

Making Concepts From Experience

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Gendlin talks informally about how thinking and bodily experiencing can inform each other, then takes questions from the audience.

I want to tell you about philosophy. It is the other half of my life, actually the main half. Let me tell you my aim here. I've worked on this for many years, so I know it will only half succeed. I want to build you a car - a philosophical car. What I mean is that we can drive a car even if we don't know anything about how a car runs, or about automotive engineering. To know auto mechanics is a whole profession. Well, so is philosophy. To know philosophy takes many years. During the first couple of years, philosophy graduate students run around with a terrible feeling that they don't know what philosophy is. Graduate students. Of course what philosophy is, is controversial. There's six different or any number of different interpretations of what philosophy is, but they don't understand any or them. And it takes about a year or two to get on to it. Then it takes quite a while to get some facility with the different kinds of concepts and strategies. And that's obviously not something that someone who is not a philosopher can undertake. If you can undertake it, I'm all for it, okay? I'm not saying that really knowing philosophy is not necessary because it's necessary in a whole lot of ways. But what I want to do is to build you a car - something you can drive, even though you don't understand the machinery.

I'm going to start by doing this impossible thing of telling you of what philosophy is. You have to understand that's only one version and it's short. I would have a lot to say. But the one thing that's clear is this: Last week I was visiting somewhere and there was a lovely psychologist who came to see me because he's been working on focusing and mathematical models. When we came to talk about it, he told me: "The only thing I don't like about what you're writing is that you say it's the body. Well, the body is the thing that pumps the heart, pumps the blood. Focusing obviously has to go on in the brain." Now, if all I needed was to show him focusing, which is not what we were doing, it wouldn't be hard at all. I did do that at first. I said to him, "Do you ever feel something HERE (stomach and chest)". He thought about it for a while; then he said "No question about it, when my eight months old daughter develops a new thing she can do, I feel it HERE." So we were fine about focusing. But in terms of theory and thinking I had this job now, to get him to distinguish his conceptual thinking about the brain - I don't care if you agree if it's in the brain. You might as well say it's this new communication, or it's electrical, or you could say it's the reticular system, or chemical messages or whatever it is - I needed him to distinguish between his conceptual understanding, which if showing him focusing were all we cared about, we might not take seriously. But the theoretical understanding is very important. It's just that you don't need it for focusing. This man had a concept about the body which wouldn't let him THINK from the body he is in. But he didn't think of what he said as a

concept. What I'm working on now is the distinction. The first thing I want to communicate is that there is a difference between the conceptual understanding and WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT THERE, that which -- once I abstract the conceptual understanding I don't even know how to talk about, right? Whatever the hell it is that you've got there when you're not paying attention just to the conceptual understanding, that's what I mean. You could call it "the felt sense" or whatever. Okay? Up to there, you're with me.

Okay, now, philosophy is concentrated on the conceptual understanding. This is going to be my fast way of saying what philosophy is, so let me say, oversimplifying: There is an old discipline which takes a long time to learn, just to look at the different KINDS OF CONCEPTUAL MACHINERY that there are. -- the different TYPES OF CONCEPTS. Now when I say "KIND" of concept or "TYPE" of concept, I'm doing that my friend, Fred Zimring used to call "eyebrowing." He would say "You know your words don't make sense, but your eye brows go up like this. You're trying to say it with your eyebrows." So do you understand? "Kinds" of concepts? There's a whole field about that. Now let's explain what that means.

1. I have to give you an example. If you understand even one example, you've got it, as far as driving around is concerned. You've got it. If you know a little bit of Freud, then you know that Freud does things by a very familiar method that most of us in science use, namely to chop things up into little units. Freud divides the person into sections. There's the ego and the id and the superego. And then in the superego, there is the ego ideal. Freud will say when you have a dream, that each day residue leads to a different association that has a different problem. To him a dream brings this mosaic. It doesn't make one picture. This little piece goes there, that little piece goes there, and that other thing means something else. At the bottom of the whole thing are little infantile drives. Freud says the body has a bundle of "UNORGANIZED" biological drives. He reduces the person and the living body to a number of drives that are not related to each other and not related to the world outside the body. The living body has to LEARN how those can be satisfied in the environment, and how to put them together into a person. An "ego" has to develop connections to the world and to organize and control these separate senseless drives. Then the ego has to manage between three forces, the super-ego, the drives, and the world.

Now compare that with Jung, for whom everything is one big whole. What he calls "archetypes" or original types are forms of this huge cosmic whole. And then you yourself are some kind of whole with these different archetypal patterns, and because all things are always related within a whole and they all always work together. What Jung calls the "the ego" rotates around "the self," so that both are one whole together. Jung says that the ego goes around the self, and the self is part of the universe. Everything Jung says is in terms of wholes, and opposites that get resolved into wholes. To him a dream is one integrated drama and it brings one holistic message.

I am contrasting these two very ancient styles of thinking. You can compare Plato and the Atomists in Greek times and you get the same different strategies. Now I want to have taken you a step. Do you see that I'm not talking about bodies or about people or about anything now? When I compare Freud and Jung, I'm no longer talking about what a person is or about

psychology or the ego, or dreams. I'm not talking about anything - except THE TYPE OF CONCEPT. I'm saying, see there you have chopped up entities and over here everything is in a whole. Do you see what I mean?

Okay, another quick example of the holistic model is the modern ecology movement which you all know. They've made use of this wholeness type thinking by saying that everything is part of one big Whole, so that if you change for instance some little thing about these fish, you really mess up the whole system, right? We all know that there is some power in that way of thinking. But there is also of course power in the more common way of chopping things into units, and combining them in a mathematical way of thinking, right?

And please see that I'm not talking about fish and I'm not talking about mathematics. I'm talking about two kinds of concepts? Are they clear? Well, there are more kinds. And I'll sketch another real fast. But if you hang on to those two, you've got it, in terms of my first thing I want to give you if you don't have it already. When you think, make that distinction. Notice that the KINDS OF CONCEPTS are not the same question as whatever you're thinking ABOUT. This frees up what you're thinking about from certain ancient issues which never go away - whether you should use square graph paper or the kind of graph paper that has circles. You know what I mean? That's not about people and it's not about anything else either. It's about conceptual strategies.

A third kind of approach is, for example, family therapy. They are neither like Freud nor Jung. They talk about a holistic system but it's only the family. And the system is defined by the family-interaction. They don't want to know about politics, ecology and all those things. Family life makes one system, and within that, yeah. The individual who comes to therapy is called "the person in whom the family trouble manifests," as they say. You see? It's the system of interactions that needs the help. Each of the people might be lovely and sane outside the system, but within the family interaction each is disturbed. In this approach an interaction process makes a whole not THE whole, and not chopped-up entities. This is the interactional model -- everything is understood as process, not things, not atoms, not units, not entities. Those can be derived from interaction process. First there is interaction. There would also be more strategies to tell about, and they can be differently compared. So first notice the kind of model, the kind of concept being used.

Now, with different models, what is it that keeps me from ending up saying that everything is arbitrary and you can say whatever you please? This question is really a problem for every approach, as soon as one knows that there are many approaches and many conflicting conclusions. It seems to mean that everything is just up for grabs. This brings me to my second point.

2. What I call the experiential method consists in letting the statements that we read or make, (I'll come back to "make"), LETTING STATEMENTS MEAN THE EXPERIENTIAL VERSION OF whatever they're about. It means we can think our next step from the experiential version, rather than only going with the type of concept. (Of course, we can always go on from

the concept with logic as well.) If we think from what we have there experientially, then even if the concepts become various and arbitrary, we think from something that isn't arbitrary, and doesn't depend on whatever theory or concept you use.

Concepts contradict each other, but experiences do not. You can have all the experiences which these contradictory concepts can locate for you.

Now, if you understood my first point, the three models and how concepts can be distinguished from -- now I'm calling it the "experiential version" -- then we're no longer arguing whether there are these drives and an ego that must control, or a family system, or the cosmic archetypes and the self. We recognize that the conflicts are largely between the concepts being used. Instead, we understand that they're all about people, right? They all get at something we might want to find. Then if we think from what each of those lets us find, we need not be stuck within any one cognitive approach.

This experiential way of thinking is something new. Until now the variety of approaches always made for relativism and arbitrariness, or simply a preference for one approach. That's because the choice seemed to be between conflicting concepts. Philosophers didn't know where to go to get beyond the variety.

But this is not simple. As I said earlier, if you abstract the kinds of concept from something you're thinking, what do you have left? Well, all of it! But what do you call that? What are you going to call it? The minute you call it something, you're in one of these or another. This has to be recognized. When I call it "experiential," another philosopher will think of certain definitions of that word, in one of the well known approaches or another. Worse -- the other philosopher will think that we don't know that THAT, which we feel or have directly always has implicit concepts in it. That's so even if we only feel something and have never explicated it ourselves. But I emphasize that the implicit concepts never encompass and determine this, which is always wider than the implicit concepts.

Should I call you an "ego, id, and super-ego," or should I say you are the "individuals in whom your family system manifests itself?" Or should I say you are part of the whole cosmos? Or what should I say? Or if I say it's "experiential," and someone wants to know what this is, what shall I say? The EXPERIENTIAL METHOD consists in taking any statement and letting it mean THAT. So at first it seems that it means hash, or 'ugh,' or something like that. But we're accustomed to that from focusing, so with this audience I don't have much trouble with this part. After a minute, THAT opens into further steps, little steps you cannot get from the concept.

