

FOCUSING WITH ADOLESCENTS:
DISCERNING SELF-IDENTITY AND CULTIVATING SELF-DETERMINATION

by

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Abstract

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Within the philosophy of Focusing, discovered by Eugene Gendlin and as developed by Ann Weiser Cornell, 10 adolescents (5 females, 1 bi-racial African-American and Caucasian, and 5 males, 1 African-American) between the ages of 13 and 15 years completed multiple guided focusing sessions over a period of approximately 3 months: 9 of them completed 10 sessions and 1 completed 5 sessions. The transcripts from these young teenagers' sessions underwent a series of qualitative content analyses, which resulted in extrapolation of the germane and most prominent contexts and themes. The contexts involved their relationships with (a) friends, (b) fun, (c) family, (d) sports, (e) physical body, (f) future aspirations, (g) mental states, and (h) Focusing. From within, the adolescents were able to determine their personal beliefs about these topics as well as to find solutions for problems concerning them. The beliefs and solutions were derived from an internal place of reflection and wisdom, rather than from outside opinions and sources. During the course of their Focusing, the adolescents developed a language rich in metaphor, narration, and description of their inner physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual states. Many of the themes that emerged from the contexts fell into the categories that renowned child psychologists, such as Erikson, Winnicott, and Piaget, have clarified and classified as pertinent to adolescents. The research gave evidence of development in the stages described by Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Wade. The themes

included (a) personal growth toward authentic self-identity, (b) personal growth toward self-assertion and autonomy, (c) inner focusing relationships, and (d) moments of transpersonal transformation. Focusing with adolescents has the promise of inestimable benefits, particularly as an advantageous alternative to therapy, given their need to separate themselves from adult authority and to find their own voice.

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I cannot begin to thank Ann Weiser Cornell enough. My debt to her is multifold. As a member of my committee, she kept me, a relative newcomer to Focusing, on a precise and correct path as I related the concepts and history of Focusing. As an expert in linguistics, she assisted in correctly categorizing the vocabulary found in the focusing sessions. As my focusing mentor and teacher, she inspired and moved me toward the means to successfully guide my participants on their inner adventures.

There are many people who helped me bring this dissertation to fruition. Michael Hutton directed me to experts in the field of adolescent development. Paul Roy stepped in as a committee member at the last moment, enabling the completion of this project. I greatly appreciate Karen Serett for her expertise and preciseness as my outside reader. Peggy Cary and Rosemary Taylor gave me their support and encouragement during the long process of formulating this dissertation. Further, Peggy continually gave feedback about my attitudes and presentation with my participants, encouraging and enhancing the integrity and responsibility that I desired to emulate in my work with them.

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This dissertation is dedicated to

Teenagers everywhere,
in the hopes they may find within themselves
the self-acceptance and wisdom needed to succeed
in fully unfolding love, joy, and creativity in their lives

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Abstract..... | iii |
| Acknowledgments..... | v |
| Dedication..... | vii |
| List of Tables | xi |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE..... | 6 |
| Transpersonal Psychology..... | 6 |
| Adolescence..... | 7 |
| Transpersonal Experience | 7 |
| Prebirth Transpersonal Influences on the Adolescent..... | 11 |
| Adolescent Psychological Development..... | 12 |
| Adolescent Physical Development..... | 23 |
| Focusing..... | 24 |
| The Focusing Attitudes..... | 26 |
| Background for an Experiential Description of Focusing..... | 27 |
| Elements of a Focusing Session..... | 30 |
| Varieties of Focusing Abilities and Characteristics | 37 |
| Focusing Research..... | 38 |
| CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD | 42 |
| Rationale for Selecting a Qualitative Method | 43 |
| Participants | 44 |
| Research Procedure | 45 |
| Description of Qualitative Content Analysis..... | 48 |
| Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability..... | 50 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 4: RESULTS | 53 |
| Individual Sessions Analyses | 55 |
| Adam | 56 |
| Clint | 59 |
| Eve | 60 |
| Georgia | 61 |
| Ike | 63 |
| Kate..... | 65 |
| Mae | 66 |
| Oren | 69 |
| Pete | 70 |
| Rhonda..... | 71 |
| Context Content Analyses | 73 |
| Friends | 84 |
| Family..... | 89 |
| Future Aspirations | 93 |
| Fun | 94 |
| Sports..... | 96 |
| Physical Body | 97 |
| Positive Mental State | 99 |
| Focusing | 100 |
| Thematic Content Analyses..... | 107 |
| Personal Growth..... | 107 |
| Transpersonal Psychology..... | 123 |
| Summarization Tables of Contexts and Themes | 130 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION..... | 134 |
| Limitations and Delimitations | 145 |
| Conclusions..... | 148 |
| Appendix A: Focusing Definitions..... | 156 |
| Appendix B: A Partial List of Potential Growth Directions..... | 157 |
| Appendix C: Induction | 159 |
| Appendix D: Focusing Session General Format | 161 |
| Appendix E: Advertising Flyer Calling for Participants..... | 163 |
| Appendix F: Informed Consent Form..... | 164 |
| Appendix G: Background Survey..... | 168 |
| Appendix H: Researcher’s Qualifications as Focusing Guide and Human Instrument | 171 |
| Appendix I: Note of Appreciation..... | 172 |

List of Tables

| Table | | Page |
|-------|--|------|
| 1 | Participant Descriptions of Complex Inner Experiences | 74 |
| 2 | Participant Descriptions of Bodily Sensed Simple Inner Awareness. | 77 |
| 3 | Areas of Body Attended by Specific and Immediate Sensation | 80 |
| 4 | Body Message: Something Wants/Wanted Company and Attention | 103 |
| 5 | Focusing Attributes and Attitudes Expressed by Participants | 106 |
| 6 | Context Content Analyses Summary | 131 |
| 7 | Thematic Content Analyses Summary | 132 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Message from Sophia
You do not need to leave your room.
Remain sitting at your table and listen.
Do not even listen, simply wait.
Do not even wait; be quite still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked.
It has no choice.
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

Franz Kafka

(source unknown)

In my rejection of my peers during my teenage-hood, I turned from personal engagement with others to private introspection and communion with God, as I came to understand the concept. However, I had no adult guidance or explicit tools that would aid in developing identity, fostering spiritual growth, or recognizing other transpersonal tendencies. (Author, 1997)

My purpose in pursuing this research was to explore the possibility that adolescents may find truth and meaning for themselves in their experiences of Focusing, a body-oriented process of coming to self-realization originally described in the works of Gendlin (1978) and, as used in this research, developed by Cornell (1996). Through qualitative content analysis of transcribed focusing sessions, I anticipated finding evidence of these experiences in each of the six realms of study as identified at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP; 1991): intellect, spirit, body, emotion, creative expression, and community. I planned to classify these experiences, including those that may be considered to be transpersonal.

According to the following definitions, Focusing is a transpersonal practice (Braud, 1998; Gendlin, 1996; McMahon, 1991):

Transpersonal experiences may be defined as experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) [and across] the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos. . . . *Transpersonal practices* are those structured activities which

focus on inducing transpersonal experiences. (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 203)

Gendlin (1978), the discoverer/developer of Focusing, found in his studies of psychology clients at the University of Chicago that those whose therapy was successful exhibited an unsolicited phenomenon in their first or second therapy session. This phenomenon was a slowing down, groping for words to describe something experientially present that was not yet in words. Gendlin called this a “felt sense.” The felt sense, which seems vague and fuzzy, occurs in the zone or region between the conscious and unconscious.

What one senses at the “border zone” is unclear in that one does not know what to say or how to characterize it. Yet it is definite in that one senses unmistakably that it has its own unique quality. One cannot be talked out of this unique, unnamed quality, and one cannot be talked into feeling it as something else. In that respect it is very definite. (p. 17)

Gendlin went on to develop a step-by-step process and attitude for being with the body and the felt sense, which he called Focusing (see Appendix A for definitions of focusing terms). Focusing is a process of giving gentle, interested attention to felt senses so that they generate symbolic images and sounds, words, life stories, physical sensations, and emotions. Sometimes these are accompanied by a change in bodily state.

Focusing is a process of honoring the wisdom that one has inside while bringing into clarity the subtle level of knowing that speaks through the body. It is a process of becoming aware of the body in a gentle, friendly way and then receiving and accepting the messages that the unconscious is sending through the felt sense. At the same time, Focusing is more than just a way of knowing oneself. It is also a way of bringing about or allowing inner transformation (Cornell, 1996). Body messages discovered while Focusing can tell a person how and why various stimuli trigger emotional, mental, and

physical reactions within, what wants immediate attention, and what is lasting and meaningful, such as to which personal and spiritual path one is best suited (Campbell & McMahon, 1985; Cornell, 1996; Gendlin, 1996). As an example of this, during December of 1998, three of my focusing sessions guided me toward a form of meditation that was unfamiliar to me yet which resonated as valuable within me. Synchronistically, I heard of a Buddhist teacher, Adyashanti. At the second of his satsangs I attended, he described exactly the kind of meditation practice given to me during Focusing, giving me an external affirmation of its validity.

Adolescents today are in need of companions and practices that will allow them to know how to function successfully in this world. Current newspapers and popular journals are filled with articles about rising crime and suicide rates among juveniles as well as their involvement in other social disturbances. Discovery of the spiritual, personal, and social beliefs that best suit them, and which are validated as being their own by their bodies' communications, might well aid them in moving through maturation, possibly with the least amount of harm to themselves and society (Coles, 1997). Focusing could be as powerful a life tool for adolescents as it is for practicing adults. It could aid them in becoming self-aware, self-identified, and self-determined.

In addition, there are strong arguments for the hypothesis that children, as well as adults, have transpersonal experiences (Armstrong, 1984; Coles, 1990; Hunt, Gervais, Shearing-Johns, & Travis, 1992). I postulated that through this research it would be found that that Focusing fosters growth toward wholeness, oneness, and spiritual transformation within the adolescent. (Appendix B gives partial lists of terms for both transpersonal and personal growth directions.)

Adolescence is the time in childhood, according to Erikson (1968), when individuals first begin the process of finding their ego identity. Part of this process is exploring personal sexual drives and limits. With the surge of sexual energy and interest, there could be a parallel surge in transpersonal experiences, particularly, as I contend, if adolescents are given a guiding tool to identify and foster these experiences. Another major drive of developing teenagers is an underlying need for connection. In conjunction with a surging sexuality, this drive is often manifest in the form of promiscuity as an effort to find that connection. In addition, this drive may lead to a dedication to certain people or ideals, perhaps manifesting as blind and unhealthy membership in gangs or cults or as devotion to God and church. In my case, when I was 13, I became disillusioned with the sexual and social attitudes of my peers. I turned to books for my ideas about God and spirituality and social relationships.

One reason I am an advocate of Focusing is my belief that the most valuable and authentic learning comes from that which arises from within oneself. I hoped that through Focusing, the adolescents would become closer to uncovering their personal code for a meaningful and rewarding life. Sensory data is one source in finding reality. Reality is also found through a deep intuitive inner knowing (Braud & Anderson, 1998). Focusing involves both sensory and inner knowing.

Focusing, as “a process of honoring the wisdom that you have inside you and becoming aware of the subtle level of knowing that speaks to you through your body” (Cornell, 1996, p. 3), could enable adolescents to express their own inner wisdom. These expressions could pertain to any or all of Maslow’s (1968) list of clinically observed characteristics of healthy persons living their lives in authenticity. There was also the

question of whether these expressions of inner wisdom ever occur for the adolescent as transpersonal events, feelings, openings, transformations, and altered states. I considered Focusing a possible way to maximize the positive potential of such experiences for self-transformation. It was my hypothesis that Focusing could facilitate transpersonal experiences in adolescents as well as increase their personal maturity.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Transpersonal Psychology

Wilber (1995) professed that the transpersonal view is dedicated to all aspects of human consciousness and behavior, and he divided these aspects into four domains or quadrants: (a) the interior-individual or subjective “I,” (b) the interior-collective or inter-subjective “We,” (c) the exterior-individual or objective “it,” and (d) the exterior-collective or inter-objective “it.” The interior includes interpretive, hermeneutic, and consciousness categories. The exterior includes monological, empirical, and form categories:

If transpersonal studies take the wide view, the more specific school of *transpersonal psychology* has historically taken as its fundamental starting point the [first quadrant above,] . . . that of immediate lived experience, consciousness, introspection, and interpretation. But the fact that transpersonal psychology specializes in the intentional domain (of consciousness and immediate awareness), does not in any fashion mean that it ignores or denies the other equally significant domains. (p. 126)

In a meta-study of the themes of transpersonal psychology, Lajoie and Shapiro (1992) concluded with this definition: “Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding and realization of unitive, spiritual and transcendent states of consciousness” (p. 91). Frager (1989) stated that transpersonal psychology is the overlap and study of (a) theoretical formulations and practical applications to individual growth in the various models of personal development; (b) consciousness (mapping and exploring different states of human functioning such as dreaming, meditation, drug states, and parapsychology); and (c) spirituality or “models of human nature found in the world’s religious traditions and the development of psychological theory that is consistent with religious and spiritual

experiences” (p. 289). These studies are pursued with a curiosity about the human potential, believed to be far greater than currently understood or theorized.

Adolescence

Transpersonal Experience

There is a growing body of evidence from psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, theologians, and other researchers that children have transpersonal experiences (Armstrong, 1984; Piechowski, 2001; Wade, 1996). Wilber (1980), as a theoretician concerned with adult development, stated the following in regard to adolescents and the higher realms of transpersonal development:

It is not really possible to set timetables for these higher realms and stages, because a collective humanity has only evolved to the ego level, and thus only levels leading up to that have been determined as to emergence. In general, however, the subtle [one of Wilber’s beyond ego stages] can begin to emerge after adolescence, but rarely before. (p. 91)

In his later work, Wilber (1999) stated that he never denied spiritual awareness of one sort or another to any stage of human development. He qualified this by stating that *spiritual trails* are rarely found during adolescence, a time when ego development is underway.

Arguing against the idea that logical operations are beyond children’s capacities and as codified by Piaget and Kohlberg (see Adolescent Development below), Piechowski (2001) stated,

When tasks measuring conceptual capability were put into the children’s own hands and were within their own experience, logical operations turned out to be within their capacities. . . . Results are similar when children are probed in a religious context . . . [as] on their own they do not produce anthropomorphic concepts of God. (p. 10)

Armstrong (1985) began his argument for his theory that children can and do have a wide spectrum of transpersonal experiences, and not necessarily rarely, by referring to Wilber's concept of the emergent-unconscious:

One of the five types of unconscious processes described by Wilber, the emergent-unconscious, contains all those levels of development yet to unfold within the individual . . . including the mature ego, centaur, and all transpersonal structures. . . . Wilber does not seem to allow for the possibility of experiencing levels far beyond one's present stage. Yet it would seem that this is exactly what has occurred. . . . Children who are in many other ways identified with pre-personal or early egoic levels of development seem to contact, if only briefly, those levels of consciousness on the far end of Wilber's developmental continuum. (p. 49)

Armstrong (1984) did not relegate childhood experiences to the prepersonal and personal (egoic) levels. He attempted to show that transpersonal experiences can be contemporaneous with a child's developmental stages as defined by Erikson (1968) and Inhelder and Piaget (1958).

Armstrong (1984) gave examples to concretize the similarities between child and adult experiences described as transpersonal:

The evidence for transpersonal experience in childhood comes from three basic sources: biographical and autobiographical material of extraordinary individuals; research studies examining contemporary adult memories of religious experience in childhood; and finally, reports of children concerning their inner spiritual lives. (p. 209)

Further, Armstrong (1984) and Piechowski (2001) credited Robinson with research in which 15% of the respondents remembered incidents in their childhood of "power beyond themselves" and "visions of beneficent oneness." Seventy percent of these incidents were experienced when the respondents were between the ages of 5 and 15 years, occurred either during specific practices or spontaneously, and had enduring significance (notably leading to further spiritual studies as adults). From Morse, Armstrong (1984) found that the words of children as they returned from near-death

experiences were similar to those of adults. Piechowski (2001) gave credit to Robinson for extensive research that led to the conclusion “that these [spiritual] experiences correspond to a property of childhood that is not something that is later outgrown but that is an essential element of the whole person” (p. 3) and, for most, grew in strength throughout adulthood. As Armstrong (1984) cited from Jung, children reported moments of total self-awareness that were corroborated by the adult symbols that appeared in their remembered childhood dreams. Armstrong presented evidence of *psychic wholeness* in children’s artwork. The wide variety of research citations indicated that children may be capable of benefiting from intrapersonal transpersonal practices such as Focusing.

A question Armstrong (1984) agreed was left to explore was implied in the following quotes:

How frequently [do] these experiences occur in the general population[?] Because there are no clear maps for making sense of transpersonal childhood experiences, it seems quite likely that when these experience do occur, they are ignored, reduced, or even suppressed by parents, teachers, and other adults. (p. 225)

and

It is rather the theoretical edifices of adult mainstream thinking that appear to be limited. . . . One of the repeated realizations in the study of children’s development is how much we keep underestimating their capacities. (Piechowski, 2001, p. 10)

Related to the question of how frequently children have spiritual experiences and how adults influence this frequency was the question of whether an adolescent’s believing or not believing in transpersonal experiences affects his or her ability to have or recognize transpersonal experiences in his or her life. A research study conducted by Gaynard (1992) partially answered these two questions. Gaynard sent a survey concerning belief in, and experience of, the paranormal to 400 students aged 16 to 19

years. Eighty-five percent were returned. A paranormal event was defined as “an occurrence inexplicable by current scientific knowledge” (p. 166). Slightly over half believed that they had experienced a paranormal event. Extent of belief was graded on a 5-point scale ranging from certain to impossible. The percentage of teenage believers responding within the certain and likely points of the scale ranged from 75.4% for déjà vu to 24.4% for reincarnation. Six of the 12 categories were believed in by more than half of the participants, who were students of Gaynard’s classes. Belief percent was higher than other cited studies, possibly because the participants were Gaynard’s students. Males and females showed no significant differences in experiencing paranormal events (unlike other studies that were referenced), even though levels of belief in some of the categories differed between the sexes. Review of the survey indicated experience of paranormal phenomena is independent of intellectual ability, which was determined by previous examination performance. Students who were artists scored similarly to those who had science backgrounds both in types of experiences and degrees of belief in the paranormal. The results gave “significant [positive] correlations between the proportion of the sample professing belief and the proportion claiming to have experienced the phenomena” (Gaynard, 1992, pp. 177-178).

Non-belief or skepticism may reduce psychic experience or cause a genuine paranormal event to be dismissed as normal. In either case, for adults and children, the transformative or transcendent drive may be stifled by society’s failure to promote its investigation. In addition, if, as Wilber stated above, experiencing transpersonal events is rare for an adolescent, then evidence of these events in this research could be viewed as increasing its significance.

