



# STAYING IN FOCUS

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APPLICATIONS OF FOCUSING

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## THE EASTERN EUROPEAN EXPANSION

By LORE KORBEI, CERTIFYING FOCUSING COORDINATOR, AUSTRIA

It all began in the Ukraine with the Truskavec Project from 1994 to 1999, which originated with Dr. Alfred Pritz, an Austrian analytic colleague. He invited representatives of Behaviorist, Systemic and Humanistic approaches to join him. For five years, both in April and at the end of August, we spread "The Good News" of Client-Centered Psychotherapy in the Ukraine. A dozen of us went by train from Vienna, Austria, or from Germany, travelling for more than 24 hours, neatly arranged in our compartments, two by two. At the end of the journey we had bonded, gossiping and laughing and more. We were called "the staff," and the whole small town of Truskavec was crowded with students from the surrounding area-- about 200 people, mostly psychologists and psychiatrists. The training course in Client-Centered Psychotherapy included Focusing, needless to say! And-- this is my personal credo--I would not know what else to do when the process gets "mind-screwing" (as Fritz Perls expressed it) but to deepen and go to the bodily Felt-Sense.

In 1999, we held "final exams" and--as expected--our Ukrainian colleagues subsequently began to train other students. We, "the staff," still travelled there once a year for supervision and theory (such as Gendlin's theory of personality change). But news of this program recently has been rather quiet, the poor financial situation in the Ukraine being the main reason, I believe.

Our next ambitious "colonization" plans pointed at Bucharest, Romania. There the OEGWG--the Austrian Association of Client-Centered and Person-Centered Psychotherapy to which I belong--started a training course in CCT, which was not embedded in all the other psychotherapeutic directions.

The course began in 1999 as a student-group led by Ileana Botezat Antonescu, nicknamed "La Mama," which she truly was. This time the gender rate was 12: 2-- twelve women and two men--again all psychologists and psychiatrists. Off we went again as the devoted staff. Of course, one of the main accents lay on Gene's theoretical and practical work. We did not need translators, as was the case in the Ukraine; everybody spoke sufficient English (and sometimes French proved beneficial). The translation of the literature was no problem either. Our Romanian colleagues now belong to the PCE World Organization and are well established in their country. Their local staff consists of six psychologists, and they have already started four new training groups (two since 2005, one since 2008 and one since 2009).

One memorable time came in 2003, in one of the psychiatric hospitals of Bucharest, when the students of medicine and the students of psychology gathered to listen to a lecture held by a colleague from Salzburg University and myself. My colleague lectured on Client-Centered Theory and I on Focusing. The assembly hall was crowded, full to the last seat and beyond. It was Good Friday afternoon, shortly before the Easter Holidays. I was impressed and touched by their willingness, even eagerness, to expose themselves to new ideas and concepts!

Our latest "colonial invasion," also starting 1999 in the autumn, was directed to Moscow, Russia. The gender ratio of the staff was the same: twelve women to two men. Could this mean that Client-Centered Psychotherapy



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and Focusing are primarily “female”?

The instruction in Moscow lasted for five years, until 2005. Our Russian students then started a pilot training-project in Nizhniy Novgorod. Olga Bondarenko, one of our students from that locality, was recently invited to the United States and was trained in Focusing there for about six months.

I returned to Moscow for ten days in 2008: three days were earmarked for supervision, three for Focusing with the Russian staff and three for Focusing “for all methods” other than Client-Centered. There were touching moments in this big group of nearly 30, whose ideologies ranged from Gestalt to Frankl--even Freudian analysts were there. I had my tried and trusted translator with me, but it soon became obvious that knowledge of Gene’s work was noticeably high, and some even possessed “better translations” of Gene’s articles and books. Especially Vladimir, a philosopher, turned out to be excellent, not only in “Gendlin,” but also in my native German.

The next year, a group of six of our former trainees originated a training course for Client-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy in cooperation with one of the University Institutes for Psychology in Moscow. They also intend to come to Vienna for supervision as well as for theory.

In this way, OEGWG, our Austrian professional organization, has “exported” the Client-Centered curriculum, including Focusing in both theory and practice.



