

Touched With Wonder

By Biliانا Dearly

I have wondered over-and-over again about the ‘Focusing attitude’ and the qualities of ‘therapeutic presence’ and ‘therapeutic environment’ over all these years of practicing Focusing and psychotherapy. How can I know if I really embody what Gendlin (1981) described as “friendly listening” or what Ann W. Cornell and Barbara McGavin (2002) named “Self-in-Presence”? And if that is the same as Wholebody Grounded Presence that I have learned from Karen Whalen? It sounds simple, but – it is deceptively simple...

Most of the time I felt that I have embodied some kind of ‘crossings’ of all my learning about quality of Presence with different teachers of Focusing. It also felt as if my body sense of it grew and expanded over time. However, when I started teaching Focusing about 5 years ago, I wondered again about how could I describe it, sufficiently emphasise the importance of it, and help others to find their own experience of it... I have tried a few different experiential exercises and learned from many groups that I have facilitated. I have wondered about how could I adjust them to different learning styles and still stay true to the essence of the Focusing attitude.

I have learned to introduce bodily awareness with some simple Mindfulness related practice. Although that helped my students develop the ability to notice their experience with friendly acceptance, I had a strong sense that something was missing... And I wondered about that ...

I have noticed in my own practice that I can be ‘just the observer’ that is aware of and is allowing what I am experiencing with friendly listening. I have also noticed how something different happens and how much more unfolds if I *wonder* about what I am experiencing and noticing. I noticed that everything inside me liked to be *gently touched with wonder: Oh, there you are... I wonder about you, who you are, ... what are you experiencing... how the world looks like from your point of view...*

And I continued wondering,like a child who is watching something for the first time, ...because every time is actually the first time...

Every time when something is touched with wonder, some alchemy happens, and nothing is the same anymore – it changes and it changes me. The touch of wonder has a rippling effect ... And that is how my ‘wonder’ continually grew. Perhaps that is what Gendlin (1990) meant by saying that we all need to be “a human being with another human being.” I wonder if plants and animals can wonder... But it is so human to be in wonder, isn’t it?

When I teach Focusing I every time wonder about what can we collaboratively create together. Presence has become *a state of being in wonder* for me, a wonder about life that is emerging, that

is co-created. When I have 'Focusing conversation' with a client who is on another side of the planet, I wonder how this process really works and how 'big' is my wonder to touch the other so far away... How can I ever find words and describe the energetics of being present with another human being?

I wonder if every-thing that is continuously touched with wonder of Focusing becomes wonder-full ... I sometimes wonder if that is the way to be fully alive and co-create the 'wonder-full world' ...

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