Aaargh, gr-r-r-r-r." You know. And it's hard to do anything *with* that.

But there is a place where a person can say, "Oh!" Once you've learned that place, then the object changes. It's no longer an emotion in a story. It's the whole damn thing together, the story and what happened and how I am and everything else that ever happened, all of my background and my animality and my tissues. All of that together becomes an "Oh!" Becomes a "that." And then I am different. Then I am somehow changed. I'm in this larger space and I have this "that" here.

So, as you will see in the two demonstrations that I bring you, a person will say . . . in Afghanistan language, a person will say, "Oh, I'm uncomfortable. I'm angry. I think I'm furious. I'm about to go out and kill people. But I *think* I have a 'guest.' Oh, I think I have a 'guest.'" And instead of rushing out with the guns, which he's already gotten, he puts those down and he sits down and he says, "I think I have a 'guest.'" He goes, or she goes, to a *place* that, with a little Focusing training, the person has learned.

"Go to a place" means "get quiet, sit there and go to where the 'guest would be." This is a distinct action, an internal action. The guest isn't already there, just this diffuse "Aa-aa-rr-rr" fury is there. But the "guest" is not there. Or the anxiety is there but the "guest" isn't there. So what's the "guest"? Well, the "guest" is a "that." You say, "O-o-oh." It takes a few seconds or a minute or two minutes for this "that" to *form*, because it isn't there as a "that."

Emotions are already there, you know. You feel them and you say, "Oh, I'm furious. Yeah, that's right." But this we call the *felt sense*. And there's a fair amount of literature about the felt sense. But you can call it anything you want. I call it a "that," because when it forms, then it's so distinct. It's in a different space. And time slows down there also. It's in a different space. It's "Oh, I have *that*." The person is *actively* looking for it, *actively* inviting it. *Not* inviting the *anger*. That's a *different* thing. Inviting the

"guest." Inviting the "that." And then *it comes*. The person is still actively interrogating this "that." "What *are* you?" Thereby the person is a much larger person, and the space is a much larger space.

Reference:

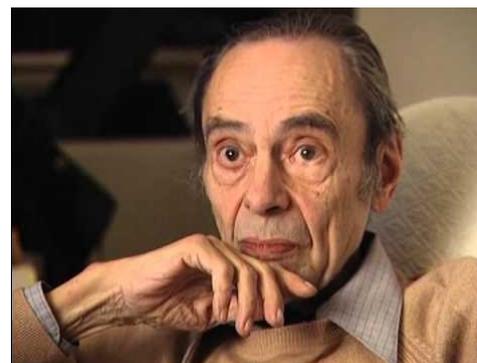
¹Gendlin, E.T. (1981). *A Process Model*. Published in book form in 2017 by Northwestern University Press (with contributors by Rob Parker).

This article was sourced from the transcript of a talk given at the 18th Annual International Trauma Conference, Boston, MA, from the Gendlin Library on the International Focusing Institute website:

http://previous.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2235.html

Eugene Gendlin (1926—2017)

Eugene Gendlin's work was notable for how he bridged the fields of philosophy and psychology, as well as bridging serious academic work with popular self-help. He studied and taught philosophy at the University of Chicago, one of the world's top academic institutions. While engaged in the study of philosophy, he became a student and colleague of one of the great minds in psychology, Dr. Carl Rogers, who was revolutionizing the study of psychotherapy at the University of Chicago.



Eugene Gendlin (2007)

*Gendlin's extraordinary intellectual gifts were matched by his extraordinary compassion for people. When he saw that the research he was conducting at the university could have profound meaning for the ordinary person, he wrote *Focusing* (1978) as a popular self-help book so that his discovery would not languish in academic circles. Perhaps his experience as a Jew escaping the Nazi occupation of Austria explains some piece of this great compassion.*

Peter Afford on Gene Gendlin

Gene Gendlin was one of two great minds I encountered in the 1980s when I was desperately seeking to understand myself and the whole thing about feelings that the humanistic psychology people kept going on about. The first was Carl Jung, whom I read avidly, then I came across Focusing and thereby found Gene. Both provided insight to last a lifetime. And Gene provided more than this, something to do inside myself that meant I found my feelings, along with my empathy for others' feelings. I learnt to feel and I learnt to listen. So simple, so important.

