



# British Focusing Association NEWSLETTER

Issue 16: November 2019



## CONTENTS

Page No.

Editorial .....	2
The BFA Focusing Camp in Suffolk: A Personal Experience <i>by Vicki Thomas</i> .....	3
BFA Annual Gathering and General Meeting: Report from the Sofa <i>by Carolann Samuels and Helen Bower</i> .....	7
Us-ness: Describing the Indescribable <i>by Clare Myatt</i> .....	9
Presence Meets 'Ego' <i>by Ann Weiser Cornell</i> .....	11
Focusing at Boomtown Fair: August 2019 <i>by Ella Higgs</i> .....	13
Is it OK to tell a story in Focusing? <i>by Peter Gill</i> .....	15
Stories about stories (poem and quotes) <i>by Gordon Adam</i> .....	16
Practitioner Profile <i>by Ruth Friedman</i> .....	17
Workshops, Events, & Groups Listing .....	18
Focusing Resources & Information .....	20

# From the Editor

Gordon Adam



Although, at 20 pages, this is the shortest newsletter I've produced (or co-produced) in the last 3 years, it feels like there is a lot in it! There are personal accounts of three quite different Focusing events that have taken place since the last issue: Ella Higgs' account of bringing Focusing to the Boomtown Fair with Kay Hoffmann; Vicki Thomas' review of her experience at the third BFA Focusing Camp in Suffolk; and a report from the recent BFA Annual Gathering from Carolann Samuels and Helen Bower. It's great to hear about different gatherings that bring people together in a Focusing way!

The 'golden oldie' in this issue is the article 'Presence Meets Ego' by Ann Weiser Cornell from 2009. I think this piece clearly and helpfully challenges the notion that exists in some 'spiritual' circles that the ego is 'bad' and needs to be ignored, overcome or even destroyed! I'm pleased to include something by Ann in the newsletter, and I hope to include other articles by her in future, especially in the light of receiving "blanket permission forever" to reprint any of her articles that appeared in Focusing Connection!

In his piece 'Is it OK to tell a story in Focusing?' Peter Gill challenges another notion that some Focusers harbour – that telling stories in Focusing is 'bad' and should be avoided. There is a DVD available titled 'Working with a Storytelling Client' by Ann Weiser Cornell – here is an excerpt from its cover description: *"Ann Weiser Cornell facilitates Patrick, a man working with issues of anger, through a Focusing process in which he moves from recounting events in his life (telling stories) into a deeper contact with himself, a place from which life-forward movement becomes possible."*

In this case Patrick's 'storytelling' is unhelpful, until he finally manages to 'drop' below the story to a deeper place inside. I think that telling a story in Focusing is fine, and may in some cases be necessary, provided there is a willingness to access the meaning (or 'felt sense') that the story holds for the teller – then the story acts as a sort of doorway into a deeper inner place. The companion can play an important role in this movement as in the situation of the DVD.

And there is even more in this newsletter, including an original article by Clare Myatt exploring her insight about the supportive and enabling quality of 'us-ness' in therapy, and a practitioner profile by Ruth Friedman from Belgium. I hope you enjoy reading it!

[www.focusing.org.uk/Gordon-Adam](http://www.focusing.org.uk/Gordon-Adam) [gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gordonadam@blueyonder.co.uk)

*Cover photo from BFA Summer Focusing Camp by Tom Crews*

## *Credits*

Design & Layout: Gordon Adam

Photographs: Tom Crews (cover), MaryLouise Morris, Vicki Thomas, Ella Higgs

Proof Reading: Caroline Redmond, Carolann Samuels

Website: Peter Gill

Distribution: Mailchimp, Gordon Adam

# The Third BFA Focusing Camp in Sunny Suffolk: A Personal Experience

By Vicki Thomas



I had only been doing Focusing for two months when I came to last year's Focusing Camp in Gloucestershire, having done a couple of introductory weekends with Peter Gill. I knew straight away that this was the process for me and I'm now passionate about it! I loved last year's camp – the chance to do Focusing every day with partners from all over the country, to explore different aspects of Focusing with a big choice of daily workshops and, very importantly, to experience a real sense of community and a way of connecting with others in a deeper way.

So there was no way I was going to miss this year's camp! And it was just as wonderful – perhaps in some ways more so because of the venue which suited us so well and the fantastic weather. It was held in Ringsfield Hall – a rambling, welcoming, homely and comfortable Victorian House (see photos of inside and outside house) a few miles from Beccles on the Norfolk/Suffolk border. It is run as a children's eco-centre for outdoor learning and nature connection so there are great facilities such as fifteen acres of woodland, areas for camp fires, various hideaway spaces and habitats including a straw bale house, an 'art barn', and a chapel.

Although Suffolk might seem a long way for many people, those who came from as far as Bradford in the north and Bristol in the west did not find it too onerous to come by car-share or train. Everyone agreed that the venue and the camp made up for the longer journey.



There were 30 of us – some camping and many staying in the house. It was the hot week after the late August Bank Holiday so almost all the Focusing sessions and many of the workshops were outside. I found a secluded 'safe' place in the middle of the wood which became my Focusing spot. It was so lovely to Focus surrounded by nature and to sense the connection with the breeze and the trees...We had a lovely big marquee for group meetings and workshops – it looked a bit bare at first but was transformed quickly with scarves and bunting.

Catherine, MaryLouise and Isla had bravely taken on the organizing and leading of the camp from three others who had done such a good job for the last two years. They led with a light and intuitive touch which enabled the camp to be co-created in a flowing and harmonious way.