In this way we don't get relativism, just many viewpoints and arbitrariness. Relativism comes only if there is nothing but various cognitive approaches. We can let any statement mean the felt sense that it brings us, and THINK FURTHER FROM THAT.

3. Now a third point. If you do that in thinking as you know from focusing, then when you use somebody's theory, you will find that WHAT YOU'RE REFERRING TO TURNS OUT TO BE MUCH MORE INTRICATE than the theory. Lets take for example Freud's castration complex. All difficulties according to orthodox psychoanalysis are of oedipal difficulties. Women Freud didn't understand too well. Now, what I'm saying is if you let Freud's concept mean not only what Freud meant it to mean, if you let Freud's concepts mean whatever you get experientially and also what other people that you listen to get experientially, then you will find that what you've got is more intricate and more interesting. Not only is it valid because you're living it, so it's already here, but it's also more intricate than the old concept, more exact, so that you have to make up new ones. We can take any concept to mean WHAT SOME PERSON CAN LOCATE. If you say to yourself, suppose I have castration anxiety. Where would I find it? You will very quickly find it. Then you can have a big hang-up and say what am I, a focusing woman, doing with Freud's male castration complex? Don't fall for that, because you can use the concept as a location pointer. Anyone can find it. Any concept is a bad map for where you're really living. So you say what's a good map? There aren't any because the territory is not just one flat territory; it lends itself to many maps and responds to them, but always with AN INTRICACY THAT EXCEEDS MAPS.

When you have a map, you look and "it says there should be a house here." Then you look on the ground and you find six shacks instead of one house. So you say, "ah, I see." Then keep the six shacks. Don't trade them in for a merely conceptual house. That's the big point we will keep with us the rest of my talk. The specific things that you find, they're much more intricate, not only more intricate than Freud's concept, they're MORE INTRICATE THAN OUR PUBLIC LANGUAGE HAS AS YET. We keep those intricacies and we think from them.

In focusing and therapy you are used to this, but when you THINK in the way I'm proposing, it may leave you feeling lonely and somewhat autistic, like you're thinking in a swampy soggy place all by yourself. You've got these different strands or strings of something and you don't know what to call them. They don't seem to have any public language, and if you are experientializing some author like Freud, you say, "Did he mean this strand here, or that one? Well he didn't. He meant an entity, not these intricate strings. When you look down there, you don't find his entity. What you find is this spider web of stuff, as you always do in focusing. So you have to say that's at least one version, my version. The next people you listen to have other spider webs. You let yours and theirs stand.

Now the big point again: From the intricacy you can think in further ways that cannot follow from the concept. It is not the case that these strands all fit under the concept. A concept locates some experience which can then lead us further to more strands, and when we think from those we may deny, redo or modify the very concept that led us there. We would continue to value such a concept since it provides the entry to all this. And of course, at times we also want to think from the concept. But thinking from experiential intricacy is very different than from the concept.

You have to be strong here. You have to stand the fact that this seemingly soggy autistic web is just your particularity for the moment. Also, the strands will not come nice and cleanly separate. That which you find may seem unreal, but it is more real and more valuable than the concepts. We already have those in the library. They have been written and commented about for almost a hundred years. You can move them around some more if you want to, if you really have to, if you have to do a paper for a course for instance. But that's not valuable. What would be valuable is if you could bring to the public language some of what you actually find when you let concepts locate something on the ground, inside, in yourself, in your life or in the other person's life. You have to be strong because the first impression of that is usually not very promising. It's like focusing but there we are used to swampy things. In thinking you might feel "why would I ever want to tell anybody about this?" Or "how would I even tell myself about this?" What I've said so far is new for thinking. When it's applied in focusing, you are totally accustomed to it. Whatever you find at first, you say, oh yeah, I'm glad I got it now, but I know it can go further, with unpredictable steps. You hold on to it even if you don't yet quite know what it is. In thinking, that's also a first step.

So let us suppose I am thinking. I am building a theory. Somewhere along the line I use Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex. I experientialize it. I might find that I sometimes feel small; maybe scared to go and get what I want. These are strands of this spider web, there is always a lot more if we go into any bit of it. Say I'm afraid of action, afraid of sticking my neck out. Right? According to the theory, that's all because I have a wish for my mother and the fear of my father's threat is still there. This is in the way of sexual freedom, and also all kinds of action. Of course you can now think further from Freud's concept and get the regular stuff, and you might want that for some purpose. About sticking your neck out, of course, your head is a substitute for your penis and you're afraid to stick it out. But that's not new. I have to go on in, further, back into the experience, and there I will find leads to further thinking that are not already in the library. I might find I'm afraid to take actions, not only because of what Freud said, that my father will punish me, but since this has made me not very good at action, I now have a record of bad actions. So, that's circular. I'm not good at it cause I'm scared, and by now I'm scared cause I'm not good at it and it fails. That's already a second circle. Now I might have a sense that there is something new here. Second circles are interesting! Why? There is what's like what he said, but also something I don't yet have words for. You won't easily find that second circle thing in the library, even though it is only one step in. I don't promise that it's all new. But we often find second-circle patterns, and on many issues, not just on this one. I know something about second circles -- I'm not sure what it is yet. I have often found that one must let a felt sense come for the whole of the second circle, so one doesn't get stuck going round on it. This now is a good example of a lead for thinking and theory. Here is a new question, something about this relation between one felt sense, one circle, and the many factors on the circle. All this is no longer just under the concept. Already now this little pattern turns out to have a wider extent.

My third point is: Stand what you actually find which is ALWAYS AN INTRICACY, a spider web, and then think from that. It is always a specificity, an intricacy, a spider web which does not all fit under the concept. Now I want to emphasize thinking from the intricacy for another

reason. If you don't think from that, then you will fall into the old concepts -- the old approaches. Without more philosophy, only the intricacy will save you. You now have a little bit of philosophy, so when you think something, you can look at it and say: "Oh yes, this is that strategy of wholes - oh yes, this is the strategy of atoms. But you would need to be much more familiar with these strategies from many written works, so that you could move across from one to another easily. Without this you will just fall into the most common assumptions that exist in the language today, and you won't know it, and you won't do anything interesting.

But on the level of the spider web, thinking from the strands, that level of specificity is something that the old concepts just cannot grab. So then you're out of them. You can let both Freud's and Jung's theory play on your spider web, and see what it might bring out from the web. But the old concepts cannot entrap you if you hold on to your specifics, what you actually find..

(Audience member: The spider web is this thing that we call experience?)

Yeah, yes. The spider web is experience. The spider web is the felt sense. The spider web is when you let anybody's concepts guide you to your own version of it, then I CLAIM THAT YOU DON'T FIND THE CONCEPT, YOU FIND THE SPIDER WEB. I don't believe that anything that has ever been named in psychology is true. Because I have never been able to find it as such. It's always much more intricate and different. What I call "experience" is what we find. I find a tapestry. I get a Persian rug. I get a spider web. Do you see what I mean? Which you're familiar with from focusing. But when you think, do that too. Don't do what we were taught in school, that the only way to think is to leave yourself behind and leave everything you know behind, and operate just these terms that they give you. That's not thinking. That's repeating.

Now when you come to speak or think from this spider web, you pick out one live strand. It should seem to you at that point that there are no words that fit what you want to say. Typically there are at first no words that fit. Something seems significant, but what do I call it? Many words are offered to me. This applies in any field. You might be thinking about physics and you might be thinking that there's something funny about this here. And all you really can say is that there's something funny about this here. Nobody else thinks there's something funny about this here and you don't know how to say it. At first there may be no words.

But the fact that no words fit is not so obvious to people who are not experienced with thinking. I've got to get you to the point where you would realize that the words don't fit. I got to convince you that there is no such thing as love, there is no such thing as authenticity, there is no such things as meditation, there is no such thing as focusing, there is no such thing as hypnosis. When you're thinking, you recognize that focusing is all the many different things that people do, when they so-called "focus." So we recognize that focusing is some kind of label we put here so we can be together. And then there's the six steps, well they sort of help you, like a rope through the jungle. In the everglades they have a rope that you hold on to, as you walk on a

little walkway made out of wooden planks, a little way into the jungle. So the six steps are like that.

Well everything else is also like that. Whatever word is used, whatever it is isn't that.

So you don't want to use the usual words -- any word. If you stay strong, you can sense that none of those words do the job of saying your thing. As soon as you settle for one of those words, you've lost your thing. Don't let any words take your thing away from you. Forget it. You're back in the library. Don't call it anyone of those things. Call it "that gizmo" or "that damn thing" or "whatever the hell it is" or "what Joe meant," or something like that. Give it some kind of name and don't call it one of those things, okay? Okay.

Now when we're at the point where there are no words, then comes a stage where you can use ordinary language to make new sentences to describe it. Once you've left those terms behind. Your thing won't be "affect" and it won't be "feeling" either, or "emotion" or "desire" or "mind" or "idea." It won't be the technical term and it also won't be one ordinary word, either. If you will describe it not by one word, if you're willing to make phrases, to give yourself room to write a whole sentence or two, then you can. There's a whole philosophical background here, that shows that words do not have fixed meaning. Words work poetically. They work metaphorically. They can always say something new again. Don't lose your thing. Make new phrases to speak from it.

(Audience member: inaudible.)

