

STAYING IN FOCUS

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FOCUSING AND CHAPLAINCY

By **JAN HODGMAN, M.A.**, *Certified Focusing Trainer, USA*

Last autumn, as a Soto Zen Buddhist priest, I became a member of a five-month long training in Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham, Washington. This international program is designed to deepen our response to people in crisis and is based on a process model, so my Focusing training and study of Gendlin's Process Model stood me in good stead. From the beginning we were accepted by the hospital staff and patients as chaplains within the Spiritual Care Department. Our training included visits with patients, clinical rounds with medical and other staff, one-on-one weekly meetings with our supervisor, planning and conducting chapel services, and a full day each week of meeting with our cohorts and supervisor as a group. During these meetings we presented "verbatim," written accounts recalling word-for-word an encounter with a patient, with observations, impressions and assessments from a psychological, sociological and theological perspective.

Perhaps the most stressful part of the program for me was the rotation as on-call responders in crisis situations on holidays and weekends when the regular hospital chaplains were not at work. On my very first call, I attended a patient who had come to the hospital for a fairly routine amputation of a toe and went into cardiac arrest in my presence. I spent several hours with his wife and family as they gathered, and the patient went through two rounds of Code Blue, emergency measures to resuscitate him. He succumbed two days later.

Throughout this program I felt such gratitude for my years as a Zen monastic and my learning as a Focusing Trainer. Both practices have symbiotically deepened my ability to be present for others and convinced me that this is still the most important and helpful part of being with people in crisis.

I offer one of my verbatim accounts that I entitled "A Natural Focuser," and as I presented this to my group of cohorts and supervisor, I was again able to explain and demonstrate the process of Focusing and how it was a big part of who I am in this work.

In the clinical rounds one morning I was asked to see S., described by one of the nurses as a "cantankerous biker." The social worker said, "I'm not going back in that room!" with a vehemence I'd never heard from her. S. was on the cardiovascular wing recovering from pacemaker replacement following an infection.

I entered his room as another nurse left, and he continued the previous conversation with me

Jan: Hi S, I'm Jan from Spiritual Care.

S: Hi, Jan. Yeah, that social worker they sent was something else. She says, 'I'm only doing my job.' Hey, you can't ONLY do your job, 'specially in this business. ♦



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When I was working, man, I loved my work. Only doing her job, @\$%^, I booted her right outa here. You gotta have heart, you know what I'm sayin'?

J: Yeah, so you really loved your work . . . (So much energy when he said "loved my work!" Making space for him to sense into that.)

S: @\$%#@ yes, I loved my work. I was a welder, specialty-like, you know? And I'd say really I was an artist. People came to me with work they couldn't tackle on their own.

J: Sounds like that's a big part of you, your work. (I feel grief around his remembering his work. Again, opening the space)

S: Yeah, it's the %%%#. No work and no riding. Pretty tough to be stuck here in a hospital bed.

J: Yes. (Silence--I see him settling deeper). What's the worst of all this for you? (Quick for me to be going here, but he is already in touch with something.)

S: (long silence, maybe 10 seconds) You know what's the worst? Seeing that tear rolling down my son's cheek. Man, that tore the starch right outa me.

J: Ummmmmm, your son's tears.

S: Yeah, I pretty much raised him, he's 22. His mom wasn't much help, that's for sure. Anyway, when he saw me here and realized how serious it is, those tears started rollin' down his cheeks, and it just did me in, you know what I'm sayin'?

J: Ummmmmm, lots of sadness here for you. (I notice his hand move to his heart, and I pat my chest, mirroring his "felt sense").

S: Yeah, we're pretty close. (More silence) Wow, yeah, it's, like, right here for me, you know, the heart, that's what this is all about, right? (More silence) Yeah, and then when I came out of surgery and my girlfriend was there and she saw I was OK. Then she turns on the tears, too.

J: Sounds like you have some people who really care deeply for you.

S: Yeah, wow, you know I feel it right here, like warm in my heart, like maybe healing or something going on here.

(Quietly holds both hands over his chest area.) Yeah, you know, I can be such a jerk sometimes. I was president of an outlaw biker group, and you had to be tough there. (Pause, checking in with his heart.) Yeah, you know that was the feeling I was getting here before this all happened, like tight, tight-\$\$, you know, that was me.

But I really don't get off on being the mean guy. I'd rather be nice.

J: Um, it feels better being caring, being the nice-guy. (Helping him process what came there.)