The basic framework was the same as previous years as this had worked so well: yoga or qi-gong before breakfast, followed by assisting with tasks such as chopping veggies and cleaning up (all of which help you to feel part of the community), also two sessions of Focusing and two workshops each day with two hours of free time after lunch for relaxing, resting or walking. There were post-supper activities such as singing, dancing or talks. Dancing was a particular hit and we danced our socks off on two nights with music from DJs Gordon and Tom. We also had some singing and story-telling around a camp-fire one night.

I was aware that 'feeling into' what felt right pervaded the whole camp both on a collective and individual basis. One day 'something in me' just felt like I needed a break from the intensity that Focusing can bring, so I went for a walk and met a fellow 'camper' on the road. We walked and talked companionably together for an hour – this brought a sense warmth, connection, and space.

This way of 'felt-sensing' also applied to finding a Focusing partner. At the end of each morning's group meeting, it was time to find a partner for the Focusing session. This can be a rather awkward time and can sometimes bring up feelings for me such as 'why does no one seem to want to Focus with me?' or 'no-one's asked me to Focus yet – I always do the asking'. But I was able to just notice these feelings as they arose and my experience was that I always ended up with the 'right' partner. And no one was ever left without one! One of the organizers was outside the marquee by a large tree to make sure that everyone had a partner – so there was a sense of being taken care of.

Of course in a camp like this with so many personalities and dynamics, there are always challenges and triggers. I personally found that sometimes I needed to share some of this by having a 'Focusing chat' with my room-mate – just ten minutes helped a lot! We also had small 'home group' meetings each day which were a safe and held place to share our experiences.



The vegetarian food was really tasty and nutritious (with vegan options and Caroline the cook, who was with us for the second year, emanated such a lovely warm and generous feeling in the kitchen and this came through in the food! Caroline had a wonderful assistant/participant in Andy who worked so hard. She was most impressed with the huge larder which must have been there since the Victorian days! There was a lovely light, glass conservatory to eat in and also tables outside.

Having two workshop slots each day (with a variety of workshop options in each) added a rich dimension to the camp. It was interesting and informative to learn about different aspects and types of Focusing. Several people had offered workshops before the camp but it was only in the daily group meetings that we used our 'felt-sense' to see which workshops were to happen that day – and this really worked well. I would have liked to have done *all* of the workshops but you couldn't do everything! I particularly enjoyed these:

- A Shamanic guided journey to find our 'power animal/guide' (mine was an unexpected but very apt and helpful one!)
- Attachment and issues relating to safety and fine attunement – a personal journey which was very moving and enlightening,
- Finding the 'We space' through Relational Wholebody Focusing – something I'd never done before which brings a more expansive way of connecting.
- Relational Focusing – being with a partner and sharing what comes up. This really touches on my yearning for bringing the sensitive and heartfelt communication that we experience in a Focusing session into relating with friends and loved ones.
- There was also a clowning workshop with Catherine which was such a hit last year and involved spontaneous, playful, improvising type exercises – guaranteed to loosen you up and laugh a lot!

With this in mind, I noticed how much laughter there was on the camp, particularly as we all got to know each other. I hope you enjoy the irreverent 'Ode to Focusing' poem I wrote last year, which follows this review. This went down particularly well in the closing circle – it's good not to take Focusing and life *too* seriously!

I have heard from many participants that the Camp was a really meaningful and empowering experience and that it has been a catalyst for change both personally and in the local communities we live in. Having had such a sense of community in the camp, we have been inspired here in Bristol to build on that. We now have a new monthly evening Focusing group, as well as the daytime one on a Sunday; there is a new WhatsApp group for arranging Focusing partners; a new women's support circle; and our first Bristol area self-led long weekend Focusing retreat to be held in Wales in November. I feel so grateful to be part of this growing community and it has really given me a sense of support and belonging. I've also heard that the London and Brighton groups are getting together more now. There is a growing sense that Focusing is slowly spreading – into a world where this deep and body-centred approach is so very much needed.

So thanks to the organizers, to Ringsfield Hall and to all the participants for a wonderful camp. I'm very happy to say that the venue has already been provisionally booked for next year – the dates, to be confirmed, are 15-18<sup>th</sup> August. See you there!



## ALL FOCUSED OUT!

*(An Ode to Focusing)*

Focusing's great!  
You tune into yourself...  
You may even find out  
Why you're still on the shelf...

This part's hot  
This part's cold  
This one's terrified  
Of getting old

Oh... this one down here  
Feels really murky  
And something inside me  
Is feeling absurd  
I'm getting an image...  
Oh! It's a great big fat turd!

This wee part of me  
Feels very unsure  
So it wants you to listen  
From OUTSIDE the door!

Blimey this Focusing's pretty intense  
Now it feels clear, now it's so dense  
I'm asking this part of me  
If it wants me to stay –  
“No! Fuck off!” it says, “and please go away!”

All this aside, Focusing's brilliant for me  
It really has given me an amazing key  
So... I'll Focus and Focus  
Until I am dead;  
Then, if I'm lucky –  
I'll Focus in heaven instead!

*Vicki Thomas (August 2018)*

### **Vicki Thomas**

*I came across Focusing 15 months ago and it has made a huge difference to my life – it is really helping and deepening my healing process. It has brought me a whole new group of conscious and sensitive friends here in Bristol, and a new way of working with people as I'm now training to be a Focusing Practitioner with Peter Gill. I have been teaching Mindfulness and Compassion skills for the last 5 years and Mindfulness was really instrumental in helping me recover from depression. Focusing is now enabling me to go deeper into the body's wisdom to heal a lot of old patterns and grief held in the body. I have regular Focusing partners, am helping to initiate a women's support group, and feel very blessed to be part of a growing community of Focusing folk in Bristol. [vickithomas@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vickithomas@blueyonder.co.uk)*



# BFA Annual Gathering and Annual General Meeting: Report from the Sofa

By Carolann Samuels and Helen Bower

The British Focusing Association Annual Gathering is an opportunity for members to meet, share Focusing, peer consultative support, relax, talk about Focusing, and then at the end of the weekend, attend the AGM. Ten BFA members met at Shallowford House in Staffordshire from 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October for this year's gathering. The AGM occupies just two hours of the weekend, but discussions around agenda items are occasionally raised on other days. The gathering is a rare opportunity for Focusers from around Britain to meet in person to discuss ideas and issues that help to keep our Association alive.