## *THE FELT SENSE IS THE DOORWAY TO THE ARTS*

*By LAURY RAPPAPORT, FOCUSING COORDINATOR, CALIFORNIA, USA*

Ever since learning Focusing in 1977, I have been struck by the similarities between Focusing and the creative arts. As a teenager, I came home from school, closed my door, sat on the floor, closed my eyes . . . and waited. After a few moments, I noticed sensations, and then an image would come. I opened my eyes and drew the image that came to me. When I learned Gendlin’s Focusing, I came to know that through the creative arts, I was Focusing.

In Gendlin’s 1981 article, “Focusing and the Development of Creativity,” he states, “Creative people have probably always used this [Focusing] method. What is really new in it is the specificity with which we can describe the steps and teach them.” (p. 33) I began to see that sitting quietly, gently noticing what was happening within, was similar to the Focusing Attitude of being friendly to what is happening within one’s bodily experience, keeping it company and getting a felt sense. To capture it, Gendlin developed the term “handle” or symbol--a word, phrase, image, gesture, or sound--that describes a felt sense. Over time, I realized, the felt sense and the handle are the doorway to the arts:

- A word or phrase develops into a poem
- An image becomes visual art
- A gesture becomes movement and dance
- Sound becomes music

In my workshops and trainings, people are often amazed at how easy artistic expression becomes when it arises out of a felt sense.

In contrast to this natural unfolding of creative expression, many people believe, “I’m not creative.” Sadly, this often results from cultural beliefs that artistic expression is saved only for a few rare, talented people. Just as Gendlin says, “Creative people have probably always used this [Focusing] method.” I believe that Focusers are inherently creative. Focusers sit with the unknown in much the way artists sit with a blank piece of paper. A felt sense forms, similar to the birth of a painting, song or poem. Meaning and insight emerge.

The great Buddhist monk and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh made up a word to describe how each element is contained in the other. He calls it “interbeing.” In his book, *The Heart of Understanding*, he writes, “If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper



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to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are.” (Nhat Hanh, 1988, p.3).

The three articles in this newsletter, Robin Kappy’s “Creativity and Focusing in Art Making and Psychotherapy,” David Orth’s “Focusing in the Workshop,” and Francesca Castaldi’s “Body-Rhythms and the Movement of Sound: Integrating Somatic Approaches to Healing” offer a glimpse into how Focusing and the creative arts can “inter-be.” They illuminate new ways of seeing how creativity is implicit in Focusing . . . and how Focusing is implicit in creativity; how they inter-are.

My life path of integrating Focusing with the Arts continues to unfold in its own forward direction. Since publishing *Focusing-Oriented Art Therapy: Accessing the Body’s Wisdom and Creative Intelligence* in 2009, (also published in Japanese), I completed a CD, “Focusing for Wellbeing,” that includes seven guided Focusing exercises. At the end of each exercise, there are Focusing instructions that offer the opportunity to carry the experience into writing, art, movement, sound, or silence. Original music plays quietly underneath the guided Focusing in order to promote bodily relaxation without being intrusive.

I have also launched the Focusing and Expressive Arts Training Institute in Santa Rosa, California, that provides four levels of training in Focusing-Oriented Arts Therapy (FOAT) and a certification track leading to becoming Focusing-Oriented Therapist or Professional with a specialization in the Arts Therapies (in cooperation with the Focusing Institute). This winter, a group will be coming from Korea to receive FOAT training and during the summer I will return to Japan and Hong Kong to offer further training. The University of Hong Kong has contracted to offer FOAT levels 1-4, with many students interested in certification. I am deeply touched to be part of this global community as the felt sense unfolds creative energies within each of us, bringing greater compassion and healing around the world!



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## *FOCUSING IN THE WORKSHOP*

BY DAVID ORTH, ILLINOIS, USA

*Condensed by the author from “Clearing a Space on the Workbench: How Focusing Helps Me Build”, THE FOLIO, Volume 21-1, Fall 2008.*

A craftsman aspires to be nimble, responsive, and accurate--not only in the fingers but throughout the body, throughout the mind, and throughout the feelings. Both Focusing and craft share a fundamental attitude of orientation toward the nuances and the often ineffable experiences of the body and the world. Focusers understand how language is both useful and inadequate in helping us stay attentive to this bodily-felt knowledge. In craft, this attitude toward language is native. At higher levels of art and craft, this nuanced understanding also extends to technique. It is of course required, but is not adequate. Focusing and craft note the loss of intricacy in language, ideas, in emotion and in techniques, and both work in steady, organic ways to return to the body’s more complex knowledge. The usefulness of simplifications, of concepts, of emotions, or of solutions is not denied, but when there is a stoppage in the expected flow of human life, of human projects, or human skills, this body knowledge can be invoked. These inner “skills” offer a renewed, supportive interaction between the infinite/ineffable/intricate and the fundamental human need to solve problems of all sorts.