Prebirth Transpersonal Influences on the Adolescent

Transpersonal psychology admits the possibility of prebirth experiences. After analysis of a variety of documented case studies, Wade (1996) argued for the existence of a prebirth “materially transcendent source of awareness” (p. 47) or consciousness. She described this transcendent source as being of an extra-sensory nature. Various qualities of this prenatal consciousness include its being located within a timeless present (therefore dualistic and not enlightened) and fully mature and insightful with the telepathic ability to know others’ thoughts and feelings. It “records and processes information about people without emotional loading or neurotic projection” (p. 55).

This transcendent awareness could transmit to the body prebirth experiences that influence incarnate perceptions and attitudes, which Focusing may reveal. For instance, the common fantasies of psychologically labeled “disturbed children” who know they are “finer and greater” than their parents are remarkably similar to worldwide myths and to the principles behind Eastern religious traditions (Armstrong, 1984). Armstrong stated,

This process seems to describe a certain kind of “exile” from Paradise, where the noble parentage is in fact one’s own Selfhood. . . . It should be noted that the usual pattern is for the person to forget these experiences upon taking birth. However, the potential for remembrance is present in all humans. (p. 218)

Perhaps there are transpersonal childhood experiences that are misclassified as psychoses, just as happens to adults’ behaviors.

Armstrong (1984) hypothesized that a person’s “immortal spiritual being” is forgotten for the most part when in birth it is embedded in material form. It nevertheless forms the basis for transpersonal experiences of children. Armstrong agreed with the Eastern traditions that there are lifetimes of experiences brought forward. Tibetan lamas are chosen in infancy based on this belief. “Certain children would qualify as having

authentic transpersonal experiences on the basis of having acquired access to transpersonal levels of development in the course of previous lifetimes” (p. 222). One could infer from this that any child could have transpersonal experiences at any level.

Adolescent Psychological Development

Erikson (1968) first studied under Anna Freud then proceeded to work with children (his work with Native American adolescents is particularly well known) and as a professor of psychology at Harvard. He approached the discussion of adolescence through his ideas on the crises of identity development. He believed that teens are “beset with the physiological revolution of their genital maturation and the uncertainty of the adult roles ahead” (p. 128). They do not recognize that they are in a transitional phase and, in order to find a sense of continuity and sameness, tend to isolate themselves from society at large through subcultural groups. Winnicott (1965a), an English educator on children, wrote that adolescents are essentially isolates coming together in these subcultures in the face of perceived group persecution or attack and then “attempting by various means to form an aggregate through the adoption of an identity of tastes” (p. 81).

Erikson (1968) described five identity elements facing teens in their maturational development: (a) a need to trust in oneself and in others; (b) a need to exercise free will; (c) a need for imaginative scope to their aspirations; (d) a need for the satisfaction of functioning with unique excellence; and (e) in face of new doubt, a need for ethnic and sexual identity. Erikson believed that teens have recognizable ways of dealing with the integration of these identity elements, but, when they are thwarted from obtaining their needs within cultural standards, they enter into identity confusion and act out in the form of psychological disorders, which society then defines as antisocial behavior.

Malmquist (1985) stated that the first function of the adolescent ego was to test reality. Impairment of this function could profoundly influence all other life functions by leading to depersonalization of experiences and, in Erikson's vernacular, to lack of a strong identity. From the cognitive point of view, this impairment leads to the inability to move from "a self-centered to an objective view of the world" (Malmquist, 1985, p. 52). Even when reality testing functions normally, the adolescent adaptation involving the move from narcissistic gratification to "new object ties induces . . . profound ego states of moodiness" (p. 51). These can range from euphoria to depression and lead to the use of various forms of defense mechanisms, which in turn may be viewed as normative at some levels, maladaptive at others, and are complicated when both normal and abnormal behaviors are present simultaneously. Winnicott (1986a) believed that within the normal manifestation of confusion and doubt felt by adolescents are the seeds of constructive work.

Identity confusion is increased by youths' proclivity for turning to others' views of themselves, rather than to their own personal feelings and intuitions, as if they exist on center stage (Malmquist, 1985). "Adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused self-image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified" (Erikson, 1968, p. 132). However, this makes them vulnerable to rejections and slights in their quest for approval and recognition.

On the other hand, an adolescent believes his or her own thoughts and processes are original (Malmquist, 1985). Winnicott (1965a) maintained that there is no way to forewarn or educate adolescents about the issues they face during their stage of life. They must experience it to know it. Society's role is to give them the time needed for their gradual maturation process as individuals.

Recognition of self can also be seen as a function of mental development. The mental development of the adolescent is perhaps best known through Piaget's concepts of formal operations that involve the emergence of the ability to use metaphors, abstract construct, logical and hypothetical thinking, deductive reasoning, and the translation of thought to achievement (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). Malmquist (1985) stated that this development is partly motivated by adolescents' need to reduce anxiety in their confusing world and to find cognitive satisfaction by promoting "a broader and more objective view of the world . . . [while fostering] creativity by way of synthesizing diverse sources of information or data" (p. 55). Winnicott (1986a) stated that "creativity belongs to being alive" (p. 41) and that "in creative living . . . everything we do strengthens the feeling that we are alive, that we are ourselves" (p. 43). With the "arrival and secure maintenance of the stage of I AM, . . . [there is] the development towards independence and ever-new meanings to the concept of wholeness" (Winnicott, 1986b, p. 56).

Transpersonal psychology includes within its scope all-encompassing human experiences of immeasurable intelligence and compassion. If one assumes that human beings are moving toward this concept of wholeness, there is the possibility of humankind reaching Kohlberg's (1984, 1987) Stage 6 of Morality, which he entitled "Universal Ethical Principles." Kohlberg, who was a colleague of Erikson at Harvard, defined this stage in terms of moral justice. Justice is based on ethical principles that include equal rights and respect for all as dignified individuals and is self-chosen by rational committed individuals. Social agreements and laws are theoretically based on these principles. However, when laws are found not to be based on these principles by

individuals operating from Stage 6, then the principle takes precedence over the law in the formulation of any action.

Kohlberg (1981) began his thinking about moral development through the study of Piaget's recognition of the child as being puzzled by the same philosophical concepts as adults (the meaning of time, space, causality, life, death, right and wrong, etc.) but the child finding answers different than those of an adult and dependent on which stage or quality of thinking the child is in at the time. Over the years, Kohlberg gradually "elaborated a typological scheme describing [six] general stages of moral thought that can be defined independently of the specific content of particular moral decisions or actions" (p. 16). Like Piaget, Kohlberg believed that for each human being these stages progress in a certain order and are developed cognitively. Unlike Piaget, Kohlberg believed that they are not entirely biological but are also progressively learned from family, society, and teachers.

Kohlberg (1981) believed that an aim of education is to aid students' advancement from their current stage to the following. In his studies of young men from many cultures, he found examples of adolescents in all six stages. From longitudinal studies, he deduced that they progressed through the stages in order—from 1 to 2, 2 to 3, and so on—unless circumstances were not supportive of that progression. Progression is a common theme among adolescent philosophers, psychologists, and teachers (Erikson, 1968; Malmquist, 1985; Winnicott, 1965a).

Kohlberg's Stages 1 and 2 are placed together in the Preconventional Level I and are clearly egocentric. Rules are obeyed in order to avoid punishment. Even recognizing another's needs and rights is due to that being necessary to pursue one's own desires.

Stages 3 and 4 are placed together in the Conventional Level II and encompass the morality of teenagers who fit Erikson's, Malmquist's, and Winnicott's portrayals as described above. They are the stages in which a person is most concerned with mutual relationships, interpersonal expectations, and interpersonal conformity (Stage 3) and with the social system and conscience (Stage 4).

Young adolescents were usually found to be making moral decisions from their presence within these third and fourth stages (Kohlberg, 1981). These stages are identified with the *conventional level* in which the child perceives the expectations and rules of his family and society as being valuable in their own right. "There is a concern not only with conforming to the individual's social order but in maintaining, supporting, and justifying this order" (p. 17). This attitude projects as one of conformity and loyalty. In Stage 3, actions are based on being nice or trying to be nice. Thus, the individual conforms "to avoid disapproval and dislike by others. . . . The value of human life is based on the empathy and affection of family members and others toward its possessor" (pp. 19-20). In Stage 4, right action consists of loyally maintaining social order for its own sake by deferring to authority and rules. The aim is to avoid blame and guilt. "Life is conceived as sacred in terms of its place in a categorical moral or religious order of rights and duties" (p. 20).

Kohlberg places Stage 5 with Stage 6 in what he calls the Principled Level III. These stages are autonomous and post conventional, wherein the principle of justice is of higher value than society and its authority or conscience. Kohlberg (1981) stated that in a longitudinal study over 6 years, 30% of his participating United States boys moved to Stage 5 between the ages of 13 and 15, with only 8% reaching Stage 6.

A person who has progressed to Stage 5 knows “values and opinions are relative” to the group membership, different than other groups, and should be upheld with impartiality and due to social contract. In Stage 5, the individual freely agrees to obey rules as formulated by his or her group. The exception to this is when the laws and standards undermine nonrelative values and rights such as life and liberty. The individual understands that moral and legal points of view may conflict but finds it difficult to integrate them.

The sixth stage individual knows “that persons are ends in themselves . . . [knows that there is] equality of human rights and [has] respect [sic] for the dignity of human beings as individual persons” (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 175). He or she chooses ethical principles and follows those laws that are based on them with a sense of personal commitment. These principles supersede society’s laws when they conflict. Kohlberg’s Stage 6 can be seen to parallel Maslow’s Authentic Self, his highest stage of human development (Wade, 1996). Maslow (1968) presented this stage as having the following qualities:

1. Superior perception of reality.
2. Acceptance of self, of others, and of nature.
3. Spontaneity.
4. Problem-centering acuity.
5. Detachment and a desire for privacy.
6. Autonomy and resistance to enculturation.
7. Fresh appreciation and rich emotional reaction.
8. High frequency of peak experiences.
9. Identification with the human species.
10. Changed . . . interpersonal relations.
11. Democratic character structure.
12. Creativeness.
13. Certain changes in the value system. (p. 26)

In proposing these six stages (as well as a Stage 7 in later works), Kohlberg (1984) generalized his conclusions from his studies on young men to include females.

This generalization has been the subject of much debate.

Gilligan, with Brown, Rogers and others, cofounded the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and the Development of Girls (Woolf, 2003). She was first a student of Erikson and Kohlberg and then a colleague and friend of Kohlberg at Harvard. When she realized that young girls did not fare as well as boys on various forms of tests based on Kohlberg's morality levels, and that psychologists spoke "about women—as having a problem in achieving separation" (Gilligan, 1993, p. xv), she suspected that there were basic differences between girls' and boys' development. Subsequently, during latitudinal studies of girls between the ages of 8 and 18 in the 1980s, she and her coresearchers found that the participants were primarily concerned with relationship in the form of intimacy and care. Girls "arrive at puberty with a different interpersonal orientation and different range of social experiences" (p. 12) than boys. Naively entering her teen years, a young girl believes that others are also willing to strive toward the best good for all through the process of communication. Relationship is seen as being a function of voice. Gilligan wrote,

To have a voice is to be human. To have something to say is to be a person. But speaking depends on listening and being heard; it is an intensely relational act. I say that by voice I mean something like what people mean when they speak of the core of the self. (p. xvi)

Gilligan and her associates found that their participants lost their personal voice between late childhood and the first few years of adolescence. Neither their parents nor their teachers in the private school these girls attended seemed to value or listen to their voices. The adults, as role models, did not relate from their own truth or, at the most, gave it lip service with no follow through. For this and numerous other reasons, relentlessly and over time, these adolescent feminine voices were lost and, consequently, authentic relationship was lost also (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan, 1993):

As the phrase “I don’t know” enters our interview with girls at this developmental juncture, we observe girls struggling over speaking and not speaking, knowing and not knowing, feeling and not feeling, and we see the makings of an inner division as girls come to a place where they feel they cannot say or feel or know what they have experienced—what they have felt and known. (Brown & Gilligan, 1993, p. 4)

“The girl arrives at this juncture either psychologically at risk or with a different agenda” (Gilligan, 1993, p. 11). During questioning, she knows at some level that she has lost authentic, caring relationship with herself and others. Adolescence characteristically becomes a time of disconnection, dissociation, or repression.

In addition to losing voice, and, consequently self, the 13- to 15-year-old finds herself in a world based on male morality. Gilligan (1993) wrote that even though Erikson knew that women’s identity was entwined with intimacy, he did not incorporate that into his view of development. Gilligan stated,

While the adolescent girl places herself in relation to the world, the same aged boy places the world in relation to himself. He worries about people interfering with each other’s rights. She worries about not helping another through oversight or lack of understanding and expertise. Whereas the rights conception of morality that informs Kohlberg’s principled level . . . is geared to arriving at an objectively fair or just resolution to moral dilemmas upon which all rational persons could agree, the responsibility conception focuses instead on the limitations of any particular resolution and describes the conflicts that remain. (pp. 21-22)

The young adolescent female could and often does hold in trepidation the idea of morality being based on rights and noninterference. For her, action based on this belief might potentially lead to an attitude of not caring and indifference. If individuation, or finding one’s identity, means loss of relationship through appearing self-centered and uncaring, then the girl chooses to foster the relationship, hoping “that in morality lies a way of solving conflicts so that no one will be hurt” (Gilligan, 1993, p. 65). She lives with the dilemma of helping others at the expense of helping herself. She must eventually

learn to modulate her sense of responsibility, recognizing that the other is essentially keeper of her own destiny.

In summary, the young adolescent female finds herself caught in what Gilligan (1994) called the first transition, selfishness to responsibility, moving away from Level I: Orientation to Individual Survival and toward Level II: Goodness as Self-Sacrifice. “The transitional issue is one of attachment or connection to others” (p. 13) versus her previous relationship to the pragmatic issue of personal survival. To develop to her fullest potential as a woman, Gilligan stated that she must move through the second transition, goodness to truth, onto Level III: The Morality of Nonviolence. Within this final level, she takes responsibility for personal choices as a universal obligation and, concurrently, elevates caring equal to the status of nonviolence in order to not hurt herself or others.

In his edited work, Puka (1994) included studies that gave voice to the supporters of the ethics of care as dominant in female development as well as to those who refuted Gilligan’s conclusions. Of particular interest are those studies that showed that females do just as well on Kohlberg-type tests as do their male counterparts when the influence of education is statistically factored into the results. In fact, it seems that men need graduate levels of education to reach Stage 6, whereas women do not (Baumrind, 1994, pp. 371-382). Also included were those studies that proposed that, generally, all testing and grading is based on male and female stereotypes (Puka, 1994, pp. 383-402).

Wade (1996), a transpersonal philosopher and developmental psychologist, formulated a theory of consciousness progression that left space for both Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s experiences with their adolescent research participants without defining them as either male or female. She stated that most individuals in the present era and from the

age of adolescence onward display consciousness as defined in what she called the Conformist Stage 4 and are as “responsive to the environment as [they are] to internal dynamics” (p. 258), with the institution being their locus. An individual may also move to the Achievement Stage 5, or the Affiliative Stage 6, or back and forth between these three stages depending on their dominant hemisphere or on the influence of society. All three stages may move directly to the Authentic Stage 7.

Wade’s (1996) Conformist Stage adolescent’s core assumption is that the universe is fair; thus, being good ensures security. The dilemma that must be confronted and resolved for transition to the next higher-level authentic stage is that “life is not fair” (p. 263). Many of the characteristics of the Conformist Stage parallel those in Piaget’s and Erikson’s descriptions of the adolescent as well as the actions and choices witnessed in Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s studies. Adolescents are motivated by safety and security. They gravitate toward groups whose members are judged as being similar to themselves and, thus, predictably safe. The group identifies social roles and rules that determine the right or good action, even when they create social inequity.

In Wade’s (1996) theory, the Affiliative and Achievement Stages are of equal complexity and may alternatively be found in the same individual. Achievement oriented individuals are generally internally driven, with self-centered motivations and a tendency for left-brain cognition. Their core assumption is that they can be masters of their fate through their own initiative. To move to the Authentic Stage they must face the dilemma that “some forces cannot be controlled” (p. 263). Their primary motivation is that their personal success be socially recognized. For them, success is measured by power and the degree to which one wins all life offers. To adolescents in this group, others appear

externally similar in kind to themselves but not similar in their ability to achieve. Exploitation is socially acceptable within limits. Limits are determined by the self. Actions are infinite and geared toward securing “the greatest personal advantage” (p. 143).

While achievement-oriented adolescents are internally driven, affiliative-oriented individuals are externally driven, have other-centered motivations, and tend toward right-brain cognition. Their core assumption is that if they have enough love they can conquer any difficulty, and to move on they must face the dilemma that “love cannot redeem every situation” (Wade, 1996, p. 263). For them, “belonging in close, harmonious relationship . . . and being needed” (p. 155) are, respectively, the ultimate goal and value. Love is expressed through sharing one’s inner self, thereby recognizing similitudes and basic equality, and by helping others in their peer group to achieve close relationship. As with achievement-oriented individuals, options for action are infinite, but for the affiliative teen, actions are determined by the consensus of the peer group. Finally, “as the ego’s strength increases, it becomes even more alienated from the numinous and involved in the mental world of its own ideas as a necessary part of human evolution” (p. 129). Stages 4, 5, and 6 are those in which the ego is at its strongest.

Wade (1996) summarily described the characteristics of an authentic consciousness as “progression . . . from joyful self-realization in the physical world to a more existential conceptualization of the self as a construct that may be transcended as part of a spiritual search” (p. 174). Wade’s Authentic Stage 7 corresponds to Maslow’s (1968) self-actualized or authentic individual and Kohlberg’s (1981) Stage 6. Although, as noted above, Kohlberg found some of his male students had reached Stage 6 during

adolescence, most were found to function within levels lower than this stage (Wade, 1996). For most adolescents and adults these lower levels correspond to Wade's Stages 4, 5 and 6.

Adolescent Physical Development

The effects of the sex hormones at puberty are well defined as they pertain to the physiological maturation of the genital organs. Scientists, however, do not completely understand how these hormones influence the moods and behaviors of adolescents. The general discussions on this question, as featured in academic journals, emphasized an incredible number of variables within the research and of contradictions among the researchers' findings. Further, the known information about the sex hormones is complicated by the changes also occurring in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal-growth axes, which are energized prior to and during the pubertal activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis. Much of the research is either exclusively about the effects of the secretion of adrenal steroid hormones or the growth hormones, without including the relevancies of the sex hormone on the mood/behavioral outcome.