Shallowford House catered for us extremely well: we received a warm welcome; the bedrooms were comfortable; meals were plentiful and nourishing; and there were more than enough meeting rooms and lounges in which to spread ourselves around. The grounds were a joy to explore with late flowering roses, ponds, resident chickens, ducks, peacocks and the new additions of two alpacas.

Over the long weekend we enjoyed plenty of time for Focusing-related activities, including a discussion around our Operational Philosophy; an exploration of Focusing and Spirituality led by Fiona; and an interactive session on Focusing with Children led by Sara Bradley, a new member, which is part of her professional work. These were enjoyable and inspiring sessions, prompting discussion over meal tables. In the afternoons we walked and in the evenings it was time for some belly laughs as we played board games and exposed our silly sides.

We owe huge thanks to the placeholders who have held BFA safely during the past year. Elizabeth Smith has taken care of all membership issues for the past seven years but is now passing this on. We thank her very deeply for her work behind the scenes for so long. Camilla Sim has looked after the finances for two years and agreed to continue for another year. Gordon Adam has produced the newsletter for the last three years (two of those with Pamela Carr as co-editor) and will continue to act as newsletter editor for the next year at least. A team continues to midwife our new website, which will be online soon.

All **placeholder posts** have been filled for the coming year, with space for more member support in all areas, especially as Newsletter co-editors for Gordon. Contact details for placeholders are on the existing website [focusing.org.uk/members-directory](http://focusing.org.uk/members-directory).

**Sofa:** Kay Hoffmann and Peter Gill

**Membership Secretary:** Suzi Mackenzie

**Treasurer & Finances:** Camilla Sim

**Wellbeing, Buddying & Networks:** Kay Hoffmann

**Newsletter:** Gordon Adam

**Website:** Peter Gill

**Outreach & Research:** Helen Bower

Outreach and Research is a new group with two aims: to develop resources for people who want to offer free Focusing, teaching and listening posts at festivals and events; and a hub to support more evidence-based research into Focusing.

Wellbeing, Buddying & BFA Networks is a group to support members in their Focusing endeavours and regional networks. For example, the group are planning to support discussion, share information and gather ideas and energy for regional groups prior to the next AGM.

Thank you to all those who have taken on placeholder and supporting roles for the coming year. As well as the placeholders listed above this includes, amongst others, Fiona Parr, Carolann Samuels, Paula Newman, David Garlovsky, Ildiko Davis, Karunamati and Susan Jordan.

Our AGM was held in a Focusing way, with pauses between agenda items, and time to question and Focus on topics before making decisions – especially those which may affect other members. We only passed decisions if they had the full support of the meeting – in the manner proposed by the founding members and as written into our Operational Philosophy.

We experimented with a method of Focusing-oriented meetings used at the 'Changes' groups in the 1970s (described by Kathy McGuire). This was suggested by David Garlovsky, who was able to share his personal experiences of groups and training with Gendlin. We used it during a discussion about finances and raising the fees. We all agreed the methods were helpful. To quote Kathy McGuire:

*"Feelings and intuitions can be valuable contributions to decision-making at task-oriented group meetings: that to stay on a completely business-like, logical level can miss a lot of creative input and can contribute to the building of tensions which finally explode. It turns out that one person's scared feeling about a decision, if given space to be heard, can lead to a new insight for the whole group; that someone's very vague, hard-to-say intuition can turn out to be a creative input that the more logical mode of discussion would miss. ...we tried to develop some rules for meetings which spot the punishing responses and provide, instead, an encouraging, warm way of response."*

David has written more about this on his website and has a summary which you can find at: <http://focusing.solar-active.com/changes-support-guide-number-1/>, and a link to "The Changes Book: A Handbook for Empathic Listening, Experiential Focusing, and Therapeutic Community".

Something special happens when Focusers get together in this way. True and deep listening can happen in our conversations and in our actions. We are not perfect people, and misunderstandings happen; tensions arise, but we aim to practise what Eugene Gendlin taught us to find out what we already deeply know. This quotation of his seems particularly relevant:

*"What is true is already so. Owning up to it doesn't make it worse. Not being open about it doesn't make it go away. And because it's true, it is what is there to be interacted with. Anything untrue isn't there to be lived. People can stand what is true, for they are already enduring it".*

We felt the whole weekend was truly a collaborative experience, with everyone contributing and looking out for each other, making suggestions, and listening carefully. We think all who attended came away feeling nourished and respected.

This is the last Sofa Report from Helen and Carolann, and as we hand over to Kay and Peter, we would like to express huge thanks to many BFA members. We were both quite new to the BFA when we began two years ago, and many members have offered us considerable support and guidance, especially our mentor, Fiona Parr. She has always been quick to help if we weren't sure how to continue the very special way that the BFA works, and to be a good Listener. And we have learned that you only have to ask the membership for support and it's there. Thank you to you all.