In any kind of workshop you will see several kinds of tools--tools for assembling and tools for cutting. There are as many tools for separating and cutting as there are for assembling, maybe more. Consider the variety of saws, chisels and gouges of every size and shape, the half-dozen hand planes, a spokeshave, the cabinet scraper, shears, grinders, and plasma cutter. The craft of a careful, well-timed cut is a thing of beauty, sometimes a terrifying beauty to be entertained after much consideration and a good night’s sleep. The separation is necessary, but it will all turn on the sensitivity of the timing, the relative precision, the restraint, the respect for the material, and the watchful eye on the unfolding process. A careful cut can move things forward. A thoughtless cut will set things back.



*Bronze Funeral Urn*



*Walnut Table, dining, coffee or side table configurations*

Focusing also requires such moments. Consider that Clearing a Space is the critical act of separating from overwhelming emotions and defeating opinions. This is a careful break from the usual current and gravity of things. Gendlin understands that a separation from inner reactions is necessary, but that it must not be an absolute or sloppy separation. As in craft, it must be just so.

Getting the useful distance from the emotional reaction is a critical part of the craft of Focusing, i.e., making room for the Felt Sense. Too little separation, and emotional static continues to overwhelm any further study. Too much separation, and the event is lost. It is too far away to study. Just as in craft, Clearing a Space is not an absolute nor final separation. It is just so, and allows for a greater intricacy and new connections.

Focusing, as I had understood it in the early 1980's when I first started using it, was a therapeutic way of facing, understanding, and transforming my inner anxieties and abundant reactions. But in time, I realized that Focusing had also become part of my work as an artist and craftsman. I found it right there with me, informing both the design phase and the craft phase of my daily work.

Lunchtime is a break from the dirty, loud, intensive environment of a working shop. We wash our hands, take a seat, have a drink to wash down a little sawdust and let out the breath. Once a week, we take turns raising a question or observation about our work. Someone brought a polished, black marble sphere about five inches in diameter and passed it around. It fit the hand nicely and the weight of it could be felt throughout the body. The question was then raised, "What is the meaning of a sphere?" This was certainly an odd question and seemed to make a category mistake. How could an object or shape mean something? And yet there was this undeniable satisfaction in holding this inedible, inoperative thing. The satisfaction clearly ran throughout the body, the mind, and the feelings. Slowly, tentatively we entertained the idea that various meanings were clustered about this thing. One by one words and phrases were ventured: unity, completion, simplicity, singularity, intelligence, responsive, infinite, fluid, impenetrable, mysterious, inwardness, consciousness and primordial. Designers also have a use for Handles.

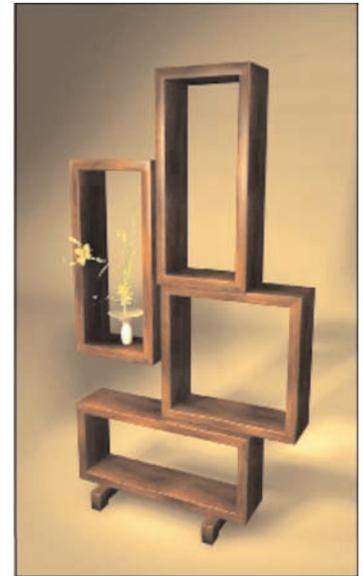
Focusing is a self-correcting model for understanding. Several important characteristics follow from this. Focusing is a procedure that requires us to walk through a series of distinct, even contradictory, steps. We separate from something. We join to something that we had forgotten. Progress is often small, but it accumulates greatly over time. Simplicity is coaxed out of complexity. Fresh complexities emerge out of simplicity. Understanding slowly aligns itself with something more genuine. Feedback in the system reflexively guides future interest and questioning. I am both stuck and intelligent. My craft is also stuck and intelligent. Craft and Focusing both operate in the barely perceptible space between where we are and where we are headed.

