

THE ART OF FEELING WHOLE

Ifat Eckstein

1st European Focusing Conference, Workshop Summary

Focusing can be more than a gate to connecting with your felt sense and yourself. It can be a gate to connecting with a wider felt sense - a felt sense that holds all times, all lives and all beings.

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE OF OUR JOURNEY

Gendlin shows us that each moment is a whole, each piece of life inherently connected to a wide range of connections, experiences and knowing. In his words, "Each bit of sensing is a version of the whole life situation". (A Process Model, Chapter 8a)

Through Focusing, we can recognize and explore these precious moments, and learn more about ourselves. Through Focusing we can touch and experience the vast web of life. But most of the time we don't feel us and life as one big dynamic whole. We see it and ourselves as separate parts, leaving us feeling lonely and alone.

How can we feel that sense of wholeness that we experienced here just a short time ago in the transpersonal meditation? How can we have it as an accessible resource on our journey?

How can we expand our perspective, be sustained and nourished by it?

For many years, I have been trying to find ways to expand our perspective in life, to see and feel things from a broader place, to understand the Oneness, our inherent undivided connection to the whole universe - to feel it in our



Ifat Eckstein — MSW

Widefulness * Focusing * Psychotherapy

T: 972+54-4870501 ifat.ecks@gmail.com widefulness.com  widefulness

body. I feel the need to find ways to practice it, feel it, learn it. For me, it is a way to heal our loneliness as individuals and society, to sense that we are One and that we can live in peace, at peace with everybody and everything. We need to find ways to feel that we are unified and whole rather than divided and distinct.

The question is 'How?' How can we expand our consciousness to sense the more, and how can we practice it? Focusing is a wonderful way, and reading the Process Model can help us dive into that field.

On my journey I have tried to find a universal map – a map for our journey as human beings that can hold dimensions of body, mind, emotion and spirit. I have searched for an energetic map that can echo our levels of consciousness as a process of development and to combine it in a crossing with Focusing.

The very ancient Chakra map brings a way of seeing our inherent levels of consciousness, each chakra holding a specific level of consciousness, opening us to specific challenges and growth, working together as a whole. Each chakra has its own unique frequency embracing whole worlds of content, history, essence and experiences on Earth. Like gates, the chakras open a complete range of experiences that our souls have chosen since the beginning of time. The crossing between Focusing and the ancient Chakra map brings something new and alive, enabling us to sense the wider aspects of us.

We can view our life journey in two directions: horizontally and vertically.

On a horizontal line, we can see the many events that we have had, that have shaped us and our lives – many relationships, events like marriage, raising children, challenges - many stories and meaningful moments, many memories.



But what happens when we add another perspective? A vertical perspective.

On a vertical line, I invite us to see our levels of consciousness as an expansion, where each level enables us to sense ourselves, events and life differently. This added perspective can bring a sense of the whole that we are, opening up a wider space to hold our journey.



all rights reserved © widefulness

The energetic Chakra system represents and holds our levels of consciousness. Its subtle energy affects our physical existence. It is dynamic and ever developing, held in all living things.

In the illustration above, the horizontal line represents our linear life journey: past, present and future. The vertical colored line portrays energetic levels of consciousness where each color symbolizes a different level, unfixed and all around us, moving in an organic way.



The Chakra System

- **The Root Chakra** – *being* - our foundation, our roots, our connection to earth and to our tribe. It is our primary need to feel belonging. The element is earth. This is the place where our soul sets its intention for embodiment. It is our physical body, our form, anchors us in reality. Through it we can experience life and stillness. We need our roots to grow and manifest ourselves. It is also the survival place in us, influenced by our history, childhood traumas, intergenerational memories and more.
- **The Sacral Chakra** – *feeling* - takes us from our basic needs to our emotional identity, we move from stillness and form to movement. The element is water and here we learn to move freely. This place holds our experience regarding relationships, feelings, the legitimacy for pleasure, desire, sexuality. The main challenge here is to release limiting beliefs and paradigms that limit our movement inside and out. We need free movement to navigate and develop on our journey.
- **The Solar Plexus Chakra** – *doing* - from earth and water, stillness and flow, to the fire that takes all our energy and transforms it. From the gravity and limitations in the root chakra, together with the flow from the Sacral Chakra, we reach a higher consciousness. Through the fire we can sense our inner power, our will, the power to choose. The main challenge here is to be connected to our deep wants and our drive to reach them.
- **The Heart Chakra** – *loving* - opening to love, the air element takes us to a more spiritual realm. There is a quantum leap in this chakra taking us beyond ourselves. We can love others, transmit love, find inner balance in ourselves and in our surroundings, learn to love unconditionally. The teachings of love echo in the heart.



The challenge here is to expand compassion, our ability to give and receive, to deal with longing, grief, forgiveness and more.