**Carolann Samuels** teaches Focusing 1:1 and in small groups in Kent. She incorporates Focusing into her own Yoga practice and teaching and each is enriched by the other. [www.carolannsamuels.co.uk](http://www.carolannsamuels.co.uk) [csamuels@carolannsamuels.co.uk](mailto:csamuels@carolannsamuels.co.uk)

**Helen Bower** is a BFA Focusing practitioner. She works as a work-based trainer in the care sector and lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire. [helengoeswalkabout@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helengoeswalkabout@yahoo.co.uk)



# Us-ness: Describing the Indescribable

By Clare Myatt

Having given voice to my experience of agape in *Love & Imperfection: A Therapist's Story*, something I'm going to call *us-ness* has now presented itself for exploration. Related to agape or the we-space? Yes, yet somehow different. Maybe I've simply stumbled upon something with which everyone else is familiar (has it really taken me so many decades?) Perhaps it really is as precious as it feels.

Especially in Focusing sessions (although not limited to them), the tantalising, occasional sense of *us-ness* arrives. It's a space where my Focusing partner and I are as one. Not merged you understand, or any other kind of inappropriate coupling, but as one. We blend, coalesce.

I wonder how to explain such a deep felt sense? For if I attempt to imagine the last time I was on a sandy beach, can I feel the sand between my toes? The sharp cold of a wave breaking over my bare foot? Can I smell the salty sea air? The resounding answer is "no, not really." I can picture the scene, recall what I remember of sand between my toes, but I can't really recapture the feelings. And so I feel daunted in my attempt to explain, to recapture, how this *us-ness* feels. But by describing part of my process of getting to *us-ness*, through exploring experiences of personal safety in both myself and in a journey with a client, perhaps I can reach some semblance of what I mean.



Many moons ago I was talking to my therapist about the forever search for love, having spent much of my life looking for it in all the wrong places. She posed a simple question. How was the moon? How was it to live on the moon? I was perplexed. I'd never been, so how could I know? And that was exactly her point, although I have to admit I didn't quite get it at the time. How could I know love when I hadn't experienced it yet? Soon after that, my Somatics & Trauma teacher asserted that we are each responsible for generating our own safety. Another furrowed brow – what did she mean? Avoiding obvious danger like a war zone was easy to comprehend. But she meant something quite different. She could generate her own sense of safety, no matter the circumstances. I was astonished. This embodied state was so unrelated to my own experience that she might have been describing owning an extra limb.

Thousands of hours later, sitting with clients and as client myself, a glimmering of what these wise women were alluding to emerged from the fog. Something had to come *before* self-generating safety, and I hadn't been blessed with this gift while growing up.

A client came to see me "on a break" from her therapist (which she hadn't told me) and things unfolded from there. She had experienced deep trauma from day one. Her sole aim was to survive childhood and escape as soon as possible, and that she did, without looking back.

I reflected on one of the developmental goals of early childhood she had clearly missed: *attachment*. If this concept is new to you, imagine a little one being with mum, making eye contact, then spotting something across the room which looks inviting. He toddles off to explore, discovers something new and exciting, and then looks back to check in with mum. Did she see? Is she proud? Equally excited? Is she still there to welcome him back and celebrate his foray? If the answer is a resounding yes, repetitively, this fortunate child is likely to develop what we call a *secure attachment*. If the answer is a thumping no, repeatedly, this child is likely to develop an *insecure attachment*. Which means he could become clingy, cease adventuring, feel anxious, even unloved, maybe other responses, depending on the makeup of the child and their environment.

Once I discovered I was Therapist Two, I knew to tread extraordinarily carefully given her desire to bail on Therapist One to work with me. Having quit her family without looking back in similar fashion, an opportunity to address some of those early 'lack of attachment' issues presented itself. Returning to Therapist One to process her desire to leave after five years of therapy seemed of the essence. In navigating a possible ending, however difficult, she would be confronting the consequences of her early lack of attachment and how it was handled. I found myself explaining the theory of secure/insecure attachment in the hope she would see that quitting Therapist One perpetuated a pattern which didn't serve her.

I hoped that returning to her first therapist would provide an opening to healing that early insecure attachment. In turn this would allow her the very intimacy she craved. And how we ended would also be influential. Would I simply be another rejecting person in her life? Could she depart with understanding, dignity and curiosity? I hope that's what happened and, of course, with her departure I'm unlikely to ever know.

After supervision and reflection time I believe there was nothing, absolutely nothing, I could have done to give her a felt sense of safety, the potential reward of returning to Therapist One. I explained the best way I could, but no amount of theory or intellectual understanding would be as beneficial as actually feeling it. Could my past therapists and teachers have revealed the profound experience of self-generated safety? No. Not a day sooner, let alone twenty years ago. I simply wasn't ready. A piece was missing. Until a recent portal.

Having not met with my therapist Alan for three weeks because of some scheduling issues on my side, I knew we would have one session and then he would be away for the next three weeks. I approached our time together with some trepidation, knowing that I could be jolly and bright about it, or I could tell the truth about how I felt. And together, through me being brave and him creating a gentle inviting space, we explored these daunting depths.

In the ensuing blissful space Focusing provides, I discovered "a knowing" that even without contact, he was still there. If need be, I could have reached out for reassurance, but I didn't need to. I was astonished. We persevered with the experience of it rather than the tempting intellectualisation. When I paused to be in the felt sense, I recognised that this was how secure attachment felt. And with that came the possibility of self-generating safety. A big *aha* moment.

And now for the final piece of the jigsaw. This isn't just about me. I discovered there is something about self-generating safety that applies both to me as client, and to Alan as a Focusing oriented therapist. Being seasoned and wise, someone who continues to do his own healing work, he is willing to be vulnerable like the *shaky being* Gene Gendlin describes. He is able to plumb the depths, offering a safe space for me to explore, for me to go away and come back again. And in some way, for him to do the same with me. We are building trust together, not simply me with him, but also him with me. As a result the presence we offer one another simply has a unique quality. I'm clear, in fact we're both clear, that our experience is like no other. It's fundamentally healing. I know I'm not his only client, but there's something about how *he* shows up that allows me to show up with similar vulnerability. Together we create us-ness.