With practice, a bit of magic begins to happen. Practice is not simple repetition. The "repetition part" is the visible part of an iterative exploration of how the body, its effort, and the task can come into a closer accommodation to each other. During the iterations, something is being "looked for." In classic Focusing, what is being looked for is the Felt Sense, a Handle, and a Shift. In the practice of a craft, one is looking for a variation on these very same things.



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When I am stuck, I stop merely manipulating the wood. I relax my frustration or fear and try to receive something. I don't necessarily stop trying to cut that dovetail, but something attentive comes forward that can listen at the same time. The tunnel



*Walnut Display Unit, a sprite shelf system or room divider inspired by Japanese tansu.*

I feel as if I have been looking through shortens and opens up. My felt sense stretches from the inside toward the end of the blade. I feel the wood directly now. I am no longer receiving distant messages through the tool. The tool is now an extension of my hand. My tool now sees, even as it acts on the wood. The work is actually magnified. The tiny area of my focus expands within and opens up new detail. My body has positioned itself differently. Now the force comes up from the ground and through my body and does not stop until it reaches the wood. I feel a circuit close between the ground and the action at the wood. Something clumsy, dark, and stopped is now full of light and current.



David Orth's most recent work, SACRED TREE.

When we bring Focusing to our physical work or play, whatever that may be, it has the effect of elevating routine activities to a new level of craft. The distances from head to heart to body--and from all, to our work--are distances to be measured, triangulated, spanned and relished, by all.



## CREATIVITY AND FOCUSING IN ART MAKING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

By ROBIN KAPPY, FOCUSING TRAINER, NEW YORK, USA



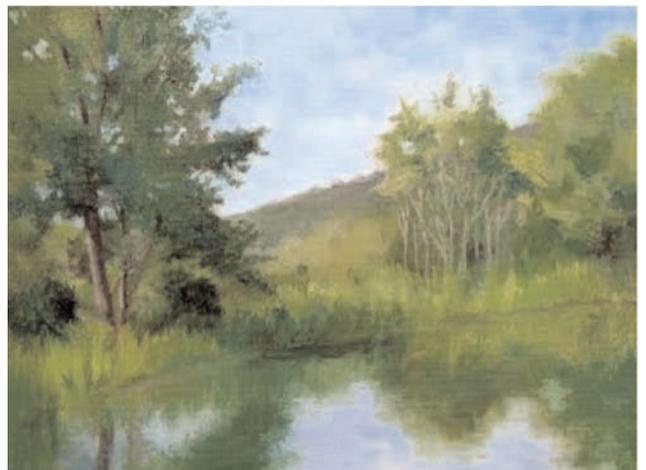
Robin Kappy can be reached at [robinkappylc-sw@verizon.net](mailto:robinkappylc-sw@verizon.net). Robin Kappy's websites are linked at <http://www.focusing.org/cfp-page/478/kappy.html>. Additional samples of her artwork can be seen at [www.robinkappy.blogspot.com](http://www.robinkappy.blogspot.com)

"In our research we have discovered that from this bodily felt sense you can move to further steps of new thought, which are not possible in any other way," Eugene Gendlin, "Focusing and the Development of Creativity," *The Folio*, 1(1), 13-16, 1981. A river of curiosity runs through my process as a psychotherapist and artist, nurturing a creative flow of meaningful growth and change. My curiosity moves me in unexpected directions along my metaphoric river. As Walt Disney said, "We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things, because we're curious . . . and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths." ([http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Walt\\_Disney](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Walt_Disney)). Focusing is about allowing something unexpected to happen. It is this Focusing sensibility that I bring to my psychotherapy practice and my art.

Being with a client brings something of the same felt sense I have when sitting across from a subject I am drawing or painting. The felt sense asks me to quiet myself, listen and observe, until something energizing, unexpected, and/or forward moving has space and a place to emerge. With a "beginner's mind" approach, I invite myself to place my assumptions aside to be more fully curious and open to the river's flow.