- **The Throat Chakra** – *speaking* – frequency of sound, rhythm, music, vibration - all these have a powerful effect on our lives on all levels – physically, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually. Here, we are talking, communicating with ourselves and with others. We bring our specific voice, sound and frequency which creates vibrations that ripple through the universe. It's a symbolic state, matter becomes more refined by the words and the symbols we use in our language. The challenge here is to sense inner and outer legitimacy to bring our unique voice and creativity through words, symbols and other forms of communication. The element is ether. The throat chakra reminds us to use our words and our silence wisely.
- **The Third Eye Chakra** – *seeing* the BIG picture. The element is light. The world of seeing, inner imagination, intuition, dreams - all contain so much information. To see is to recognize - it is not just looking. Here, we begin to see the bigger picture and how we fit in. There is a 'seeing' that includes our insight, intuition, psychic abilities.
- **The Crown Chakra** – *our universal identity* – it is pure consciousness. From here, we can experience pure qualities like love, freedom, peace, quiet. There is no element here. It holds all the elements. It is our direct connection to the divine, beyond space and time.

I would like to point out that this is not a linear process and it is not exclusive. But it can give us the whole picture and a door to healing and development. Each level transmits a unique rhythm and frequency, and the more we go up, so it becomes more refined. The levels are holographic and dynamic, as we are.



An example from my clinic

The following case study reveals the need for connection to all our levels of consciousness, from our roots to our branches. Sometimes, in our lives, we limit our accessibility to and the vitality of some of our chakras in order to protect ourselves from pain or some other thing that we cannot contain. These limitations block the flow of energy passing through us and limit our ability to manifest ourselves fully.

Mayan came to therapy to deal with the separation between her and her partner. She came to me after 3 years of 'regular' psychotherapy, feeling that she needs to involve the body in the therapy. 47 years old, mother of 3, divorced, she was separating after a 2 year relationship with her partner.

Mayan has a very traumatic history where as a child she took care of her depressed mother and became a parental child. Her father left home when she was 5 and didn't insist on being in touch with her.

On the first meeting she shared with me: "Since childhood, I have been deeply connected to the spiritual realm and have a direct communication with my guides... it is something very natural for me to speak with them...it is a unique channel for me, giving me a sense of connectedness and support. Now I use this direct connection in my work with children and their families".

Her direct connection to the spiritual realm filled her and it was enough for her. 'There' was her home (something she had said to me in another meeting).

When a young infant or child faces difficulty, fear, neglect... it sometimes forces him to rely on himself. The feeling of not being safe and protected is unbearable and the child redirects his attention away from the unpleasant experience, cutting off from body sensation. By directing most of the energy to the head, and above, the child can feel safer. This is what happened to Mayan. It saved her from the emptiness and the terror at home but cut her off from her roots and her physical body represented in the first chakra.



The split and detachment she did as a child so as not to feel the pain, made her withdraw to a place inside where she didn't feel the hurt, the destructive sentences that her mother said to her could emotionally disappear (not concretely). The spiritual realm was the only place she felt alive in. There she felt at home.

As an adult, in her daily life she found her way of living in intensive doing but couldn't feel herself. The split between worlds had become her way of life.

This position made her less accessible to herself and to others. When I sat in front of her, I couldn't feel her weight, although she told and touched difficult memories, the quality was like something I couldn't touch, like a cloud that has no heaviness, no weight, nothing to grasp. It appeared also in her voice which was very quiet and flat toned, out of context with her physical size and the size of her experience.

One morning she came to our meeting very excited, telling me that she had had a dramatic dream that night.

"In the dream I was dying. I was ill, lying in a big bed in some house. There were people there but they were not with me, they were occupied with something else... In the moment before I realized I'm going to die, I became terrified, I understood I'm going to leave.. I shouted 'No, I want to experience life through my body!' I want to be here.. to feel.. to be in my body.. not to die!"

She looked at me directly and said with a big smile, "I want to experience life through the body. I want to experience life, I want to feel life.. I want to be here.. I want to feel life through my body".

It was a very strong moment. The dream was alive again, awaking in her an inner call for connectedness.

I asked her to be present with what was unfolding in her body...



She felt soft aliveness.. a gentle and clear energy moving through her body... very subtle but real , something very deep was opening.. all her body was reacting to it... it was like awakening from a deep sleep....

All through the meeting we were with this sensation, the awakening of her body and her deep new choice. The shift was very visible. Inside, I felt grateful for the dream that had come as part of the process of reconnection as a person and human being.

The therapeutic process completely changed after the dream and this meeting. A new direction was created... topics, like new physical sensations in her body, arose. She started to feel her digestive system and the traumas held within it. After another month she found that her voice was now coming from a new place in her abdomen, not as it was before... and I reflected that I felt her voice now has more tones.

From time to time we went back to that dream.. it was a resource for her..she reported that she feels more aliveness in daily life.. she is not afraid of life any more.

Mayan's choice to come to me because she felt the need to involve the body in her therapy, was her body's first call for healing. Throughout the process, different parts of Mayan emerged, each one enabling Mayan to connect to her sense of wholeness. It took time, but in the end we understood that she had come to reconnect to her roots, to spread herself deep within the earth, to allow herself to be nourished and connected.