I think this is the essence of Focusing. Huh, now I get it...



**Clare Myatt, LL.B., M.A.**, is an experienced clinician using the lens of somatics/embodiment to inform her integrative therapeutic-coaching. Clare has degrees in law and psychology, was licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist in California (1991), certified as a Master Somatic Coach by Strozzi Institute (2001) and is a member of the BACP and Association for Coaching. She was certified as a Focusing Practitioner in 2018 and has just published her first book *Love & Imperfection: a therapist's story, to positive and encouraging reviews*. Clare maintains a coaching practice in London and works with clients internationally via the web.

[www.claremyatt.co.uk](http://www.claremyatt.co.uk) [clare@claremyatt.co.uk](mailto:clare@claremyatt.co.uk)

# Presence Meets 'Ego'

By Ann Weiser Cornell

What is 'ego'? Is 'ego' something bad that should be eliminated? I'm hearing this question a lot these days, so I decided to do some research.

I discovered that there are two very different definitions of 'ego.' The Freudian term 'ego' refers to "the organized part of the personality structure" (according to Wikipedia) which includes conscious awareness. Then there is the Buddhist ego, which seems to be what my questioners are wondering about. "Ego, in the Buddhist sense, is quite different from the Freudian ego. The Buddhist ego is a collection of mental events..." (from 'An Overview of Buddhism' by Mike Butler)

I found a number of writings in which 'ego' in the Buddhist sense is treated quite negatively. The message is that this is something you'd be better not to have. For example: "The deepest meaning of ignorance is the believing in, identifying with and clinging to the ego, which as we have seen, is nothing but an illusive mental phenomenon." (*Ego and Desire* [www.mathri.com](http://www.mathri.com))

Eckhart Tolle is one of these writers. In his book *A New Earth* he writes:

"The ego tends to equate having with Being: I have, therefore I am. And the more I have, the more I am. The ego lives through comparison. ... The extent of the ego's inability to recognize itself and see what it is doing is staggering and unbelievable."

So, according to these systems, there is something called 'the ego'—and it is spoken of with such disdain and contempt that one naturally concludes 'the ego' is bad and should be eliminated.

## A Process, not an Entity

Now, if you read these writers carefully, you see that none of them actually advocate saying to a part of one's self, "Bad ego! Go away!" Buddhism has an eightfold path that involves building up positive practices such as right view, right intention, and so on. Tolle recommends an awareness process that emphasizes the present moment. (And he says, for example, "There is nothing you can *do* to become free of the ego.")

So why is it that when we read these writers we have the strong tendency to treat a part of ourselves as bad and assume that trying to eliminate it would be a good idea? I believe it has to do with the labeling process itself. What is essentially a process has been given a name—a noun, a label. Add the contemptuous tone, and you have a classic 'exiling' of an aspect of self.

If the problem is labeling, then what is the solution? I'd say we need to shift our language—and the new language brings with it a shift in how we understand, treat, and interact with the phenomenon in question. Rather than saying, "My ego says..." or "That's just my ego wanting that," let's say instead: "Something in me says..." or "Something in me wants..." By saying it this way, we begin to get curious about what is going on with *it*, from its point of view. We take the first step toward an inner relationship that can lead to its transformation.

And if there is some part of us that has an objection to doing that, we can turn with curiosity toward that as well. We may discover that a part of us doesn't want us to be curious and compassionate toward that part called 'ego' because it holds the belief that the 'ego' part is incorrigibly, unchangeably bad and wrong. I can't help but notice how alike that is to some social and political beliefs: "Don't even talk to that person (or that type of person) because they are [LABEL]." Thus we stay stuck, inwardly and outwardly as well.

## Fear and 'Ego'

I remember hearing a noted New Age author being interviewed on the radio. She said, "Fear is the ego's way of keeping us small." From my way of thinking, that sentence contains assumptions that are unlikely to contribute to transformation. In other words: when you see the world that way, you stay stuck.

How remarkably everything shifts if, instead of saying "fear," we say, "Something in me is afraid." Then we start to get curious about what would happen if we get to know it (this *something*) better. The same

kind of shift happens when we treat 'ego' as a process rather than an entity. "Something in me seems to want to keep something in me small." How interesting! I wonder what's going on for it that it would want to do that. (And I won't find out by reading books or listening to lectures about 'ego.' I have to go inside and invite this part into a conversation where I will be the listener... because I don't know in advance what the answer will be.)

### **Presence and 'Ego'**

Presence, or Self-in-Presence as Barbara McGavin and I are now calling it, is the embodied ability to be in compassionate, curious company with whatever arises in us. 'Whatever arises' includes what is called 'ego.' As Self-in-Presence we are not judging as bad or good, not evaluating, not labeling. Judging, evaluating, and labeling are 'partial-self' experiences that perpetuate the struggle and therefore the stuckness. As Eugene Gendlin puts it, "We think we make ourselves good by not allowing the feeling of our negative ways. But that just keeps them static, the same from year to year." (*Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, p. 178)

When we're identified with a part of ourselves that feels the need to judge and label and eliminate other parts, then we are stuck. Tragically, we are behaving in a way that is intended to save us but will not succeed.

Please understand: I am not saying that Buddhism leads to being stuck! Our ways of misunderstanding or misapplying it seem to be the problem. There may also be problems with some ways that it is taught, but that is not for me to say. Here is what I do know: Any inner aspect of experience is on our side, trying to help us, no matter how negative it may seem and even be in its current behavior. This includes what is called 'ego,' what is called 'critic' and what is called 'mind.' It is in the compassionate company of Self-in-Presence that the life-forward energy of any part of us can be tapped into and carried forward.