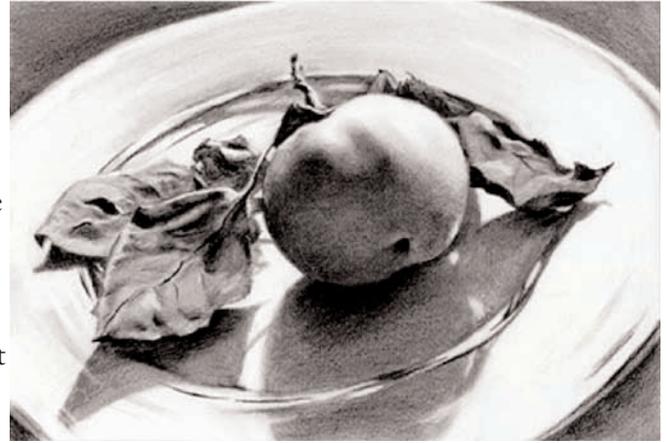
Whether engaging in a psychotherapy session or creating art,

I ask myself to attune to the whole situation before zooming in on details. In the initial stages of drawing or painting, I invite my felt sense to guide me in creating the overall composition, design, gesture or context. I focus on seeing large shapes and placing them in correct proportion to each other. Then, directed by my bodily felt sense, I open myself to the details, curiously waiting to discover their importance as aspects or parts of the whole as the work develops. In a psychotherapy session, I listen for the felt sense of the person in relation to their whole situation, before assuming that any one detail is most important.



However, sometimes I start to spin in an eddy of confusion *Painting of Andes Pond*

along my river, forgetting to allow my curiosity to guide me, and getting stuck, instead, on distracting associations or conflicts. These are moments when I am blocked in my capacity to bring pencil to paper or to listen. At times like these, I am caught in a whirlpool of thought and feeling that distracts me from a more open and creative process. It is only when I pause and become present to the experience of being caught that I can free myself enough to stop my struggles and create a moment when I am open to a fresh possibility. I first find my way back to the flowing river when I let go of trying to get out of the rough spot in familiar, ineffective ways. The opening then presents itself as a creative solution.



*Drawing of Crab Apple*

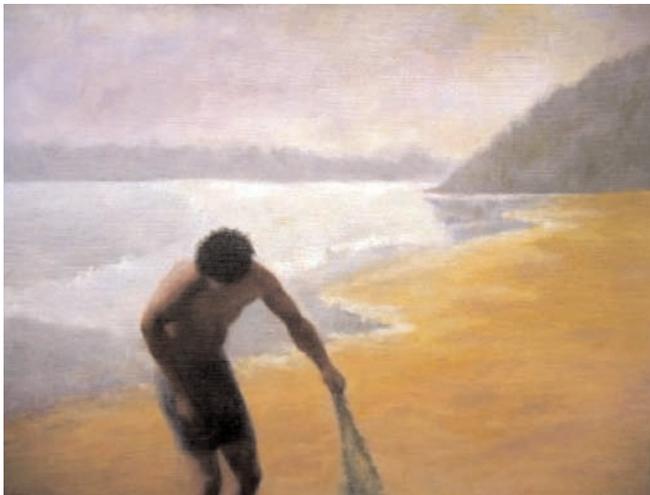
Similarly, the more I listen to a client the more I can hear the person amidst their situation, and their relationship to that situation changes in the process of being heard.

Something creative has a chance to happen. We may stop together along the river for nurturance, empathy, and safety . . . and remain there in a secure place. Or we may simply pause in those places to attune to the felt sense, gain understanding, and change the context of the situation. Or we may just enjoy sharing a curiosity about what will come. If I too quickly narrow my focus to concrete details in a psychotherapy session, I may miss the felt sense, feeling or direction of the whole person and/or situation.

This is just what happened with one of my clients. After he left my office, I found myself in an eddy of rumination about the session. Dave had arrived and left the session feeling dejected over the loss of a friendship, and he was flooded with negative thoughts about himself and his friend. I felt I had focused too quickly on one aspect of his narrative, rather than on his felt sense, which might have opened to a larger understanding of his state of being.

Over the week, I stepped back from the details of the situation and placed my attention on my larger felt sense of him with a soft, diffused awareness, attuning to his deeper process. As I invited an unclear felt sense of him as a presence, I asked inside what he needed and how I might best assist him and sensed his need for time to be sad without intervention.

When Dave arrived at my office the next week, I quietly offered him a safe and open place for his sadness. He continued to speak of his friendship and came to realize the relationship had not been satisfying enough and that he had often longed for more connection. As the session ended, he had gained compassion, a broader sense of himself, and found a desire to be more present in his relationships. By attending to the larger whole of Dave's experience, I had provided him with empathy and attunement to his bodily felt experience, and this gave room for something fresh to emerge out of his process.