S: Yeah, I guess so. And the doc's a good guy, too. He said, 'I don't really like operating with this kind of infection going on, but we don't have much of a choice. Might as well go down fighting...'

S. went on to tell me how grateful he'd been for a visit by Reverend Ron, whom he called a "biker chaplain," right before his operation. As he talked on about his biker days, his voice got softer, the swearing dropped out, and he was able to show his vulnerable side.

We talked for several minutes more, and at one point I called the aides in to pull him up in bed, and he was very courteous with them.

S: Thanks so much for coming by. It means a lot to me. I can tell you have heart in your work, not like that social worker—'I'm just doing my job' ...sheez.

J: Nice to get to know you, S. I wish you the best in your recovery. Peace be with you. (My usual chaplain leave-taking, something I'm comfortable with as a Buddhist, and my sincere wish for him.)

S: Yeah, peace. (Deep breath, pause.) That's good stuff. Thanks again for stopping by, Jan.

I'm startled when he says my name. And I feel a warm place in my own heart as I leave his room.

Most of my interactions with patients were half an hour or less, and I rarely saw the same patient more than 2 or 3 times, so there weren't many opportunities for a formal Focusing lead-in and session. but there were many instances where Focusing responses, and certainly being in Presence, contributed greatly to the interactions.

I see these Clinical Pastoral Education programs as a great possibility for Focusers to make presentations for the teaching modules called Didactics. The programs take place in over 350 sites in the U.S. alone, including hospitals, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, and geriatric centers. You can find CPE programs near you on the website of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc., www.acpe.edu, and could suggest a Didactic in Focusing.

FOCUSING, LIKE AN ANCHOR, OR FINDING A RELATIONSHIP TO CANCER

Excerpts from letters by **MARTA STAPERT**, Focusing Coordinator, The Netherlands

December 1, 2007 Dear Friends,

It really is time to inform you how we are at this moment. I have been diagnosed with breast cancer and on the fifth of December will have partial surgery of the breast. After that, comes five weeks of radiation therapy.

I have a lot of support from my husband Ynse, from our 10 children and grandchildren, my brother and his wife, and a niece who went through this process recently. I receive complementary medicine with homeopathy and orthomolecular therapy. Tomorrow I will have a Focusing session with Jellie, a therapist in a national project for revalidation of cancer patients, to prepare my body for surgery. I'm happy I don't have to be strong all the time.

This message will be very strange . . . for you. Keeping you informed helps me to formulate and express my ideas; that gives me space inside. With warm love, Marta

December 9 Dear All,

With all your messages, a lot of warmth and encouragement came like waves into my body. This closeness prompts me to write to you again. Writing down my thoughts helps me find the right new way for me and to experience the connection with you.

Last Thursday I came home from the hospital after surgery. It's good and cosy to be home. We are happy. Ynse takes care of me and spoils me. Everything is in slow motion. Our children have been of great help, both for me in the hospital and for Ynse at home.

While in the hospital I especially enjoyed the book *Zen-Begin* by Shunyu Suzuki. I took time to let in the words in a Focusing way: "Being like the frog, who is just sitting to be" and "When you are ready to receive experiences as they are, you will see them as 'old friends,' esteeming them with a new feeling."

I received Reiki, did EFT tapping (www.emofree.com). During all the injections and infusions I used hypnosis to relax and divert my attention from the pain. Above and during all that, there was Focusing like an anchor. I took time to find "how is it with me" at the moment as well in deep processes, and to find "how it was" in many decisions, even small ones, which I had to make.

The main issues of my Focusing process in preparation for surgery center on three themes:

- a) What do I sense about the happenings in my life?
 - b) What images can help me deal with my too-fast growing cells?
 - c) How would my body like to prepare for the surgery?
- a) What came first was a sense of disappointment "I did the best I could to take responsible care of my body with Focusing, food and exercise." From there I found the need for softness and for gently stroking my body.
- b) Ynse and I already skipped words like "malignant" and "aggressive cells," because these words didn't seem right for my body. In the deepening Focusing process, this hunch felt so true. The image came of "cells like trotting horses who are bolting." I felt this image very powerfully in my body. I discovered the horses' reins and pulled them with strong soft hands. "You don't have to bolt that fast." I use this image regularly now.