Well yes, in focusing "a handle" is typically one word or two words, I know what you mean. You might get a handle-word first, and that can help, especially if it is a weird, crazy, and hyphenated. That helps hold it for you. A handle has that inner connected power to hold the thing. But of course what the word means in the world will not be this odd, new, special, intricate thing you've got a hold of.

Then when you write a couple of sentences, it's important to be strong again, and make your sentences odd, so they don't make sense except to say your thing. You can do this if you own the piece of paper on which you're writing. Those are private sentences. I teach students, I'm a professor at the University of Chicago, right? I teach students to own this piece of paper. Write something like "fuck" on top of it. Then you know this piece of paper is not what you're going to show people. If you want to show something you'll copy it. This one here is your piece of paper. If you write new phrases free-style, you will find that the language has all these infinite poetic possibilities. Where words like "love" or "authenticity" can't do it, an oddly twisted phrase will let the old words change.

First there's no words, second you write free-style, and you discover you can use all the words. You can even go back and use the technical words provided you stick them in sentences that twist them up good enough so that they can't mean what they usually mean. Instead, you

are strong and you are making them mean what YOU mean. Then you keep fiddling and adjusting them until you like them.

Even if I were to use an old word, call it "love," I've got to know that it's love sub-g, this specific I've got here. I'm just using that name like I would call it George, only I'm calling it "love." I can't allow the word to put its meaning on my thing because then I lose my thing. I have to hold on to my thing, and the word means my thing. Then I may find a phrase after a while, it could be wild, and mean only what I mean. I was trying to think of a sentence that would have love in it and yet you would all understand that it doesn't mean what you mean by love. What it means you may not know but at least you know you don't know what it means. And that's the kind of sentence that I ask students to write. I say: "Write a sentence that either they don't understand what it means whatsoever or they get your point."

And the same thing that applies to the words applies also to the logic. Now I have to talk a little bit about logic. I have to say that logic is made for already cut units. Logic and mathematics are basically the same thing. They can be converted into each other. You know mathematics and what I need you to know about logic is obvious in mathematics. You know that if you start with 57 you mustn't end up with more units than 57. I mean you can end up with 50 plus 7 or you end up with 100 minus 43 or any version, but you mustn't drop out any of the units and you mustn't add any. When you do your checkbook it's like that, you know. All right. I shouldn't tell you about my checkbook. Now mathematics only works because they make us assume that units exists - little entities - little boxes - little one and ones, you know, and the unit are all alike. Then it works. And logic works and is extremely powerful. The reason we have microphones and airplanes and much else is because of logic, so don't put it down please. If you put logic down, you just get helpless while logic marches on and builds more and more things in the world. So you can say bad things about logic, but that's is not very effective. Logic is a graph paper system but it is enormously powerful because it really leads you somewhere. When you say to somebody, "three across and three down," they find the exact point, when we play battleships. And first three down and then three across gets to the very same place! Logic works very powerfully but it works only within the already cut units. The units are cut in a certain way and then logic picks up. But as soon as you add one more unit to it, the whole thing is disorganized. If you say 57 plus 3 is 60, but if I get 57 plus 3 is 1000 because one of the 3s is my uncle? Then you laugh. You say that's not mathematics, you see. But the point is that if I'm inviting 57 people and I add three more and one of them is my uncle, it does shoot the whole logic, if you know my uncle. So the point I'm making is on the one hand logic is very powerful but only after the units are cut, and if you keep them fixed that way.

When you get to your spider web you will notice that the units are not already cut. One of the wonderful and troubling facts about experience is that it does not come in convenient mathematical units. That's not how it comes. So you can take this moment and you can see, is this ONE unit moment? Am I having THREE feelings just now? You might feel that your chair's uncomfortable and you wish you understood what I'm was saying and some other thing, so it's three. Well you could get 50 things out of it if you had time, if I let you think for a minute, just out of one moment. You know? Then you can say well a lifetime is short. Talk of life as

one unit. Experience does not come in units. Somebody wanted to say something and I wouldn't let them. Yes -

(Audience member: Is that the reason that when somebody asks you to explain something, and you give the definition, you cannot explain it?)

Absolutely. Absolutely. The only way, explain tends to mean that. But now I'm not sure that I know completely what kind "you can't explain" you mean. So say one more thing so that I don't get hung up.

(Audience member: But then the definition you give this clear-cut concept in a kind of logic, and you get stuck because you are not able to explain it.)

Thank you, now I see. Yes, yes, yes, yes, stuck in the logic. You've all had the experience that you sort of half know or ninety percent know something or really know something and you can't explain it, right? And now I'm saying, he's saying, that's why. The reason you couldn't is because you tried to explain it in the units and concepts that we have in the public language. And those are only good to explain whatever they were made to explain and maybe a little more, but they will not explain your spider web.

You know this from your particular individual focusing. But we're now talking about thinking which means really, MAKING CONCEPTS FOR OTHER PEOPLE FOR THIS SOCIETY. In focusing and therapy, we make up a new vocabulary between us, and the minute you walk out, that's gone. Only if you come back next week, ah yes, it's here again. But if we want to explain, if we want to say something to our colleagues who are not focusing people or to the society, then we have to build new concepts, and that's what I'm now talking about.

Best begin where you already have a felt sense of something specific, some strand or cluster of stuff you would LIKE TO THINK from, but cannot yet do clearly. This needs to be in a territory where you have experience and know something, physics, psychology -- any field.

If you have no such felt sense, you can get one by entering into the intricacy from any sentence in your field, that seems important to you. Experientialize it. The main words in the sentence refer to something that's much more intricate, and the sentence takes off from only one aspect of this. If you've worked a lot in the territory around that sentence, for example in a laboratory, you get many strands behind the main word. Pick one or a cluster of those and if that sentence seemed important to you, you will now soon have a felt sense -- something you know here that you can't yet articulate.

If you can, try to speak-from the felt sense in ordinary language, but make sure you ALLOW THE MAIN WORDS TO CHANGE SO THEY WORK TO SAY WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO MEAN AND SAY. You can put adjectives in front of the old words or use them in odd new phrases, until they do that. Not for one moment do they get to mean what they usually mean. If they cannot speak-from your felt sense, throw them out. That's where you have to be strong

again, because if you write a sentence, and you want it to mean what you want it to mean, and then you read it and it means something else, you change it. It's not allowed to mean something else. As soon as it does you've lost your thing. Very much as you would do in focusing.

Okay. Now, how much time have I used up? I forgot when I started. 4:30? So that's not too bad.

Now if we're really going to make concepts, I would like to take only those of you with me on this next trip who want to make concepts. Those are to communicate to the society. I'll be back soon so as not to bore the others.

If you want to build concepts, logic comes back. You want them in a certain way. My fastest example is the Declaration of Independence. It has this sentence near the beginning. It says, "We take it to be self-evident - a self-evident truth B that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with unalienable rights among which is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And it goes on actually, but I've got to stop there. If you look at all those all words, you will discovery that they are all locked into each other, because a right is a thing that grows out of the nature of the thing that has that right. And unalienable means that you can't sell it or sign it away, you see?

(Audience member: It says inalienable.)

No it says unalienable, but you're quite right. I mean, English today would say inalienable but

(Audience member: No it says its. Among which its.)

Oh I don't know. I don't think so. I think that correction I accept because you're right anyway, but it does say unalienable because I spent time with that. But what it means is that it isn't like a piece of property that you can sell. There have in history been times when property, certain kinds, was unalienable, which meant this piece of land stays in your family and you can't sell it, and everybody in your family has to die out before it moves, that means its unalienable. But if you think about unalienable and right, you will see that rights are INHERENTLY unalienable, and unalienable is the same notion. Then you look at " among which are life, without which there isn't a creature here at all, right? And liberty, which, okay, we can come back to because I don't even have time to really analyze it, but the pursuit of happiness clearly now is like that again. Because what is happiness? Well see, if Jefferson had written in what happiness is, we would have lost it. Happiness is whatever THAT kind of creature will pursue that was created with the unalienable right to pursue. And what does pursue mean? Well pursue means whatever it takes to get the happiness that is whatever creatures pursue who have the right to pursue things like that, you see? And what about the creator? What was Jefferson's theory of God? Well, the creator is whatever this kind of creature comes from. See? And so then you look at "we take these truth" and you say, what's a truth? Who's he to decide what a truth is? No, no. He said the truths are self-evident. Because if they're not self-evident, then it's up to so and so who says

that they're true. And there's always somebody else who says they're not. But they have to be self-evident. Do you follow me?

So that's logic. That makes this what I call a "theory." And the reason he could do that is because there was 200 years of philosophy behind him, John Locke and Hobbes. And they were all arguing, and all that stuff was familiar to him, and so he could write a sentence like that very easily. And he knew that all these terms lock into each other, and if you understand one of them you can get all the others out of any one of them. Right? And it goes on, even to his conclusion which he wanted to derive that way. So the sentence doesn't stop with happiness. It says, and governments are instituted to make those rights work, and if government, all in one sentence, and if governments don't facilitate these rights then it is the right and duty of people to change the government and - don't put a period - to set up new governments on this basis. Then you finally get a period.

Now, in contrast to that, think about what happened a few years later in France when there was the great French revolution, 1789. Around about 1790 I think the French government, the Assembly, the famous Assembly that changed everything, the metric system and the months and everything else, made a Declaration of Human Rights in which it said, the Government of France hereby announces that from now on all citizens shall be accorded the following rights, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and they put them all down on a list. Do you see the difference? You get it?