His was a great mind, with an originality of thinking that is very unusual. His ideas are not ones to excite you for a while and then you move on, they are ones that go on stimulating you years later. What's more, he taught us how to anchor conceptual thought in feeling rather than build intellectual edifices.

I met him a few times, and we were never entirely at ease with each other. But the groups that formed around him were full of heart and soul, of humility, humour and tolerance of personal hang-ups – unlike the humanistic groups that challenged you on your 'issues'. It might be ridiculous to say that Focusing is based on love – but it is! The warm feelings that flow amongst groups of Focusers are a wonderful experience, and testament to what Gene, with all his weird philosophy, was really about.

I often thought that Gene was really saying one thing. But that one thing has an infinite number of facets – we can harvest more any time we want. His spirit will live on, and who knows where it might lead us now?

Both the description of Gendlin and the reflection above by Peter Afford were taken from a website which was set up as a memorial to Gendlin after his death at the end of 2017 www.eugenegendlin.com

Welcoming Grief: in Ourselves and in Community

By Peter Gill



When we make that essential invitation in Focusing "what wants attention, or what wants to be known?" one of our regular visitors is grief – or more specifically grief that has not yet been welcomed. Focusing in a pair or alone provides us with a beautiful and safe way to meet and be with that as it creates a container in which to welcome grief... AND I have come to see that sometimes our grief needs a stronger and bigger container. In the words of Francis Weller, our grief needs a village. It needs community.

In his book 'The Wild Edge of Sorrow' Francis outlines the deep human need to share and be witnessed in our grief. Contrary to modern attitudes that say we need to grieve alone, he shares his discovery that for many indigenous cultures, grief is welcomed and 'processed' within and through community. Our present lack of welcoming and provision of safe spaces for grief within the community, can create numbness and disconnection. This is all the more important in these times of huge loss – of ecosystems, species, certainties and more.

From exploring this for a couple of years now, I have come to know grief as sacred – and as communal as much as individual. It's as if our bodies 'hold' our collective knowing of what is happening to our world. They hold and know our histories in some way. They hold the unacknowledged sorrows of our ancestors. These are big things to be with in Focusing. For me, finding a bigger container to welcome and express these feelings has been a huge relief. To use a Focusing term, something has been able to carry forward that was blocked before. A river that was wanting to flow but could not has now found its path – and mysteriously and beautifully, that path has often led me to a deep sense of connection and belonging.

If you want to know more about this approach to grief see: <https://www.livingfocusing.co.uk/grief.html>
To listen to Francis Weller talk about grief see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eal-4c92Mqo>



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 Peter Afford in the UK. Peter is a BFA mentor and Focusing Institute Coordinator offering practitioner and teacher training, and he is also qualified in Somatic Experiencing (SE). More recently he has been training in nature connection with Wildwise and is apprenticing in holding grief circles with Azul Valérie Thomé in Devon. Peter lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Photo by Peter Gill. For more of Peter's photos see www.transiencephotography.co.uk/index.html
[www.livingfocusing.co.uk](mailto:livingfocusing@fastmail.com) livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Also see editorial comment and poem on the next page...

Editor (HB): I was very pleased to be present for Peter's online webinar entitled 'Navigating Grief and the Sorrows of Our Time' which was very moving and also enriching. This webinar, was one from the International Focusing Institute's Focusing Highlights Series and was aired in December of last year. Particularly evocative, was the way Peter interspersed his presentation with poems, describing poetry as 'the language of the soul and body'; something not quite graspable but nevertheless profound. I have included one of Peter's chosen poems here:

Kindness

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes any sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and send you out in the day to mail letters and
purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
'It is I you have been looking for',
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Focusing in India

By Fiona Parr



For the last three years I have been blessed and privileged to be invited to teach Focusing at the Just Being Centre in Pune, India. I have found the whole experience to be very rewarding and enriching for me, and I am pleased to make a contribution to the work of taking Focusing to India. There are very few people that I am aware of who practise Focusing in India. If you know anyone, I would love to hear from you, and make contact.