I imagined the cancerous lump as one soft smooth whole, with no loose ends. I thought "I'm not sure if this is a wish or reality . . . and that is not important at the moment. It feels good to see it like that."

c) I had told my two granddaughters, eight and six years old, that my surgeon's name was "Sonneveld" and that I could imagine him as "the sun in the field." I also told them I had looked intensely at his hands and that I felt, "Those are good hands, and I trust them. His hands may cut my breast in order to heal it." They sighed in relief.

During Focusing, my body imagined the moment of falling into a narcotic sleep without fear, as if I were simply in a deep Focusing process. A warm emotion came through my body as I realized this surgeon would take good care of me. I felt, "He may do this for me."

I prepared myself to ask the anaesthetist to be careful of his words during surgery and not to make any jokes because our subconscious hears more literally than people realize. And to please make a positive suggestion at the end like, "Your breast will heal famously." I did indeed ask him, and he agreed with a smile. I don't know if he really did. I only know the healing up till now is all I could wish. After this session I felt quiet and full of energy through my tiredness. I could go through it all without fear or resistance.

We live in a kind of tension and trust, observing from a little distance, and living each day fully, with all

uncertainty behind it. There is no “must.” Lots of love, Marta

December 18 Dear Friends,
I do like to stay in connection with all of you. Thank you for all good wishes and encouragement. Unfortunately I have to send you an unpleasant message. A second surgery is ahead of me for total cleaning of my right armpit. The lymph glands were not clean. This surgery will take place on Friday 28th of December in the early afternoon.

My energy at the moment is about 75 percent of normal. I feel OK, as if nothing is wrong. I am not ill, but that is the tricky side of cancer. My biggest concern is that this type of surgery can cause oedema. I am worried about playing my violin.

My grandmother lived twenty-two years after total breast removal. She died at the age of 84 because of complications of a broken hip. Through Focusing I felt the presence of my grandmother as my guardian angel and for the last few days I have experienced her very close to me. She is my model to mirror myself by.

December 23 Dear All,

Your sweet attention, advice, and good wishes are heart warming and move in me. Many thanks for that.

It is an unreal time. Our lives continue as usual, however we know there is something different, and soon it will be quite different. In the meantime our kids cleaned our big old house, and we furnished and decorated the living room, so we could celebrate Christmas in our familiar atmosphere. A lot of “memory-stories” crossed the table. This meant a lot for all of us.

After getting the news that I needed a second armpit-surgery, I made arrangements for another Focusing session with my companion. I had two themes to work on:

- a) “You don’t have any choice about this next surgery,” had come to me several times, and I knew it was true.
- b) I wondered what lay behind my everlasting optimism. I also felt sorrow when it seemed everything was attacking me unexpectedly and at the same time. Was there a snag in this optimism?
- a) When I focused on the words, “You have no choice,” they brought me into a vortex. I felt so far down in the middle that I was almost invisible. Where had I gone to? By staying with this image, memories came from the past about how strongly I resisted anything forced on me. The vortex became a strong flowing river. A little boat came along. I took the helm in my hand. I sensed a quiet powerful feeling, as I steered the boat, knowing my direction.
- b) Having a positive inner quality has always been part of my life as far as I can remember. It feels like having a white light inside. While focusing on this feeling, a deep inner voice said, “It is also rescuing you.” There was the image of a rescuing buoy, and the feeling of “You never let yourself be put down,” a kind of war-surviving feeling. The white light became a warm orange. It felt very powerful yet soft. My positive attitude was reinforced.

With this I felt prepared for the next surgery. Ynse and I could enjoy our days.

If possible we walk for half an hour daily. Through meditation I try to empty my mind and stop running thoughts. This is not easy for me, but the sitting feels right. Like the frog: just sitting--a quiet time to start the day.

Without any doubt the Focusing process is the most important ongoing support. With warm love, Marta

January 6, 2008 Dear All,

Many thanks for your heart warming, empathic, supportive reactions. This is feeding me, giving me the energy and courage to write again about how I’m doing. Last week the second surgery took place.

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Marta Stapert at home with her husband, Ynse Stapert, a certified Focusing professional, and two granddaughters. Marta looks forward to personally answering/reacting per Email: ymstapert@hetnet.nl, but will not respond to discussionlist or any other list.

FOCUS ON: *NICOLETTA CORSETTI*, COORDINATOR, ITALY

By *DIONIS GRIFFIN*, Certified Focusing Trainer, USA

HOW DID YOU COME TO FOCUSING?