(Audience member: inaudible).

Exactly. One of them is that the Government gives you these rights; tomorrow they can take them away again because where did you get them? From the government. Right? Okay, that's the political difference. But the logical, philosophical difference is that the French rights are merely listed, just one thing after another. People get to do this and this and that and that and that. A theory is not just one thing after another. In a theory they are locked into each other, so all of them are built into each. Do you see what I mean? A theory is like Jefferson - not like the French one. In a theory, if you understand one concept, you are led to the whole thing. You can get it from any one of them. This doesn't mean you have to build it like that. Just that you would know about it.

Now the next thing I want to say fits here. I've already said that logic only works when the units are already cut. When you think something new, it seems illogical. That doesn't mean that logic won't work there. Before Locke that people would have a right to revolution seemed illogical. Or contradictory. Government is rightful power to keep us from killing each other. A right to revolution is just not amenable to logic. What is new and valuable about your thing will be just that part which seems illogical. Deliberately look for a part like that. And then again you have to be strong. You have to know that if you force any existing logic on it, forget it. You've done the old thing again. You have to allow it to develop its own odd illogical sentences, and then you can develop its own units and its own logic, or, if you're not making theory, you simply need to avoid killing what you've got, because it doesn't fit any logic. That's all, but it's a lot.

Now I want to illustrate those things real fast if I can. If you allow the illogical frame to stand, if you don't lose it, if you play with it, you will see that it has its own patterning, its own way that it is. Then as soon as you keep that and you make one concept for it, say its terribly specific, from then on, that particular unlogical pattern will climb into every next concept and every next thought. It will change what all the words mean, one after another. For the reason that I'm calling Jefferson for fast. Now if I can show you that then I will have done very well.

(Audience member: Only if all those subsequent concepts are built the same way.)

Well let's put it so that it's neither what I said nor what you said. If you want it to it can.

(Audience member: Okay.)

Right? Because he's right. You don't have to build everything the same way at all. But it's exciting to see that you could.

(Audience member: If you want the interlocking...)

Well, okay. If you're building a theory you want the interlocking, but you don't necessarily want it the first way that you can have it. So, he's quite right. I'm overstating it. This little illogic that you would begin with the first five minutes doesn't necessarily have to end up climbing into everything you're ever going to say. All I meant is that if it's the crux of your thing, and if you want a theory, then it can. It can climb into any next concept, and it will illuminate something. Then if you don't want it, and that's all right.

I want to illustrate that by taking one of mine that by now is very familiar to me. I want to take what I call carrying forward. That's what I finally ended up calling it. What it comes from is thinking about the body and how the body knows the next step. If I tell most anyone "The body knows the next step," I get a funny look. I've got me a sentence that doesn't make much sense, because most people's conception of the body is such that this is not just wrong but senseless. And "the body knows" is using the word "knows" in an odd way, and the word "next" becomes mysterious here, and what are "steps" anyhow? So to say the body knows the next step is something you can say in focusing jargon, but it doesn't communicate to the society, right? Yet the sentence does help me hold on to what this. So, back to my story before, by "body" we don't mean what my psychologist thought. We don't mean the machine that pumps the heart, right? I mean we know it does that also, but we mean the body that we speak from. You know, the body that we're sitting there as.

Or, I make a sentence like "I mean the body that you're sitting there as." Well look at that for an English sentence. No editor will accept it. I do have a lot of trouble with editors. But you see that's inherent. Editors want only what can be said in good English. And you can't say anything NEW in good English, because good English comes from the last things that were being said. So don't be afraid of editors, especially not the ones in your head, you see what I mean? Yes, being careful with real editors, fine.

So at first, with something new, make odd sentences that make no logical sense.

To do that, I have to realize that I don't mean by body whatever has already been explained. I mean by body the body that I'm sitting here as. That's the one that knows the next step, right? And I mean by "THE next step" not all the hundreds of steps that I can think of, but precisely the one that I can't think of yet. So I would add another sentence, the body knows the next step that I haven't got yet, or that doesn't exist yet.

Fine! Now we have the body knowing a step that doesn't exist. You see that logic mustn't come in until much later.

Look at "knows." This isn't like knowing. This is like, what? And then it seems I can't find it. If I want a regular right word, there are no words. I wrote down some of them to illustrate that. If I say the body implies, "implies" usually means that what is implied is already there, just hidden, not visible yet. So when I say "implies" to ordinary people, they assume that it's all finished, it just hasn't been unpacked. Imply is like two and two implies four.

I could say the body "indicates" the next step but that doesn't do anything for me. I could say it "makes" the next step but that's not right because the next step has to fit the world. I could say the body "finds" the next step. That sounds again like the next step is already there. It "feels" the next step? Well, no, because at first I'm just stuck. And it goes like that. There are no words for it. Give up. Okay.

But my trouble is that I have a language which says either the next step is already there, or else it isn't there at all. Either there is no nature, culture and science just "construct" it, or we innocently assume it's all there. The whole sophisticated philosophical world these days is stuck between these two. There are the empiricists who think they find nature, and opposed to them are the constructionists who think science and culture invent nature. And it's so obvious that it's neither one of those. You look at any experiment in science, and it's obviously not that you sit there and make it up. And it's obviously not that it's already there because it depends on your experience and your experiment and your machinery and hypotheses. So you're tempted to say you want something between, but no - no - it's not between. Between would be half arbitrary invention and half already there? Between just avoids the new thing. So you go back to the spider web and you say what have I got here? And then you see: "Oh --I have this lovely pattern here. It's just a little more complicated than what we have in the library."

The felt sense FORMS FROM what's there, it wasn't just there, waiting. Then when I focus on the felt sense and the step comes, where was this step? Well it's clear it wasn't there before. But it's also clear that I mean something when I say, this is what that "was trying to be," or what "was implied," or indicated. I might think I should be able to tell myself in old words what I mean, but NO. Well, what do I mean? It takes me a while to figure that out, that I mean THIS, just the way it is here, this funny pattern, not the old stuff. The step is not there already, but it isn't all new and made up, either. I mean there's some relationship here between this new thing that came, I feel the relationship, the connection, the continuity between this new thing that came and what I

had there before. Before I was annoyed, bored, and frustrated, and where I turned to let a felt sense come, a slight not intense felt sense, out pours that I'm angry. And I'm VERY angry, nothing light about it. So was this intense anger in my boredom? Well, that's not right. And yet I say, sloppily, that my boredom WAS really that I'm angry. It wasn't. And yet what I have now is not invented or made up. I probably spent some time making up all kinds of things that didn't do anything. How do I know bored "was really" angry? Because just now the boredom flowed, melted into, (see I'm making illogical poetry sentences again). It flowed, it melted into this angry. Whereas all the other things I said to myself whenever I checked it was still hanging there the same as before. So this pattern is a little more intricate than was already there or wasn't there.

It's not that it was AND wasn't there, it's not a paradox (you could write one on the way to working it out), and it's not half-way between. IT'S THIS MORE COMPLICATED PATTERN HERE. What came is not what was there, but it does have a relationship to what was there. And other proposals fail to have that relationship, just this step does. And there is a little more to this pattern. What felt stuck flows into that next step, whereas the other things let the stuck thing hang there.

Now this turns out to be an enormously helpful concept that I made up, I think thirty years ago. And the world hasn't yet caught up with me on something that now seems so simple. But it's a little more intricate than what the public system has. Not was there, not wasn't there. At first it seemed illogical.

"Carrying forward" also has this cuteness that whereas the usual linear time has only one past tense, this pattern has two different past tenses. There is what actually was which is the boredom, and there is what looking back from now I say "it was," which is the anger. There are two different senses of "was." Does that have to be so bad? It's only a little more complicated than one sense of "was."

Now that I've worked out what I mean, I can go back to those words and use any of them. I can pick "imply," and I build into it this, and I say that's what implying is. Now implying means a la Jefferson. It's how the body implies the next step. That's what implying is. But now I can also make logical sense -- new logical sense -- about implying, and I can go from there. I can say that the life of a living body is that kind of implying. A body implies what it is about to become, if it can. Living things organize what needs to happen. Then if it doesn't, then it does something else. Then it either finds a new way, or the implying continues. Let say it implies feeding. Then, if food doesn't come, the stomach swells up. Eventually it might find a new way to feed, or it dies. It doesn't imply what's already there, only covered up. Stomach swelling isn't already there. Feeding isn't already there.

(Audience member: Retroactively.)

Yes, exactly. "Retroactive time" I sometimes call it, but I was sort of putting some sparkling confusion into the system. But yes, retroactively. So it has two pasts. The literal past and the

retroactive past. Or you can the linear time past and the retroactive time past. Now have let this help me define what a living body is. A body is the sort of thing that knows its next step. Now I can say it implies its next step. And if you don't like implies, I can use another word, which will pull out a further strand of this.

Carrying forward means what was implied is no longer implied. You can distinguish feeding from starvation that way. You can distinguish what carries life forward from what gets it stuck. So already it has a lot of power. But I'm rashly simplifying. Belly swelling up is already an intervening development that makes feeding difficult. It's another kind of step, not what was implied which was feeding, but also not just neutral. It gets in the way from then on. We all know such developments from experience. So there is always further intricacy if we look further. The theory wouldn't stay simple.