Buchanan, Eccles, and Becker (1992) performed a meta-study of over 40 associated research studies. The authors attempted to enumerate and evaluate the hormone-mood/behavior theories. They did elaborate on the physiological changes in the sex and other hormonal secretions' concentrations and the interactions between them and the genital glands. They were not able to be specific about how adolescent moods and behaviors are directly related to hormones as these hormones fluctuate and eventually stabilize. Instead, most information gathered about mood and behavior was related to general age categories and/or the Tanner Scale of Maturation. Those few research

projects in the meta-study that did use body fluid samples gave confusing results due to time-lag effects as hormone levels ascended or descended.

Buchanan et al. (1992) catalogued and synthesized research for their meta-study to formulate hypotheses. Following are some of those that were considered pertinent to this research:

1. Adolescents in early stages of puberty show more mood or behavior fluctuations than those in the later, more stable stages which generally have higher levels of hormones.
2. Adolescents who are physically maturing out of step with their peers have a high proportion of problems in a number of psychological areas such as depression and self-esteem. Timing of puberty seems critical in many cases.
3. Hormone levels rise in the evening, being lower during the day. Time-lag studies involving the influence of these fluctuations are few and inconclusive.
4. Psychological maturity interacts with physical maturing.
5. Personality and environmental variables have strong morphic fields of influence.

Truth in any of the hypotheses above could complicate and increase the difficulty adolescents have in coming to know themselves.

Focusing

Fundamental to the practice of Focusing is the idea that for each person there is a source of information. The gateway to this source is made available through the body to that person's awareness or consciousness. Gendlin (1996), a philosopher and psychologist who discovered and developed Focusing while he was a professor at the University of Chicago, described this source as "the implicit" and described the felt sense

as a gateway to the implicit. He stated that often we become aware of the material from this source without the sense of the source. Examples are dreams and images that “pop in” accompanied with emotions and even physical senses. However, at other times, such as when Focusing, a person can bodily sense the source itself. By attending inwardly,

one can stop and sense the place that one is trying to “get at,” the place that one is speaking from. This sense is always much richer than what one says in words, and one cannot know all that it is or could be in it. This is what I mean by “the implicit.” (p. 17)

Gendlin was explicit in differentiating between Freud’s preconscious, which he gave as being the “realm of available material,” and his own unconscious or implicit source. “The layer of the unconscious that is likely to come up next . . . is at first sensed somatically, not yet known or opened, not yet in the ‘preconscious’” (p. 19).

While recognizing that there are other valid theories about the unconscious, for purposes of this dissertation, I have ascribed this source to Wilber’s (1999) transpersonal view of the unconscious, specifically to the type he labeled “ground-unconscious.” He defined ground-unconscious as “*all the deep structures existing as potentials ready to emerge, via remembrance, at some future point*” (p. 163). He wrote, “Everyone ‘inherits’ the same basic deep structures; but everyone learns individual surface structures . . . (within, of course, the constraints of the deep structures themselves)” (p. 164):

When—and if—all of the ground-unconscious has emerged, then there is only consciousness: all is conscious as the All. As Aristotle might put it, when all potential has been actualized, the result is God. (pp. 163-164)

Reality in the western world is often about how people experience the things outside themselves. In order to know reality as defined by transpersonal psychologists, a person must explore his or her inner world (Vaughan, 1979; Vaughan & Walsh, 1993;

Welwood, 1996; Wilber, 1995). Focusing is a practice for such an exploration. Gendlin (1978) requested in his book *Focusing* that one

put aside for a while what you know about psychotherapy or inward processes. What I am about to show you is not the familiar “getting in touch with feelings.” Nor is it the content-free quiet of meditation. Whether you are a psychotherapist, patient, or intelligent layperson, this inner act is probably quite unfamiliar to you. The internal equipment needed to perform the act is in every human being, but in most people it is unused. (p. 9)

The practice of Focusing, as described by Cornell (1996), consists of applying those skills needed to foster responses from the body while moving through the various stages met when sensing into the body. A detailed description of these stages and skills is given under the section *Elements of Focusing*. This description reflects certain attitudes held when being with the body while Focusing.

The Focusing Attitudes

Gendlin (1990) became acquainted with these focusing attitudes during his studies as a graduate student and as a colleague of Carl Rogers. The attitude of the companion/guide and of the focuser toward the focuser’s body process is an application of those qualities Rogers considers characteristic of a successful therapist.

In his book *On Becoming a Person*, Rogers (1961) elaborated on his definition of the most successful relationship between a therapist and a client. Primarily, the success is founded on the attitude of the therapist. Rogers believed therapists are more effective when they listen with genuine acceptance. He stated, “We cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly *accept* what we are” (p. 17), “*I can trust my experience*” (p. 22), and “*The facts are friendly*” (p. 25). He also stated,

I have found it of enormous value when I can permit myself to understand another person. Very rarely do we permit ourselves to understand precisely what the meaning of his statement is to him. I believe this is

because understanding is risky. If I let myself really understand another person, I might be changed by that understanding. And we all fear change. (p. 18)

Rogers continued with the concept that a therapist must believe that it is “better to rely upon the client for the direction of movement in the process” (p. 12). This happens when therapists accept their clients’ feelings, attitudes, and beliefs as being real and vital and when they believe unconditionally in their clients’ self-worth. Clients must know they are being understood with empathy and acceptance and that their process is personally valuable.

Gendlin (1990) took Rogers’ description of the appropriate therapeutic attitude and taught it to his students and their clients, not to be used only for their interrelationships but also for the intrarelationship of individuals with their bodies. It is important to note that Focusing also incorporates Rogers’ concepts that people have a basically positive direction and that “*Life, at its best, is a flowing, changing process in which nothing is fixed*” (Rogers, 1961, p. 27). The inner world is never static.

Practitioners of Focusing bring awareness to this inner world as it unfolds, moves, and becomes its own next step. They hold the confident expectation that changes will occur in a life-forward course.

Background for an Experiential Description of Focusing

Focusing means “spending time with something bodily sensed [felt sense] but unclear (until it comes ‘into focus’)” (Gendlin, 1996, p. 34), so that new steps come. “Focusing requires self-responses that create a climate of safety and receptivity to anything that arises from inside” (p. 303). A felt sense is an awareness or sense of the source of emotions, images, physical feelings, etc., as a place or “‘border zone’ between the conscious and the unconscious” (p. 16). This awareness is always much richer than

what one says in words, and one cannot say, make explicit, all that it is or that could be in it.

According to Cornell, author of *The Power of Focusing* (1996), the process of Focusing occurs essentially through a series of steps beginning with the first two, which bring an awareness of some “thing” felt within or around the body:

Focusing begins with bringing awareness into the body, especially the throat, chest, stomach, and abdomen. . . . We don't try to find a feeling, or try to make something happen, but we invite something to be felt by asking a gentle, open question such as “What wants my awareness now?” (p. 12)

Cornell (1996) described the third step by saying, “*When we first find a feeling, we acknowledge it by saying an inner hello to it, and then we describe or name it*” (p. 12).

We give it a *handle*.

A handle is a description of felt sense. Handles can be physical such as a burning, a tightness, or either general or specific pressure areas. Handles can be symbolic images or sounds that emanate from a felt place in the body. Handles can also be kinesthetic, such as feelings of movement through space or, conversely, stillness. Handles may be combinations of these and other manifestations from the body. The body is defined here as the physical body, including its head, torso, limbs, and energy fields (Diamond, 1985; Greenwell, 1990).

It is important to understand that a felt sense is not static but is in a state of process. The feelings associated with a felt sense may intensify, enlarge or shrink, move within the body, change shape or color, and any combination of these and other evolutions. Occasionally during Focusing, there is a change in a felt sense, usually experienced as a change in emotional energy, a release of breath, and/or body tension. These types of changes are defined as felt shifts (Gendlin, 1978). They often, but not

always, come with a bodily sense that something has become clear emotionally and is understood cognitively. This bodily sense is what the body is wanting the focuser to experience (Gendlin, 1996).

After one is aware of a felt sense, there are ways for coming to know it in the fourth step. In this “next stage [step] of *Focusing*, we sit down with the feeling to get to know it better, with an attitude of interested curiosity” (Cornell, 1996, p. 12).

When I focus, the experience is more like sitting next to a silent friend, and slowly realizing that something in their posture or attitude has been there all along, with a meaning for me, and can be put into words. It’s usually very slow for me, and can take lots of patience. For other people, meanings come quickly at this stage. . . . Remember that the attitude of friendly, interested curiosity is all-important here. (Cornell, 1993, p. 38)

During this fourth step, the bulk of Focusing centers around being with the body companionably, perhaps asking the body, in a patient unpressured manner, gentle questions as a way to invite answers. One might thus discover the felt sense’s relationship to life or its story. One might notice an emotional quality associated with the sense. It may present itself as an image or sound that one could interpret as symbolic of a meaning.

The meaning that is carried in the body is sometimes connected with a memory, a belief or attitude, or an unmet need or an unexpressed part of ourselves. There is no need to “fix” or “solve” the problem. Acknowledging the message, really hearing it, is all that is needed to bring deep relief. (Cornell, 1996, p. 13)

Key to the success of all steps is the concept and practice of continually taking time to check back with the body for the rightness or fit of the description, revealed information, and drawn conclusions, sensing a verifying resonance.

Finally, there is the last and fifth step, ending a Focusing session. One must check that the body is willing to end the session, or if it has more that it needs to impart, and

then mark the place of ending. The body seems to want to know that the focuser will return in the future. It is usually positively responsive to a respectful and gracious note of appreciation and thanks for its participation and the insights it has brought (Cornell, 1996).

Elements of a Focusing Session

Focusing as a practice can be done alone or with a companion. A companion is a person whose primary function is to be attentive to the focuser—the person doing the Focusing by tuning inward. The focuser is ultimately responsible for the focusing experience. She or he determines the timing, the place, and the attitude toward the body. Focusing with a companion is usually a planned session of an hour or less. The session often begins with an induction (see Appendix C) that aids in bringing awareness to the bodily felt sense. The focuser may choose to begin a session with a specific issue in mind or without anything specific in mind, just a willingness to be aware of the body with interested curiosity and an attitude of acceptance. Also, a focuser can choose to focus alone whenever he or she becomes aware of a bodily felt sense that is upsetting or wonderful or strange or just different from what was being felt previously.

The focuser remembers the focusing steps involved in coming to know and understand the messages from the body and utilizes the focusing phrases that correspond to these steps and most encourage responses from the body. These steps and phrases are learned during focusing training. There are four levels of training included in learning to focus and utilized when accompanying one who is focusing. Depending on his or her level of training, one can be an attentive listener-companion, reflecting the focuser's words or the essence of the words such that the focuser can easily hear them and check them back with the felt sense for confirming resonance, or a listener-guide, giving

suggestions that may aid in moving the process to the next step or in new directions. By themselves, with a companion, or with a guide, a focuser will gradually come to a deep and dimensional relationship with her or his body process, which has the potential to ring gifts of self-growth and self-understanding.

As with the waltz, Focusing can appear to move back and forth through stages easily and gracefully with no apparent pauses between steps. Focusing can be a natural way of moving within oneself, but, like waltzing, the steps become inherent only after first learning them and after much practice. As dancing is not walking, so Focusing is not the everyday way of being with oneself. One learns the focusing steps, so that they can be returned to in one's life as a choice, just as one would choose to dance.

In 1994, Cornell briefly described five steps and five skills of Focusing. (Cornell has continued her development of the focusing process. It no longer strictly follows the format used for this study.) The five steps were (a) bringing awareness into the body, (b) inviting a felt sense, (c) getting a handle, (d) being with the sense by asking it questions or other forms, and (e) ending. The five skills were (a) developing a relationship by being interested and curious, (b) acknowledging, (c) being like a friend, (d) resonating, and (e) receiving. To illustrate the concepts of Focusing and its techniques, I offer a part of my own work as a model of Cornell's former five-step approach (see Appendix D).

Recently, there were two events in my life that occurred within 48 hours of each other and that seemed somehow related. I determined to bring these two events and the issues they raised to my next scheduled focusing session with my companion. These events are described below in chronological order.

At a dissertation support group meeting, during a break between sharings of our week's research activities and personal concerns, I began to tell the story my minister had told at church about how the pursuit of happiness proclaimed as an American right was related to the spiritual right to bliss. The minister went on to say that the "pursuit" part sometimes gets us in trouble. Spirituality, on the other hand and at all times, gives us the right to the "presence" of bliss, or happiness. Before I could finish that last sentence and go on to tell how I had been affected by this story over the last few days, one of the members of the group stated that if she had wanted to hear the story she would have gone to church, and because the story was not about me she would prefer, insist actually, that we get back to sharing.

I felt as if I had been stabbed in the gut, my whole system shut down, and I knew I was wounded. I tried diligently to be with the feelings, but at the end when the woman proposed that the group clear (a process for knowing that one has been heard and understood by all parties involved) I was not ready and I refused to participate, wanting to wait until another time. I did recognize almost immediately that a long-held wound, only partially healed, had reopened. I had been told throughout my childhood that the way I told stories was boring. Others insisted on finishing my jokes as, from their point of view, I was telling them incorrectly and in an uninteresting manner. During much of my growth and young adulthood years, I never believed anyone was really interested in what I had to say, or even that I had the right to be the center of attention. When I was, I usually noticed an ache in my throat and tension in my stomach.

The morning after this group meeting, I woke up with a dream. In it, I was with my son Keith, who in the dream was age 9. I was enrolling him in a special school that

had a reputation for being wonderful with children, honoring who they are and encouraging them to learn at their own speed and through their own interests. (Years ago I did do this for my son and daughter.) The boys applying for entrance were seated at a table waiting for the school officials to come and talk about who would be enrolled. The parents were milling around the table. One man said that there was definitely one student who the important people were predisposed and biased to accept into the program. He then went to sit across from this boy. It eventually became obvious that the boy was the man's son, even though he seemed Asian and the boy was Caucasian. The man's questions to his son were directed in such a way that it became apparent he believed that his son was the preferred child. He was coaching him in a manner that made it obvious he believed he could discourage the rest of us by making us aware of his boy's superiority. I became livid, and forcefully, with anger and determination, loudly proclaimed that each child was valuable and wanted and welcomed for who they themselves were. If this was not the case for this school, than I wanted no part of it for my child. I was not yet perfectly sure I would withdraw my son, because I was not sure if the school really operated in the same manner as was demonstrated by this man's beliefs and actions. The dream ended here.

At the start of my focusing session with my companion the day after the dream, I could not determine which of these events, the interaction with my peer or the dream, I wanted to explore first through my Focusing. I chose to give up making that a conscious decision. I then began by slightly squirming into my place on the couch. I took a breath, drawing air deep into my lower abdomen and letting it gradually fill into my upper chest. I brought my awareness to my outer body, first noticing my arms as they lay against my

sides. Then I concentrated on my hands, sensing how my fingers were cold while my palms were warm and realizing that the backs of my hands were tingling. Then I brought my attention to my legs and feet, becoming aware that the shoes were tight around the tops of my feet and the socks felt soft and warm against the soles. After settling into the couch and into my outer skin, I went inside, bringing my awareness to the whole middle area of my body. I asked, “What wants to come and be known now?”

I found that my throat, chest, stomach, and pelvic area were engulfed in feeling. Every time I moved my awareness from one of these areas to another, there was feeling: a clogged knot in the lower area of my throat, rawness throughout my chest, tightness all around the upper and lower portions of my abdomen. Eventually, I noticed I was holding all of these feelings in my awareness at once (not usually the case for me, or a condition for Focusing), and they became connected with a vision of a purple-black flower. The flower began in my solar plexus and extended upward through my chest with the opening of the barely unfolding flower just below my throat. The flower had a narrow dark green stem ascending from the diaphragm into my upper and then descending into my lower abdomen.

As I dwelt on that flower, I discovered a well of congestion and tears located just above the flower in my thymus and throat areas. My companion reminded me to say hello, acknowledging that image. I did so, and tears flooded my eyes. My thoughts brought the words, “All children need an Advocate.” I heard an inner voice say, “Protect me.” As I stayed with that voice, letting it know I heard it and that I loved and valued it, my whole inner self eased and became peaceful.

Surprisingly, I then noticed tension all across my back, radiating from my shoulders down to my hips and down my arms to my hands. I gently wondered why that place in my inner front torso could be so peaceful while the back was not. (I often end a focusing session with such a sense of peace.) A blue light formed in front and above my eyes. (This light usually comes to me as a sort of benediction at the ending of a focusing session.) I let myself also wonder why it was here at this time when my back was acting like the protective hard shell of a turtle. I received an internal message that, yes, I had in me a place of peace, but there was more to know. A feeling of encouragement seemed to emanate from the blue light. Ahh, yes, I had done well thus far, and it was right to go on.

As I allowed myself to be with the tight shell, the notion came that I was protecting myself against the beating a part of me expected to receive. I mused on this and noticed a sense of yes, that also was correct. Gently, I extended a curiosity toward that protecting back. I heard, “This is how you have been protecting, and it is such a tiring and ineffective way. I still get beat.” My companion suggested I let that part know I heard it, and I did.

My attention then automatically moved to my left hand, which was gripping my right hand’s wrist, the right hand a clenched fist. By holding onto my right wrist and not allowing my right fist and arm, my action hand and arm, to be free, it became clear to me that I was not able to protect the child that is me, or any child, from an adult’s intent to label them and ultimately to harm them by denying them their right to their own way of existence. I purposefully tightened my left hand around the wrist, emphasizing the gesture. (This form of conscious gesturing is not normally part of my Focusing, but I found myself curious about what it would bring, if anything.) In this case, it seemed to

cause a knot in my throat. When I brought my awareness to this knot, I found a part that was afraid that I might harm someone if I let go of my right wrist. I asked that part if it could relax so I could experience the unleashed force of my right arm. I promised that I would not let my fist truly hurt my focusing companion (she was the only one in my immediate presence whom I could injure). The knot partially released, and I could now let go of my wrist. My fist pounded on my upper thigh, though without hurt. I became aware of a sense of wanting. My right fist and arm were wanting to hammer the point across that children need advocates not adversaries. We adults do not have the right to squelch them and decide who they are.

My clarity about this passionate belief needed further expression. I allowed the tears to flow. With the continuing release of tears my back relaxed and the knot in my throat completely dissolved. I went inside once more to welcome these messengers and thanked them for their appearance and their message.