My journey came about through a BFA member, Amanda Raine, who was the trailblazer. She taught Levels One and Two in South India, and one of the participants was Sandy Dias Andrade, who is the founder and director of Just Being. Sandy was just starting a major new two-year training for therapists, counselors and coaches, and people who work in the social sector. It is called 'Presence Oriented Psychotherapy', and is based on Mindfulness, with Focusing as a key component. Amanda contacted me and asked me if I would like to teach on this training, as she was not in position to do it. It took me all of five minutes to think about it, as we were chatting on the phone, for me to say yes!

The training explores three vital aspects of the therapeutic relationship: the therapist's Presence: the quality of embodied Presence by the therapist as a key ingredient for transformative change; also the relational space: bringing this quality of Presence into the therapeutic relationship; and the client's awareness: how to bring Mindfulness and Presence for the client. I teach Focusing Levels One and Two in four days on their first year, and for the second year, I have been supporting their research with Thinking at the Edge (TAE). I also teach Level 1 for people who are not on the training.



Retreat Centre

People ask me what it's like teaching Focusing in India. Is it any different to teaching in the West? There are similarities, and also differences. I was initially surprised to discover that everyone speaks English, as well as Hindi and also their local language. I have found the participants to be delightful and receptive to my teaching. They are mostly younger than me, and are enthusiastic. They are managing this intensive training at the same time as having demanding full time jobs, and some are also mothers and coping with the demands of a busy family life. I don't know how they do it. However, the course itself offers support though the Focusing and Mindfulness practices that they are learning and integrating into their lives.

I am very well looked after, and fetched and carried between where I am staying and the Just Being Centre for the training. I am glad about this because I could not manage the journey through the city on my own. The roads are teeming with people; cars, auto-rickshaws, thousands of scooters, and trucks, all weaving across lanes of traffic and hooting their horns. It's astonishing to me how it all works, especially crossing oncoming traffic to turn right. They just go, and it all seems to work out.



I stay with a delightful friend of the centre, who has become my dear friend also. She is a nutritionist by training, and I love Indian food. She kept coming up with new and delightful simple Indian dishes for me to try. Delicious! We spent the early evenings in meditation together, or with spicy chai and conversations, and walks around her leafy neighbourhood.

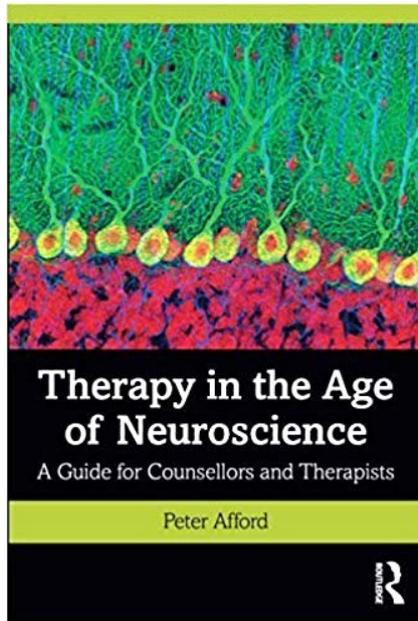
The centre itself is on the second floor of the building, surrounded by trees and other houses and flats. Noisy crows caw outside the open windows, sometimes perching on the window and looking in, and a kite brings its prey to eat on the tree. The temperature is warm, and we sit on the floor with back rests. In between the teaching sessions, I took a few days in the hills at an Ananda retreat centre, practising yoga and meditation and recharging my batteries. I am glad Amanda contacted me, and it shows what can happen if you are a BFA member!