Now HOW does the body imply a next step? Does it know, does it have a picture of a next step, or a memory of a next step, or a perception, or an emotion of the next step? None of those, right? With a felt sense, sure. But before we had that term it didn't make sense. Because none of the old terms make sense. So I have to let it be the odd physical thing that a felt sense is. I can't substitute perception or any of the other old notions.

And then, also, I'm building a theory. So I say the body implies the next step WITH ITSELF, with something BODILY. I want to do a Jefferson. I want to say, well, that's what bodies are. What is bodily is INHERENTLY this kind of implying of next steps. So it does its implying with a bodily something -- and this contains everything the body has experienced in all its situations up to then. And we call this a bodily felt sense. And this also tells what 'situations' are -- they aren't just what's around in space, nor inside us subjectively. Lets say my keys are in your pocket. That's not a situation. It's that I left them lying around and you took them and I think you might go into my apartment with them and take something, or a very different situation lets say I gave them to you to keep because I was drunk. Obviously a situation is how the body has lived and implies further living. Rather than telling you a new story about God and a new story about rights and a new story about inalienable and a new story about pursuit of happiness and about governments, I keep building my central story into each next term.

Coming off of focusing, I realize, yeah but we constantly get new steps, don't we, in focusing. We were taught that plants and animals and bodies are machines that always do the same thing. But according to my theory bodies are not like that, right? That's another thing this will do for you. When you have something that doesn't fit what you've been taught, you are led go look. Then you find a whole file full of anomalies that you know about on something like this. Even single-celled organisms, I know, do all kinds of new things all the time. Some amoebae in a little beaker with a chemical that doesn't normally happen in the life of amoebae, and they develops a specific reaction to strengthen their cell walls to keep that chemical out. So living bodies do imply next steps that are new and helpful. "Adaptive" it's called, because in Latin it sounds as if we understood it. You will find if you develop something new from here it often starts to solve anomalies. This is because anomalies are precisely what didn't fit the old

theories. But don't get to be too proud about this because you'll develop your own anomalies that don't fit your theory. No theory is ever going to not have anomalies.

Living bodies are capable of quite new next steps when the circumstances around them change. This is because a next step is not a separate perception - not a separate knowledge - not a separate object. For instance, hunger is the body itself doing the hungering. It's not a perception of hunger. It's like a plant. A plant doesn't have a separate picture of water. It needs water we say, looking at it. But it doesn't have a picture of water, which enables it to say I need that. It's just drying up there, right? And then as soon as you add water to it, it says, ahhh. The plant "knows" the water. But now I'm changing the word "knows" to mean that kind of knowing. You see what I mean? It knows the water with its livingness and it knows the light and it knows the air. It knows them by how it lives, right? Through its life process which is its photosynthesis. It's a making of itself. But it doesn't make itself out of nothing. It makes itself, if the light is there, then it makes. Now that's the kind of knowing and that's the kind of body that I have in my philosophy. It's a being kind of knowing. It doesn't require perception and pictures and representations. I can do a lot with that because that explains much better why focusing is deep when there's another person there for instance. That is like the what the plant can do when the light is there. It explains much of how we know situations, why the body's so smart after living in complicated situations. What it implies, you see my shorthand for this is to say, sure we're human beings and sure we're animals but we're also plants. Of course elaborated by human living and animal perception, but it is really our plant body that does focusing, and has a being-knowing of situations with other people, and comes up with new steps. That's the body I'm talking about. The body that IS the light and IS the water, and IS the interaction with the other person. It's from that one that we know all this stuff. It's that kind of knowing that we do. Do you see what I mean? To think of the body this way frees me from a whole lot of the old concepts.

Now I got to stop here because I want to hear from your experience.

(Audience member: I want to hear the theory that you're still working though. I don't want. . . . let it go. . .)

Maybe later, maybe later, because that wasn't really theory. That's just a spider web. I was going to use it . . . last night

(Inaudible - audience and Gendlin talking all at once)

(Audience member: I was wondering if you've looked at Bohm's concepts of implicit and explicit meaning and thought about it in relation to what you're talking about?)

It certainly sounds right, explicit and implicit meaning, but whose concept?

(Audience member: Bohm's...)

Oh sure, sure.

(Audience member: Because it sounds like implicit meaning, what he calls implicit meaning is what like we know what should be.)

David Bohm was this lovely man who in a sense did this, and first let me tell this story. He was presenting one time with Krishnamurti, and I had the privilege to be invited there. I think by you, maybe or maybe not or by David Chambers. David Chambers. I got all upset because he said the implicit was like a spot of ink that a machine spreads into an endless stripe finally invisible, and then when you roll the machine backwards, you get back to the same spot. For me that doesn't break out of the old "was there/was not there" concept, right? And I got all upset about it and argued about it, and then finally, Arthur at lunch said to me, look this whole thing that he's presenting - this whole thing is a meditation, too. So then I dropped it and I realized it was silly to burden David Bohm.

(Audience member: I'm glad you straightened that out. For twenty years I thought you were upset about Krishnamurti.)

Oh no. No, no, not at all.

(Audience member: That the David Bohm was the meditation.)

No, no, but this Nobel prize winning physicist, David Bohm, had given up working on physics after having gone far enough, and was devoting his life to trying to tell people, devoting his life and his prestige, because that meant he could invite people who would otherwise not come, to hear that sort of thing. No seriously, he was quite conscious of this. And I talked to some of the physicists who came, and they said, you know it's David Bohm. How could I not come, he invited me. What is this all about? He was able to communicate to a lot of people, you know, and it was clear to me what he was doing. It wasn't until lunch time, but it's been clear to me ever since. I was on a panel with him somewhere else, and after the discussion people wanted so much to talk to him. All the questions were directed to him. It was very nice.

(Inaudible audience member)

Yes. I was hoping that you would give me things to use as examples. So this can be one. You're in the orthodox model, when you assume that the reason we can communicate is that we already share what we're communicating. But you see, with a little philosophy, you can notice that, oh yeah, that's the atomic model. It says there are exactly one trillion unit meanings in the world and we can communicate only if we share some already. Which you've all heard. That's what we were taught. It's totally absurd. We would only communicate what the other person already knows? We could never show someone anything new. Communication would be totally useless, right? All you could ever say is 56 plus 1 instead of 57. Big deal. It'd be like the people in jail with the joke numbers, you know? One of them says 13 and the all laugh. If you don't already know what I mean, you can never know it.

Okay, now Marcus took that old assumption and he put the felt sense under it. Right away he could say, so it's not hopeless when we don't quite have the same thing because you could be doing something a little new and I could be doing something a little new, right?

(Member audience: dialogue... inaudible...)

You're trapped in that machinery that I was trying to point to. You see, he says it's got to be because of all those shared meanings. That's why we can communicate because we all know trees and water. . .

(Member audience. . . inaudible)

We operate those meanings he says. Now I'm not denying that we all know trees and water and sky and so on. But you see I want to break him out of there. And now let's see if I can do it. See, as a philosopher, the way I would do it isn't going to work. But I'll show you. I would say, this is that model where you have these meanings and you have to account for everything by rearranging the same units. You never get anything new with that model. Right? Way back to the Greeks it's like that. You can't get anything new because everything has to come from these shared meanings. But think from one momentary example of actually communicating. Take this moment or any moment. You don't have to tell us what it is. Just pick a moment and don't say it, when communication happened. Doesn't have to be big and dramatic or any kind of communication.

(Audience member. . . inaudible)

Yeah. And then take a look at that and decide that communication is that. It might be other things too but it's at least that.

(Audience member... inaudible)

So now we're talking about connectedness. And he's done that. He's taking what he actually found for communication. Now do the next thing for me and don't let it be connectedness as one thing, but look at what that's actually like there, that you call "connectedness" and you'll find the spider web there.

(Audience member. . . inaudible)

Okay, well those three, that does lovely for me. Okay, so let's take those three now.

Acknowledged, empathy. He feels acknowledged. He feels some empathy for the other person, and he feels or he sees there is something we are facing, that, whatever that is we're talking about together.

(Audience member: Well more like we're standing together. . .)

Standing together, yeah. Standing together with that. Now I think right there that that's a more intricate more sophisticated and better model for communication than the one that everybody is using. Because you've got the two people, you've got one acknowledged and the other empathized with. That means more than just the message, right? And there's we are standing together in relation to whatever that outside thing is. And we've got the people in it now instead of just these message-unit meanings with no people. I would right away take that little three-way model home.

Now I'm saying you have to be strong because you're not going to believe that what he and I could make up in three minutes with all these people here waiting, could really be serious, that it could be better than what we have in the library, but it is. And if you got no further than that, you'd be doing something.

(Audience member: So Gene can you say how you're looking at it is a kind of phenomenological method, how it is not (inaudible. . .))

This is now another one. She wants to know in terms of phenomenological method and Ducane method, okay, at Ducane University, they have a certain method, you don't need to know what it is, and phenomenological method is sort of broad, you meant it that way, a broad word that includes many people, where is your phenomenological method? So your question is perfectly sensible. Does everybody follow? She's saying on this map in this society there are these people from Ducane which we both know, and then there's this big phenomenological movement that in some sense, that we of course belong to. Weren't you in that? Yeah. And so now tell me.

Okay?

(Audience member: What I want is what I will say to these people. . . (inaudible))

All right, now I can't really answer anybody's question until I can feel where they're coming from. I feel I'm answering somebody that I made up who isn't here. Meanwhile this person is waiting and you know, sort of listening to what we're saying, which doesn't have anything to do with what they were asking. But why would you waste your lifeblood answering questions before you can sense where that person is coming from with that question?