During the four years I lived in Argentina, I attended a three-year Counseling Course where Focusing was part of the curriculum. After graduating, I completed Focusing Trainer study with Elena Frezza, Coordinator.

AND THEN YOU BEGAN TEACHING FOCUSING IN ITALY?

When I returned to Italy in 2000, Focusing was totally unknown. Importantly, I found a publisher willing to produce an Italian edition of Gene Gendlin's *Focusing*. Each copy had my name, my website, and other contact information. Through the book, people started to find me.

I started with small groups of people in my home. I traveled to other places, wherever I was invited to give a presentation or workshop. Since 2003 I have had a studio, with a small room for three or four people, and a larger room for fifteen people. I have discovered that in Italy, weekend workshops are more popular than smaller groups. When I became a coordinator early in 2004, I began to train trainers. Now there are 13 trainers in Italy, not all trained by me. Most of them are teaching Focusing. I have created my own competition! We now have trainers in Naples, Milan, Sicily, Torino, Umbria, besides Rome, and five trainers in training. The growth is exponential.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FOCUSING IN ITALY?

I am very optimistic. For one thing, Focusing exists in Italy now. I can make my living teaching it. I am also a Focusing-oriented counselor, while teaching Focusing is my principle job. As other people teach Focusing in various situations, the public awareness grows.

My favorite place to teach Focusing is in counseling schools, teaching my colleagues. I will still travel to other cities, but now I can decide which is most effective and convenient. I like to go to one school and teach 10 workshops over the course of one year, a more coherent program; people get the entire training.

WAS IT DIFFICULT TO GAIN ACCESS TO COUNSELING SCHOOLS?

Extremely difficult. I am not a psychologist. I am trained as a counselor. In Italy, 99% of the counseling teachers are psychologists. Also I did not at first have a name for myself. Then counselors and psychologists started coming to my workshops because they read the book or because of word of mouth, and started recommending my workshops to their schools.

YOUR WEB PAGE, www.focusing.it, RECOMMENDS A. W. CORNELL'S BOOK, *The Power of Focusing* AS WELL AS *Focusing*?

Yes, Ann's book was published in 2007. Usually, a book of this nature has to be recommended by schools and universities to be published. It took five or six years to find a publisher for another book about Focusing.

HOW DOES FOCUSING FEATURE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

It is very present. I have my partnership every week. The first thing I did in 2000 was to teach Focusing to my friends. I still partner with my best friend, and of course with more people whom I've met through my teaching.

One important thing to mention has been the Changes Groups. We started in 2003 meeting once a month in my studio.

The next year, we met twice a month. Another group formed, so there were meetings three



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times a month. In January, this new group will extend the possibility to four times a month. It is very important to have this open, free space for people to practice and meet other people. We would like to develop more Changes Groups in 2008, perhaps creating groups along lines of common interest.

CAN YOU SPEAK ABOUT HOW IT IS TO TEACH FOCUSING?

Yes, it is important to have a lot of passion. You need to put a lot of energy into it. If you can earn enough money at it, then you have time to give it all your energy. You won't become rich teaching Focusing, that is very clear, but you need to find a way to dedicate all your professional energy to it. Since I can earn my living in this way, I do not have so many other distractions and priorities. My dedication is that much greater.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD ANYTHING ELSE?

In May of this year we had an international workshop called "Meeting at the Edge." It brought together Body-workers and Body-oriented Psychotherapists who also know Focusing. There were seven organizers, myself and six others. We had forty attendees from the US, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Ireland, Greece, France, the Netherlands, Costa Rica and Italy. All forty-seven of us met on an island for three days of important interaction around how to integrate Focusing into a body-oriented profession.

What was important to me as an organizer was the beautiful collaboration I experienced between myself and the other six organizers. Because of the Focusing attitude, an open space was present where everyone felt free to share experiences and to explore ideas.

Our group formed in the 2004 International Focusing Conference in Costa Rica. We also explored together our common interest in the ensuing international conferences. We are already preparing to hold a second "Meeting at the Edge" in 2009. A report of our first conference ("Meeting at the Edge 2007") is posted on The Focusing Institute website.

Letters from Marta Stapert continued from page 4

Once home, I realized this second surgery caused more harm to my arm. I got sort of fixated on my anxiety that I wouldn't be able to use my arm properly, especially after radiation treatment. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to play my violin, garden, bike, and have the physically active life I have enjoyed with so much pleasure.