*This article originally appeared in the January 2009 issue of 'The Focusing Connection' and appears here with Ann's permission.*

**Ann Weiser Cornell** is an internationally known author and psychology educator who has been working with the Focusing process since she learned it in 1972 from its originator, Eugene Gendlin. As the CEO of Focusing Resources, she has taught in twenty countries around the world for more than thirty-five years, as well as online. She is the co-creator (with Barbara McGavin) of Inner Relationship Focusing and Untangling™. Her books include: 'The Radical Acceptance of Everything' and 'Presence: A Guide to Transforming Your Most Challenging Emotions'.  
[www.focusingresources.com](http://www.focusingresources.com) [ann@focusingresources.com](mailto:ann@focusingresources.com)



# Focusing at Boomtown Fair: August 2019

By Ella Higgs

When I received the call from Kay Hoffmann, my Focusing teacher and friend, I felt SO excited! She was going to Boomtown – a huge 5-day festival near Winchester – to do an introductory Focusing workshop, and had invited me along!

What a curious and exciting context to introduce people to Focusing in. In many ways a festival is perfect for exploring Focusing – it's an environment where people are often far more open to listening to and following any inner curiosity or direction. But of course, part of me was wondering how people would respond in an environment often akin to partying and excess too, where some people go to escape their inner and outer reality rather than let it be just as it is! Who knows!



*Boomtown by night*

The atmosphere at the festival was incredible – a full sensory experience everywhere you turned!! And a real energy of fun and connection. Meeting interesting people, immersing in wonderful music, in awe of the breath-taking set up that the organisers must have worked so hard to create. From dancing in the forest to walking through huge city-like structures, there really were endless wonders to explore!

So the Saturday came. Most in attendance so far knowing only the title of the workshop: 'Coming home to ourselves'. About 20 of us sat round inside a tepee, snuggled with cushions and blankets, the tent billowing loudly and the distant beats of music floating around. After a warm welcome and introduction, the workshop began with a short description of Focusing. A natural human skill – a simple way of coming home to ourselves, in a deeply nourishing, life-giving way. We then listened to Kay share a beautiful quote from Thich Nhat Hanh:

*"Go back and take care of yourself. Your body needs you. Your feelings need you.  
Go home and be there for all these things".*

The first part of the experiential workshop was an exploration into the everyday question "How are you?" The group was invited to notice the difference between how we might respond 'off the top of our heads', compared to in a Focusing way, pausing to sense what's actually here. Kay and I did some small demonstrations, with myself Focusing and Kay listening silently. Then, members of the group paired up to have a try themselves. As a testament to the naturalness of Focusing, and also Kay's beautiful ability to speak from an authentic, alive place, the people who'd come to experience it for the first time seemed to sink into it with ease and curiosity, which was wonderful to witness.

Next, everyone was invited to settle into their bodies and into the environment, starting with a quote from Gendlin:

*"Your body needs the rest. Once it is allowed to be itself, uncramped, it has the wisdom to deal with your problems".*

Kay then offered the group some gentle guidance: *let yourself get comfy, say yes inwardly to whatever you notice as we settle together, notice the sounds around, let your whole body feel the support of the ground, the textures you can feel, then beginning to notice how your body feels from the inside, just noticing what's there – let it all be there like one whole rich tapestry of life living and notice how it feels to be you here now.*

Finally, we moved into sensing anything what would like some attention/company/kindness, and letting it be there within the whole field of our felt experience. Kay then Focused with me listening silently to her. The group was guided to let whatever wanted to step forward come into focus in its own way and in its own time – not trying to work it out, fix it, change it, analyse it, or get rid of it. After some sharing in pairs, the workshop drew to a close. Many stayed snuggled for a moment, as the shared experience lingered on, drifting around softly like the distant music.

One person I spoke to said that she came because she just knew she needed it, some time out, some time for herself. Some people fell asleep, following their inner knowing, likely needing a rest from partying! Another commented on how deeply connecting the experience of listening silently to a stranger felt. So I was once again reminded of the simple yet magical humanness of Focusing. It was an experience I will never forget!



*Boomtown Fair is a roots, reggae and bass-driven music festival held early in August each year, in Winchester, UK. The site is transformed into an old town, reminiscent of a film set. Boomtown is a fully immersive festival, with festival-goers encouraged to jump in and be a part of its creative story. For more information about Boomtown and dates for next year see <https://www.boomtownfair.co.uk/>*

**Ella Higgs** lives in London, UK. She is currently an Education Mental Health Practitioner, supporting children, young people and families with mental health problems. She has been Focusing for 3 years, and enjoys attending events and workshops including Children Focusing, where she loves connecting with people from all over the world. Ella hopes to bring Focusing more centrally into her work with young people.

[ella\\_higgs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ella_higgs@hotmail.co.uk)

*Boomtown photos by Ella Higgs*



# Is it OK to tell a story in Focusing?

By Peter Gill

There is a common misunderstanding about Focusing that it is all about the body – that you have to feel it all in the body and the body is where all the wisdom lies. To me, this is too black and white, and somewhat literal. What we can often forget is how important it is to tell a story, to give space to the narrative, or to share the narrative. When the original research was done into Focusing, they originally called what they found "a different way of speaking". They didn't say it was people listening to their bodies, they said it was about a different way of speaking. They saw that when people spoke, and at the same time referred to their direct felt experience, then change happened. So I want to talk more about this way of speaking.