I was going to say "phenomenological" is just like love and authenticity and other words. One word doesn't mean there is one thing there. But I forgot to find out what she was after. Then she said, don't waste your time telling me about phenomenological method, here's exactly what I mean. It's what can I say to those people?

(Audience member: (inaudible))

You did that for me. With one close friend I had to spend three hours trying to get him to this stage. He said all of these orthodox Jewish things and I just knew he wasn't orthodox right now. Why are you being orthodox? What is it for you? What does it mean for you? Finally he

said, I'm trying to communicate to that community and I won't be taken seriously unless I'm orthodox. So I said, thank God, thank you. Now I don't have to argue about that. I can share with you about how one needs to be taken seriously by people. And you did that for me. Lets see if I can answer your question. What can you say to those people?

(Audience member: Just tell me in one sentence how we understand why focusing is easier with a partner. Could you explain that?)

Yes. And I know that wasn't clear. I was conscious even in my room preparing this that I would say a number of things like that. I was depending on questions to let me make them clear. If the focusing process were intrapsychic, it would be the same if you weren't there. Then I can't explain why it's so much deeper when you are there. It seems like a mystery because as a focusing companion, you're just there. You give your little bitsy helps or instructions or maybe you're totally silent, and yet the person goes more deeply than they would do alone. And then they thank you a lot. That's so funny so great at the same time, you know? When I'm the person thanking I know how ridiculous it seems because I remember being the other person. Why are you thanking me? But if instead I think of myself as like a plant, that my actual body-tissue is an INTERACTION with my environment including you, with animal and human stuff too, of course, but a plant process. Then your presence makes my tissue-process different, just as if I were a plant making myself out of the light and the water and you. So of course I'm different when you're there, than when I'm alone and there is no water.

And I can feel that difference in my body the moment I first sit down with you. A difference there is, always. But with some people my body constricts. It wouldn't be too smart to focus with them. I would have to take private emergency measures and say to myself, "let me see if I can find myself."

Or when something is off in the relationship, that comes first. Because focusing is not like having a content and then you talk to yourself about it. It's this tissue process. So I couldn't focus right now, with you, because I still have this little worry I need to talk to you about, to make it all right, from last night. But when that's OK, then with you my body will feel like it expands there, and whatever my focusing is, it's going to have more water, if you get my analogy real fast. The tissues are going to expand. So anybody who says focusing is intrapsychic, in contrast to client-centered therapy which they say is relationship-therapy, doesn't understand either one of them. Please tell them so if you meet them. Because they've made that contrast now and talked about it that way for thirty years.

Theoretically, can you think of living bodies like that? A body lives its relationships, it IS interaction. There is only one ongoing interaction, not one body here and an environment there, and merely perceptions going back and forth, you know. A body is not connected to its environment only through the five senses, as if a body were behind the wall in the dark and there were these five holes. The body inhales the environment and it walks on the environment and it sweats out into the environment and it does that with other people in situations. It IS the environment. The body starts out as one cell in a womb, and then it makes itself plant, animal,

and inter-human. I'm still doing that, now. And when I've got Agnes to do that with, something better happens than when I'm alone. I can immediately go deeper. I AM more. And in my experience I can touch and find and delineate that much more. I'm showing the usefulness of just one theoretical concept about the body. Did I make sense? That's great. I didn't think I could.

(Audience member (inaudible).)

No, I didn't say that to Agnes. I said that there are people who if they are my focusing companion, I have to make myself a private space while they're there. Then it's not even as good as if I were alone.

(Audience member: So we really don't want to say that focusing is, I see this a lot, is always better with a partner. When we have our workshops you may want to bring somebody with you but whenever we need partners, that's generally, you just can't say that every time.)

Well I do say it all the time, but it should be specified. I do sometimes say with a partner provided the partner can give you their attention and knows how to keep quiet. Because really a stranger can do this for us very deeply and sometimes much better than the close person whom you like, but whom you know so well that the minute you're with them, your body sort of changes in that relationship. A stranger can do it very well. But it has to be a stranger who's willing to give you their attention and not think about something else. They have to be there. And they have to be willing to keep quiet and not interrupt you. And then you will find that the very presence of another being has the most effect.

(Audience member: I still can't agree with that though because I've had the experience that the other person has been very much giving me the attention, being quiet, and yet, I knew I could not go to (inaudible). There was something in the air, , , (inaudible)

And it was with a person you didn't know?

(Audience member: Right.)

Okay, then that's something added to what I am saying. And I rather we see that of course it could be true, the vibes of the person or you could pick up a lot about person . . .

(Audience member: (inaudible). . . inside yourself. . . (inaudible)

Yeah, I could do that too but that's already different. It's already like this. It's not that. So I know you're right.

(Audience member: So maybe it would be all right to stay with a person who would be able to whom we feel can feel like this. . .)

Well that makes it so pretty that then the shy lovely people who you would want as partners are going to say they're not up to it. Then only the people will volunteer who aren't ready for it because they don't know they're putting out yucky vibes. So I would rather say the way it was before with an exception added that she's saying that it has to be somebody that you don't feel uncomfortable with or something like that. And put it on you. Then it would be right.

(Audience member: (inaudible))

Exactly what I mean. I think an interaction between two people is not my perception of you and it's not your perception of me. You know, it's on a subtler, more physical level. And then it has all those other things added on to it, sure.

(Audience member: (inaudible))

That's right. But this is an appropriate example again of what I mean. You have to not only say "I don't mean cellular," because then you'll be stuck. There will be nothing that you can do.

(Audience member: (inaudible))

You did. But let me use it though because it helps me make my point. Not only do you mean that you don't mean cellular in the usual sense, you know, you mean something like that. Every word that's going to go in there will give you the same problem. You don't mean physical, you don't mean physiological, you don't mean ..., they're all going to be like that. But be strong though and turn it the other way. And say now we know, we are, I am at least, asserting something about cellular process that physiology has as yet no room for. Because it's indeed cellular process but cellular process is not just what "cellular" has meant until now. So we make a sentence: "The cellular carries human environment as well as animal environment in the actual cells." Now our concept of the cellular process has changed. And what "physiological" means has changed. It works only when you make sentences to put YOUR meaning into all the old concepts, and that's what I was saying before.

(Audience member: The most interesting thing to me is that you keep coming back to these words, be strong, and I just wish you would expand that.)

Okay, there were a number of places where that came in. The first place you know from focusing. It's very much the same thing. It's like when something suggests itself in your head that makes perfectly good sense and is rational and well-intentioned, but it doesn't connect with the felt sense, you put it aside. And you put it aside quickly because it's hard to hold on to a felt sense, right? So you say, quick, quick, that's not it. If you have to stop and explain at great length why it's not it, even though it's perfectly sensible and such a good idea, and it would be right under some circumstances because on and on, you lose your felt sense. So you don't do that. You put it aside quickly. And that quickness is just as vital for thinking from a felt sense. That's just the first kind of being strong.

The second being strong is if you do use words, whatever they are, insist that the words mean THAT, whatever it is you're tracking and trying to think. Again, we can get this from focusing. You use words and sentences like a handle. Except you can't always get a handle for an intellectual thing, so you can insist that the words should work to mean THAT. For instance, if you call that the "cellular level," THAT'S now what the word "cellular" means. So the word "cellular" has changed. Isn't it interesting! Did you know that? Biology just changed. It expanded. It still has everything it ever had but now it also carries human and animal meanings on a cellular level. It does that. The cellular process does do that. So be strong means make your meaning go into the words that you're using. We only have the English language, all the old words, but if you make a sentence in which they mean what you mean, if you defend your meaning, you will find that it's fascinating.

Once you succeed to make a word or two work this way, all the next ones you think of acquire THAT, which you are thinking and tracking. Each next thing that comes by you can say, for example, art. Oh, now we can talk about art like that. It's a creativity on the cellular level, but once created, art is real and about the world, because on the cellular level the body is an interaction with the world. Oh, and now "religion" means THAT. It's concepts are doubtful like all concepts, but on the cellular level the body is an interaction with the whole universe. Oh now "language" is like this. The words come in us from the body as an interaction in the situation. The cellular level produces phrases that are the next step of what we want to say, or how we want to change the situation so we can live further. Oh now "communication" is like this. The other person can create a new meaning in us because we ARE interaction. Oh now "friendship" means that. Oh now "authenticity" means that. Your one new thing can and will inform every next topic that comes by and every next word that comes by, if you want.

The other place to be strong is to believe, or to act as if you believe that thinking from a little bit of EXPERIENCED INTRICACY is worth something to the society - that it's new, that it's not in the library. I don't know how to mediate this for you fast enough. You don't need to believe it, because in any creative process we pass through big doubts. We cannot be sure that something new is really promising. It may seem like garbage. So "belief" isn't the right word here, unless you let me use it for this "act-like you believe" in the value of your new thing. It's ironic. Just write it down is all you have to do, just don't throw it away or let it get lost.

If you are in the business of writing things, you can know in general that something new and seemingly autistic is more worth writing than some rearrangement of the old stuff that we already have. But there you have to be strong because it doesn't feel like that at first. It feels like something Mark and I made up on the spur of the moment here. How can that be better than so-called "communication theory." But you don't have to trust it like a faith either. Just go to the library and see if they have something better than what we said here. And they won't.

(Audience member: Or it feels impossible because sometimes there seem to be no words as you started out.)