*Painting of Mexican Night*

Our psychotherapy session provided the possibility for creative interaction: the client directed me, as I directed the client. When drawing a complex subject, my eyes and pencils travel along the piece as if exploring a new land, my felt sense guiding my hand towards a softer or harder touch or direction. I step back frequently to get a sense of the whole work and what it calls for as it is being created. The big picture informs me as I continue to engage intimately with the work. The work directs me as I direct the work.

The first drawing I remember caring deeply about was one I drew of the Beatles as they performed for their first time on the Ed Sullivan show in 1964. I was 11 years old. I remember experiencing a different felt sense about each one of the Beatles as I drew, and marveled at how this came though in my very primitive drawing. To this day, it is my "felt sense" that directs me as I work as an artist, and as a psychotherapist. This is much more important to me than technique.

Focusing reminds me to be curious. As an artist, I find great satisfaction in allowing my felt sense to guide me

in the creation of something new, fresh and not fully expected, and in touching the felt sense of a viewer in unpredictable ways. As a psychotherapist, I appreciate how trusting in my felt sense can open up my client's experience and my own. When my work as a psychotherapist is meaningful, I experience the work as art.



## ***BODY-RHYTHMS AND THE MOVEMENT OF SOUND: INTEGRATING SOMATIC APPROACHES TO HEALING***

*By FRANCESCA CASTALDI, Focusing Trainer and Coordinator, California, USA, and Italy*

From an external point of view, my behavior as a Focusing guide has little to do with the practice of West African dance, or Contact Improvisation and Motivity (low flying trapezes and bangies) to which I dedicated so many years of my life. Yet from an internal point of view, my interaction with clients unfolds as a dance. The sensibilities I have developed as a dancer function implicitly while I actively call on them in the Focusing interaction. This implicit functioning does not interrupt the flow of a typical Focusing session and therefore does not involve a renegotiation of the Focusing contract with clients, yet it supports deep levels of somatic integration.

As a dancer, I approach each Focusing session as a choreography in which I attune to the rhythms, impulses and stirring of another while following their flights of spirit and memory, or the wondrous imaginings of dreamtime coming alive even in awakened states. This intimate attunement coordinates improvisations at several levels: within the Focuser, in our interacting, and in our attuning to the larger dance of life. We dance to a polyrhythmic ensemble of time-lines, from the most immediate (i.e., the blinking of the eyes, the gurgling of the stomach, a sudden gasp of fear, the upset at the neighbor today), to the most ancient (i.e., the intergenerational fallout of migration or gendered wars, or the million years old history of the human spine). My own presence to these multiple rhythms and levels of experiencing engages me in an informed resonating with the somatic states of the client (which I call “somatic resonance”) while inquiring into their affective and symbolic dimensions, and at the same time offering my own body-field as a stabilizer and a modeling of peaceful containment. Within this way of working, I also look for a more explicit engagement of somatic movement that can be useful to the client and that arises directly from our interaction in the Focusing process. For this purpose I have chosen the practice of Continuum--developed by Emily Conrad and in which I have trained intensively since 2008--for the way it integrates with the Focusing approach to complex trauma developed by Shirley Turcotte and also with Somatic Experiencing by Peter Levine.



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I will briefly say that Continuum is a practice that explores the continuity between sound and motion, engaging the dance of breath and tissue to awaken the fluid nature of our being. As we are composed of 75% to 60% of water (shifting from infancy to old age), how do we interact with this mysterious quality of our being? If we do not reduce ourselves to chemistry, we can be free to wonder: how is our fluid nature inherent in our being human, and a healthy human at that? Continuum asks these questions engaging each practitioner in a “moving research” as both a personal and collective exploration. The following summarizes a session in which I engage Continuum within the context of Focusing.

### **The Dance of Fluids:**

Hillary is a woman in her 50's who approached me in the context of her breast cancer diagnosis, which came as a surprise and required immediate surgery. My intervention was intended as a time limited one, essentially for pre-surgery preparation and immediate post-surgery support.