Talking and sharing my tears with Ynse and our children helped for the moment. In Focusing alone I could not find the depth I needed. Still, I looked forward to my Focusing session with my companion. I chose the theme: How can I deal with my lifelong way of being active when I need to slow down?

c) Very soon a trembling tension came, concentrating around my stomach. Staying with it in an open receiving way. I sensed words like "confusing . . . something is in the way of moving ahead . . . I feel captured . . . not free . . . my feet cannot step forward." I felt veils pressing all around me . . . I felt wrapped up . . . the veils were not transparent . . . I couldn't move . . . I tried to pull them off my body and to kick with my feet . . . the veils became tighter . . . till I slowly discovered the veils were also soft and shiny . . . wrapping me in a soft way . . . perhaps even protecting me? My breathing slowed down. The veils were wrapped around me in a supple, soft way, becoming more transparent and acquiring soft colours. I realised they would give me a quiet space with protection . . . I could walk with small steps . . . a new safe world is opening up for me.

Now I can wait with a quiet, secure, protected feeling for getting the surgery results soon and for learning the next steps in the treatment program. I feel prepared for what will come.

Thank you for reading. Wishing you all the best with love, Marta

Postscript I am happy to give you a good message. The results of the bone scan and CT scan show that my body is clean from metastases. This is a great relief. The clear preventative program ahead for me is five weeks of radiation, five times per week and (anti)hormone medication for five years.

Waiting for the results of the CT-scan unexpectedly brought me a lot of insecurity and tension, utterly serious now. I again Focused with Jellie. Each time I receive new courage. This time walls seemed to keep me imprisoned. I couldn't come through into the distance, the future. When I let the word "today" come in, the walls disappeared.

We also consulted the physiotherapist on the functioning of my arm. It is important to use my arm, but not burden it too much, really a challenge for me. She advised me to start quietly playing my violin.

A MEETING OF WORDS AND TOUCH

By JACK BLACKBURN, Certified Focusing Trainer, USA

In 2004 I was one of the practitioners of body-centered modalities based upon touch, movement, and somatic awareness who met together at the International Focusing Convention in Costa Rica. We created an interest group: the Bodywork and Movement Focusing Group. Since then we have presented workshops individually and collectively at the International Focusing Conferences and organized our own gathering, "Meeting at the Edge," in May 2007 in Italy. (Our next gathering will take place in Switzerland in Fall 2009.) We found that bodywork and Focusing connect in wonderful and productive ways.

In 2003 I developed, along with my colleague Cynthia Price, Ph. D., a course called Table Talking, designed to teach bodyworkers how to combine words with touch. As a researcher, Cynthia Price's studies involve the combination of professional touch and verbal support for sexually abused women. She has used the Experiencing Scale, a measure used extensively in Focusing studies, to examine engagement and the relationship between engagement and health outcomes. Her studies have shown positive results. Table Talking encourages bodywork practitioners to accompany their clients with in-the-moment verbal interaction. The dialogue stays body-centered--emotional issues that arise can be confirmed "somatically." We have developed a vocabulary that borrows much from Focusing.

Presence--In a state of body-centered awareness one becomes conscious of the interconnectedness of all phenomena. I tell my students that the doorway of presence opens when we listen to or observe our own body's signals in the moment without trying to change or understand them. Hands-on therapists are in a unique position to teach their clients how to become present in the body for longer and longer periods of time and reap the benefits of fully clear, conscious awareness for moment after moment. I believe that presence is the place where Focusing and bodywork can merge.

Presencing--The conscious choice to practice presence is an antidote to the fear and suffering we experience. One can choose to activate a shift in awareness. The body surprisingly is the key link to this change, since the body, it can be argued, exists only in the present and is reporting the present continually to its owner as sensations and awareness. Body practitioners say, "the body never lies."

Body Messages--The body communicates through its various systems: mental, chemical, emotional, neurological, positional, sensorial. These channels of communication produce internal sensations, emotions, and thought. When thought is consciously directed towards tracking these internal messages, thought changes from brain-centered and abstract to body-centered and present. As we train ourselves to pay closer attention to these communications, our body and mind form a somatic unit that is capable of registering both inner and outer phenomena simultaneously.

Mirroring--In our three-day workshops we help our trainees to discover what they are feeling moment to moment and to mirror the clients' words and confirm what is changing under their hands.

Listening with our hands--We learn to "listen" with our hands as well as ears. Whatever a person is thinking or feeling can show up in the body now. We practice Presencing while placing our hands on the client's body and thus can discern very subtle information coming from that body, such as muscle tension, skin tone, etc., that changes as the felt sense changes.

