

Focusing

Courses and Coaching for groups and individuals

Discovering Focusing

Focusing is a gentle yet transformative approach to listening to ourselves and others. Asking the question, 'What wants my attention right now?' we invite an open space within us. In this space, our deeper impulses come more fully into our awareness and begin to find a voice. As we learn Focusing, we discover how to respond to this space creatively, and how to enable fresh directions to open up with the issues and people that concern us, and in our lives in general.

By simply sitting and listening within, without judgement (supported by a Focusing teacher or partner), Focusing gives us a way of understanding the meaning and implicit wisdom held by our bodies, combined with spontaneous images, metaphors and dreams. We do this by tuning into our felt-sense of a situation—taking in the whole of it, and feeling its effect on our whole being.

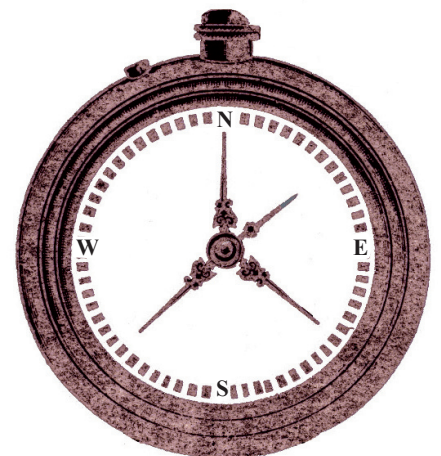
What are the benefits of Focusing?

- Healing past rifts, pain and depression.
- Moving beyond blocks.
- Making clearer choices.
- Fostering self-respect and inner confidence.
- Better relationships with others.
- Increasing health and happiness.
- Improving sleep.
- Benefitting from dreams.

Finding our Felt-sense

The felt-sense is like our inner compass. It gives us a tangible, felt-experience of what we need to move forward in any particular moment or situation. It is freshly experienced and unique to us and our situation.

The felt-sense is a kind of natural knowledge that, if we can give it space to be heard, will give us the inner resources to deal with whatever is present, and carry us towards our cherished goals. It is as if we hold a deeper knowing about what we need to move forward and grow, and by creating the right conditions for that wisdom to be heard, we also discover the means to achieve this. By cultivating this natural ability, we are able to align ourselves more fully to what we want to do, and how we want to be.



'[T]he process of ... changing feels good. ... The change process we have discovered is natural to the body, and it feels that way in the body... The experience of something emerging from there feels like a relief and a coming alive.' *

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PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Who learns Focusing?

While used by many councillors and therapists, Focusing is also learned and practiced by non-professionals world-wide. It provides a safe and confidential environment to explore our inner worlds, and to experience the felt-shifts within us. Focusing is supported by a long series of operational research studies conducted first at the University of Chicago and now internationally (see www.focusing.org).

Learning outcomes:

- How to locate, find and create space for a felt-sense.
- Exquisite listening that allows the felt-sense to move and shift.
- 'Clearing a space' to cope with over-loaded and busy life-styles.
- Subtle approaches which bring semi-and-unconscious impulses into awareness.
- Freeing up core beliefs that cause stuckness and block creativity.
- Ways to tune into our 'inner compass' within a hectic working day.
- Applications of Focusing to sleep and understanding dreams.
- Focusing partnership work, to sustain future development and learning.

Suggested Reading:

Gendlin, Eugene T. 2007. *Focusing*, New York, Bantam Books (1st edn 1978, Everest House).

Gendlin, Eugene T. 1986. *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications.

Gendlin, E.T. 1990. 'The small steps of the therapy process: How they come and how to help them come.' In G. Lietaer, J. Rombauts & R. Van Balen (Eds.), *Client-centered and experiential psychotherapy in the nineties*, pp. 205-224. Leuven: Leuven University Press. From http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2110.html

Weiser Cornell, Ann, 1996. *The Power of Focusing: A Practical Guide to Emotional Self-Healing*, Oakland CA: New Harbinger Publications.

Weiser Cornell, Ann, 2005. *The Radical Acceptance of Everything: Living a Focusing Life*, Berkeley CA: Calluna Press.

*'When you give your awareness to something, it is carried forward. That is why it is so powerful to attend inside.'**

Central Model

Our approach combines the insights of *Focusing* and *Thinking at the Edge* (TAE) with Nonviolent Communication™ (NVC) and meditation. Focusing and NVC are rooted in the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers (1902–1987). Focusing (www.focusing.org) was developed in the 1960s and 70s by Eugene T. Gendlin Ph.D, still a leading figure in philosophy, psychology and psychotherapy. This process gives us access to our more instinctive and creative impulses, and allows us to tap into wider perspectives, gut-responses, intuitions and informed hunches—innate wisdom that we naturally hold about the situations we find ourselves within. Nonviolent Communication (www.cnvc.org) has developed world-wide since the 1970s through the work of Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D and its approach is perfectly-suited to negotiation with others and to resolving inner conflicts. Supporting and sustaining the insights of these two processes, we bring over twenty-five years' practice and teaching of mindfulness meditations (among others) – approaches now clinically proven to assist in reducing stress and clarifying internal confusion (www.umassmed.edu/cfm). All these approaches can have a dramatic and immediate effect, and radically increase the quality of our lives, at work and at home.

* All quotations here are by Eugene Gendlin, who first developed Focusing.

*'Experience is a myriad richness. We think more than we can say. We feel more than we can think. We live more than we can feel. And there is much more still.'**

*Life
At Work*

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

More about the benefits of Focusing

Healing past rifts, pain and depression

Our body-and-being has an implicit knowing of what is right for us (although we often experience instead a feeling of what is wrong with us). In focusing, the felt-sense gives us a safe and profound way to be present with our painful feelings, and enables us to discover what it is they are wanting to contribute to our lives.

Moving beyond blocks

Our mind can move across time from past, present to future. But change happens here and now. So when your life is somehow blocked, the first thing to do is to come fully and naturally into the here and now. This is the only place where change is possible. Focusing gives us a way to be fully and naturally present with what is alive in us. As we do this, we can also discover what holds us back. We then find ourselves able to cater for the different sides of ourselves in a way that leaves us free to act as a whole, complete person.

Making clearer choices

Inner conflict (ranging from how we do a small task to major life-decisions) is uncomfortable, and at worse, destructive. Focusing opens up ways for us to hear the wisdom of each part of ourselves, without getting bogged down in confusion, anxiety or fear. As we learn to trust and identify our 'inner compass', we can move forward with clarity and confidence.

Fostering self-respect and inner confidence

As we learn to hear the wisdom within our thoughts and feelings, we gain confidence in our own unique path. We learn to greet whatever is within us with an attitude of radical acceptance—with interest and curiosity about what is there, without 'falling in' to old, familiar or difficult states.

Better relationships with others

As our attitude to our inner world changes, so does our attitude to what is around us. We begin to greet other people with the same interest and acceptance—recognising the impulses that drive them, and responding with the same natural compassion that we are able to give to ourselves in the Focusing space.

Increasing health and happiness

As our innate happiness begins to be more tangibly felt and present in our lives, we naturally want to orientate our lifestyles in a more healthy and compatible manner. The sense of freshness and aliveness that comes from experiencing the shifts in Focusing also pervades our physical being. There is much anecdotal evidence not just of radical shifts towards better health, but of healing of major sickness too.

Improving sleep and understanding dreams

We also teach applications of Focusing for finding better quality sleep, and ways of dealing with insomnia. (See: www.lifeatwork.co.uk). In addition, by finding our felt-sense of a dream, we can explore and open up the language and symbolism of dreams, so that the beneficial message of a dream is understood and felt in our body and being.