Fiona Parr is based in Devon, and offers individual Focusing and Focusing-oriented Therapy sessions in person and online. She teaches the Focusing Skills Certificate course, and professional training to Practitioner and Teacher level, mostly online. She is a BFA Recognised Focusing Teacher and Mentor, and Certifying Coordinator. Fiona travels to India to teach Focusing and Thinking at the Edge (TAE) on a Presence oriented therapy training. Fiona is a member of BFA, and hosts a monthly Focusing practice group. She is an active member of the European Focusing Association (EFA), and she initiated a special interest group for Focusing teachers in Europe. www.fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk



'Therapy in the Age of Neuroscience'

by Peter Afford: A book review by Philippa Bayley



As a former neuroscientist and a Focuser, I was delighted to be asked to review a new book by UK therapist and Focusing practitioner Peter Afford – 'Therapy in the Age of Neuroscience'. With its gorgeous, multi-coloured front cover (a magnified picture of the cerebellum with its intricate, tree-like Purkinje neurons) it feels like an invitation into a rich, mysterious world.

The order of the words in the title is important – this is a book about the therapeutic process, seen in the context of the burgeoning (and often overwhelming) field of neuroscience. It's not, as Peter himself points out, a primer in neuroscience. If it was, you'd expect to find chapters on neuronal structure, how neurons fire, circuits and brain areas, learning and memory, etc. But as a reader you would have a long and fraught journey from those fundamentals to something that approaches an understanding of what happens in the therapy room. Instead, Peter starts from the opposite perspective, casting his chapters around themes such as relationships, emotions, stress, anxiety and depression, mental health – topics

that will be familiar and relevant gateways for counsellors and therapists into understanding the mind and its frailties.

As each topic is introduced, Peter builds convincing and well-evidenced linkages between the phenomena (e.g. the social brain) and current relevant insights from neuroscience. This is a heroic task in itself. The neuroscience literature is vast (a search for scientific papers in the field yields more than 300,000 results) and he has successfully identified, synthesised, distilled and presented the most relevant strands of thought and research to give us a rich contextual picture. This is all the more impressive as it is still rare for neuroscientists – even those with a strong psychological bent – to link their findings to the phenomena that show up in the therapy room. My sense is that Peter has walked a difficult road back and forth between his experiences as a therapist (and client) and the science of the brain. No doubt the material presented has been honed by the years of study and many in-person courses the author has delivered on the topic.

Engaging my more sceptical brain, I noticed Peter drawing heavily on a few names from neuroscience and found myself questioning whether the opinions cited reflected a widely-held view or something more niche or personal. I also wondered if narrowing the field of reference was a strategy to deal with the inevitable overload of information that would accompany researching a book of this breadth. This isn't a criticism, just a gentle nudge to any reader to remember that scientists always have their own world views, – the science is partial in its explanations and ever-changing. Indeed, according to the neuroscientist Olaf Sporns (cited in 'The Idea of the Brain' by Matthew Cobb), "Neuroscience still largely lacks organising principles or a theoretical framework for converting brain data into fundamental knowledge and understanding". The sophistication of the questions we can address, and the insights we can generate will almost inevitably grow over time, and may well turn some of our current understanding on its head. Hopefully, this will help to make neuroscience and therapy even more immediately relevant to each other.

Within the chapters I found fascinating nuggets and ideas that helped me to build a richer picture of what is happening in my own and others' brains. Peter introduces a nuanced view of how the left and right hemispheres function, as a co-operation between the 'foreground mind' (left) and the 'background bodymind' (right). This is so much more helpful, and honest, than the simplified descriptions often found in popular science of the analytical (left) brain and the dreamy, creative (right) brain. It also immediately

resonates with the embodied experience of Focusing. But Peter pulls no punches about the important contribution of both of these ways of thinking in the therapy room. Whether it's the foreground mind unpacking long-held but implicit feelings and memories, or the background bodymind paying attention to the sensations and feelings behind the words as the foreground mind tells a story... Both are absolutely necessary, and therapy requires both the therapist and the client to pay attention to the 'four minds in the room'.

One slight frustration for me with the chapter layout was the number of subsections (or sometimes sub-subsections) that left me slightly lost with respect to the train of thought and where we were headed. I felt myself wanting clearer titles for the sections to signpost me to what was coming. I'd suggest it's a book to read (and re-read) in good, long chunks, rather than in fragments of time (as my life with a toddler sometimes affords me!)