During the pre-surgery time, my dance approach to the sessions with Hillary functioned at the implicit level along the lines outlined above and mostly engaging the field of somatic resonance. I used my own corporeal field to both sample and track her somatic states and as a stabilizing resource (i.e., modeling a calm breath, a relaxed muscle tone and voice, and a kind connection with our surroundings).

Hillary was mostly concerned about not wanting chemotherapy and being afraid to find out that the cancer had spread to the lymphatic system. In my own being I could sense how facing the possible news of such a spread activated in her a strong shock-response that could inhibit if not harm her recovery from surgery. We then worked on preparing for the worst without going into physiological shock. This involved a great deal of sacred work in which I integrated the principles of Somatic Experiencing and Focusing to support a client-centered and body-centered spirituality that helped Hillary connect positively with her feeling of mortality and enter the surgery (and the state of anesthesia) without fear.

Fortunately the surgeon found that the cancer had not spread to the lymph nodes and no chemotherapy was prescribed. Yet Hillary had received a breast implant and adjusting to it was difficult. Hillary found that the implant at times felt like it “turned to stone”--something that happened quite often, and particularly when she was tired. The tissue around the implant would constrict and cause a kind of cramping in the whole area of the chest, immobilizing the fluids and making the silicon of the breast feel “hard like stone” and painful.

I drew on the principles of Continuum for a direct intervention. In Continuum we use sound to activate the fluids in our tissue and thus open up and soften different parts of the body as well as the body as a whole. Particular sounds are made on the exhale without forcing the diaphragm and while maintaining a low pitch that has calming qualities.

I experimented with Hillary which of two sounds was easier and most comfortable to her, testing between an E and a “puffed O” sound (made by puffing the cheeks). I felt it was more important to find something easy and acceptable to her than to apply the perfect sound to her condition.

Before making the sound I invited Hillary to scan her body in relation to her breathing. Could she feel the movement of her breathing reaching her back? Could she feel it in the pelvis? Did she sense any tension in the back of her neck? In her jaw? How was her belly? Once we had this baseline (a term of Continuum), I did the sounds with her, in a seated position, in a cycle of 4 or 5 breaths.

Hillary chose the O sound to work with. I then invited her to self-touch around the breast (away from the scarred tissue and just at the edge of it), holding the hand in one spot while sounding on the exhale. I joined her by doing the same on my body. Every so often I invited her to enter into “open attention” (again a specific term in Continuum). In “open attention” the person listens to the whole body, to receive the effect of the sounding and to notice if an impulse for any subtle moving has been stirred, following it with an open attitude. Each little impulse is received, supported, and “bathed” in a kind of moving stillness. We shifted several times between sounding and open attention, for about 20 minutes.

I then invited her to check back with her baseline and describe verbally what she was sensing and if she could notice any difference from when we started. Among other subtle body changes, she reported a sense of softening and opening in the breast area and a definitive lessening of the pain. She also expressed a sense of calm wonderment that something so simple and gentle could have such an immediate effect. This was our last in-person session. I continued to check-in with her via phone over the course of two weeks.

Hillary reported that she would apply the sound often, as needed--that is--when she felt the silicon breast becoming hard--and also before going to sleep. This brought her immediate relief and thus motivated her to continue. The simplicity of the process and its self-directed nature also fostered a sense of agency and empowerment especially welcomed at this time. She could feel that she was not at the mercy of her own body nor of medical doctors.

Emily Conrad who created Continuum writes: “Breath will start to activate our fluid systems and bring about novel intrinsic interactions where the throb of life becomes apparent.--movement stimulated by using breath--brings warmth and flow to what once appeared to be frozen and unresponsive.” (for full article see <http://www.continuummovement.com/article3-textonly.html>)

Hillary could feel this herself, her body giving her unmistakable biofeedback. In Continuum we “feed” our body with self-made sounds, thus potentiating the breath and its motion, and fueling our bio-system with its most essential nutrient.

“All breath is movement. All movement originates with inhaling and exhaling. All movement becomes elaborated by the breadth of breath.” (Conrad, 2007:143) Continuum is to me like Focusing in that it has broad applications. It is both simple and intricate, reaching into deeper and deeper layers of our organic wisdom; it fosters self-

referencing and direct experiencing; it slows us down and helps us relinquish our cultural conditioning; it connects us to greater and greater wholes, and it cannot be easily understood without experiencing it. At the same time Continuum and Focusing differ in significant ways and thus amplify each other.