I scanned my body once more, noticing that all tension was gone with one exception. I was surprised to find a place in my upper left chest where there was a slightly uncomfortable pressure. I brought my full attention to this place and pictured a silvery metallic small boomerang-like shape lodged there. Whenever I let go of this picture, the discomfort returned. I eventually held on to the image and the word aerodynamic came to my mind. As I sat with this picture and word, I realized that I could bring all that I have learned during this focusing session with me while I completed my dissertation process and fly with it. But then I noticed the word “fly” did not feel quite correct. I went back to the image of the boomerang and the word aerodynamic and gently asked what there was about them that would fit even better than “fly.” I got a kinesthetic

body sense of soaring and a knowing that this was right. The word was “soar.” I could now soar with my dissertation. Ahhhh!! I let my body fully feel this sense of soaring.

Finally, I noticed a small place in my lower left abdomen from whence a voice came, saying it was scared that I would forget all that had been revealed today, as I had before. I let this voice know I heard it also.

I went inside one last time feeling a full sense of gratitude for my body, for all the parts that I had met, and for all that I had come to know about myself. I allowed my eyes to open slowly, and I gradually let the room and my companion come into my awareness. I thanked her for her presence, for holding the space for me, and for her helpful guiding suggestions.

Varieties of Focusing Abilities and Characteristics

Adolescents may have differing levels of ability for mastering Focusing. Hendricks (1986) reviewed the concept of there being various levels of experiencing as defined by the EXP [experiencing] Scale developed by Klein, Mahieu, Gendlin, and Kiesler. The EXP Scale measures how people experience themselves. Hendricks wrote,

On a Low EXP, the client narrates events (inner or outer) with no explicit references to their currently felt meaning. We are all familiar with clients who only report what happened since the last session. They don't attempt to sense or explore the events' implicitly personal significances. The process feels flat and static. Similarly, “acting out” is a Low EXP process—the person acts the meaning behaviorally rather than experiencing its felt significance.

At the Middle EXP levels, the client can at least identify some emotions and may also think about events in terms of personal connections, but there is no “Focusing” on a felt sense.

At High EXP levels, the client refers to the implicit meaning of an event. . . . The implicit significance is spoken of as a concrete, bodily “sense” of a whole situation. Gendlin calls this a felt sense. It is preverbal, a bodily felt whole that is not at first clear. When a client says, struggling, “It is so hard to put in words,” a felt sense is experienced. The client has

an “it” that is sensed bodily. But “it” does not yet have words or images. The meanings of it are not yet explicit. [As] the High EXP client “focuses” on this felt sense, exact words “move it,” “shift it” so that the client says, “Oh yes, that’s what it is!” This “felt” shift is accompanied by bodily relief . . . [such as] a deep breath, tears, a sigh. (pp. 143-144)

Through excerpts from her therapeutic work with clients, Hendricks (1986) defined characteristics of clients with different levels of experiencing ability “so that therapists can recognize this variable minute by minute, and respond to maximize it” (p. 144). She pointed out that clients on the Low or Middle EXP levels “do not know that they can attend to their more vague, implicit sense of something and that such attending leads to steps of change” (p. 161). A trained therapist or focusing guide may be particularly valuable for these clients or focusers.

Focusing Research

The value of Focusing to both adults and adolescents has been researched and verified since Gendlin first discovered and developed it as a therapeutic tool. Following are studies relevant to the research conducted in this dissertation either due to their similarity to the research design in this study or because they demonstrate the possible value of Focusing to their participants.

Krycka (1997) began a study to determine whether changes would occur for four clients with HIV syndrome who engaged in accompanied Focusing over 6 weeks. One of Krycka’s clients said that Focusing led to the “recovery of will.” Krycka analyzed the steps to the “recovery of the will” for their psychological meaning employing phenomenological methods. Krycka stated that he verified the validity of the prescribed focusing method (he did not state that his method was exactly the same as the one used in this research). Leading clients through the focusing stages facilitated felt senses, felt shifts, and subsequent awareness. One anomaly Krycka apparently never explained

concerns one of his four participants, who demonstrated a Low EXP level throughout the sessions. Krycka stated that this participant also went through the movements toward recovery of will. If true, this indicates that Focusing is valuable even for those who have low levels of bodily experience.

Research related to Focusing with children, particularly adolescents, is sparse in psychological literature. At the 1998 International Focusing Conference on Children, there were only a handful of attendees who had focused with children, all of whom were under 12 years of age. However, the Women's Institute of Chicago has in its archives the following two doctoral theses wherein the research concerned young female adolescents and Focusing.

Barba (1984) combined the use of behavioral techniques with Focusing in the treatment of an adolescent fire setter. Focusing gave the young girl a clearer understanding of her motivations, a deeper sense of herself and her self-worth, and the realization "that she and her problems were separate" (p. 59). Focusing also aided the therapist and the young client in coming to know the correctness of each of the behavioral techniques for individualized therapy. Outside of the focusing sessions the adolescent's grades improved, as did concentration and motivation. She began to make friends. She was more pleasant, caring, and responsible, demonstrating increased social skills. Barba concluded that the behavioral techniques helped the client to stop acting out. These techniques were not described or placed in their actual setting.

In a workshop consisting of six sessions of 2 1/2 hours each and including six girls between 10 and 13 years of age, Gardner (1995) taught Focusing as a self-contained experience and in conjunction with both dream work and mandala drawing. The purpose

was “to provide these tools to encourage adolescent girls to sustain a ‘healthy resistance’ to our culture’s deeply held convictions that serve to disempower women” (p. 52). In a systematic way, specific topics were brought to the Focusing. First, it was found that because the sessions were held after a busy day, the girls often arrived tired and stressed. “The girls consistently brightened and stayed attentive when they were using any one of the process tools” (p. 125). Along with themes particular to each participant, there were commonly held themes. Safety, both physical and mental, during Focusing and in life, was necessary before other issues could be explored. As in Barba’s research above, it was found that Focusing was used naturally in combination with the other activities. Gardner described her work as utilizing a “hermeneutic phenomenological and heuristic research method” (p. 44), based on the inner processes discovered when the girls reflected by focusing on their previous experiences of mandala drawing and dream work. Gardner claimed to have enhanced pathways to the preservation and strengthening of self-esteem by including Focusing in her work with these adolescent girls.

In follow-up conversations, Gardner (1995) “sensed” that each girl was “attentive to each detail . . . and seemed to be listening from her felt sense for any information that substantiated or denied her sense of herself” (p. 129). This supported Gardner’s primary conclusion that “each girl had an experience of a deeper ‘coming to understanding of herself’ than she had experienced before, and a valuing of that understanding as an integral element of her individuality” (p. 129). However, it seems that this study included a number of confounding factors (dream work, mandala drawing, group interaction, and setting), which may have influenced the absolute effect of the Focusing experience,

making it difficult to ascertain the extent to which Focusing was exclusively responsible for any changes in the targeted population.

Preliminary study revealed that there seems to be a distinct lack of research concerning how adolescents talk about themselves to each other or within themselves while doing inner work. Thus far, the only language studies I have found deal with adolescent and parent interchange (Bhushan & Shirali, 1992; Jaccard & Dittus, 1993; Lock & Vincent, 1995). Further, in a study that included Focusing with sixth graders, it was concluded that students this age had lost a great deal of their ability to visualize (McGuire, 1986) and thus to focus. However, visualizing is not necessary for successful Focusing and can even be a hindrance if seductive images come from the mind rather than the body (Cornell, 1996). McGuire's (1986) study was in a classroom situation in which the level of trust was not clearly established. It could be that the older elementary students were more reluctant to reveal themselves than the younger students. No research was discovered that determined that other modes of learning (kinesthetic or auditory) are a factor in either adult or child Focusing.

In summary, literature referenced the existence of transpersonal experiences specific to adolescents and gave evidence, however limited, of the value of Focusing both for adults and children. In those few studies cited involving adolescents, Focusing enhanced the value of other psychological interventions. Also, there was no definitive evidence that there are either physical or mental inadequacies in adolescents that would prevent them from engaging in Focusing successfully. Adolescent psychology was largely given to discussions of their needs and how they usually go about fulfilling them, sometimes to their detriment.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

This research project enlisted a qualitative method in order to discover what, if any, experiences were taking place in focusing sessions with young adolescents. Of particular interest was whether these experiences were egoic and/or transpersonal in directions of developmental growth. After guiding multiple focusing sessions with each of 10 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 15 years, I conducted qualitative content analyses of transcriptions of the taped sessions. These analyses revealed an enriched depth and breadth to the content of the sessions through satisfying broad descriptions and provided for detailed comparisons and contrasts between the variety of experiences of the focusing adolescents. The plan had been for the participants to be an integral part of the research by their critiquing the analyses with regard to the truth and relevancy of the findings and conclusions drawn from the analyses as they pertained to themselves and in keeping with the values of transpersonal research methods (Braud & Anderson, 1998). However, other than a very brief reflection on their Focusing in a few instances, the participants were not interested in reviewing their sessions or any conclusions I made about them. Also, I invited the participants to use the last session to focus on the topic of what this experimental experience meant to them in terms of personal growth and transpersonal awareness. For some of the adolescents, this last session did not give this information, which was permissible as the body is always given the freedom to proceed as it wishes. Through my own Focusing, both following the sessions and during the extended analyses, I came to have a bodily-based check for meanings and conclusions (Braud & Anderson, 1998). During post evaluations with my focusing advisor, Ann Weiser Cornell, the International Focusing Institute's Northern California coordinator, I corroborated the foundations for these conclusions.

Rationale for Selecting a Qualitative Method

My reasoning for selecting this method stemmed from both personal and research positions. Originally, I had planned to use a quantitative method that involved assessing the growth of Self/self-knowledge by the adolescents through use of an appropriate assessment instrument prior and subsequent to conducting the 10 focusing sessions per adolescent. I would then have applied a statistical analysis to determine any significance Focusing may have had in the developmental growth of the adolescents. Through the process of my own Focusing, I found I could not do this.

During the 1996 Christmas season, I came to a standstill in the effort to continue my mini-proposal. Focusing helped me realize and remember that I had an intense dislike for the idea of determining the nature of a child through anything resembling a test. I took my own children out of regular classrooms and put them into an alternative open education classroom to prevent their being tested and to thwart the negative competitive nature developing within my 6-year-old daughter. This consideration overset the values found in the primarily statistical methods called for in quantitative research.

Statistical research appealed to the scientist in me that likes the simplicity of the idea that answers can be found in the black and white of numbers. However, as a teacher, I was more concerned with the value of the research to the child. I was interested in honoring the voices of the child as an essentially unempowered person (Braud, 1998). I also believed those adults I desire as an audience to this research, and who are in charge of children, would be swayed toward a favorable trust in Focusing in face of the positive effects found through Focusing if they heard and could feel its value, at least partially, through the intimacy in the words of the children themselves (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative methods allowed this hearing.

Qualitative methods, with various characteristics such as subject participation, unique experiences, and inner-oriented wisdom, are considered part of the complementary science to orthodox quantitative research methods, which together are known as transpersonal research (Braud & Anderson, 1998). Among the assumptions in transpersonal research are that “research is value laden” and that “ultimately, responsibilities for determining the adequacy of knowledge claims rest in the informed judgments of investigators and research consumers” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 13). Qualitative content analysis gave me and my consumers that informed judgment.

Participants

At first, attempts were made to draw participants from the general public by having flyers (Appendix E) announcing the study distributed through local school counseling centers, therapists’ offices and, where permitted, churches and other private organizations. Three potential participants emerged from these sources, but, after one session, two of them withdrew due to their busy schedules and the third was unable to participate due to parental disapproval. The required 10 participants ultimately came from references given to me by friends and neighbors. They were children I did not know personally, except for two young men and one young woman whom I knew very casually as children of their parents. One participant chose to withdraw after five sessions (the young woman I knew slightly). She did allow me to use her sessions in the study.

Listed below are the criteria for the participants:

1. They were 13, 14, or 15 years-of-age. This narrow age range allowed for similar developmental levels of the participants. They were old enough to develop the verbal capacity for articulating what they found within their bodies.

2. They did not have serious psychological problems or juvenile delinquency records. It has not been established that Focusing is therapeutic for individuals with social or personality disorders.
3. Both guardian and adolescent agreed to the adolescent's participation as stipulated in the Informed Consent Form (Appendix F).
4. There was approximately an equal representation of the sexes.
5. There were an equal number of participants spread among the age range.
6. Participation did not interfere with schooling.
7. Participation did not compete with belief systems or practices important to the participant and/or the participant's family.

Research Procedure

Prior to the focusing sessions, the following activities occurred:

1. Research participants were recruited after potential participants were screened for the characteristics under the criteria listed above. Screening was done by written questioning of their backgrounds (Appendix G), based on a questionnaire fashioned after those developed by social services agencies and after the theory and practice of Focusing was explained to the participants. Questions were answered and concerns allayed.
2. Participants and their guardian(s) were given a detailed description of what would be required, culminating in signed Informed Consent Forms. Guardians were offered a guided focusing session which all but one chose not to accept.
3. Decisions were made by each participant as to the location and time of their focusing sessions. Effort was made to influence this decision away from locations that inhibited responses and times that may have proven stressful to

the participant, such as late in the day, although Gardner (1995) found that Focusing energized the adolescent girls in her research. Most participants elected to focus in a private room in their own homes. For the first four sessions, 2 participants focused in each other's presence. When this became unworkable, they continued their sessions separately. A few sessions were held in the confines of the researcher's van in order to ensure privacy.

4. Researcher prepared, immediately prior to each focusing session with a participant, by engaging in personal Focusing specifically for that session. The aim was to identify expectations, stresses, and other influencing factors in order to be a guide in as appropriate a manner as possible. In addition, a weekly peer review of the proceedings enabled the researcher to assess her actions and reactions to the participants' Focusing and to alter attitudes and procedures when they were considered a liability to the research outcome or to a participant.

The research included 10 focusing sessions per participant lasting approximately 1 hour each (with the exception of the participant who chose to stop after 5 sessions), spread over the course of about 3 months. This number was considered adequate because of Kryka's (1997) success with six focusing sessions. Also, in the researcher's personal experience (see Appendix H), focusers have never needed more than two sessions to become comfortable, to feel safe, and to find personal and meaningful insights.

The actual focusing sessions began by bringing the participant to an awareness of his or her body through an induction. Cornell (1993) developed an induction that has been conducive to accomplishing this aim and enabling successful focusing sessions. A

close facsimile of Cornell's induction, which was used during this research, is found in Appendix C.

An example of typical guiding comments and their usual order in the focusing process is given in Appendix D. It was tried by adult members of a class at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and proved to be sufficient for them to receive bodily-imparted information and shifts in felt senses. Therefore, it is believed to be a fair, if minimal, example and similar to what was followed during the focusing sessions. Language adjustments were made only as it became apparent that they were needed to support the adolescents' abilities to relate to their bodies. Reflection on each session was done at the focuser's instigation or as deemed to be needed as a teaching tool. These reflections were not included in the transcriptions, as they occurred outside of the focusing session itself.

Sessions lasted between 10 and 75 minutes, including the induction. All sessions were audiotaped. After each of the audiotapes had been collected, they were labeled with codes to protect the identity of the participants. The tapes were used for transcription and further review. Transcription was done by a professional data processor. She was not privy to the participants' identification, as their names were never used during the course of the taping. The audiotapes were protected in a locked cabinet. The 1 participant who chose not finish her part of the research gave permission for her completed sessions to be used in the analyses. Participants were encouraged, just prior to the last of the 10 sessions, to bring to their body the question, "What does my body want to express about the experience of Focusing?" Finally, a formal thank you note was sent to each of the participants (Appendix I).

Description of Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis afforded the researcher the leeway to employ a variety of avenues for exploring the descriptions and meanings of the transcribed focusing sessions, personal Focusing, dreams and synchronicities, and participant, expert, and colleague reviews. A qualitative content analysis as described by Miles and Huberman (1994) occurs when the content of a communication (in this research the communication content came from the body's messages to the focuser) is rendered for its descriptions (what is going on), analyses (systematically identifying key factors and relationships to show how things work), and interpretation (within context, understanding meanings and themes). Braud (1998) stated, "There is no reason to avoid thinking about findings and experiences as well as simply providing rich and deep descriptions of them" (p. 48). All three types of rendering were included in this research, with weight on the descriptions using the adolescents' own words.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that besides prolonged engagement with the participants to find the scope of the research, persistent observation to find the depth of the research is also important. Depth is related to coming to know "those characteristics and elements in the findings that are most relevant to the issue being pursued" (p. 304). For instance, atypical data (defined here as those experiences unique to an individual participant within this research) were found to have significance in terms of potential effects of Focusing and were included in the analyses.

Another instance of discovering depth involved investigation of the influence of multiple focusing sessions. Focusing skills usually increase with practice. An analysis was made of the differences between the early and later sessions when they were existent.

In order to find this depth, the content analyses began with the process of selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming chunks of the contents (data) from the transcriptions of the focusing sessions. This process, known as data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994), continued throughout the coding, teasing out of themes, clustering, and partitioning, which all led to additional categories of variables during the analyses. Content analyses were conducted through use of 3x5 card sorts. The researcher attempted to use the computer program HyperQual for Macintoshes (Cuddy, 1993; Tesch, 1990), but found the program suited to more extensive and complicated types of research than was involved in this dissertation.

Displaying data was the second major flow of analyses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). “Generically, a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (p. 10). (An action, for example, may be coming to new categorizations for further content analysis.) A matrix for each participant, with direct quotes categorized under various definitions of personal growth and transpersonal transformative experiences (see Appendix B), was constructed at the beginning of the analysis. These descriptions were then ordered by strength of intensity or number of occurrences or both. They included atypical experiences. It became necessary to formulate meta-matrices showing clusters of related categories for further analyses and accurate drawing of conclusions. Qualitative research encourages additions and changes in procedures during the course of the research in the face of emerging requirements for fuller understanding (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The third major flow of analysis was intended to verify validity. As researcher, I sought to maintain openness as well as skepticism by holding the initial vague and

inchoate conclusions lightly and, concurrently, aiming through continued analyses and other validity techniques to eventually come to final conclusions that were explicit and well grounded (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated the case for alternatives to quantitative internal and external validity checks when doing naturalistic inquiry. The *Naturalist Paradigm* was based on five axioms. The authors argued that qualitative research methods fulfill the requirements of these axioms. They then followed those arguments by listing the methods for satisfying validity requirements for these types of research methods. Beginning with a change in emphasis from the quantitative idea of the necessity for an objective, unbiased, and distant researcher, they emphasized the importance to naturalistic inquiry of method criteria that allow for uncovering confirmable characteristics of the data. The first step in accomplishing this goal is to include techniques in the study that give “credible findings and interpretations” (p. 301). My research methods included a number of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) ideas for achieving this goal as discussed below.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that if the researcher’s expectations are consistently met there is a distinct possibility that the collected data and the conclusions are distorted by these expectations. Part of my personal regimen for preventing as many distortions as possible that might be due to my own preconceptions was to determine my expectations through Focusing, dream work (Gendlin, 1986), psychotherapy, synchronicity notation, and reflective journaling and then to systematically determine how often they were met. This regimen was conducted throughout the body of the research.

