

A HEALING DIALOGUE: A Self-In-Presence Listens to Anger

Pamela Carr

There is a Natural Law in Naturopathy that says the body heals from the inside out and from more crucial organs to less important ones. The skin is the body's largest organ and skin problems are not usually life threatening. But they can, in my experience, involve a lot of suffering—and can, as I discovered, bring potential for learning, understanding and healing through Focusing.

For about four years I had experienced problems with the skin on my face. Parts felt hot and red and inflamed and erupted in spots which were itchy, unsightly and slow to heal. I don't think I fully acknowledged it, as I just assumed that my skin would heal in its own time and way. I didn't want doctors to label it or medication to suppress it. I just learned to live rather uneasily with it. Even two family weddings didn't bring much urgency to change anything; I just applied more makeup to cover up!

Even though I had been Focusing for two years on all sorts of issues, my skin was not improving, and I wasn't managing to bring it up as an issue in my Focusing time, either alone or in partnerships. I gradually realised that I had a block relating to my skin issues, and that anger was involved so, at that point, I decided to write to Ann Weiser Cornell and seek her help via her online 'Weekly Tips and Support for Focusers'.

A few weeks later my request for advice appeared as the topic in her "Weekly Tips". I thank Ann again so much for her reply to my message (#326).

*Ann wrote "...you are identified with another part of you...a part that I suspect is not only angry, but also worried, scared, and feeling helpless. It is **that** part of you that needs attention first, or everything just escalates. So try saying, "Something in me is angry..."*

*When **you** can stay in the place of **being with** this part of you, listening to it, making sure that all of its feelings are heard, then the space of **you** gets bigger. You have room in you for all of this...for the part of you that is reacting **AND** the part of you that is showing up in this redness and soreness...*

*We have seen remarkable shifts and rapid healing from this kind of process. No guarantees about that, but the one thing you **can** be sure of is that your relationship with these symptoms will shift, and **you** will be bigger."*

Her response so inspired me that I Focused alone on this issue twice the very next day. I often write in my journal as I Focus alone, and these are extracts taken from my notes, which I made during the two sessions:

I'm inviting the 'something' which is feeling angry about the itching, to come and be known. I'm saying hello to this one. I'm gently, patiently sensing, inviting *it* to let me know what it is that gets it to feel so angry.

It says, "*I'm angry because I'm not knowing what is causing the redness, or how to help. And I'm angry because I want to be perfect and have a lovely face with a sunny smile.*"

I'm letting it know that I hear what it's feeling angry about...no wonder it feels that now.

(Phone rings) Coming back into Self-in-presence. What comes now are thoughts about the missed call: Is it my daughter wanting to see me...? Is it someone returning my call? Noticing that these questions are present now, for good reason, and they can be here too, as long as they need be.

I'm gently inviting the part that feels angry to let me know anything else it wants to tell me or show me. Another part comes now, saying, "*I'm not sure I like this...it's stilted my style, this trying to follow Ann's instructions!*"

I'm letting that other part know I hear its complaint, letting it know it can be here too, because there's plenty of space...

(Timer ringing, 5 min signal) I'm letting the complaining-part know that this time I'm following Ann's instructions. So before I finish, I turn towards the soreness and redness, sensing freshly, now, as if I never felt before, exactly how it feels—

"*Vulnerable and sensitive,*" it responds.

Ah, so that's how it feels! I really hear that. I'm wondering what it is that gets it to feel so vulnerable and sensitive.

"*Scared,*" it says.

It's scared. I hear that, wondering what gets it feeling so scared.

"*Scared of being clear and open and allowing everyone to really see me.*"

Ah, you're scared of being seen...So what is it that you need from me?

"*To Focus on this fear of being clearly seen and heard by others.*"

I'm letting it know I hear this...really hear and am willing to Focus some more. Thanking it...

I'm sensing something in me that is feeling afraid of being seen and heard by others. It's scared of being hurt by others. I'm inviting it to let me know any more about what it doesn't want.

"*To be beaten, made to feel insignificant, valueless...*"

Yes, that's it! That's how I've felt with some people: beaten, bruised, insignificant and valueless. Being with them is a repeat of the trauma that I have experienced before.

"*Is it about re-traumatizing?*"

So this beaten, unvalued part comes now for some good reason, and I'm holding space for all that wants to come, going slowly, gently, patiently, and compassionately. I'm sensing something in me that is afraid of being hurt and doesn't want to be beaten and made to feel insignificant and valueless. And it is asking if this is about re-traumatizing, from the way others have treated me. This feeling must be coming for some good reason, and I am letting *it* know it can be here as long as it needs to be.

I'm just sitting with this whole sense while being a Self-in-Presence. What comes now is realisation that each time I scratch my face; I'm re-traumatizing the already sensitive and vulnerable skin. I really hear that voice that says it's the same thing that I've been doing to myself all this time, re-traumatizing the sore skin.

(Phone rings) Coming back again into Self-in-Presence, it's ok, I am processing through this bit by bit. Inviting anything else that wants to come before ending.

What comes is something that says, "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me—unless I let them!*" *if I don't let them!*"

And I realize that this thought is leading again to Wisdom Teachings. (Sighing) Feeling heavy, bogged down... I'm sensing something that is feeling heavy and bogged down... *It* can be here too, I know it's here. I'm patient and will return to this place to help unravel the *more* that's unknown about... *the whole thing*...

Time to find a finishing place, thanking all—and more comes—about the similarities, of micro and macro: my skin itches, I scratch, it feels sore, something in me feels guilty and ashamed AND there is something in me, which is triggered by others' words or actions—and if *it* reacts angrily, it may well feel guilty and ashamed. But if I see clearly and am open to allowing this clear seeing, I can feel relaxed and comfortable. And I can also open and allow others to really see me, clearly. Both need presence, mindfulness and wisdom to bring the healing. Yes! Realizing that there is no intending to hurt or re-traumatize. It's my view and my reaction that matter. Thanking all that's come and thanking...

And the following week, Ann's mailing (#327) confirmed what I had experienced as a result of Focusing with my issue.

"...When you've really heard it all, something will let go, and you'll be able to do what you couldn't do before. Partly because it feels heard, but far more importantly because you have proved yourself trustworthy... by being Self-in-Presence so steadfastly."

After these sessions, my skin gradually began to heal, fewer spots came, they healed more quickly, and the redness subsided. I realise that I had shifted my view and come into a new more healthy, balanced and nurturing relationship with my face. I was no longer scratching and feeling frustrated with my skin; instead, I was acknowledging and sensing what it needed, including water to cleanse, an organic moisture cream with sun factor morning and night and to not sit too long in the direct sun. A big heartfelt thank you to Focusing, and Gene and Ann, and all who are sharing Focusing round the world.

Pamela is currently one of Ann Weiser Cornell's advanced students and in training to become a Focusing Professional. She is interested in a holistic and self-empowering approach to health, for herself and for others. She believes that Focusing is a vehicle which can support, carry and enhance many other resources for healing. For her these include Mindfulness, Relaxation for Living, Natural Nutrition, Tai Chi and Qigong, Yoga, Sound Healing and Creative Writing.

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