Felt sense--By contacting the felt sense, we become aware



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that the body is communicating in a pure language of feeling and sensation continuously. Like spoken language, this sensory language of the body has a varied vocabulary, including feelings, sounds, reflexes, colors, smells, words, and images. I teach this method not only to bodyworkers, but also to counselors and business people. Anyone can learn to use their hands to listen to the body and thus accompany the inner experience of another. By sharing the body-centered experience, both client and practitioner are changed.

In-forming--As we pay attention to our internal environment, the ongoing experience of presence in the body changes or in-forms us. Presencing brings us new information that reshapes our thoughts, emotions and body-state. When we apprehend the changes that are happening inside, we are changed! In spiritual direction the word "formation" refers to spiritual development. I use in-forming to refer to developmental changes.

Felt-Shifts--When there is an undoing or releasing of our habitual thoughts and reactive patterns, it can be felt as a parasympathetic shift--a shift away from tension and towards bodily comfort: warmth, relaxation, softening, or relief. A practitioner who is using touch can learn to feel these shifts as they are occurring in the client's body.

The following case study will illustrate what I mean. Elizabeth's arthritic and fibromyalgic symptoms were so severe that I could not work with her by applying physical pressure. I had to use my hands as sensors rather than manipulators. My hands as I touched her were very soft. Elizabeth then sensed into her body and, as various insights arose, I was able to feel her process with my listening hands. It was much like "no-hands" Focusing, except that I was able to feel the tissue changes as she experienced little lettings-go. Focusing was combined with what in bodywork is called "somatic awareness" on both our parts. She was willing to attend to where she was being touched; and I could confirm that she was present because I could feel her awareness in my hands.

I started the session by guiding Elizabeth through different parts of her body. This was like a Focusing lead-in. She reported various sensations, mostly uncomfortable, in some joints and muscles. I started to work with different parts of her body, and she brought her attention to wherever she could feel my hands. I asked her to describe or put into words what she was feeling, and she was willing.

As I felt the tissue tone and movement restrictions, Elizabeth was telling me what she was feeling from inside. In the beginning, she alternated between the sensations in her body and her emotional states. I mirrored back what she was reporting and helped her translate emotions into bodily sensations. As she "came into" her solar plexus she said, "I'm feeling a lot of stuff . . . it feels like anger." I mirrored, "So, Elizabeth, you're feeling anger here under my hands." Then I helped her presence. "Notice how the anger is showing up and give me a sense of what it feels like." She responded, "It feels like a burning pain, as if I have hot coals in my stomach . . . and the heat and the pain are radiating out to the rest of my body." As she said this I felt a palpable softening under my hands. I also noticed that Elizabeth was breathing more deeply. I echoed, "The burning pain feels like hot coals, right here under my hands." She said, "Yes, and it's cooling down now."

As we continued this process, Elizabeth became accustomed to reporting sensations, sometimes adding emotional content. Suddenly she announced, "I've been saying 'No!' to everything in my life for 15 years, ever since my divorce!" As she made this statement, I was working on her right shoulder, which had been extremely painful to her for a long time. "So, you've been saying 'No!' to everything. Come in right here Elizabeth," as I tapped her rhomboids to indicate the place for her to put her awareness. "And notice what 'No!' feels like."

As I said this, I paused, removed my hands, and stepped back so she could sense inside her, without associating what she was feeling with my hands. I observed that she was taking very deep breaths. I found myself saying to her: "What would it be like if you were to say 'Yes!' to everything?" I then brought my hands back in and we continued what we'd been doing except that as she reported her sensations she also said: "Yes!" I began to notice that each time she said "Yes!" there was a definite softening in the tissue. I could tell that her attention was right where my hands were, because I could feel some tingling sensations in the tissue and a palpable breath-pulse. (The "breath-pulse" is the displacement of any part of the body due to inhalation or exhalation).

It didn't seem to matter whether Elizabeth was reporting her experience or silently saying: "Yes." Under my hands everything felt freer, softer, and warmer. After about ten minutes of this she started to laugh, gently, quietly at first and then louder and fuller. Finally she said: "This is impossible. I feel no pain in my body! I feel like I'm bubbling over with energy! I can't believe this is happening!" Later she recalled, "I don't remember so much of the specifics as I do that felt sense of 'yes' that I experienced. I'll never forget that."

