

Introducing Focusing in an experiential way

By Beatrice Blake

I just did an experiment recently with two friends. I had a bunch of stuffed animals and toy people and other things like stones and coins. I have had fun collecting a lot of things like that since taking René Veugelers' and Harriet Teeuw's workshop in Being Seriously Playful. I wanted to see if I could illustrate some of the key concepts in the Philosophy of the implicit, in a simple experiential way.



I asked my friends to pick some of the animals and objects that they felt drawn to, without thinking about it too much. I then asked them to talk about why they had felt drawn to what they picked.

At first one person said "I picked these three things because all of them are shiny." I said "Is there anything more?" She paused and decided if she wanted to reveal something personal. She talked about how she hadn't felt valued by her family as a child, and that the

shiny things represented the treasure that she knows herself to be, and that she is working on valuing herself more. After speaking, she said she wanted to spend more time with the objects she had chosen, because she felt there was more that could come about all that.

The other person chose a tiger and a giraffe. At first she said: "They are both orange with black or brown markings and soft yellow underbellies." When I asked "Is there anything more?", she talked about seeing her tiger part as a "bad guy", and the giraffe as "patient and peaceful". But she could also feel the patience and peace in the tiger, and she noticed how she didn't want to judge aspects of herself in terms of "good guys and bad guys". She wanted to feel the wholeness of all her aspects.

In both cases, the question "Is there more?" is an example of the principle of "interaction first". The interaction of leaving space for "more", deepened the communication and allowed the implicit meaning to emerge and be expressed. After their initial statements about how things looked, the "more" that came was an example of implicit intricacy, the rich meaning that is so different for each person depending on their lived experience. The insights my friends had, and the wanting to dwell more deeply with what they had seen, were examples of carrying forward--it seemed that the interaction had led to new understanding and integration of the issues they had brought up.

Beatrice Blake graduated from UC Berkeley in Social Science and Spanish. She studied acupuncture for four years at the Kototama Institute and was licensed as a Doctor of Oriental Medicine in 1982. Her Japanese acupuncture teacher always said "Disease begins in the spirit", but she didn't understand how to make that connection until she learned Focusing in 1989. She became a Focusing Trainer in 2000. Since 2007, she has taught Focusing and Nonviolent Communication to community groups in El Salvador. Now, two Salvadoran Focusing Trainers are leading Resilience Circles in rural villages with women, youth and children. Find out more at www.focusingnvc.com. She teaches Giving Language to Stress, a phone class in Applied TAE, with Dr. Evelyn Pross, through The Focusing Institute. She also gives private and small group guided sessions in Thinking at the Edge. Find out more at <http://possibility-space.com>