

FISS 2017 and more...

by Nada Lou

WE came back to the beautiful Garrison Institute property on the Hudson River for our 12th Focusing Institute Summer School this August. In each of these 12 years, many features remained the same and yet each has been so very different. The biggest difference is always new participants who discover that there is such a thing as Focusing available to explore and enrich their lives with. Another big difference is that each teacher has brought fresh and evolving Focusing wisdom.

Although the group this year was smaller than 12 years ago, it was as varied as always. We were happy to receive a group of 7 young Chinese students who were not sure till the last minute if their visas were going to be issued on time. They added a lot of fun, variety, translations, and very upbeat participation at Follies night. It was delightful to observe a young couple from South Korea in their discovery of the Western world. Another young couple showed up the first morning dressed in full burka and Saudi Arabian business outfit. As they relaxed with other participants, their formal outfits relaxed too. Participants from Israel, Japan, and Canada were among other mostly US persons.

We were 4 teachers this year: Ann Weiser Cornell, Glenn Fleisch, and Nada Lou presented morning courses. Tobias von Schulthess inspired the whole group on the first afternoon with something novel to FISS: Focusing and Playback Theatre. Every afternoon, he attracted a following for his very impressive combination of art with a social interaction.

As always, movement exercises were added, with Betsy Powers leading yoga in the morning and Kristin Swiat's gentle movement class in the afternoon. These classes were very popular with everybody.

One evening, Ann and Nada presented "[The Worlds of Focusing](#)" and another night, DVDs of Gene Gendlin were followed by questions and discussion. Glenn offered "Awakening the Body's Life Energy and Spirit" with beautifully composed poetry, music and dance.

For me, it was delightful to take the time and bring back all the memories of 12 years since the first FISS in 2006. Back when Gene gifted us with his presence for an afternoon, we sometimes had over 110 participants attending, which was a lot, but we managed and enjoyed it. All these presentations are saved on DVDs – and in our hearts.

Now we are seeing that "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Our beloved teacher Gene is not with us anymore; webinars are a popular substitute for in-person gatherings; travelling and visas are more difficult to afford. The number of participants has declined and does not justify the great amount of teacher prep and work by TIFI staff.

FISS has successfully served the Focusing community in so many good ways like

*attracting new members

- *fund raising for the Institute
- *providing opportunities for some expert teachers to develop and present their Focusing and TAE related courses
- *creating a friendly, supportive, community-building environment
- *successfully generating the “functional whole” of FISS teachers and TIFI staff.

Ann and Nada have been the teachers at FISS, from the very beginning (in 2006), serving continually for 12 years. A number of others generously shared their wisdom, some for just one year, others for several years:

These are people who were teachers at FISS. We thank them all whole-heartedly:

Nada Lou
Ann Weiser Cornell
Kevin McEvenue
Atsmaout Perlstein
Akira Ikemi
Joan Klagsbrun
Elena Frezza
Rene Veugelers
Greg Madison
Soti Grafanaki
William Hernandez
Laury Rappaport
Glenn Fleisch
Tobias von Schulthess

We also want to thank everybody who supported us through all these years, who came to participate, who began their Focusing life and are still in the organization in different functions. Many people played important supporting roles by helping in a myriad of ways, including Lucy Bowers who was a strong support in the first few years, Eleanor Buscher who steadily held the space for partnerships in the afternoons for many years, and Andrew Nickolson who faithfully attended to all AV needs, keeping our voices loud and PowerPoints clear.

And we want to thank the TIFI staff (Rita Kirsch, Elizabeth Cantor, and Catherine Torpey) who generously and tirelessly reached out and spent endless hours working to make FISS such a success, with a special mention to Melinda Darer who was the Managing Director when FISS was created and whose empowering presence was so much a part of the success of FISS those first years.

for FISS,
Nada Lou