

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

When we put out the call for papers for this issue on aging, we had no idea what kind of articles we would receive, and truthfully, we really didn't give much thought as to whether the contributions would be funny, touching, poignant, resistant, accepting — we just didn't know. Then the articles started coming in and of course, as is the hallmark of our Focusing community, there was all of the above, with much diversity, humor, sadness, profundity — and everything in between.

As you will see, for some, aging is a process that is gently welcomed, and the responses to the aging process are acceptance, and even joy, for a life well lived. In these articles we see inspiring demonstrations of insight, vision, and wisdom, carrying Focusing into even more ways of *moving the life energy forward*, in spite of age.

For others the process of aging turns out to be a constant struggle — a having to accept the unwelcome transitions into ill-health, memory loss, physical frailties, pain, and taking the journey in into the famous 'unknown' — and not always with the 'attitude' of 'making friends with'. . . !! These articles are also inspiring, because they gently touch into the collective fears that we all have as we see our lives more from the perspective of the 'end' — rather than the 'beginning'.

Then there are the stories of using the gift of Focusing that we all treasure, with other people, to bring some felt healing and peace into the final days of life.

We can say unreservedly, that this issue has been an awakening process for both of us, and we hope it is for you, as well. The range of articles is both varied and fascinating. Here we give you a 'taste' of what lies ahead:

PART 1: PERSONAL STORIES presents highly introspective views of the impact of Focusing on the authors' ongoing experiences of Aging.

Interviews with two of our community's most revered pioneers open this section as Reva Bernstein reflects on how one of Focusing's essential attitudes of *Being With What Is* has guided her through the changes of advancing years, while Bebe Simon looks back on the amazing gifts that Focusing has brought into her life in her delightful retrospective on, *It Needs To Make Sense*.

Jill Drummond in *My Journey With Focusing*, offers a developmental perspective on how Focusing has influenced her life through the decades, as well as how her maturing life experiences has changed the way she views and uses Focusing today.

What starts out as an exploration of Joan Lavender's gradual memory loss and Focusing, in *Some Thoughts about Focusing and Aging: Losses and Gains*, her story unfolds into a profound new understanding of the meaning of her therapeutic relationships with clients.

In *Focusing and Aging, Accompanying A Woman's Aging Journey*, Patricia Manessy courageously presents a poignant but clear-eyed look at the deeply sensed losses felt in the painful transition following the middle years, while Carol Bellin, in *Focusing Happier*,

tells of her decision to deliberately Focus on recognizing opportunities for happiness as she enters her later years.

An abrupt series of crises launched Hadley Fisk into a sudden dread of the losses she might face in old age, but through Focusing and Focusing-Oriented-Therapy she recalled a forgotten trauma that triggered the fear of aging in *Focusing Adventures in Aging: Alone — Crisis and Opportunity*.

Written as a long-flowing, ever-circling Focusing session, Christel Kraft looks with wonder at her life's mystical journey in *Growing up with Felt Sensing and Staying Young Into Aging With Focusing*

Over her many years of Focusing, Erna de Bruijn reflects in *Focusing And Aging*, that one of the most important listening qualities that have evolved for her is the wondrous sense of being alive to 'all of it' — to what is present and what is lacking — which opens her to a profound kind of not knowing.

In *The Golden Years*, Kevin McEvenue poignantly shares a transcription of a Focusing session, in his inimitable Whole-Body sense, of the complex acceptance of his aging process.

With delightful humor, Judy Robbins recounts in *Focusing, Life Coaching and Ageism*, how the support of a coach who is a Focusing trainer helped her to discover that the subject of Ageism excites her baby-boomer heart and starts her on a new career of writing and speaking.

As Dave and Jane Young remind us in *Aging's Music*, aging is always a shared process with others, and co-aging in the intimacy of a marriage between deeply experienced Focusers brings unexpected joys and fears.

PART 2: INSIGHTS: TRANSFORMATIONS USING FOCUSING WITH OTHERS presents a selection of articles by Focusers who not only reflect on their personal development through Focusing, but who have compassionately shared Focusing with others who were struggling with the pain and loss of old age.

In *The Book Of Life: The Final Chapter*, Mary McGuire, one of the icons of our community, integrates her own Focusing experiences of aging and death with a remarkable story about a formidable nun whose dying was transformed by a Focusing image.

In *Attuning To Natural Process Action Steps*, Katerina Halm brings a treasure-chest of her poetry and very special Focusing exercises, first developed to ease her own unremitting pain, to classes of seniors.

In an *Integrated Approach to Processing Aging and Pain*, Elfie Hinterkopf shows us how being with aging and pain in a Focusing way can lead to a spiritual awakening that gives profound meaning to the challenges of advancing age.

Using only the most fundamental Focusing attitudes of compassion, listening, and acceptance, Bala Jaison in *Focusing. . . and he didn't even know it. . .* was able to accompany

her dying father, an adamant thinker and ‘non-feeler’, as he transitioned from anxiety to peace.

PART 3: AGING: CASES, AND RESEARCH presents a case study, a psycho-spiritual treatise, and a TAE-based study — all highlighting the diverse perspectives Focusing can bring to the subject of aging.

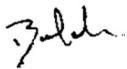
In *One Man’s Life Journey*, Atsmaout Perlstein recalls an aging lawyer who entered therapy complaining about depression and emptiness and how Focusing reconnected him with an essential body-sense of himself as a child with healing hands.

In an adaptation (for this Folio) from their upcoming book, *Rediscovering the Lost Body-Connection Within Christian Spirituality*, Ed McMahon and Peter Campbell continue their lifelong exploration of how a felt organic awareness of being a part of something greater than ourselves can provide an anchor for aging people.

In an effort to more accurately understand the challenges faced by the aging Japanese population, researchers Yoshika Yamaguchi and Satoko Tokumaru use a TAE-based qualitative study to closely examine the subjective life of one retired schoolteacher in *A TAE-Based Qualitative Study of Subjective Well-Being For Aged Japanese Men*.

To our readers of all ages! — we hope you enjoy the meaningful insights, struggles, and eventual epiphanies and understandings that our wonderful authors have provided in this evocative issue on *AGING. . . FOCUSING THROUGH THE TRANSITIONS OF LATER LIFE*.

With regards from your Editors,



Bala Jaison, Ph.D.
Senior Editor



Paula Nowick, Ed.D.
Managing Editor