It's also true to say that sometimes Focusing is so appealing because we have already talked ourselves to death, and we don't want to talk any more about it... So here we are, in between this extreme of talking about it too much and not talking about it at all. So how do we navigate this?

Here are four occasions when telling the story or sharing some narrative might be helpful.

The first reason to give some narrative is **to evoke something** – to bring the real felt quality of it alive in the body. By speaking about it we bring something to life... but be mindful of just going on and on and never pausing!

The second kind of situation is **when we speak about something that we have never spoken about before**. This can be a good opportunity to tell a story – not a pre-rehearsed story, but more like describing what this issue is like in your life: what this relationship breakdown is like; what this tricky issue in my parenting is like; what this significant visit to the hospital was like. And as you speak it, check in with your body. See what you notice, see what stirs inside, what feelings or images come, pay attention to what fits and what doesn't. Pay even greater attention to what you can feel but can't put into words, that's where the good stuff is! So that's one story to tell – the story that has never been told.

The third kind of story or narrative is **the story that a part has to tell**. We are giving it space to say what it has never said. Sometimes we get in touch with a part of us in Focusing and it's never had a chance to speak. It's never had a chance to express its worries, its pains, its wishes, longings or beliefs, so give it a chance to say those things... and listen.

The fourth kind of story is **when we feel the presence of the deeper, more real story that our being knows – the story of the truth**. The real truth, not the truth everyone else has been saying or our family has been saying but the real truth of what happened and how it impacted us. Where our soul speaks you could say. Or it could be the story of the deep hurt or wisdom that can finally reveal itself.

So we have four kinds of narratives that belong in Focusing, So please don't block out the story thinking that it doesn't belong in Focusing. Be brave enough to have an important conversation in Focusing. Don't leave out the important stuff! Say it!

*This article appeared originally as a blog post by Peter on 21/10/19 <https://www.livingfocusing.co.uk/blog.html>*



**Peter Gill** became a Focusing teacher in 2005 and is fully qualified with the British Focusing Association and the Focusing Institute in New York. He trained with Ann Weiser Cornell in 'Inner Relationship Focusing' in the USA and with Peter Afford in the UK. He is a BFA mentor and Focusing Institute Coordinator offering practitioner and teacher training. He previously 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](http://www.livingfocusing.co.uk) [livingfocusing@fastmail.com](mailto:livingfocusing@fastmail.com)

# Stories about stories...

Compiled by Gordon Adam

## On Teaching Children to Focus...

"Prior to sitting down with them in any sort of Focusing way, I told all three of them one night just before bedtime about stories and we talked about what makes stories exciting to them. They love to have stories read to them and to hear "made up" stories. So, we talked about how they feel when all of their attention is in a story. Their comments ranged from, "It's exciting and fun to hear what's going to happen," to "it doesn't feel right when you stop and don't finish the story." They seemed to catch the notion of the on-going movement in stories and how they love to stay with that story as it unfolds.

Then, when we were together several evenings later, I referred back to the previous discussion and went a step further. This time I told them that behind all their feelings is a story that is waiting to be heard, too. They listened intently, and that was as far as I took the explanation at that time."

*Marianne Thompson*

As human beings we have this immediate gateway –  
you've just to articulate exactly the way that you're exiled,  
exactly the way that you don't belong,  
exactly the way that you can't love,  
exactly the way that you can't move...  
and you're on your way again. You're on your way home.  
If you can just say exactly the way that you're imprisoned –  
the door swings open.

*David Whyte*

## Try Not to Guess the Ending

Our book will close when its words  
Have all been read  
But for now it seems  
The author  
Is still  
Busy  
Writing  
Things  
Down

We cannot force the telling  
Of our story  
Only be still enough  
To read each word  
As it appears on the page  
And try  
Not to guess  
The  
Ending

*Natalie Fee*

# Practitioner Profile — Ruth Friedman

I think I am one of those people who has been failed by classical psychotherapeutic approaches. Over many years, I have been exposed to, worked with, and participated in all manner of therapeutic approaches, encounter groups, Biodynamics, CBT, psychoanalysis, to name a few. They all helped – up to a point, but fundamentally I was still stuck, and unhappy. I was caught in difficult patterns that I wasn't even aware of, despite all the work I had been doing, and feeling depressed was my 'normal', back then.

Then, one day, an acquaintance was looking for a Focusing partner, and I haven't really looked back since. Right from the get go, Focusing landed in me. I loved the surprise of it, never knowing what would come up in a session. I rarely succeeded in Focusing on 'topics', but nonetheless, suddenly there was more space in the relationships that challenged me the most. I was no longer caught up in the relational dynamics that had been playing out negatively in me for decades. Now I could see the dynamics playing out, and I was finally able to make some different choices. Things were shifting.

So I decided to learn Focusing more formally, and I took the four Levels of Inner Relationship Focusing with Ann Weiser Cornell and her team. During that year I began to experience the felt sense of my own Self-in-Presence, where everything is calm and spacious. This was a place that I learnt to find back when I needed it and to use this Self-In-Presence to resource myself – a revelation! My capacity to support and witness myself as I encountered the dark corners of my soul was slowly growing, and there was more and more space in my psyche.

However, I was also interested in WholeBody Focusing, so I did a camp with Alex Maunder. It was very grounding, and I loved it. Shortly after the camp, I discovered that Karen Whalen and Katrijn van Look were starting a two-year training in Relational WholeBody Focusing (RWBF) near my home in Belgium, and I knew I had to be there!

Karen introduced RWBF as a process that came out of her long ongoing Wholebody Focusing partnership with Kevin McEvenue. They noticed that the work of each partner was almost always related and it wasn't a coincidence, so they created a process for it, which also brought more safety.