I selected a student peer to work with me weekly in a debriefing of my actions and attitudes. This peer has a masters degree in Counseling Psychology and was a philosophical doctorate candidate in transpersonal psychology at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology during the gathering of the research data. The goal of the debriefing was to forestall an overeager closure on my part in the process of collecting data and in drawing hypothetical conclusions. This student peer also reviewed my adherence to the overall method of research, including the aforementioned personal regimen.

I employed an experienced focusing trainer to evaluate the focusing transcriptions periodically during the duration of the research. I was particularly interested in (a) if or when I was leading with biases related to the direction of a adolescent's Focusing (fundamentally opposite to focusing guiding principles, but still a concern) and when I had lost a "detached wonder" and (b) if or when the participant appeared to be focusing but was actually talking about emotions and feelings as remembered rather than as they were experienced in the moment. Another function of the expert focusing trainer was to help find the significance, if any, of the atypical data.

Dependability and confirmability seem to me to be natural consequences of the doctoral research process and the research method as described in this methods chapter. Both dependability and confirmability result from an extensive and inclusive audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), where every entry can be justified by record keeping, which provides access to the process and the product. This trail helps the researcher to systematize, relate, cross-reference, and attach priorities. It includes the raw data and its collection methods, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstructions and

synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, instrument development information, and a reflective journal. All of these elements were checked for inclusion in the research by either the doctoral research committee or the peer member of the investigating team. Outside experts checked for those elements related to their fields.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

My New Best Friend

Today I met a great new friend
Who knew me right away
It was funny how she understood
All I had to say

She listened to my problems
She listened to my dreams
We talked about love and life
She'd been there, too, it seems

I never once felt judged by her
She knew just how I felt
She seemed to just accept me
And all the problems I'd been dealt

She didn't interrupt me
Or need to have her say
She just listened very patiently
And didn't go away

I wanted her to understand
How much this meant to me
But as I went to hug her
Something startled me

I put my arms in front of me
And went to pull her nearer
And realized that my new best friend
Was nothing but a mirror

Retold by Kimberly Kirberger (1997, pp. 57-58)

During the course of guided focusing sessions, 10 adolescent participants described their bodily dynamics and contexts from which various personal themes emerged. The contexts were almost always about a situation or condition immediately present in their lives. In those instances when the contexts were not about the present, Focusing generally brought them to the present, making them as if real in the moment. Context is defined as the collection of situations and conditions found within a session.

At times, situations and conditions are called topics. Themes have been defined as those topics within the context “developed or elaborated as an underlying motif” (Guralnick et al., 1968, p. 1452).

Focusing evoked a variety of themes from the participants. As all the participants were within the same 3-year age range (13 to 15 years old), many of their experiences reflected a similar developmental level or theme. However, Focusing is not always about a single theme carefully explored; rather, it encompasses a multitude of experiences that may pertain to all of life’s issues given enough time and involvement. To state that the themes and contexts found in this limited study were comprehensive, or the most important to the teenage focusers, could be erroneous and misleading, even given the argument that a few are a representation of the whole (Braud, 1998). What can be construed was that the topics given verbalization by the participants were those present during the time of each session.

For this reason, all the perceived themes and stated topics are presented in this Results chapter. Usually, themes were not specifically identified verbally by the participants but were gleaned during qualitative analysis. Classifications used during the analyses follow the words spoken by the participants when adequate or have been augmented as needed to clarify their import. The analyses were divided into three major sections: (a) Individual Sessions Analyses, (b) Context Content Analyses, and (c) Thematic Content Analyses.

The Context and Thematic Content Analyses sections include those themes and topics that were shared among the adolescents, were particular to a single individual on more than one occasion, or seemed notably salient to transpersonal psychology. They

have been discussed primarily with respect to the number of occurrences (implied importance). With the notable exception of those topics pertaining to nonegoic transpersonal themes, contexts and themes occurring only once have been listed only in the following Individual Sessions Analyses (which also include descriptions of the participants' bodily dynamics).

Individual Sessions Analyses

The purpose of this section of the analyses is to give an impression of each participant by featuring one session judged to best exemplify his or her most prevalent themes, contexts, and focusing dynamics. It also includes themes and topics particular to an individual. Adam's session is presented in its entirety to depict the use of interventions by myself as guide and to indicate common responses to my reflective and guiding statements. This particular session was selected because it adequately exemplified a moderately typical adolescent focusing process as revealed during the research. However, the analyses of the sessions accentuated the broad range of attributes found during the course of the participants' focusing.

The other 9 participants' sample sessions have been condensed to include only the words of the participants. Because Focusing involves pauses to reflect and patiently wait to discover responses within the body, and because the focusers were new to Focusing, a session may have ended with just a few paragraphs of information even though it was 35 or more minutes in length. Each example below begins with the session number in which it occurred for the focuser.

Adam

(Adam's statements are denoted by "A:."; researcher and guide's statements are denoted by "L:")

Session 1:

L: [Induction: Appendix C] . . . and when you notice some thing, you might let me know. Even thoughts are acceptable.

A: The side of my stomach has this tingly feeling.

L: You are sensing you have a tingly feeling in the side of your stomach. You might say hello to that tingly feeling.

A: Sort of like when your foot falls asleep but a little different.

L: A little different, but similar to when your foot falls asleep.

[long pause]

A: The tingly feeling went away.

L: Ah, you notice that the tingly feeling went away. You might let me know if you notice something more. [long pause] Remembering that you don't have to go after anything or expect anything. Gently waiting like at the edge of a forest, respecting the space of a gentle wild animal. And if you're noticing nothing, you might let me know that too.

A: I don't notice a thing.

L: You might notice where you are not noticing anything.

A: Like just above my stomach.

L: Kind of a nothing right there above your stomach. You might notice if that area that has nothing has any edges to it. Like how far out does it extend? Or is it a silent nothing, or a black nothing, or an empty nothing?

A: It's an empty nothing.

L: You are sensing something like an empty nothing. You might just kind of welcome that emptiness, letting it know that you know it's there. Taking that word empty back to that space and saying, "Is that exactly the right word?"

A: It's sort of like a hole.

L: It's like a hole.

A: It's sort of like a bowl-shaped hole.

L: A bowl-shaped hole. You might see if it's okay just to be with that bowl-shaped hole for awhile.

A: Just a second ago I felt two thumps where that bowl is.

L: Ah, two thumps where the bowl is. You might see if it is okay to sit with curiosity about those thumps.

A: The bowl sort of flattened out when I asked it, "Should I have more fun in my life?"

L: It kind of flattened out when you asked it, "Should I have more fun in my life?" You might be curious about what flattening out means in regard to that question. Or if flattening is the right word.

A: Or it filled up.

L: Or filled up.

A: I think of filling up a car with gas.

L: That's it, filling up a car with fuel, with gas.

A: My whole body sort of relaxed when I said, "Do I need to fill up with more fun?"

L: Your body relaxed. Kind of like, oh, he's got it. That's the right question.

A: When I said, "Do I need to have like a quiet fun, sort of like a board game or something?" my body sort of relaxed.

L: So you got another yes, that's it. Quiet board game kind of fun. Maybe it's letting you know that a relaxing kind of fun is what it wants to do.

A: It said "Yes" to "Do I want to have a relaxing kind of fun?"

L: There's a yes there. You might want to let your body know you heard that. You might kind of wonder whether there's something more your body wants to tell you right now or if that's what it was for today.

A: Yeah, I believe that's it.

L: Well, before you open your eyes, let your body know you appreciate it being here today. Let it know that you'll be back. When you're ready you might gently open your eyes and come back to the room.

A: That was cool.

Adam usually began his sessions with kinesthetic body feelings (tingling and thumps). He then moved on to physical and analogous descriptions such as a bowl-shaped hole that (kinesthetically) flattened, an empty place in the stomach, and a car being filled with fuel. Unlike the rest of the participants, the closest Adam came to disclosing an emotion was when he exclaimed, "Focusing was awesome," or, as above, "That was cool."

Adam began asking himself questions internally during this first session and then waiting for a resonating answer. He often used this technique of questioning throughout his 10 sessions. It came to mean yes when he noticed his body relax as he speculated about the responses he received. This means of checking was not the only method Adam used to determine truth for himself. Confirming thumps were unique to Adam's sessions, but Adam's body also used the reduction in size of the focused-upon object as another way to indicate confirmation. This last phenomenon was common among the participant focusers' dynamics. Often, when the object completely disappeared, the participants found that their whole body would relax.

Fun was the prevailing topic Adam explored for himself. Over the course of his sessions, various aspects of this topic surfaced: sports, games, boardwalk rides, and acting. During his session that involved rides on the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, he was told to go all out and ride every one. Eventually, the theme of finding balance between private, relaxing fun and social, energetic fun emerged and was weighted toward the

quiet side of the scale. Another theme particular to Adam and which is discussed under Thematic Content Analyses was of a nonegoic transpersonal nature.

Clint

Session 1:

I am noticing something, a beautiful image. It changed [after an inquiry as to its nature]. It's kind of happy, just smiling.

It's just changed again and looks like anger, and it is not doing anything. It's near the stomach, and it just got smaller. It wants to be noticed, and it keeps getting smaller [as it was noticed]. It's not shocking, it's almost like I expect it to be there, and that part is happy.

Now there's an anxious feeling in the upper chest, like there's a little bit of pressure. When I asked what makes it so anxious, it just showed me another image. It's trying to give me advice, and I should listen to it. It feels right to listen to it. The image is getting bigger, like it's important. The more I listen to the advice the more the pressure goes away. It is advising me that I should do it soon.

There's one part right next to the pressure that's trying to tell me what could go wrong. It's saying I could be humiliated.

Nothing's changing. It's just kind of getting slightly quieter. There's nothing else, and everything seems peaceful. It just keeps reminding me of what I should do. It just got quiet.

Clint's following session was a confirmation from the body of the appropriateness of his follow-through with the advice given in Session 1. He had done so during the intervening week.

In Session 1, Clint began with an image. The image enlarged or waned in response to Clint's wonderings. It was followed by emotions (anxiety) and verbal advice with attendant kinesthetic characteristics (pressure). In each of the remaining sessions, he did not have an image. He most often began by verbalizing an ongoing kinesthetic sense of awareness of emotion. The focusing process then contained ostensible leaps to causes or messages explaining these emotions. He took many long pauses, during which he may

have been continuing the focusing process, which would account for these unexplained leaps. Clint usually needed extra guidance to expedite the unfolding of the final message, which was often indicated by a felt shift. Unlike Adam, who purposely asked questions and received a resonance of yes from kinesthetic shifts, Clint seemed actually to hear his messages from an internal auditory source.

The contexts of Clint's Focusing involved problem solving (he never explained his problems, and twice he was told by an inner source to seek advice), disappointments concerning missed activities with friends, and balancing social requirements with self-satisfying activities. His primary theme involved a struggle to maintain a sense of personal freedom in the face of restrictions and requirements set both at school and at home.

Eve

Session 3:

I am wearing khaki walking through the waving grass. The grass parts, and I come to a jungle with lots of trees. I am following a path to a clearing.

There is a watermelon split open with green on the inside and pink on the outside and Sao sitting in the middle. Sao dances with a bunch of pink monkeys having a lot of fun being Sao.

The monkeys left, and I turned around and went back. I kind of know that it is okay to go have fun.

Characteristically, Eve's Focusing involved the unfolding of a symbolic narrative or allegory, a mode most often found in some of the young women participants' sessions and rarely in the young men's. Although Eve primarily described vivid visual scenes, she often spoke about auditory, proprioceptive, and kinesthetic experiences. Eve's focusing pattern was to move rapidly from a proprioceptive or kinesthetic body sensation to

lengthy allegories and finally to expressed emotions with concurrent and kindred conclusions.

The theme that ran throughout most of Eve's sessions concerned her edginess over moving out into the world under her own captaincy. It usually emanated within the context of boyfriends and, in some manner, involved constructing the resolve necessary to allow herself to pursue fun (as in the session above). Once, during an early focusing session, Eve focused on her determination not to focus. I believe this was due to unexpressed anger at me. (Eve and Mae were friends and present during each other's sessions until the following incident. Because Mae had no access to privacy in her home, I originally agreed she and Eve could meet together at Eve's home. After this incident, we used my van as our meeting place.) During their third session, I had expressed irritation at and frustration with them for interfering with each other's Focusing by making undue noise and comments. I explained my irritation and apologized. Apparently, this was not enough to alleviate the resulting reciprocal anger, which affected their next session. Twice, not including the incubated session on focusing, Eve's focusing process was about an aspect of Focusing itself. It was almost as if she were wondering about the self that was able to focus. During her last session, she expressed her ambivalence about the value of taking the time to be with her inner self versus being active outside herself and with her friends.

Georgia

Georgia gave me permission to use the results of her sessions even though she elected to stop the sessions midway through them. Her summer camp began at that point, and when she returned home a month later, she had decided not to continue as a

participant. She did not give an explanation. In compliance with our confidentiality agreement, I did not ask for one.

Session 2:

In my stomach, it feels kind of like butterflies. I just feel them, and they're not really fluttering their wings. They are just there. I'm kind of butterfly-ish about going to camp. Yeah, because I know it's really fun, but I'm going to be away for a really long time.

[At this point, Georgia had a smile on her face, and I encouraged her to let that good feeling be as big as it wanted to be.] It makes me dizzy, I feel like I'm going to fall over. There's a lot of stuff to do there. Yeah, busy. But sitting with it makes me dizzy. It's just exciting. And it's also, I don't know how to say it. It's not surprise, but it's the waiting to see what's it going to be like. And then finding out. It's scary. It's kind of like an image of the first time I went on a ride. Because there's this time between going up, and coming down, when you're just there. And it's scary. It's the not knowing.

It's funny; I keep on seeing a swan that's white with red around it. It seems like it wants to go. It just keeps on going in a circle. It wants to break out.

The butterflies are back, and I see a picture of them with the swan. The butterflies are going away, but the swan is still there. It's kind of making like a whirlpool that's not going down but going up. There's something going around it to make it keep going, but I don't think it's the swan. Something like a swan. The whirlpool is in a spiral, and it makes me dizzy when I look at it from above. It's a different dizzy and not as bad. I'm just standing there in a room, and the landscape is going around, but I don't mind it. Because sometimes you have those little toys that when you spin them around you can see pictures in different movements just going around.

It's getting taller coming to a point on the top. It went right up to a castle and looked right in the window, and it was just gold, and then it faded away. And now there's nothing.

Just a lizard up and down on both sides of my waistline. It's not a lizard; it's a crocodile with a big mouth. It doesn't want me to be there because it's busy looking for fish. He's gone. I feel like I'm done.

[After thanking her body.] I think it's saying you're welcome, but the image is really cool. It's kind of like a Christmas tree, but not. It's the whirlwind shaped like a big thing that came to a point with birds around it.

I think that's what the butterflies were, and they're soaring. That's why they didn't flap.

This session was an example of how focusing on real events could move to symbolism and then back again, and the reverse. Symbolism or metaphor, as with allegories and narrative, was a channel characteristically employed during the Focusing of female participants. (Ike was the only male whose Focusing involved symbolism extensively.) At times, Georgia examined her problems directly without extensive use of metaphor. After briefly discovering a bubble and then a feeling of being able to soar, she quickly discovered two inner parts in conflict over a situation in school and a third part that wanted to mediate the disagreement. She listened to each of the three parts tell of their wants and not wants, and she felt the attendant emotions.

The contexts for Georgia's sessions evolved from current events in her personal world. From the five sessions she completed, it was difficult to determine an overriding theme, and there may not have been a single theme even within a single session. However, it became obvious that Georgia was deeply involved in the exploration of her inner world and its motivations, beliefs, and emotions.

Ike

Session 4:

I want to start feeling feelings before I try to look for them, and I am not getting much feeling. Am I bad?

At the end of my throat where it goes into my chest, I felt some stress that varies in size. It gradually comes like out of a hole. And at the slightest sound, it's like fear, it runs right back in. And it kind of stays in there.

Something in my chest moves outward like I'm breathing, and then it seeps back in. It's different because it is weaker. I am feeling a vague feeling in the pit of my stomach, some weight on my stomach. I have had other feelings there.

I gave a good speech at school today, and, as I thought about it, I got a feeling of happiness. It was in the same area in my chest. It is a tingling feeling way low on my back too and on my stomach, but stronger. When I think about the speech, it kind of brings it on.

There is something like a dull pressure in my throat pushing out. Kind of like I am sad, and I'm holding something back. I want to cry, and I don't want to. I feel like something locked in my whole entire throat is trying to leap out of my mouth, and it is pressuring all over my throat. Yeah, there is a lot of pressure to keep the crying part from crying.

During the course of Ike's Focusing, it became obvious that he seemed to carry reservations about his ability to focus. A part of himself was reticent to reveal his emotions even though they were inadvertently revealed as often as those of the other participants. For instance, during three of his sessions, Ike found a starkly green swirl that appeared whenever he got close to his sensations and emotions. It either distracted or prevented him from maintaining an inner awareness of the process.

Ike's body employed many interventions to aid in working through reservations. One example is shown in the complete illustration above, in which he was reminded of the good speech he had given resulting in him feeling happiness. Another example was the manifestation of a dough metaphor. It seemed supportive as the dough absorbed much of the intensity and complexity of his emotions, allowing Ike to successfully continue to navigate through them and to reach a comfortable place within himself about himself.

Ike's primary theme involved establishing an intimate and comfortable relationship with himself, particularly in regard to his public performances. Unfortunately, I, as his guide, was not always sensitive to this theme during his sessions. I did not foster this inner relationship as much as was needed. It was well into the second half of his 10 sessions before I consulted with my focusing instructor. Consequently, it was not until his eighth session that Ike was able to have a session relatively free of

reservations and discomfort. As with the school speech, the situation for this session involved his own and his public's opinion of him given the consequences of his performance.

Kate

Session 1:

It feels like a presence is missing. Now there is a burning that is fading away and rising up into my upper stomach. It is feeling left out and lonely [tears, sniffing]. It's somebody it wants me to say "I miss you" to. I still don't know who it is.

It wants to know how the white, tingling, burning and the loneliness is connected. In my head I see my best friend's face, and the tingling and burning is released. I'm thinking about the last time I went on vacation with her to the snow and feeling it in my abdomen. It was fun spending time with her. We haven't spent that much time together lately because she has been with somebody else.

I'm okay now. I didn't know I felt that way.

Kate was the only participant who experienced emptiness and did not first assume it meant nothing. Feelings, information, and emotions fostered one another. Without me having to guide, she typically companioned her inner state from a witnessing perspective and a natural openness.