Well that's how it starts. But I'm saying you WANT just that thing that has no official words yet. Very soon you'll have words. You'll say oh that's how it goes. Oh I see there's two people, and one has empathy and one has acknowledgment and then they both stand with a something. And that's already much better. And also, the felt sense of THAT is behind us and we can elaborate further from there. All right?

When you have articulated this thing after a while, when you see that it applies all over the place and you also go to the library and see it isn't there, then you gradually think gee, I have got an article here or something. But it doesn't start like that. It starts with this shaky feel that this is something I made up out of my own goo, how can that have some significance? And this is also my own story. For years I felt "Everybody ELSE thinks there is a real thing called focusing, but to me I made it up. How can it be real?

(Audience member: It could if it can be communicated in writing.)

It can be communicated but is it real? Can that be real? Something I made up? Of course I didn't make it up. I found it there in my experiencing. What a human organism finds, what a body-environment interaction finds cannot be totally unreal. It's always something in the world that we ALL live in.

(Audience member: inaudible)

Yes, yes, that's a nice way to say it.

(Audience member: So you have to be strong with a person who says it's all electromagnetic and is famous, and you don't.)

My slogan is: If people cannot understand you, that doesn't absolutely prove that you have something new and valuable to say. I mean that the converse is true: If you have something new they will not understand you at first. The clear things that are already well established are good things. Things we wouldn't want to lose. I mean, I'm not saying you should be so strong that you should eliminate all electromagnetic theory and all you've ever read, just for this. But that's all safe in the library, you see. No, we're not burning the library. So given we're not, and these established things are out in the bright clear daylight, and your thing is still down here in the inarticulate shadow where nobody can see it but you, then it's certainly worth an hour of quiet time or something. And so . . .

(Audience member: . . . been in the library all day and then I come back and I can't find my things.)

Can't find those things. Yes, you want to be protective of those things. If they disappear, they may never show up again. You have to write them down quick, when they're there, and keep them safe. Write them down just far enough so you can get them back from your notes. Then it's safe to do the stuff in the library all day.

(Audience member: I don't know if you feel comfortable speaking to us but could you say something, is that because some of the words for spirituality, like about God...)

Same thing.

(Audience member: . . . and holy spirit and stuff. Those are like established concepts., right . . .)

Yes, yes.

(Audience member: . . . and somehow, and that's like contents. And when we use those, it's very easy to clobber other people.)

Sure.

(Audience member: And that's because it makes their experience smaller or something. . .?)

No, I think, well, of course, this whole issue that you're raising is very large. But the thing I can right away say is that those kind of words function the way these others do that I said. I said there's no such thing as love or authenticity or wellness or self or ego, as if there one set thing to go with each one word. For instance, I say "super ego" all the time, and people say, you mean the critic? I say yes. Whatever they call it, I mean THAT thing to which I refer in my experience, which attacks you and gives negative messages. I don't mean everything Freud says, as if THE super ego could only be one thing. So I would say you don't mean "spirituality," because spirituality, there's no such thing. It's all an intricacy, a Persian rug, so I'd ask you what you have there that you're using this word for.

But maybe its a special word that has a political significance. In that sense let's keep it, okay? It gets us free of organized orthodox religion. In that sense let's keep "spirituality" sort of like our flag, you know? If you put a big tag on it, to me that's a political question by which I mean it's about which community it goes to. Like when I called it "focusing," they said you can't do that. The bookstores will put it under photography. So "spirituality" will let them it on the right shelf in the bookstore.

But I agree with you that some people hit other people with these fancy words. Many people went through all kinds of oppression with those words and they puke. Then we cannot understand each other. All the other words, I don't think we should use without tying them to something that we have there, which they can mean. Because they all have this entity quality and then people go looking for it and they can't find that stuff.

Also to everybody, please don't do that to focusing. Don't make the word "focusing" mean some big mystifying thing that includes all the beautiful things that you find through focusing. Because then people won't be able to find focusing. It can be learned by anyone, something like ice skating. Focusing is just that uncomfortable bodily sense that's complex and you don't know what it is yet. That's all it is. It's spending time with that body-sense. As soon

as somebody does that, they've got focusing. That's focusing. And everything else is on the other side of that little door. Describe that in words and phrases that mean whatever you have there. Otherwise they won't be able to find whatever you mean, either. People can find whatever you mean, if you describe it from the bottom up, the way you have whatever you have there. If you're getting a little shy and insecure, that's the right place. You'll be saying to yourself, am I supposed to be the one to define what some big word, for example "grace" means? Well you can say you know one kind of grace, or you don't have to use a big word. You can just say what you have there. This is how this and this happens. And that much you know because it happens to you. So you know it's possible. Whatever any person experiences is possible in our universe. You don't have to put these big tags on it.

I would say don't transmit the old stuff because the old stuff is safe. It used to be that there was one great library and when it burned down we lost a lot of stuff. But this will never happen again. It's on microfilm and CD everywhere. So if you have any inkling of any kind of bit of spirituality that's actually there, if you would speak from this you would be saying things that other people can find and resonate to. They won't find exactly the same thing, they'll do the Mark theory, you know? They will hear you and then as a result of hearing you, their tissue process will change a little and they'll find something that wasn't there before. And you'll carry them forward and they'll carry you forward. I think it is impossible for a human being to articulate something from there and not have it be meaningful to many other people. It immediately creates something in other people. See, I get to say that now because I've said all this stuff before, but the word "create" is wrong of course. It carries them forward, it doesn't get made from units that are already there.

(Audience member: (inaudible. . . shared in order to change the other person somehow or just the communication with your own essence.)

No, I'm talking about thinking which is inherently a social process.

(Audience member: Because I'm also wondering well where does the other person end and where do I begin if me is also the atmosphere and the air and. . .)

Well, I see, because I said you are the atmosphere and the air. This is a certain kind of concept that I'm using. This question is good, see if I can grab this, it's just right. We can get stuck on my concepts just like on other ones. If you get stuck on concepts as concepts, that's where I want you to have my philosophical automobile that I was building. You could say, oh yeah, that's right. Gendlin's got that KIND OF CONCEPT here where everything is part of one interaction. And that's lovely, but whatever kind of concept it is, we can ask: What is the experience that that locates? You probably did that, did you? -- and found the experience it locates is that you're not just alone with your self but somehow with other people, and this brings up this question, where is the boundary line for something like the self?

(Audience member: Are we talking about that which is just meant to be shared or does my having communicated with myself also affect everyone else? And that being shared, I experience that. . . (inaudible). . . we're talking about what is shared.)

No, if there is such a thing as what is shared separate from what you've experienced, then its the old model where we get stuck. In my new model there is first one interaction, then the two people go away separately and have separate ideas. Those come in interaction and are inherently interactional, whether you share them or not. We've developed a kind of therapy that lets the individual attend, be in, live from the felt sense, which is always at an individual center. The individual can come up with new and unheard-of meanings from living, but those new ones, they're inherently interactional too. The human individual is inherently interactional. That doesn't mean the content of what we live is produced by others; it means that life-events are inherently with, at, from, to and about others and ourselves. It means that if you are sad, then with a certain rare kind of other person you cry. Therapy works in the context of a new interaction in which the individual's body-life can be carried forward, so that the individuals can continue stopped interactions -- stopped body-process, and thereby change in just that way in which the organism directs from inside.

But you've carried what I said earlier further in another way, and a whole step further I think. You're saying when I have something just between me and myself, (however that forms), then . . . is that what you're saying? Say it your way, it's not exactly.

(Audience member: Well there's a couple of things that I wanted to say if I'm also saying this but it seems so much to me to be about fumbling in the dark with a language problem that's being here and we're trying to talk to each other and at the moment at which I finally can communicate and my (inaudible) word language to its richness, then I get the aha, that knowing, that big capital K knowing.)

Right.

(Audience member: Now I have changed and I sit in the presence of you, and now do I have to share that.. .?)

And what's the have-to? Where's the question coming from? I don't grasp why you say do you have to share. . .

(Audience member: Well you were talking about, and now, you know, sitting in the presence of someone else, and that is changing. . .

Yes, yes, I see. I said that there is only one interaction, so you have to change if the interaction is new to you. In fact, you've already changed if you are in this changed interaction. Is that "the have-to?"

Yes, if you get up the nerve to articulate something from what you are actually living through, it will change anyone that has the patience to come to understand it, which means anyone that lets you create/find this in their experience. It can't help but be significant to other people. There will be other people who don't want to grasp it, but there are going to be people to whom it is necessarily significant. This is because anything you lived is a human possibility. There is no way that it won't create something in other people. But is that what you meant?

(Audience member: And I guess what I'm just saying is that it was just a process that I have experienced also changes you. I have an experienced moment. . . (inaudible) . . .

So you KNOW it does, right? Absolutely, of course, of course. But you know it does and you're only politely putting it to the speaker as a question. You already have the answer since you know. That's what I mean by be strong. That's fine, be polite, but you know it does, so THIS is there for you, this little cluster here that you are SPEAKING-FROM. If I get it, you're saying that when you eventually get the capacity to speak from it, this changes you.

Now, if that's right, and if you enter in there, you'll find a whole spider web. Then see what you would further want to pull out from this.

If I imagine myself entering at that spot, and thinking further, I would define myself as the sort of thing, in other words what a person is, is the sort of thing that would be changed by that kind of a conversation. It has to be so. I mean maybe a person is a million different things also, but one thing is that what it is to be a person is to be something that is changed by such a process, right? And that already opens a whole field of okay now, what am I going to think about next. . . ?