In RWBF we work with the relational field that is called the 'We Space' and this 'We Space' can be incredibly rich. We were wounded in relationship so we need to heal in relationship. But as we carry all of our relationship patterns within us, these patterns tend to play out again in our current relationships, so creating a safe and spacious container is crucial. This is a big part of learning and practicing RWBF.

In addition, information can come to the companion that is really part of the Focuser's process. Creating the 'We Space', and mining its information safely are key parts of the process. Through my own practice as a RWBF Focuser, I have opened up to aspects of myself that I would have never encountered any other way. Specifically, it has helped me to welcome a darkness that was all too often staring me in the face. It has helped me recognise that I am bigger than this darkness, that I don't need to be afraid of it, and to make friends with it. This process has been truly transformative, and the other methods I worked with before didn't come close!

The sense of spaciousness, the capacity to connect with a space that is larger than me; this deep, and always growing sense of self-acceptance and deep love for myself, are all tools that I now share with my clients. My own journey has itself also become a resource that I draw on in my work. It is the wish to share what I have learnt that motivates me the most. I guess it's like that for most of us!

**Ruth Friedman** is a certified Relational WholeBody Focusing Trainer with The Focusing Institute. She is from the UK and lives in Brussels, Belgium where she works as a coach, and a well-being counsellor. She also works in London and online with clients around the world. 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. [www.ruthfriedman.com](http://www.ruthfriedman.com) [ruth@ruthfriedman.com](mailto:ruth@ruthfriedman.com)



# Forthcoming Workshops & Events

## November & December 2019

**The Art of Focusing** (BFA skills certificate Level 1) with Peter Afford

London (Clapham). 2nd/3rd November. [www.focusing.co.uk](http://www.focusing.co.uk) [peter@focusing.co.uk](mailto:peter@focusing.co.uk)

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

Devon (Liverton). 2nd/3rd November. [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionaparr-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](http://www.livingfocusing.co.uk) [livingfocusing@fastmail.com](mailto:livingfocusing@fastmail.com)

**Focusing for Everybody** (BFA skills certificate Level 3) weekend course with John Threadgold

W. Sussex (Westbourne). 9th/10th Nov. [www.newfocustherapy.co.uk](http://www.newfocustherapy.co.uk) [john@newfocustherapy.co.uk](mailto:john@newfocustherapy.co.uk)

**The Path to Wholeness** (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Peter Gill

Bristol. 16th/17th November. [www.livingfocusing.co.uk](http://www.livingfocusing.co.uk) [livingfocusing@fastmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.suzimackenzie.com/focusing-training) [suzimac55@hotmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.focusing.co.uk) [peter@focusing.co.uk](mailto:peter@focusing.co.uk)

**Focusing Oriented Therapy (FOT) Introduction** Weekend workshop with Frank Bock

London (Highbury). 23rd/24th November. [www.frankbock.net](http://www.frankbock.net) [contact@frankbock.net](mailto:contact@frankbock.net)

**Radical Presence Retreat** 6-day retreat with Simon McKibben

Spain (Andalusia). 24th-30th November. [www.mindfulnesswithcompassion.com](http://www.mindfulnesswithcompassion.com)

**The Path of the Focusing Practitioner** 3-day retreat for practitioners & trainees with Kay Hoffmann

Warwickshire (Nuneaton). 29th November—2nd December. [kayhoffmann1@gmail.com](mailto:kayhoffmann1@gmail.com)

**Focusing Partners** (BFA skills certificate Level 2) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr

Online. Tuesdays. 3rd December– 7th January. [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto: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](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk)

**Thinking with the Felt Sense** (for experienced Focusers) Weekend workshop with Peter Afford

London (Clapham). 7th/8th December. [www.focusing.co.uk](http://www.focusing.co.uk) [peter@focusing.co.uk](mailto:peter@focusing.co.uk)

**Companionship** (BFA skills certificate Level 3) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr

Devon (Liverton). 7th/8th December [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk)

**New Year Focusing Retreat** A 5-day residential retreat for Focusers with Gordon Adam

Devon (Dartmoor). 29th Dec 2019—3rd Jan 2020. [www.focusing.org.uk/event/new-year-focusing-retreat](http://www.focusing.org.uk/event/new-year-focusing-retreat)

## January & February 2020

**Introduction to Focusing and listening** (BFA skills certificate part 1) 4-week course with Kay Hoffmann  
Online. 4 Mon evenings from 13<sup>th</sup> Jan or 4 Weds mornings from 15<sup>th</sup> Jan. With the option to attend...

**Focusing Skills Course** comprising 12 online sessions and 2 residential workshops.

Online and Warwickshire (Nuneaton). 13th Jan—21st June. [kayhoffmann1@gmail.com](mailto:kayhoffmann1@gmail.com)

**Reminding Suggestions** (BFA skills certificate Level 4) 4-week online course with Fiona Parr

Online. Thursdays. 6th—27th February. [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk)

**Reminding Suggestions** (BFA skills certificate Level 4) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr  
Devon (Liverton). 8th/9th February [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk)

### March & April 2020

**Applied Focusing** (BFA skills certificate Level 5) Weekend workshop with Fiona Parr  
Devon (Liverton). 14th/15th March. [fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto: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](http://fionaparr-focusing.co.uk) [fiona@fionaparr-focusing.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:kayhoffmann1@gmail.com)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.solar-active.com/focusing_group) Contact: [david@solar-active.com](mailto:david@solar-active.com)

**South Yorkshire Focusing Group.** Open group which meets monthly. Contact: Hugh [hugh-knopf@rocketmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:livingfocusing@fastmail.com)

# Resources & Further Information

## **British Focusing Association (BFA)** [www.focusing.org.uk](http://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](http://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/](https://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](http://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](http://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 March 2020.

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