

As promised, some resources:

Daily (weekdays) Focusing-Oriented Meditation 45-minute, drop-in classes via Zoom:

<https://heidistable.com/product/focusing-oriented-meditation/>

(Feel free to use the coupon code “friendly” for 20% off the purchase of classes. Valid through May 6).

One-on-one "At Home in Your Body" Focusing sessions:

<https://heidistable.genbook.com>

(Times are listed in Eastern US/Canada time.)

Coming Soon Programs / Classes:

“A Month of Living Curiously” and "Focusing: An Introduction”

[Sign up for Heidi’s mail list](#) to learn more and to find out when registration opens

Teachers I think the world of:

Focusing: Ann Weiser Cornell and Barbara McGavin — <https://focusingresources.com/>

Meditation: Tara Brach <https://www.tarabrach.com/talks-audio-video/>

And, an open letter from Heidi to all webinar participants:

Hello, again!

It was such a delight to be with you, to share my experience and story, and to get to practice — together— this thing of meeting ourselves with friendliness through Focusing-Oriented Meditation.

As a practice, Focusing-Oriented Meditation is becoming much dearer to me these days in which visiting and being with people in person is not possible. As a Focusing-Oriented Massage Therapist who has needed to pivot her work during these times, Focusing-Oriented Meditation has become not just something I practice for myself and by myself, but an opportunity to continue offering services that help my clients (and whoever else from around the world wants to join me) turn toward their own bodies with friendliness and interest. So while I do miss the physical touch of the work I was doing before, I am discovering that the quality of the focusing-oriented approach is more transferrable and applicable than I ever would have imagined two months ago.

I am writing this letter because a) I promised to send you references and resources mentioned during the webinar; and b) after looking over the questions you wrote in the Q&A, I see that time was short to get to them all.

I’ll begin with the quote I shared by Gene Gendlin:

"...Focusing, by itself, is not a 'method.' Focusing deepens everything that we do, unless we don't do it. So I tell people, 'Don't do focusing by itself, please.' Do it *with* interaction and body work and every other thing. I agree with what was just said here: that we need to pull all the resources we can get together. Focusing comes from *inside*, so it fits in with everything you're doing. It will *deepen* whatever you're doing. It's not something separate—although when you learn it, then for a little while it seems like something *very* separate. But once you have it, it's no longer separate."

Gendlin, E.T. (2007, June). *Focusing: The body speaks from the inside*. [Transcript of talk given at the 18th Annual International Trauma Conference, Boston, MA]. New York: The Focusing Institute..
From http://previous.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2235.html

There are many recordings of Gene Gendlin saying words to this same effect. And I always marvel at his humility and generosity of spirit in encouraging and blessing the combination of Focusing with other things.

Regarding **the difference between Focusing and Meditation...** Some of you wondered if they might not be the same, asking: *is it even possible to do Focusing without being mindful?*

What a great question. (And I do so love questions in how they can point us to the answer we may very well already “know” or be coming to “know” below the surface, there at that fuzzy place where focusing happens...) “Mindfulness” has become a kind of cliché, a fashionable thing to do, but in its literal meaning of simply noticing I would say: no, I don’t think it’s possible to do Focusing without being mindful.

I say all of that even while recognizing and honoring one of the meditation teachers who’s influenced me the most: Tara Brach (to answer another question or two). And Tara Brach’s style of meditation is often called “Mindfulness,” though more traditionally the name for it is “Vipassana.” Indeed, Tara Brach’s practice of “R.A.I.N.” has a whole lot of overlap with focusing.

Several of you expressed appreciation for what you called my modeling of **slowing down and pausing, checking in, listening...** It is lovely to hear that this resonated for you, since even in the appreciation of this way of being, you are, in some way, experiencing the practice of that for yourself. Takes one to know one, and all that... Or, in more “grown-up” words, we are drawn toward and notice things we are wanting and in the very wanting there is an implication of something already formed or forming within us.

In answer to another question I would say no, meditation is not the “main way to approach focusing,” although I think it’s a very good way since in the practice of meditating there is an “on purpose-ness.” Meditation practice is a kind of workout and strengthening of attention and awareness. To then bring a focusing way of being to what we find when we “notice on purpose,” well, for me at least this has been some kind of a revolutionary kindness. As someone who came from and experienced organized religion in a harmful way, this focusing-oriented meditation kind of practice allows me a spiritual expression and

opportunity for deep connection to myself, to something, and to many things greater than I...all without jumping over and disregarding the person of me, the so-called “self.”

(For those of you wanting to ponder this more deeply and philosophically, here is a little clip of Gene Gendlin speaking of the difference between eastern approaches (including meditation) and western approaches: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NonZSHazpjs>) — skip to around minute 5 to get right to it.)

Lastly, I feel moved by people’s comments and “wonderings” after spending time with their experience during the guided focusing-oriented meditation and the silent time in our webinar. A few things specific to those comments/questions:

In relation to **trauma-related**... go gently. Spend as much time on the Resourcing part of the work as you need. (Wherein Resourcing is finding and taking in the support of anything that brings your nervous system down from hyperarousal to a place of more calm, safety, security, grounding). If that is "all you do" in Focusing-Oriented Meditation, that is wonderful and plenty and so worth every moment. In fact, if that is where you are at, then I would say that is the only thing for you to “do” right now. And of course to get as much help as you need from professionals, from classes, from partnerships... For many years I could not really do focusing or meditation without someone else there. (Focusing partnerships are wonderful and I met many of my partners over the years in classes I took. Meditation retreats are also wonderful, especially when you know ahead of time that you really resonate with the teacher(s).) And then there came a time when I could do it alone-ish by kind of “channeling” or borrowing how such-and-such person would be with me right now... But for the most part, for many years, I spent time with felt senses that were related maybe to past trauma only with the company of someone else who was, in a sense, holding presence and kindness and attention for me. Does that make sense?

The intention and the practice of kindness toward our own experience is worth every moment. AND we can only ever really be with ourselves exactly as we are / how we are / where we are at. It sounds obvious but I know what a temptation it can sometimes be to pretend myself to be different than I am. Thankfully, my body is always so honest and so "right now" (even when what comes pulls on long ago threads).

I’ll close with a big thank you for your interest in knowing and understanding yourselves. And to The International Focusing Institute for organizing this webinar, and their Highlights series of affordable and beginner-friendly classes.

Warmly,

Heidi

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