Overall Peter's style is warm and accessible, peppered with anecdotes about his own experiences from Focusing, and as therapist and client. I found it refreshing to be brought back to the real, lived experience of something like trauma, anxiety or depression, discussion of which could become overly abstract and academic without any first-person account. I wonder if, in a subsequent version of the book, Peter might find it helpful to create or draw on case studies to make the links to neuroscience more vivid and perhaps more immediately relevant for therapists.

Focusers will find a lot to enjoy (the book is even dedicated to the memory of Eugene Gendlin) and will likely appreciate the linkages to familiar concepts such as the felt sense and presence. I'm not familiar enough with different therapeutic approaches to know whether these would resonate with people from across the therapeutic spectrum, but certainly the call to engage the body and 'feel' is strong in therapy. As Peter says, "Let's...allow for disagreements without abandoning the conversation. And let's start with the big picture view before immersing ourselves in too much detail". This book is a great place to start.



Peter Afford has been practising 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

Philippa Bayley is a neuroscientist, research manager, artist and facilitator. She specialises in setting up conversations about issues that matter to people - whether about the newest developments in cyber-security research or people's personal experiences of bereavement and loss. She has worked in the US and the UK, in universities and in the private sector, and is about to embark on a new phase of her career. She loves Focusing and has found it an incredible support and source of guidance through some big changes. She lives with her partner and fiery young son in Bristol. pipbayley@googlemail.com



Practitioner Profile – Helen Bryant



Having had the great good fortune of finding Focusing some years ago, I am now very slowly and with not a little resistance, starting and restarting to begin to open to its simple but profound treasures.

I have to thank the great god Amazon for introducing me to Gendlin's book on dreams whilst I was searching for Jung on the same subject. Finding Gendlin's approach fascinating and hopeful, I researched the Focusing Institute, almost dismissing it as being solely American. Imagine my delight at finding Focusing had a British 'arm' and thus began my study by way of the skills course with Fiona Parr and, through that, the birth of a now long-standing and dearly loved group of fellow students from the course.

The Practitioner Training, with Fiona and Kay Hoffmann, was undertaken as a means to study Focusing further. I found it stimulating and extremely challenging; several times being ready to throw in the towel because I felt not up to the task. Still I finally 'finished' having now amassed what I call a range of tools collected along the way. These many and varied 'helpers', both physical and metaphysical, have been gleaned from authors, poets and teachers of different schools. (I do sometimes like to imagine life as a quest with these trusty tools in my quiver, to be brought out as required!)

I have very recently started introducing Focusing to a group in Tavistock. My hope is that the participants will find it a useful experience, but alongside that, in equal measure, is the aim is to help embed my own practice and learning. To me, teaching Focusing in a group setting is a possible way of us sharing a way of being together that is a little kinder and which has the potential to permeate out. It would be so easy to despair about the state of the world, but I genuinely believe that Focusing may be one of myriad paths to something David Whyte calls more 'hospitable', emerging.

Find that far inward symmetry
to all outward appearances, apprentice
yourself to yourself, begin to welcome back
all you sent away, be a new annunciation,
make yourself a door through which
to be hospitable, even to the stranger in you.
David Whyte

Here are a few tools that I find useful:

- Cultivating 'Beginner's Mind' over and over will help when struggling.
- Commitment to a daily practice of some sort in order to reconnect to the process does help.
- Expect a certain heightened sensitivity/disturbance every day and try not to get too paranoid at what appears on this moment's stage!
- As far as possible, and with a great deal of compassionate kindness, connect to some sense of a growing capacity for irony/playfulness/humour/joy even, about your very vulnerable, human condition
- You will frequently forget you ever knew there was a possibility of a 'process' but at some point you will remember

Life is both painful and beautiful as well as exceedingly mysterious. It is all the more so when we can share the experience of living, with each other and as equals.