Kate used few metaphors and usually went straight from bodily feelings to thoughts, emotions, and insights. Except for the natural expression of her emotions, this was more characteristic of the male than the female participants.

The contexts for Kate's sessions were split between the situations within her intimate relationships and the condition of her feelings about her actual and anticipated school experiences. Her cardinal theme involved exploration of her personal values. After expressing a number of fears about entering high school, she said, "My body is like saying have fun and relax, but keep my goals in my head and strive for them." At another

time, Kate said, “It wants to succeed by me doing the best I can. The ball with the lumps has gone away.” After stating her fears for a friend, she concluded, “She is my best friend, and it doesn’t want to lose her. My body just wants me to be there for her to make sure she’s okay.”

Mae

Session 8:

Right now I’m seeing a soft feather boa, but also I am feeling the softness of the feathers strongly brushing up against my cheek and on my hands, and it’s around my chest, like under my ribs. At first it was like a thin feather boa, but now it’s like the very, very thick feather boas. Now I’m seeing it resting on an antique vintage tapestry couch with wood on the outside. Someone walked in with it around their neck and just flopped it down on the side of the couch. It’s like in a really, really nice hotel room. I’m seeing myself in a really, really, really pretty goldfish tan dress meshed with rhinestones. And it’s like I’m walking, and I look exhausted. But now the scenes are flashing through my head, and the last is like I’m sitting on the couch, resting there kind of.

Now it’s flashed to a different [scene]. It seems like it’s flashing through scenes or something, but now instead of resting on the couch, there’s the couch, and it’s in this nice hotel room, kind of like a penthouse suite. It’s not that big or anything, and there is this nice wooden table facing a balcony. And it flashes like I’m standing on the balcony just looking out, and the feather boa is on my shoulder. It’s a cold night, and my dress is like a halter so my shoulders are exposed, so I can feel the cold wind against me. I feel the cold wind. I’m in a tall building. It’s like a tower. It has to be a tower at a hotel.

I feel kind of like a lot of times when I’m looking out somewhere, just thinking by myself. It’s kind of like trying to figure out something, or I’m sad, or melancholy, or lonely. This time I’m all by myself in this beautiful place with all these things, but I’m sitting there looking out, and it just feels lonely. It’s okay to be there because it’s very familiar, the feeling. I’m missing something because I’m by myself, a friend. Yeah, like I’m missing a friend. Or a family member. I’m pretty sure it’s Eve.

Yeah, it is Eve, but it’s not like I’m missing her now. It’s more like I’ll be missing her later. Not like now, but it seems like it has to do with some decisions that I’m making in my life. Like if I make these certain decisions I’ll be missing her. Because I’ll be away from her.

You know, you put things out in front of you. Like if I do this, this will happen. If I do this, then I know what's going to become of it because I'll be determined and very passionate about what it is, so I'll drop most everything to get what I want, and I'm going to end up missing my friends. Especially Eve, because we're always together. I get flashed to another spot where I'm just back on that couch, and there's a sound system like those ones where the TV comes out of the floor. I'm watching this TV show that I used to watch when I was little and that me and Eve both like now. We have a million different things that we both did, but we didn't know each other. And then I'm just sitting there thinking about what's not there.

Then I'm flashing to myself in a bed, and I can feel the silk on my skin. It's a very, very soft silk. Sheets or silk pajamas or something, but I'm resting again. Sleeping. And I have something over my eyes, against my eyes, like a mask. Very, very exhausted. Knowing that I don't want to be woken up. But knowing that I am going to have to get up very soon. Parts of what I have to do would be fun for me. It's what I love. But part of it is just dreading being in the same spot all day. Doing the same thing over and over and over. Because you have to get it perfect. But then again, it's something I enjoy at the same time.

It's kind of like I know that this one thing is right for me. But the fact that I have to put other things on hold is what's really bugging me. I would have to be away from my best friend and different things, that's the part that's bugging me. That's definitely what's bugging me.

It's not like people understand, like my mom, she's just like been like you can call or you can take visits. But like when you're around someone all the time almost like your sister or brother, and you just love her, it is really hard to just be away from them, not to be able to walk down the block and see them.

Yeah, but to get what I want, which is what I've always wanted, I'm going to have to give it up. For a little while at least. But the fact is, during this whole Focusing, things are flashing in front of me that I've admired, adored. But it wasn't as cool to be around them, because I wasn't sharing them with my best friend. I couldn't be there with her. She wasn't really with me being with a goal so cool. So we weren't together, enjoying it, so it wasn't so cool to me. But just all blat. But I know it is something I have to do. I'll have to make a few sacrifices. But it feels like destiny. It's my decision but it feels like fate.

It's like both parts come toward me. They are on two screens going like this at an angle, and I am standing in the middle seeing all the things I do now on one. On the other are all the things I would be into, affiliated

with, doing every day. It has turned into a blanket of glitter and wrapped me in it and went that way away from the other screen.

It is like gold glitter, and I got washed away in it, wrapped into it. Everything I want to do is very, very ostentatious, very materialistic. Everything to do with everything I feel is right, including going away, is all material things. The glitter is what is representing just all those things, shiny and extra. It doesn't have to be there, but it looks nice, and it's pretty. It's an extra. But it's like definitely something I relate to, because it's always what I like. Except for the thing itself, everything else about it is extra.

So I'm working, working toward it with a fervor, with a great passion. And my friend is helping me along the way, and us having a little bit of fun, but not as much as we used to, because I'm working toward something. And leaving, leaving it all behind and going because that is what I want. It is just like me wrapping into it, the clothing, like swish.

Mae was a natural storyteller, with a strong use of allegory and metaphor. Even though her stories were highly visual, I experienced them as emanating from her body. When I did check this out with her, she immediately told of the place in her body (not her head) from which the stories originated. She sometimes seemed enmeshed in her story. At other times, she was able to disidentify and perceive the focusing-derived situation from an observer's perspective. Her sessions often lasted an hour or longer.

Mae's contexts provided a venue for her to cultivate her determination to pursue autonomy, a primary theme. Sometimes she weighed the prospects and consequences of an envisioned future, whether professional, as apparent in the session above, or relational, as noted during one internal debate about the advisability of changing boyfriends. At other times, she explored possible paths for successfully working her way toward her goals, whether it be breaking away from a parent's influence by asking for help or turning away from previous accomplishments in order to proceed toward eminent and, therefore, more desirable achievements. Like Eve, and for the same reason (a conflict with me), she

once refused to focus. However, her anger, even then, expressed itself as a black-purple cloud that was not okay to welcome.

Oren

Session 7:

I notice my stomach is twisted up like a hot little ball. And it's all bunched up. It's unraveling. It seems to be mad, but I don't know what about.

It's mad at me because I forgot something. I forgot to tell Pete [Oren and Pete are brothers] to feed the dogs. That's what it was. It's because I know I'm supposed to do it and if I'm going to be gone, I have to tell him. If no one feeds them, then my dad gets real mad.

Mostly just that I forgot I guess, and I shouldn't have. I just know better not to. I shouldn't have forgotten because I know better.

It's still unraveling. It's getting looser though. Yeah, it seems to be unraveled now. It's like opened up, flat. Yeah, like a bay leaf. It's kind of round and flat and takes up the whole area in my stomach. It feels good.

Like most of Oren's Focusing, this session was simple and to the point. He either started with a kinesthetic feeling (as above) and quickly moved on to the issue, or he began with an emotion and its reason for being, as if prior to the session he already had been contemplating the issue. His body seemed to want to provide further information and closure.

Oren's focusing situations usually centered around sports activities, family disagreements, or his responsibilities within the family, but also included responses to physical pain and environmental annoyances. The most obvious theme was his desire to work through his disagreements with others in a way that satisfactorily allowed him to feel as if he was somewhat in charge of his own decisions. Secondly, Oren explored the breadth of his feelings about those conditions in his life that were bothersome or puzzling.

Pete

From the age of 6 years to the age of 15 years, Pete had experienced chronic pain from a perpetually infected toe.

Session 5:

The pain is about 5 on a scale of 1 to 10. It's a familiar pain but so different from anything else. I've been with this before, but there is something else. I'm noticing that it is not only that the pain is here, but it is the whole state that my body is in. I am always cautious of my toe. It is saying that I am always having to be careful. My body gets frustrating because it restricts everything else I do, everything I used to do or want to do.

It says I am foolish, because I know what I should be doing. I am feeling restricted everywhere. If I did what I know I should be doing it would help me feel better, relieve the pain. That is part of the familiarity. I have known this all before. It says I should actually be doing all these things to let the pain go away, to help, because the rest of my body doesn't want it there.

A short and simple confirmation of the benefit of this session occurred during a portion of Pete's sixth session. "I am noticing that my toe doesn't hurt ever since the last session, although I have stubbed it since then. Once it even broke open. That may have helped it."

A unique feature about Pete's sessions was that occasionally he would repeat the guiding phrase out loud as he talked to his inner self. This method seemed to help him stay within, even though he probably also thought he was supposed to do this. Except for once, when he found himself irritated with a teacher and trying to remember something he thought would help alleviate the irritation, Pete's Focusing centered around himself—either his inner self or his physical self—without any reference to others.

Pete's sessions usually opened with either scared or irritated emotions or a bodily pain or tiredness. They led to something he had wanted to remember or his body wanted him to remember. His first session was totally about an experience of *déjà vu*, without

ever identifying the memory. Often, his body would give him new information. Once, it was the meaning of a dream he had forgotten but eventually remembered as he focused on being tired. Twice, however, Pete began by expressing a state of quiet calm or happiness or as he put it, “It’s like perfection, there is nothing wrong; everything’s perfect.” This was the only context for these two sessions. The prominent theme of his Focusing was the discovery of his inner world and the marvels it could provide for his personal enrichment.

Rhonda

Session 4:

A knot in my stomach goes in and out and moves up here, and then it rushes down really fast. It’s not exactly painful, and it has been here for a full day, beginning as I came home from a party late last night.

It’s kind of like when you’re about to do something exciting that you can’t wait to have happen, anticipating. It’s like grief, grieving. It’s like anticipating when it can go away. It wants to get everything worked out in me with Travis, Scott, and Heather.

I think I know what it needs, wants. [Declined to state what, but probably meant giving up boyfriend.] It’s still there, but not as bad. It’s not moving. It’s kind of telling me it’s not really Heather’s fault, because it’s like Heather will be Heather, and she has to get revenge on me. Even so you have to go with your friends, you can’t ditch them over a guy.

Unfortunately, every part agrees with that. The part that feels it’s unfortunate is in my eyes. It means I might not be able to see him again, and it is disappointed. It’s telling me that after I wait a month I might get over being sad.

My stomach hurt, but now that it got my attention, which it wanted, it went away. Like Heather. It wants to end the fight.

A third of Rhonda’s sessions were about problems she faced among herself and her friends and the inner conflicts she had regarding those problems. These sessions started with a bodily pain. Another third seemed to be attempts to withdraw from the pain

of those conflicts and find a place of relaxation. (The remaining third were based on the relationships and responsibilities she faced with family members.) By her eighth session, Rhonda had reached a stalemate in dealing with the conflicts. This session reflected her reluctance to once again be with her feelings about her situation and an insight about not doing so. "I feel a strong pull toward looking at one area. If you don't, then you can't go anywhere else. You have to go there. It's too drawn to that area." After keeping that area company for a short while, Rhonda's body was able to release the disharmony.

I'm sensing nothing there anymore, just space, and a little bit of relief because that part that was drawing it toward that area gave up. It feels like you're in the middle of a field in the country where you can't see anything. Because it's all too far away. It's kind of relaxing because you don't have to do anything. You can just sit down and rest.

At 13 years of age, Rhonda was the youngest focuser in this study. This was reflected in her prevailing theme, which was to discover a path through the discord of teenage society.

Rhonda had a tendency to move into a place of concentration that seemed to be a deeper state than is suitable for Focusing. In one session, she mentioned that her friends noted that she sometimes seemed to be meditating. She also told me that she meditated during weekends. This may be the reason I often had to draw her back to her body with a number of guiding statements. When she was actively awake to her body, she focused quite effectively. Her sessions entailed recognizing and describing feelings, exploring conflict, becoming aware of consequences, discovering bodily given solutions, noticing a physical resonance of truth as revealed during the session, and experiencing a positive shift toward a renewed zest for life.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 categorize and summarize the language of inner awareness the participants formulated during their Focusing to describe what they sensed within their

bodies. In Table 1, these categories are (a) Emotional States (pure emotion), (b) Mental States (thought content with complex emotional overtones), (c) Evaluative States (emotional and mental states of parts as implied by their judgments of other parts), and (d) Physical States (implied within the context as having emotional overtones). The table also gives the number of occurrences of these sensings by each participant. Those instances when it was not clear whether a thought was also felt in relationship to the body were not included. The most common emotion expressed was a form of anger, with happiness and sadness tying for a distant second. Pleasant, relief, and excited were the most frequent mental expressions as was relaxed for the physical state. Table 2 denotes the expression of physical sensations for which there were no obvious indications of their being conjoined with mental or emotional components. Kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensations occurred most frequently, with a form of nothing being the most common type and pain being a close second. Table 3 lists all the states and the affected body locations only when the participants gave both. Therefore, some of the sensings were not included in Table 3. The stomach was the most common location for sensation. The chest was a close second.

Context Content Analyses

In this portion, analyses have been limited within the framework of determining the scope of situations and conditions (context) that arose during the participants' Focusing. They have not been emphasized in the sense of assessing meaning, as that is the function of the Thematic Content Analyses section.

Basically, context content analyses have been written as a listing of the conditions and situations constructed within a focusing session. Text has been included to justify the classifications (especially when the situations seemed obscure).

Table 1

Participant Descriptions of Complex Inner Experiences

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Emotional | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mad, Angry, Grumpy, Annoyed, Irritated | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Happy, Giddy, Carefree, Laughing, Joyful | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Unhappy, Sad, Grief, Mourning | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Frightened, Scared, Fear, Butterfly-ish, Mouse-like | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Melancholy, Morose, Gloomy, Weary | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Jealous | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Mental | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disappointed | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Anxious, Worried, Nervous | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Frustrated | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Ashamed, Guilty, Remorse | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Peace, Calm, Settled | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Excited, Stimulated | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Feels Good ^b (catch all) Pleasant | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Feels Bad ^b (catch all) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Lonely | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bravery, Brave | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Anticipation, Anticipating | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Optimism, Expectation | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Not knowing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Not wanting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Yearning, Wanting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hopeless | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Helpless | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Boring | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Relief | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Stress | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overwhelming, On the edge | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Something missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Perfection | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Awesome, Wonder | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Satisfaction, Satisfied | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Wondering, Curious | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Confusion, Uneasy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strange | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Déjà vu, Familiar | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Sense of forgetting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Physical ^c | | | | | | | | | | |
| Relaxed, Comfortable | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Exhaustion, Tired, Sleepy ^d | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Strong pull toward one area | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Note. 100% of participants had at least one emotional, mental, and physical sensing experience. Types are actual words used by participants. There are elements of each type within the other types. Placement is based on personal discrimination and with confirmation from Ann Weiser Cornell, Ph.D. Linguistics.

^a Participants are designated by the first letter of their names: A (Adam), C (Clint), E (Eve), G (Georgia), I (Ike), K (Kate), M (Mae), O (Oren), P (Pete), R (Rhonda). ^bWhen stating “Feels bad” and “Feels good,” participants did not declare whether these feelings were emotional, mental, or physical. They are placed arbitrarily under mental as they imply a judgment. ^cThese physical sensations have a mental and emotional quality to them and, therefore, are placed in this table rather than in Table 2. ^dThese physical feelings have been placed in this category because they were alleviated when emotions felt in the same session were acknowledged and processed during Focusing.

Table 2

Participant Descriptions of Bodily Sensed Simple Inner Awareness

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Kinesthetic/Proprioceptive | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dizzy, imbalanced | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Able to soar | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hungry, tight, sucked up | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Massaging, like dough | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bubbles | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Empty, Nothing, Hollow | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Tingling: Fuzzy, Neurons | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tickling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pressure, Bulging | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Airy, Wind | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Heart racing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Booby (Jelly) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Slithering | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Silk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Weight, Heavy, Gravity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Diamond, twisting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sharp blade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ball | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Bay leaf | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Dense | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Feeling big | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Space | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Warmth, Heat/Hot, Burning | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cool/Cold, Chill | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Shield | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Cube | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cube | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thumps, Bumps | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bowl-shaped hole, Half dome | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pain, Hurt, Headache | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Still quiet, No movement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Restricted everywhere | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Knot | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Numb | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Dancing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Visual ^b | | | | | | | | | | |
| Warm golden pictures | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Light, Bright | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lights, Glimmering | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clouded up | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Penny/Top spinning, Spiral, Churning vortex | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Auditory | | | | | | | | | | |
| Birds chirping in forest | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Music | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Olfactory | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fragrance of flowers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Multiple Types ^c | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pushing down (No) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Popping/Pushing up (Yes) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bumps, Thumps (Yes) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Increasing in size (Yes) | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Disappearing, Decreasing in size (Yes) | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Rising, Lighter (Yes) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Right feeling, Sense of Yes | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Hearing words of Yes | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Relaxed, Relief | 10 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Loosening, Unraveling, Spreading (Yes) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note. Types are actual words used by participants. Placement of sensations within a type was determined through personal assessment and verified by Ann Weiser Cornell, Ph.D. Linguistics.

^aParticipants are designated by the first letter of their names: A (Adam), C (Clint), E (Eve), G (Georgia), I (Ike), K (Kate), M (Mae), O (Oren), P (Pete), R (Rhonda).

^bChanging visual images that related to a story were not included. These stories were preponderant in Eve's, Georgia's, and Mae's Focusing. They were not evident at all during Adam's, Clint's, and Pete's Focusing. This group of multiple types refers to ways that participants indicated a direct resonance to truth or to receiving a message from the body. Within parentheses are specific answers given to participants when they felt a resonance with the truth of received message. At the end of other sessions, participants stated they were finished or had received all their bodies wanted them to know. These endings were found to be the most common. They are not included in Table 2.