Focusing opens people to trust their embodied nature in a culture that is deeply distrustful of our organismic wisdom and agency. In doing so people also open up to practices that, albeit deeply healing, often sound too alien or foreign and strange if presented by themselves. In this sense I find Focusing a great connector and bridge to the world of somatic/dance/body-work practices. For this (and more) I am thankful.



**MANY VOLUNTEERS HAVE TRANSLATED FOCUSING ARTICLES OR TRANSCRIBED FOCUSING TAPES FOR US. OUR APPRECIATIVE THANKS TO THEM FROM THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE!**



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**TRANSLATIONS** *By Isabel Gascon, FOCUSING CERTIFYING COORDINATOR, SPAIN*

Ever since I got in touch with Focusing--such a long time ago!--I have felt the wish to read and understand what was published in other languages. I also felt the importance of contributing to the task of making Focusing available to the Spanish-speaking community.

When Carlos Alemany asked me to translate, I happily accepted. My knowledge of English isn't very good, so I immediately asked my daughters--who have a good level of English--for help. Even though they were pretty small at that time, they helped me a lot; we worked together and step by step, translating articles first, and then videos of some Focusing sessions by Eugene Gendlin.

Translating videos was an arduous and slow task. It was difficult to understand a session, to transcribe it in English first and then to translate it, especially at the beginning, because my daughters didn't know Focusing!

I admit that this has been a way for them to get to know Focusing, to understand what was that "thing" that had kept their mother so fascinated! Their help has been very important, and they have made it possible for many people to hear those sessions and understand what was going on.

As the amount of texts to translate has grown larger, I have counted on many members of the Spanish Focusing Institute to help me, some of them certified trainers now. The whole Spanish speaking community is grateful to them for this work. Here are two of their experiences:

**TRANSLATIONS** *By Ciro Caro Garcia, FOCUSING TRAINER-IN-TRAINING, SPAIN*

I was studying Psychology with Carlos Alemany when he introduced Gendlin in my country at Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid. It was during the third year when, without talking directly about Focusing, he explained to the class-group what it is like to clear a space, and how to retain contact with your inner space. He did it in a vivacious manner and created an internal experience in me which is still alive.

Fifteen years later I'm a practicing psychologist who finds in Experiential Psychotherapy both an anchor and a

trampoline. What to say about translations? I find them exciting and demanding activities, and I enjoy very much struggling with words and expressions, trying to catch the essence of the writer's lived-expressions, at the same time trying to give them back to the reader in an accurate but fresh mode. So, although it is a time-consuming activity, I am thankful for the opportunity to spend some time "focusing on Focusing."

TRANSLATIONS *By LUCIA EMA, FOCUSING TRAINER-IN-TRAINING, SPAIN*

For me, Focusing is a treasure that is always surprising. I am a child psychotherapist who became familiar with Focusing through a friend. It was a way to get in touch with and discover the unknown corners of myself. I never know what I am going to find . . . but it is always valuable and useful.

Translations are a challenge that I have felt unprepared for. I still do not believe I am prepared, but out of curiosity to find testimonies and significant information, I have pushed past my fears. It is very exciting to discover new territories and be the enabler and transmitter of this information to others. Although at times it is not easy to meet the deadlines, it is always a privilege and a satisfaction

TRANSCRIPTIONS *By JILL DRUMMOND, FOCUSING TRAINER-IN-TRAINING, NEW JERSEY, USA*

Some years ago, I heard through the online Focusing discussion list about TFI's project to produce transcripts of Gene Gendlin's presentations and teleconferences. The Institute needed volunteers to transcribe the recordings. I was able to transcribe five, including a teleconference series on "The Philosophy Of The Implicit."

It was a great opportunity for two reasons. First, I was able to hear these presentations, which I had been unable to attend. Secondly, I was able to ponder them. Transcribing takes time and attention to detail, and the careful, slow listening allows understanding to open up. Each time I finished a transcription, I understood Gene's philosophy a little more deeply. I gathered "Ah-ha's" along the way.

Along with what I gained for myself, the transcripts were useful to others. They provided Gene with a detailed written record of what he'd said, and also helped make his presentations more accessible to Focusers everywhere. I feel good about that. So the giving and receiving are inseparable.



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