

## Summary Minutes from The Focusing Institute Board Meeting July 22, 2010

The Focusing Institute Board met via a telephone conference call on July 22, 2010 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (USA). Those present were: Reva Bernstein, Melinda Darer, Elena Frezza, Mary Hendricks, Akira Ikemi, Joan Klagsbrun, Pat Omidian, Harbert Rice, Astrid Schillings, and Rosa Zubizaretta.

**1. Welcome to Elena Frezza and Akira Ikemi.** Board members gave a hearty welcome to our two new members, Elena and Akira, and thanked them for “diving in” and contributing to Board’s work.

**2. TFI’s Fundraising Needs.** The Board explored three questions: (1) What is our current financial picture? (2) How can we raise additional funds for TFI? And (3) How do we cover BOTH the needs of the local country or regional associations, and also, the needs of the Institute?

**Background.** While TFI has been good at raising 80% our own funds (through memberships, workshops, and product sales), we still depend on donations to meet the remaining 20% of our monthly expenses. We are also currently in the midst of an additional fundraising effort to add an extra position “from below” to free up Melinda Darer to take on bigger projects, and to meet some of our critical infrastructure needs. We have currently raised \$20,000 of our goal of \$50,000. Finally, the whole structure of TFI is based on training. People feel obligated to join when they are in training. Once training is over, they may be less interested in being members of TFI.

**Possible Solutions:** *“Think globally, act locally.”* If local focusing coordinators are interested, we could offer TFI-sponsored training events in different locations around the world. Coordinators in other countries could organize local training events for their trainers-in-training with the intention of offering a percentage of revenues to TFI. (For example, workshops for trainers-in-training in Japan, or summer schools in Japan, or elsewhere.) For participants attendance at these events would count as part of their training leading up to TFI-sponsored certification. In some situations, people may value being certified by TFI in addition to their local certifications, and therefore participants may be interested in doing it. This could also serve to strengthen communication, interconnections, and a sense of affiliation between TFI and coordinators in other countries. We also could coordinate a series of local fundraising events in different places, which are all globally coordinated to take place around the same time, to benefit the local organizations and TFI.

**Concerns:** Many countries already have their own summer schools, and may not need or want another, Spain, for example, has a summer school, where the teachers earn very little. They use the summer school as a fundraiser to cover the expenses of maintaining their own local organization. We don’t want to have a conflict between supporting the local organization, and supporting TFI. Secondly, some countries have their own internal certification processes, which are not TFI linked. People there may not be interested in becoming TFI-certified. Thirdly, people who are not on the training track get little from TFI. We need to do something, create some kind of events that would attract those people to supporting TFI. Finally, fundraisers may not work well in Japan. It may work better there to have something that is more structurally built in. In whatever we do, we need to

be looking for synergistic solutions: how can we strengthen the local organizations, AND, strengthen TFI.

**Next Steps:** We will share our ideas about creating more TFI-sponsored local training events (for the purpose of both helping support TFI financially, and also creating more structural connections between TFI and local training programs) with the International Functional Committee and Coordinators Functional Committee for their input and feedback. More generally, Board members will also obtain input on this from the coordinators in their home countries. Once we have more input and feedback, we plan to write a letter to all Coordinators from the Board to explore these ideas further.

**3. Benefits of TFI membership.** The Board explored two questions: (1) What do we currently offer people in return for being members of TFI? And, (2) How might we enhance or expand what we offer in return for membership?

**Current Context:** People may feel that they get little benefits from paying an annual fee to TFI. It can be hard to convince people to join. We need to look at the “competition” (what other organizations offer.) One of the things we do offer for members only is our newsletter “Staying in Focus”.

**Possible Solutions:** We could offer a 10% of discount for activities and in the bookstore. We could offer seminars online, telephone seminars, or recordings of past seminars for members only. We can have access to archives that is for members only. We can explore an old proposal to create a Focusing “bed and breakfast network.” This could be a members-only benefit. We also could be highlighting more of what we do. Sometimes people join organizations for “intangibles” – not what they receive materially, but for feeling a part of something larger that is doing valuable work in the world. Along these lines we need to be working on a “What is TFI?” brochure.

**Next Steps:** Mary Hendricks will contact Carolyn Worthing to see if she is interested in calling together a Functional Whole through the Gazette to explore the idea of a “Focusing Bed and Breakfast Exchange”. If Carolyn is interested, Melinda will work with her. Rosa Zubizaretta will send the current draft of “What is TFI” to the Board. Harbert Rice will review it and offer feedback. Others are welcome to do so as well.

**4. More on the Relationship between Local Focusing Organizations and TFI.** The Board took up two questions: (1) How can we strengthen the coordination between the local organizations and TFI? And, (2) IF there are countries where trainers are certified by a local organization, is there a way to have them be certified by BOTH their local organization and by TFI?

**Context:** Currently the relationship with TFI is up to the local organizations, and it is different in each country. In Japan, what has worked well is to have people join their local groups, yet if they are doing training leading toward certification by TFI, then they are also required to join TFI. The rationale is: if they are benefiting from TFI’s “brand name,” then they need to pay a certain % to TFI. While this “model” works well in Japan, we don’t know how well it would work in other countries.

**Possible Solutions:** We are working on changing and improving TFI’s relationship with coordinators. This might be part of the general restructuring, of the “internationalness” of

the Institute by highlighting that TFI offers an international certification. As part of our efforts it may help to circulate the TFI vision-statement more widely, and engage in a “replanteamiento” (redefining process) of what TFI is. With regard to becoming more “international,” we also need to value and appreciate more the people who offer volunteer translations. We may want to consider offering them discounts, some free materials, memberships, etc. We need to appreciate these people more, as they provide a valuable service that helps us to become a more international organization.

**5. Honorary Memberships in TFI.** The Institute currently has about 25 people in this category. If someone makes a significant personal donation to Gene and Mary, we may want to give them an honorary membership in TFI. This is a way to send them regular TFI updates, which opens the possibility that they may become interested in donating to TFI as well. Also, if someone has made a large donation to TFI, we may want to give her or him an honorary (or lifetime) membership. This means that we would be sending them regular TFI updates, and contacting them personally about our projects, in case they are interested in making additional donations. However, we would not charge them “annual membership fees” in consideration of their support.

**6. Expanding the Website to Include Focusing-Oriented Retreats.** The Board agreed it makes sense to bring up a website page, which will feature Focusing-oriented retreat centers run by members. As a first step in making these centers known, Mary Hendricks will create a new category on the website of “Focusing-Related Retreat Centers” where we will be linking to various retreat centers run by TFI members and honorary members.

**7. Items Carried Over to Our Next Meeting.**

- A. Managing multiple fundraising efforts – working on a larger picture to ensure that we are making both distinctions and progress in: a) TFI fundraising and b) Gene Gendlin’s and Mary Hendrick’s long-term retirement and immediate financial needs.
- B. Report on progress in forming Functional Committees.

**9. Next Board Meeting.** The next Board meeting will be via phone at 9:00 am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on September 1, 2010.

Respectfully,

Harbert Rice