Table 3

Areas of Body Attended by Specific and Immediate Sensation

| Area of the body | Sense | # of participants |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| All around the body | Quiet, Still, Clear invisible air | 1 |
| All over | Relaxed, Calming, Letting go, Still, Quiet, Peaceful | 5 |
| | Happy, Joy, Giddy, Carefree | 4 |
| | Good feeling | 1 |
| | Excitement | 2 |
| | Dancing | 1 |
| | Exhaustion, Tired | 3 |
| | Confusion and uneasy | 1 |
| | Clouded up, White | 2 |
| | Dense irritation | 1 |
| | Tense, tight, and stiff; Restricted | 1 |
| | Anxious, worried | 1 |
| | Dizzy, imbalanced | 1 |
| | Big, Vast desert | 1 |
| | Bright | 1 |
| Skin | Vague feeling | 1 |
| | Silk | 1 |
| | Feather boa | 1 |
| | Cold wind | 1 |
| Head | Tingling | 1 |
| | Dizzy heat, Spinning like top, Circular motion | 4 |
| | Shield | 1 |
| | Black and white | 1 |
| | Heavy gravity | 1 |
| | Bouncy ball | 1 |
| | Auditory annoyance | 1 |

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

| Area of the body | Sense | # of participants |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Eyes | Empty and still nothing | 1 |
| | Hurting teeth | 1 |
| | Sleepy, tired | 2 |
| | Mask | 1 |
| | Headache in right eye | 1 |
| | Disappointed | 1 |
| Throat | Finger pressure | 1 |
| | Fear | 1 |
| | Nervous clumpy burning | 1 |
| | Sad pressure, bulging | 1 |
| | Tired plug, Worn out mood | 1 |
| | Sad circling | 1 |
| | Cube | 1 |
| | Auditory annoyance | 1 |
| | Sore and raw pain | 1 |
| | Penny spinning | 1 |
| Arm | Stinging heat | 1 |
| Chest | Thin bubble | 1 |
| | Half dome, thumping | 1 |
| | Blue hot spot | 1 |
| | Pressure, air pressure | 2 |
| | Slow breath of depression | 1 |
| | No movement of lungs | 1 |
| | Heavy breathing | 1 |
| | Rising and lighter | 1 |
| | Circling spark, Spinning | 2 |
| | Rising spiral | 1 |
| | Pop up and pushing | 1 |
| | Tickling | 1 |
| | Very vague feeling, Strangeness | 2 |
| | Uneasy, Mouse like | 2 |

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

| Area of the body | Sense | # of participants |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Ball, bouncing | 3 |
| | Hollow nothing | 1 |
| | Big strong nothing blocking feelings | 1 |
| | Loosening when heard | 1 |
| | Sharp hurt in rib | 1 |
| | Dull pain coming and going | 1 |
| Heart | Racing | 1 |
| | Puzzled, Wondering | 1 |
| Back | Breathing in pressure with wave of water vice | 1 |
| | Tingling with happiness | 1 |
| | Glimmers flick and swivel | 1 |
| Stomach | Tingly | 4 |
| | Nothing, Hollowness | 5 |
| | Thumps above stomach | 1 |
| | Bubble of empty air | 2 |
| | Pain | 2 |
| | Ball | 2 |
| | Round, flat bay leaf | 1 |
| | Bowl, Half dome | 1 |
| | Bulging out | 1 |
| | Sick feeling, weary | 1 |
| | Boring | 1 |
| | Weight, Heavy knot | 4 |
| | Knot | 2 |
| | Hearing birds in forest | 1 |
| | Rock | 1 |
| | Butterflies morphing | 1 |
| | Churning green vortex | 1 |
| | Tickling | 1 |
| | Twisting, sharp-edged diamond | 1 |

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

| Area of the body | Sense | # of participants |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Sharp blade | 1 |
| | Irritated | 1 |
| | Slithering | 1 |
| | White burning | 1 |
| | Excited | 1 |
| | Light fluffy, Giddy, Fun | 1 |
| | Helpless, sad, scared | 1 |
| | Rising spiral | 1 |
| | Settled, Relaxed | 2 |
| | Anxiety, tight | 1 |
| | Grumpy, Annoyed | 1 |
| | Hungry, sucked together | 1 |
| Abdomen | Joyful | 1 |
| | Disappointment, sad, heavy | 2 |
| | Tingly | 1 |
| Thights | Jelly (booby) | 1 |
| Abdomen to all over | Excitement | 1 |
| Heart to stomach | Tiny ball going up and down fast | 1 |
| Stomach to chest | Spiral rising | 1 |
| Chest and heart | Bouncy ball | 1 |

Note. The participants did not couple all of their sensations with a specific area of their bodies. Thus, this table does not include everything derived from their bodies. Also, some of the sensations, such as headache in the right eye, sharp pain in the ribs, or annoying sound, are often experienced in the body without being associated with Focusing. They are listed here because they disappeared when the message they were imparting was understood or when the area of the body in which they occurred and that wanted attention was noticed.

Friends

Situations involving friends arose for 9 of the 10 participants. Only Adam did not directly include any references to this topic.

Missing, Losing, Remembering, and Making Friends

Kate and Oren were moving from middle school to high school. They anticipated making new friends. Unlike the other teens of the same age, they were the only ones who had never had to move to a completely new school setting. In two sessions, Kate expressed excitement and happiness about making new friends. Oren was afraid he was not going to be able to make new friends: "It's just, I've always had the same friends ever since elementary school."

Kate spent her first session exploring her left out, lonely feelings as she realized she was missing a friend. "She is the one that brings the light and the goodwill, and she is the one that's making me feel lonely. She's the one I need to say 'I miss you' to. She's all of it." She did not discover who this friend was until near the end of her session. In another session, she was worried about losing a friend because her friend was feeling extremely despondent.

Even though Clint was looking forward to the freedom of summer, he also was sadly regretting not being able to be with those friends who were going to be away. "If some of my friends weren't going away," then it would not feel so sad. During another session, Clint expressed distress over not being able to attend a friend's party.

Ike also contemplated losing a friend. "And we used to be really good friends, but now we're kind of not, you know, as good as friends. I can tell after awhile we're going to stop being friends. And it's kind of sad."

In a session in which Mae focused on all the implications of moving toward goals she was setting for herself, she became aware that in doing so, she would be leaving her best friend Eve behind. She reminisced about all the things they had done together and all the things they had mutually liked. Closely related was a session in which Mae and Eve and Jack were dancing in a field of flowers. The flowers were happy memories of Mae's childhood, and she was delighted to share them with her friends.

Similarly to Mae's session, Rhonda once recalled how much fun she and her cousin had had sledding in the snow. She was sorry they were not able to share more time together. During another session, Rhonda found she mostly wanted to excuse one of her friends for her behavior in the interest of preserving their friendship.

Concern for Friends

Later in the session involving her vacation in the snow, Rhonda remembered that she had wanted to assist her cousin by sending a letter with useful information about airline tickets. She regretted that she had forgotten and expressed gratitude that she had finally remembered.

Kate found herself worried and sad about her best friend whose parents were very strict with her. The friend had even talked about being glad she only had a few more years to be with her parents as otherwise she would not want to continue living. Also, Kate knew her friend had been lying to her parents, and she did not like her friend believing she had to survive by doing so. Kate discovered that she wanted "just to be there for her to make sure she's okay."

Georgia thought that one of her teachers was being mean and rude. She expressed concern for those of her friends who were the recipients of her teacher's actions and attitude. This topic occupied the bulk of two sessions.

Pete also had an issue with one of his teachers. In this case, the teacher was disciplining the students in a manner Pete considered unjustifiable. Primarily, the teacher did this by expelling students from class and by confiscating personal property, but he also kept students after class, causing them to be late for other activities and classes. Pete spent quite a bit of time focusing on the feeling that there was something he was forgetting about this whole affair. “It was something I wanted to do. It was a piece of paper. I’m feeling anxious. I want to know what it is.” Eventually he remembered that there was a form inviting him and other students to comment on this teacher’s policies and performance. They could give suggestions. For his own and his friends’ sakes he wished to follow through on this.

Conflict with Friends

Rhonda and Ike were the only participants who focused on conflicts with friends. Ike’s disagreement with a teammate is discussed under Sports below.

Once, after an incident with a girlfriend, Rhonda concluded she would have to overlook a girlfriend’s efforts to take a measure of revenge. Later, in the first of three sequential sessions, Rhonda found herself very sleepy:

It’s like a chance to get away from all the noise, commotion of the world. Fighting and arguing doesn’t solve anything. It just leaves things worse than they were at the beginning. It’s the fights between friends. [If I sleep] it won’t get hurt. Me [won’t get hurt]. [Sleep] is holding distance. [It feels] lonely . . . kind of like I’m caught in the middle. It’s not at ease. It wants everything to be resolved.

During the next session, Rhonda spoke of being in a soap bubble where she did not have to worry or deal with anything else. She could relax somewhat like she did during meditation. In the last of the three sessions, she was pulled to look at an issue and at the

same time was not wanting to go there. She expressed “a little bit of relief because that part that was drawing me toward it gave up.” She then found herself in a space:

It kind of feels like you're in the middle of a field or something . . . in the country where you can't see anything because it's all too far away from anything. . . . It's kind of relaxing because you don't have to do anything; you can just sit down and rest.

Clearly, Rhonda was using isolation as a means for escaping conflict. I placed these last two examples here in *Conflict with Friends* because the only conflicts she ever mentioned were among herself and her friends.

Boyfriends

Mae, Eve, and Rhonda had sessions centered around the subject of boys; Kate and Georgia did not. No boys expressed any issues concerning girls. The basic questions asked and answered by the three girls were the following: (a) What are the issues involved in choosing, obtaining, and dropping a boyfriend? and (b) are your boyfriend's wants more important than your own?

Choosing, obtaining, and dropping a boyfriend. In a competition with a friend over a boyfriend, Rhonda realized, “You have to go with your friends. Like you can't ditch your friends over a guy.” Even so, Rhonda knew she would have to give herself time to recover from her disappointment. This realization came at the end of a session in which she had lamented over her friends and their conflicts.

Eve sat with a ball of colored rubber bands that represented the confusion and frustration she felt regarding her boyfriend. Because she found it difficult to be with the whole ball of bands, she settled on a violet one that had disengaged from the ball. It represented her desire to be free from her boyfriend. However, she spoke of the confused state of her mind concerning what to do. Eventually she said, “It doesn't really want me

to deal with it right now.” Like Rhonda in her handling of conflict with her friends, Eve found that backing away was the preferred solution in the moment.

In the midst of a later session in which Eve was feeling an overwhelming warm and fuzzy tingle while thinking of how much she liked a certain “guy,” she began to be aware of a heaviness inside. Even though her original vision of the young man showed him giving her a thumbs up, she came to know through the heaviness that he was “out of her league” due to the friends he kept. As she sat with the heaviness, it lightened until it was gone. In contrast, during one of her last sessions, Eve found herself watching a boy she liked “just chilling” (in a chair inside a split coconut and listening to Destiny’s Child). She was aware of wanting to do something about it. Eventually, she chose to go over to him and sing and dance around him. “There’s a go get him, Tiger. Yeah, if I don’t do anything about it, I will be left to wonder, ‘If I did, what would have happened?’”

Mae’s Sessions 6 and 7 seemed related. Early in Session 6, she found herself in a “tired worn out mood.” The scene moved to pictures of three young men. The first was someone out of reach and famous, the next was someone she was dating, and the third was someone she liked a lot. As she viewed each picture, different emotions arose. She moved from saying, “A glow of warm colors, golden. I can feel it all over. It makes me giddy, happy,” to saying, “Sparkles, in lots of colors. They are in a spiral, going up from my stomach into my chest. It’s like a feeling of no hope.” As the last picture came into view, Mae ended by saying, “Now I get why they came in that order.” She began Session 7 knowing that she wanted to leave Tom for Tyler, but at the session’s end, she chose to close the book on Tyler in favor of not going behind Tom’s back. Tyler was an

unknown, and she would have had to discover if he would be her boyfriend without Tom knowing. Tom's status as her boyfriend was a certainty, one she chose to retain.

Taking care of self or boyfriend. Mae began one of her earlier sessions noticing her favorite rapper, Eminem, and how much she enjoyed listening to him. She wanted to go to an Eminem concert, but her boyfriend was jealous and objected. At that point, a copper penny that had been spinning on her collar bone dropped on heads up. "A sense of succeeding at something, sort of, but maybe having something bright in my path. I don't know. Like something good coming up." She chose or was drawn to continue being with Eminem during this session in spite of her boyfriend's objections.

Rhonda had a date with Travis. On reflection, she realized that she wanted to invite Anthony instead. He would be more reliable. Travis might go off with Scott and leave her by herself. She sensed something inside of her was angry at Scott. "It would get satisfaction if Anthony was with me." He would not leave her.

Family

Family issues arose for 4 of the 10 participants. Family conflict or family responsibilities were the context for four of Oren's sessions, for three of Mae's, for two of Clint's, and for one of Kate's.

Family Conflict

There were eight sessions that seemed to deal with family conflicts. Mae had three such sessions in succession. The third one was a reaction to the second. Clint had two related sessions about this topic with the second being a reaction to his first. Oren had two seemingly unrelated sessions. Kate had one session.

Oren may have been referring to a parent when he stated,

I'm very tired. It's like my eyes just want to stay closed and fall asleep. I'm seeing these thoughts, or memories of someone yelling at me. I can't describe it, but I feel it in the lower part of my throat. I'm feeling nothing now, kind of hollow in my stomach and chest. Nothing, really.

He had a strong part that was not ready and would not allow an exploration of the feelings engendered while being yelled at.

Oren's session in which he expressed disagreement with his mother over the advisability of becoming a member of a hockey league is discussed under the topic Sports. This session was a direct reflection of how he thought and felt as he moved through the issues of the argument. It concluded with Oren physically feeling the rightness of his chosen course. An interesting side aspect of this session was that it was Session 10. It was obviously an important issue because he went directly to it even though he had been requested to incubate the feelings his body had about the whole experience of Focusing. He made just a brief statement at the end in response to this request.

I made the assumption about the following session that Mae was talking about a parent because she lives in a single-parent home without siblings. "That person is the one keeping me back." After reflecting on the differences between the two of them and how those differences were affecting her life, Mae realized that the conflict was

a combination of doing the things I want to do and being able to get along with that person.

And now I am seeing a picture of that person in a puddle. Like with mud on the bottom or a pool extending to the bottom, sort of just floating in the center of the pool or puddle because they have to let go. No, it is not that they have to let go. It's I have to let go. They really want to hold on to me, for me to stay forever. Or be in my life to say what is right for me.

Now, if I try to disagree with that, then I get a guilt trip about it. Like if I don't go along with this person, then I am an awful person to do this to them. Trying to make me feel bad about what I am telling them, that they are controlling me too much.

During her next session, Mae surmised all she would have to leave behind if she left her parent. She eventually realized that it was going to be extremely hard, perhaps impossible, to do. She became less sure that it was something she wanted to do. "I want to be with it [her present life], but I just shouldn't." She even found a part that was in empathy with her parent's own difficulties given the circumstances. Finally, from a huge audience in a movie house, Mae selected the two persons who seemed capable of presenting to her parent her case from her own point of view. They were the only two who understood her and could represent her without injecting their own opinions into the discussion. "I see myself cuddling with a blanket. . . . I could go to these people, and I would be able to trust them." Finally, Mae stated, "Basically, it is encouraging me to take action in this situation and not just try to leave it like I have for the last couple of months."

Mae began her next session with a sense of happiness, relief, and belief that everything would turn out all right:

Okay is how everything is now. It wasn't great before, and I knew it and didn't like it before. But I changed, and it is like you can be low, and it won't change. You have to do something about it.

Just be myself. Go after what I want and think for myself. . . . I see myself just kicking all this stuff into a big hole and covering it all up. So you don't have to worry about it anymore; you can think about it like it is all over. You can get on with life. I'm noticing that covering up all that stuff makes it quit buzzing, and it is like a big fuzzy ball floating away. It's like relief.

Clint did not mention the subject of one of his sessions, but, from remarks made after the session, I assumed it concerned a member of his family. Although it was unclear

whether the unstated issue involved a conflict, during one of his earlier sessions, like Mae above, Clint had concluded that the best solution for the problem he had been pondering was to confer with someone wise who held some influence. His next session was a short one, during which he was congratulated for having pursued this course.

During the summer Kate was focusing, because of family disputes, she, her mother, and her brother made plans to leave the home in which she had grown up. She spent a session discovering many of the feelings she was experiencing about leaving. They ranged from feeling scared and helpless about the whole idea of moving, to feeling sad about not living with her brother anymore as he was moving elsewhere, to feeling sad as she contemplated missing her neighborhood friends. She discovered a part that was excited about having her own room and also happy and carefree about leaving behind the disputes. Unlike Oren, she did not speak about the conflict itself, only the consequences. Like Mae and Oren, Kate discovered what her body wanted her to do to find comfort and resolution. “It just wanted me to know. It wants me to tell my mom how I feel.”

Family Responsibility

Oren focused twice on feelings in his body that led him to remember family responsibilities he had forgotten. In his sixth session, just prior to attending hockey practice, he said, “I kind of feel anxiety, like I should have done something, but I don’t know what.” Eventually, he remembered that he was supposed to do the laundry and later that he was supposed to return movies. “My stomach just didn’t want me to forget what I was supposed to do.” Oren’s following session is quoted in full in the Individual Sessions Analyses. It also dealt with his responsibilities toward his family.

Future Aspirations

The aspirations listed under this title are those that were the specific topic of the participants' Focusing. Goals or future-oriented solutions that evolved from focusing on other topics are not included. Eve, Kate, and Mae (twice) focused within this context.

Eve had one session that could be depicted as being about her future profession. As she looked around a condo on the beach, she noticed various professions above the doors as if they were beckoning her to choose which one to leave the room through. "They are saying lawyer and singer; like different occupations. Like teacher and things like that." As the session continued, Eve explored the difficulty in choosing a profession when so many people were giving unsolicited advice.

Mae found herself viewing an empty auditorium strewn with items left by her many competitors in beauty pageants. She realized it was time for her to leave that facet of her life. As she turned away in mourning, she noticed her favorite singer Eminem on stage. She came to realize that her future was still on stage but as a performer.

During the second of Mae's sessions concerning her future professional career, she talked of her expectations. She would enjoy all the secondary perquisites of the job even though they were just frivolous "glitter." She would have to experience the loneliness and the fatigue that were also inevitable.

Kate was the only participant who spoke about plans for her future profession in terms of her educational goals:

I think it is about school. I am so excited that I am going to a new place and meeting new people, and everything . . . but nervous 'cause of grades and being in a new place. And they are both kind of equal.

My body is like saying have fun and relax but keep my goals in my head and strive for them. To feel what it is like to have fun and relax and chill with my friends but still have all my homework done and everything.

The thing in my stomach has gone, and I don't really feel anything else. I definitely know that I want to go to college so I can have a good career, so the grades have something to do with that.

Fun

Fun was the context of focusing sessions for 4 of the 10 participants. Although, except for Adam, it was not the context for a majority of their sessions, it was an important subject for all 4 of them.