That we are here is a huge affirmation: somehow life needed us and wanted us to be. To sense and trust this primeval acceptance can open a vast spring of trust within the heart. It can free us and open up our lives to become voyages of discovery, creativity and compassion. *John O'Donohue*

Helen Bryant is a Focusing Practitioner living in Tavistock, Devon. Apart from Focusing, she enjoys giving Reflexology and Reiki. But best of all she likes being out on Dartmoor walking or just looking. The photograph of the fungus at the beginning of this profile was taken on a surprisingly beautiful clear sunny day on the moor!
treadlightlyreflexology@gmail.com



Forthcoming Workshops & Events

March & April 2020

Introduction to Focusing Day 2 workshop with Suzi Mackenzie
Brighton. 1st March. www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

Practical Session on Focusing and Active Listening with David Garlovsky
Sheffield. 11th March. 5.45—7.45. <http://solar-active.com/> David@solar-active.com

Applied Focusing (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr
Devon (Liverton). 14th/15th March. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

An Introduction to Thinking at the Edge . Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr
Bristol. 21st/22nd March. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

Applied Focusing (BFA Skills Certificate Level 5) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr
Online. Thursdays 2nd—30th April. fionaparr-focusing.co.uk fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk

The Gifts of the Body in Focusing and Listening 3-day residential workshop with Kay Hoffmann
Warwickshire (Nuneaton) 3rd—5th April. kayhoffmann1@gmail.com

No Holding Back 12 week online Course with Peter Gill
Online. Starting 22nd April. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Focusing and Dreams A weekend workshop with Peter Afford
London (Clapham) 25th/26th April. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

May & June 2020

Experiencing and the Body (BFA Skills Certificate Level 3) A weekend with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 16th/17th May. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

Creativity and Values into Action (BFA Skills Certificate Course) with Suzi MacKenzie
Brighton. 23rd/24th May, www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

Introductory Focusing Workshop One day workshop with Rob Gibbs
London. 31st May. <https://robgibbscoaching.co.uk> robgibbscoaching@gmail.com

The Path of the Focusing Practitioner Retreat with Kay Hoffmann
Warwickshire (Nuneaton) . 5th—8th June. kayhoffmann1@gmail.com

Introduction to Focusing with Suzi MacKenzie
Brighton. 6th June. www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training suzimac55@hotmail.com

July & August 2020

Thinking with the Felt Sense. A weekend workshop with Peter Afford
London (Clapham). 4th/5th July. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

A Companion on the Journey. Workshop 2 of the Focusing Skills Course with Peter Gill
Bristol. 4th/5th July. www.livingfocusing.co.uk livingfocusing@fastmail.com

Creativity and Criticism. Workshop 4 of the Focusing Skills course with Peter Afford
London (Clapham) 25th/26th July. www.focusing.co.uk peter@focusing.co.uk

Forthcoming Events Highlights

We are pleased to pass on the following information from Sara Bradley about her new course training therapists and Focusing practitioners in Focusing with children. Dates for this course are not yet available.

Children Focusing Training

BFA member Sara Bradley will soon be offering Children Focusing training courses (60 hours). These courses will be certified by the International Focusing Institute (for participants who have already achieved their Focusing Practitioner/ Focusing Professional/ Focusing-Oriented Therapist/ Focusing Teacher/ Focusing Trainer certificate, either from BFA or TIFI).

Sara completed her Counselling MA with a research study on 'Focusing with Children in Schools'. Since then she has become a certified Children Focusing Trainer having completed her training in the Netherlands with Rene Veugelers and Harriet Teeuw. She is a Co-ordinator in Training (CiT) at the International Focusing Institute. Sara has lots of experience of working in a Children Focusing way with both adult and child clients as a counsellor. She has spoken at the BACP CYP/F conference recently on Children Focusing and has written a chapter on Children Focusing in the new '*Senses of Focusing*' book edited by Judy Moore and Nikos Kypriotakis (*soon to be published*). Sara has experience of delivering Children Focusing workshops to CAMHS practitioners in Norfolk and wants to share her trainings and workshops to those outside of Norfolk who are interested in this dynamic and powerful way of working therapeutically with children (and adults).

Sara's training course takes place over five weekends in Norwich. She also offers one-day workshops. Dates are to be confirmed. For more information see www.inner-focus.co.uk

Ed. Please send us some information if you are planning to put on a new type of Focusing course or are starting a new Focusing group and we'll include it in the next Newsletter

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 July 2020.

The deadline for receiving contributions for this issue is **31st May 2020**.