(Audience member: Now when I get pictures of you and I haven't shared that something now is either different (inaudible). . .

Of course, of course. Absolutely.

(Audience member: Is it a great deal more complex than just saying, I mean it can certainly be part of the talk but "the word isn't the thing," something. . . (inaudible). . .

That's certainly one of the things I said.

(Audience member: But it's great. It's a lot, there's a lot. . .)

Well where it's more is if the word isn't the thing, go to the thing. Of course the thing is not the thing but the experience of the thing. And then if you go to the experience you find that it isn't already cut up into nice convenient things. And so then you have this spidery thing and you have to be strong enough to hang onto it and not stick something else on there, right? And then you find if you do . . .

(inaudible).

If you use ordinary language, you can actually eventually speak for it and it has this possibility of an eventually being spoken from. Eventually has a kind of time in it, perhaps. I don't know what all you will find in it. There is a whole spider web. But one thing you find is that that's a kind of process that will change the person, right? And inside without any (inaudible)...

(Audience member: What you are saying just reminds me of when I'm presenting to physicians and such, and I often say if the medicine doesn't work, throw away the medicine, not the patient. And what you're saying is IF THE CONCEPT OR THE THEORY DOESN'T WORK, THROW AWAY THE CONCEPT AND THE THEORY, NOT THE FOCUSING.)

That's right. That's right. And I'm also saying, I'm also saying throw away the concept, not WHAT THE CONCEPT WAS TRYING TO FIND. Because here is what I was calling the philosophical car I am building you.

1 If you know just that smidgen of philosophy, to recognize that any concept is first of all a certain KIND OF CONCEPT, kind of model: The chop things up kind, the hoslitic kind, and the interactional one I tried to show when I said that we're plants and the plant is the water and the light. The last is the functional-interactional KIND I was advertising.

2 And then, secondly, I tried to show that you can pull ANY word or concept off from what you have there, that you are thinking into. If you have something there, and are not asking that just academically, if you've run into something really, drop the word or concept and see where you have to be right, where you do have something, how that is. You can't do that in general but you can do it when something arises from you, or for you as a person that's trying to make sense somewhere. Then it works. You find you have not only the old concept that goes with the word which you've pulled off, but you also have THAT, whatever it is. And DO YOUR THINKING AND SPEAKING FROM THAT. Then you're free of the old, poor clunk-concepts.

3. THAT IS ALWAYS AN INTRICACY. And you can go in there, and pull out at least one central strand that you're tracking. Whether you are building a theory or not. Once you get your own strand, you can use any words, even that first one. Now you can make it say how your thing goes.

You were going to say something.

(Audience member: I was just going to say that I'm very much what it is way. . . (inaudible). .

..there's a book, "Faces in the Cloud," about different people in psychology, and tracing the theory of how these people experience their lives, and then they came up with this theory. This is sort of the other way around. Making up a theory, then we think it's objective. Well we think that it's secondary process rather primary process. We start with our own theory though that way so that hundreds of years from now somebody isn't going to have to say well Gene Gendlin had this idea because really he was experiencing this, this, and this.

In my experience you can lead life abominably and still have valid spider webs that are very specific where you can go. The kind of surmise those authors draw, they're really crude with that thing. They should be saying that what Gendlin said came from this intricate specific pattern, where you LATER find that you want to say that this now IS what your earlier experience WAS, and yet it is different from what you really had earlier, and still have there in your memory, but not just something else, rather something that "carries forward" what you had. That sort of thing is valid independently of the kind of thing these writers look at. They try to explain composers by what they went through in their life. That doesn't work at all. Composers go to a funny place where their musical infinity opens. They can be lovely or mean people, normal or weird, and yet in there, that opens. The kind of thinking I'm talking about is like that. And when you like to think, you can think further under any circumstances pretty much. Everything else may be going to hell, and you can still sit there and say "Now how does this wrinkle go . . .?"

All right. Yes, you were going to say something.

(Audience member: (inaudible))

Yeah, similar to what Kathy was saying. How do you answer those people? Let's have a special. . .

(Audience member: (inaudible). . . willing to step out those two concepts and try to find a way to get into each other.)

Well, don't say that, because you're making us the adults and them the children and that's a good way to not communicate from then on. I know that you wouldn't say it to them. I know, but even so, let's say that these clothes don't fit those clothes. And then we're all right. You see what I mean? It's like trying to put, I don't know what. . .

(Audience member: Be strong Thomas.)

(too many people talking at once)

(Audience member: I. . . not a question of strength. It is a question of . . . introspection. . . what they're trying to say is true. And those people from the experimental psychology who only believe what they can see by statistics. So now, how to get some kind of communication?)

That's right. The first thing we want to do is we want to, if you want to get communication is, we want to go looking for what their concepts mean experientially. How can anybody be like that to say that only the results of experiments are to be trusted? That whole kind of language, that's the first job we would have. Everybody has got something. People wouldn't be saying something for no reason. They could be saying it for some reason we can't find, like maybe they're answering some other people and we don't know whom. But it makes a great deal of sense to say lets devise an experiment, for instance about false memories which is what you were

just mentioning, right? You can EXPERIENCE that this is your client's thing and not a false memory.

(Audience member: (inaudible) I don't believe it will work but all the clinicians. . . statistics, and I think they will not succeed.)

No. No, but this is because you need better concepts. And that's where I'm coming in with this thing. What we need to do there is not play defending the people who have the abuse memories against the people who believe in false memories. The concepts are poor. That won't work. It's never going to work. Calm down and ask yourself, WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE THAT CONVINCES YOU? I mean do you just believe all your clients because that's your religion? No. You've got something there. What is it? How come you are so sure the memories of this person in front of you are not false? You worked with her probably or him, and know something that you haven't articulated yet. That's valuable. How can you be so sure? You just love your clients? Is that all it is? No. You have something intricate there, right? And then. . .

(Audience member: test. . . (inaudible). . . stuck in the repression paradigm, and that one won't handle the job. . .)

No, no. None of the old concepts handle really anything. That's why things are so poor. We need to communicate to the society what therapy is. They think it's whatever a therapist imposes on a patient.

(Audience member: But also assuming that the people who are in the false memory thing, they also have their concepts name something that is also real.)

Certainly. Some so-called "therapies" push things on people.

(Audience member: So that you want to give them the time to (everyone talking at once. . . inaudible. . .)

Exactly. What are they locating here? But it doesn't mean that "false memories" exist. Or that true memories exist. Because if you look at memory you'll see it's much more complicated than that. So why is it that Tom believes his client? Well I know why I believe my client. Because I have seen it all emerge bit by bit from this person, and in a certain way. If I had had another therapist sitting there insinuating to my client "Wasn't it true that such and so happened to you," and then my client agreed, I wouldn't believe a thing after that. I would say honestly, I don't know. I don't know if they should be called "false memories," if there is such a thing. I don't know if you can make kids believe these things. I don't know that. I haven't tried that out. I'm an experimental psychologist when it comes to that. Because I don't have any inner knowledge of that. But if you take a person who never thought of that stuff and then it emerges and emerges and emerges, at least I can contribute a simple distinction from client-centered therapy, which is there is a difference between letting a process emerge from the person where you never put any false content in there ever, and a different situation where so-called therapists have a method of

suggesting this kind of stuff. And then these "therapists" trust their own judgment, whether what they get is real or not. So, a researcher should at least begin with that. See but there I'm contributing an obvious distinction which would immediately make research possible, where right now research is not possible. There is no standard, therefore there are no statistics. I would like to see some research, comparing kids who have these memories and nobody worked on them and told them about such things, comparing those with kids who were told this stuff by somebody. It's a totally different kind of process. I want to see what the differences are in terms of the situation that existed and so forth. I wouldn't like to do this to kids for the sake of the experiment, I don't think you could. I wouldn't want to. But if this is already going on, this is different. We need to study it. But imagine! In forty years we have communicated so poorly, so few of us made concepts for the society, that most people still don't know about this simple difference, letting things emerge from the person vs. pushing stuff and laying trips on people! Hadn't we better make concepts so we can communicate to society, not just to one person with a private vocabulary the two of us form?

This simple distinction would let the difference come up fast. If we spend a week working on this thing in this fashion instead of one minute, we could design some research. Rather than fight people who believe in research because we believe in this. Do you see what I mean? But I'm just using what you gave me to help with that. But it's not that false memories exist or not, because there are people there and you're supposed to sympathize with them. It's more like where are they coming from? What is their experience that makes them passionate about this, and then you can hear. Perhaps they saw this stuff pushed on kids. I read about a woman who went for nine years to a "therapist" who was telling her all that time that she was abused. So, finally she found it. Well maybe she really found it and the therapist was right. But I don't have the same confidence in that, as I do if it emerged from inside. It's an utterly different process and every bit of content feels and smells and sounds different, intricate, like nothing one can make up. But the distinction does not appear in public. It isn't there now. It's not part of the public controversy. Isn't that amazing? People think of therapists this other way. So. . .

(Audience member: . . . the whole idea of memory really has to be brought down. If the concept of memory doesn't work for some reason. . .)

That's right. Memory isn't just a piece of clunk that's there or not there. It has to be brought to exactly, so that's a lovely. I think it's time to stop. I'm ahead and I want to quit.