Clint's and Kate's Focusing began during late spring. This was true for a number of the other participants, but only Clint and Kate expressed an intense interest and need for summer to begin. Apparently, both were feeling the pressure of meeting school requirements and their inherent restrictions. Clint once said, "The fewer people it has to listen to, the less restrictions there are. It thinks there's going to be a lot of fun." Specifically, he was tired of writing essays. His one misgiving, as mentioned previously under Friends, was about missing his friends. In his next session, despite some anxiety, Clint was infused with happiness over having completed his work. "Yeah, it wants to be happy for a long time." After Clint sat with that happiness for awhile, even the anxiety went away. Kate said,

All over it's bright and giddy and happy because summer is next week. There will not be school, and it can relax, swim, and have fun. It will miss everybody, but it is glad to get away from the work and the teachers. It's tired of working hard. It is ready for summer.

Eve and Adam both had sessions encouraging them to have more fun. One of Eve's sessions consisted entirely of the statement, "It's happy and excited about last Friday. It's saying, 'Good job. You go girl!' because I went for it. It wants me to have more fun." Two of her sessions were allegories that featured male friends enjoying themselves in outlandish scenarios, demonstrating how to have a good time.

Adam stated the inducement for enjoyment in his first session (See Individual Sessions Analyses) when his body expressed its desire to “fill up” with fun. Eight of Adam’s sessions centered either wholly or partly upon his choices of activity and the kinds of fun they would bring him. In this first session, Adam went on to discover that his body preferred that he play quiet board games. Yet in the very next session, his body recommended that he engage in activities outside of the house, as he had been at home doing nothing for a week:

I asked it if my life was dull and I needed to have more fun in it. It feels sort of like there’s a bubble in my stomach that moves a little bit and is sort of dull. Well, I asked it if it’s a dull bubble filled with air, and it hit against the side of my stomach like a loud bump, confirming my description, not once but twice. . . . On one side of it, it got a little bit smaller. Yeah, I got a sense that maybe that’s a yes.

Later in this session, Adam’s body clearly indicated that it wanted him to go to the Boardwalk for a full measure of fun. “I asked it if I should go on every single ride because I don’t usually go on every single ride, and it disappeared. . . . It’s real relaxed.” The bubble continued to get smaller as Adam explored the idea of having a lot of fun on the Boardwalk. It went away completely when he interpreted his body as meaning, “Don’t have a little bit of fun. Do lots of fun.”

In his fourth session, Adam was again given the message that he should get out and in this case go swimming, specifically in a swimming pool. He was still not as active as his inner being wanted him to be. Finally, during his seventh session he said, “I asked it if it wanted me to know that I can have an exciting lifestyle, but it would be better if I had a quieter one, and my body relaxed.” Adam explored the feasibility of possible activities in two other sessions. Once, he spent time focusing on choosing a team sport he would like to engage in. After realizing that the suggested choice was football, he said, “I

asked it if it wanted me to have even more fun now, and my whole body relaxed.” In an even later session, Adam was given an unqualified yes to his idea of becoming an actor in a local play. He began this session with a blue hot spot in his chest and found that it had to do with his costume being very blue and hot to wear. After he had confirmed this, the hotness disappeared. His body then let him know that acting would be an “awesome kind of hot.”

Sports

Every young man except Clint had at least one session in which sports was the main context, sometimes with a number of subcontexts. Of the young women, only Kate mentioned sports, and that entailed a brief reference to her desire to swim during the summer.

Adam, Pete, and Oren focused once each on sports safety and injury. Their emphasis within this subtopic was very different. Adam talked about choosing finger skating as a means to be safe while pursuing learning how to skateboard. Pete spent one session attempting to remember how the injury he had sustained occurred. He did finally remember which of the many sports he had participated in recently was the cause of his chest pain. It turned out to be racquetball. Oren addressed the topic of sports as part of a disagreement with his mother concerning the safety of playing in a particular hockey league. He disagreed with her about the importance of safety, believing it was minor compared to the benefits of playing.

Three of the young men focused on an aspect of their skill levels in various sports. For Oren, the benefit of playing in the previously mentioned hockey league was the opportunity to increase both his defensive and offensive skills. This would result from necessity, as rough plays were often uncalled by the referees. At another time, Oren

expressed remorse as his body let him know a part of himself was disappointed at his performance during a skateboard practice. Adam determined to use finger skating to increase his skateboarding skills. Ike was reassured that he could feel comfortable with his skill level as a basketball player.

Ike and Oren focused on aspects of fairness. Ike had earned a foul during the basketball game mentioned above. One of the other players accused him of losing the game for the team. Much of this session was spent exploring the feelings engendered in response to the hypocrisy of this accusation. In coming to his own defense, Ike reflected on the fact that there were many infractions during the game that had not been acknowledged or blamed. Oren also felt unfairly treated after his team won first place in his league. The school coaches did not pick any members of his team for the all-stars team.

Physical Body

Their physical body was a context for 5 of the participants. Four of Pete's sessions and one of Adam's, Clint's, Oren's, and Rhonda's revolved either partially or wholly around this topic.

Exhaustion

A number of sessions for many of the adolescent participants started with the feelings of being tired and/or heavy. This was their bodies' way of introducing certain situations that quickly evolved into other topics. Only two sessions were actually about exhaustion. Clint stated, "There's an all over exhaustion. It just seemed to want me to know I was exhausted. Now there's a dark and silent relaxed feeling that feels good." The first part of one of Pete's sessions was also about exhaustion and the pain in his head and

eyes it was causing him. “I toss and turn all night, and it feels frustrating everywhere. I am so tired, but I can’t sleep.”

Personal Safety and Care

Rhonda and Adam each had one session related to personal safety and care; Pete had two. The second part of Pete’s aforementioned session related, ostensibly, to a deep seated fear of falling and being hurt or never reaching bottom. At another time, Pete demonstrated his concern about personal well-being as he realized his whole body was restricted because he did not properly care for his perpetually infected toe. In the middle of his following session, Pete stated, “I am noticing that my toe hasn’t ever hurt since the last session, even though I have stubbed it since then.”

Adam’s body told him to choose finger skating in order to safely learn a certain skateboard move. Rhonda’s stomach let her know it was hungry, its feelings about that, and what it wanted her to do about them.

Pain Awareness

Oren and Pete each had sessions during which they focused on a physical pain. Once, after Oren described his painful hands and remembered the probable cause, he stated, “I think they just wanted me to know how they hurt.” On two other occasions he also ended a session with the pain receding. One of those times, he spoke of dizziness: “My whole chest feels like it’s spinning, but it’s not going very fast. It makes my head spin round and round like a fan, and it’s making me dizzy. It seems to have stopped. It just settled down.” At another time, Oren talked about what might have been the beginning of a cold:

I notice a pain in my throat when I swallow. It reminds me of a sore throat, very raw. It feels like when I swallow, something is scraping against it. It’s just the air and the fluids are making it more and more raw. It’s like

hard and tender, and it hurts. [after a long pause] I don't really feel anything right now. Everything feels normal.

Besides the session mentioned earlier in which he talked about his painful toe, Pete also spent some time during a later session focusing on a pain in his chest. "I am having difficulty breathing in my chest because of a sharp hurt in my rib. . . . I am feeling irritated because I can't figure out how it happened. If I knew what happened then I would know what to do." After stating, "My chest pain is something like *déjà vu*," Pete went on to guess at which of his former activities might have been the cause:

I remember. We were playing racquetball. I hit the wall and jammed my thumb and wrist, and when I slipped, hit my chest. Good! I am glad I remember. For that one thing I get to notice the pain whenever I weight build. It feels better. There is nothing I can do about it, but it feels better to know what it is about.

Pete began the session believing he could find a way to relieve the pain if he knew its source. He concluded that just ascertaining the source was enough to relieve the pain.

Positive Mental State

Most of the participants' sessions focused on situations or conditions that could be classified as problematic, at least at the beginning of the session. Usually, toward the end of a session, they found a sense of relief, peace, or relaxation. However, occasionally, a session was just long enough for the participant to know that things were going well or to experience a feeling of well being. This occurred for 3 participants. For instance, Clint's second session evinced a short statement that because he had done what was advised in the previous session, he could relax and enjoy the results. Twice he began a session in which he felt relaxed and happy, went on to notice more negative feelings, and finally chose to come back to noticing the positive feelings.

Like Clint, Pete also experienced a short session in which he found a good feeling, quiet and still. His life was “okay” right then. Another time, Pete started a session by saying he did not know how to describe it, and then he went on to state, “It’s located everywhere. It feels good. It’s like everything. . . . Joy. Relief. Happiness. . . . It’s like a perfection. Like nothing’s wrong; everything’s perfect. There is nothing else. It feels great.” He took time during this session just to be in this perfect moment. He was encouraged to enjoy that moment for a long time to come even after the session ended.

Rhonda, too, found herself feeling relaxed. “I’m in a bubble, like soap because the sides keep moving. I’m by myself but it’s a good feeling of just me. I don’t have to worry or deal with anything else.” She spent the entire session floating in her bubble.

Although Pete’s state of perfection within his body could be considered transcendent, only Adam engendered a place in himself that seemed to definitely pertain to a transcendent place within himself. When he described his body as being relaxed with nothing else bothering him after coming to a conclusion about a problem, I reflected that back. During sessions, it was rare that the adolescents would sit further with themselves after the initial topic was closed. Adam asked, “Now what do I do?” Thinking he was finished, I answered, “Whatever you want.” It took some time before I realized what was happening. After a short time, Adam told of a place in his stomach in which there was a forest with birds chirping, a place he could come to whenever he wanted.

Focusing

Following are the sessions and large segments of sessions that seemed to be totally involved with the inner something that instructed, encouraged, endorsed, or desired the intimacy with self fostered during the act of Focusing. Included is an account of the number of occasions when a session ended with a participant ascertaining that

something just wanted to be noticed. Also included are the 10th sessions, in which some participants responded to the incubated question, “What does my body want to express about Focusing?”

During Eve’s ninth session, she focused on something indescribable. She spoke of it as “not a heavy feeling, but it’s not a light feeling either. There’s no way [to give it words] cause it’s there, but it’s not there. Seems like there is nothing there, but it feels like it is.” Possibly “it” was a felt sense as it closely fits the description as found in Appendix A and defined by Gendlin (1996).

During their first focusing sessions, Ike and Pete had experiences similar to Eve’s. Pete said,

I’m noticing a kind of all over really dense irritation. I’m noticing I can’t tell what it is. Not knowing feels less dense. Both are there, and I’m drawn to the not knowing. It is a comfortable quietness. I can’t place it, and now it’s gone or on the edge. Now it has left. It’s leaving is kind of strange, but familiar at the same time, like *déjà vu*.

Ike expressed it thus,

Now I’m feeling very vague, vague feelings. I can’t really describe them, unlike the extreme feelings when I’m alone. It’s kind of like the same feelings but much more down, like 99% down from the extreme feelings. I can barely tell that they’re there.

It’s right here in my lower chest and in the middle of my stomach. It’s like seeing inside me a kind of white thing that I can’t describe but just feel its presence. It’s not unpleasant but kind of pleasant.

Ike’s primary context during seven sessions was the process of Focusing itself.

Ike often was having trouble accepting an intimate relationship with his inner emotional self. During those times Ike was having difficulty focusing, he would sometimes sense something inside of himself that seemed to be encouraging him by tendering a pleasant experience. An example is his Session 4, given in the Individual Sessions Analyses

section, in which immediately after making a statement that indicated something mouse-like was afraid, he got a feeling of happiness as he recalled successfully giving a speech at school. An appreciation for Focusing was beginning to surface within his last few sessions. “I guess I’m kind of feeling good because I can tell when my body feels when it’s done.”

Ike came to understand that a pleasant feeling could also mean that his body was resonating yes to a response from him or a reflection from me. “I don’t really get a yes or no feeling. Just that the feeling is pleasant. I suppose it’s a yes feeling, and if it’s not good, I suppose it’s a no feeling.” As shown in Table 2 under Resonances to Truth, all participants seemed to discover resonances of truth within their bodies. The table also indicates the types of resonance and the participants for whom those types occurred.

At times, many of the participants would get the message that what had been wanted was company and to be heard. Table 4 indicates for each participant the number of times they received this as an explicit message from within their bodies. Implicit willingness to focus was assumed because usually the participants easily discovered parts of their bodies that were readily accessible and had information to impart.

Some of the participants found themselves or parts of themselves reluctant or refusing to focus or without a topic for Focusing. This situation occurred during four sessions, one each for Adam, Eve, Mae, and Rhonda. Adam’s incubated session was the only one in which he clearly expressed his inability to find anything on which to focus. Eve’s and Mae’s fourth sessions were expressions of their anger at my having lost my temper with them during their third session. Eve said, “There is nothing, and it’s boring. I’m noticing a part that doesn’t want to do this today. In my stomach. It doesn’t want to

Table 4

Body Message: Something Wants/Wanted Company and Attention

| Participants | Number of Occurrences |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Adam | 4 |
| Clint ^a | 3 |
| Eve ^a | 2 |
| Georgia | 1 |
| Ike | 0 |
| Kate | 1 |
| Mae ^a | 2 |
| Oren | 1 |
| Pete | 2 |
| Rhonda | 1 |

Note. Ninety percent of the participants explicitly received the message that something wanted company at some time during their sessions. Only Ike did not receive this message.

^aOnce each, Eve and Mae received the message that something wanted attention during their incubated 10th sessions. In his 10th session, Clint was told from an internal source that being listened to was a benefit of Focusing.

talk or do anything. My stomach is like bye-bye.” In their refusal to focus, they both did a fine job of focusing. During a session concerning her conflict with friends, Rhonda met a part that “doesn’t want to go there.”

The 10th session for each of the participants except Georgia, who stopped Focusing after her 5th session, occurred after incubating the question, “What does my body want to express about Focusing?” Three of the tapes for these last sessions were either blank or missing. I do not remember Ike, Kate, or Rhonda focusing on the incubated question. I suspect, as in Oren’s session, they went straight to some other context. Unlike Oren, I do not believe they came back to the incubated question at the end of their last session. Adam, during his 10th session and for the first time, found “nothing.”

Oren, Clint, and Pete gave direct and brief answers to the incubated question, What does my body want to express about Focusing? After focusing on the controversy with his mother, Oren stated, “[My body is expressing how] it feels good that I learned how to do it and how to accept what my body is saying, because now I can do it whenever I need to see what is going on. And that’s it.” Before focusing on something that seemed more important to him, Clint said, “All over it says it was happy with the Focusing. Also, Focusing was refreshing, because it felt good to be listened to.” Pete placed his awareness inside for some length of time before he stated,

Focusing really helped me. I am finding a good feeling everywhere in my body. Focusing brought my attention to things I didn’t even know were there, such as physical things. I was able to get messages through that were useful in making decisions.

Afterward, and upon opening his eyes, Pete stated, “Now that is a funny feeling, trying to remember where I am.” Apparently, he had been deep within himself experiencing that good feeling everywhere.

Eve's and Mae's 10th sessions were each contextualized as a fantasy. Eve had a heavy feeling in her stomach:

It's like a big gray rock in a field. It's on a bird; the bird is under the rock. They both don't have a reason for being there or know how they got there or anything, and it shifts around. It's just the bird is there, and the rock is on it.

The bird doesn't want to be under the rock as it's too heavy. The rock is really, really big, and that's what makes it so heavy. The bird just wants to be on top of the rock and flying with its friends. But the rock won't let it.

The bird won't pay attention to it, and the rock is getting bigger. The bird is mad because the rock won't leave it alone. The rock says the bird should pay attention to it, even though it doesn't know what it wants.

Eve concluded, "I think they probably equally want attention." It also seemed likely that the bird was conflicted about the value of Focusing versus the desire to fly with its friends.

Mae's fantasy began with her joining a friend on a cloud (both of them aged into adults) and watching something like a day-care center's backyard full of little children "doing weird things, like puttying and playing, as if in a movie." She described the setting:

It is really nice, like an airy light, carefree feeling and warm at the same time. The clouds are moving, rocking very slowly like a cradle. I can see our lips moving and our heads nodding, like we are conversing, but I can't hear the words. It is like a movie on slow motion. We are exchanging information. We are nodding and giving a type of look you give somebody when you are listening to them, and you are interested in what they are saying.

Now we are laughing together. What we are watching is distant. We are just observing things together and analyzing what we see, talking it over together. We are laughing at the funny things the children are doing and how they are causing trouble. Like we are watching Dennis the Menace.

All of a sudden, it is as if someone presses the pause button on a remote. It popped into my side vision, and the screen comes to a close. Then it goes "flip," and the screen becomes dark, and the TV movie is

over. It's an every kind of sad feeling when things you have been thinking about just end, but not like a sad goodbye, but like it's been put on pause. Not like it's gone or anything. There's not a goodbye, but a reassurance it's coming back. But it's like a little thing that is fading away and becoming more and more distant.

Apparently, Eve had a fundamental, though possibly not conscious, understanding and appreciation of Focusing. Her fantasy seemed to be encouraging Eve to remember that Focusing was not ending but available even into adulthood.

Table 5 is a summarization of the findings concerning attributes of and attitudes about Focusing as experienced and expressed by the participants at various times during their Focusing. It lists the percentage of participants who used the words given as attitudes or attributes in the table either exactly or closely approximated.

Table 5

Focusing Attributes and Attitudes Expressed by Participants

| Attributes and Attitudes ^a | # of Participants |
|---|-------------------|
| Presence of something indescribable | 3 |
| Recognizing a bodily sense of truth | 10 |
| Easily establishing an inner relationship with self | 9 |
| Something wanting company and attention | 9 |
| Unable, reluctant, or refusing to focus ^a | 5 |
| Positive evaluations of focusing experience | 3 |
| Abstract evaluations of focusing experience | 2 |
| Missing 10 th session evaluations of focusing experience | 5 |

^aNo participant displayed these attitudes toward Focusing at all times and rarely even for an entire session.

As analyzed and evaluated, the primary contexts of the adolescents' Focusing were friends, family, future aspirations, fun, sports, physical states, positive mental states, and Focusing itself. From within these contexts and during continued analyses, themes emerged. These themes have been summarized in the following section.

Thematic Content Analyses

Because a primary purpose in pursuing this research was to discover the value of Focusing for 13- to 15-year-old adolescents, the categories under which the data have been designated as themes are those I considered beneficial and germane to the ages of the participants and their developmental processes. These thematic categories were usually quite apparent, although not explicitly stated as themes by the participants themselves.

Personal Growth

Under the class Personal Growth, I selected two subclasses: Personal Growth Toward Self-identity and Personal Growth Toward Self-assertion (Autonomy). It became apparent that autonomy could easily be considered intrinsic to self-identity. Many of the examples included in self-identity have autonomous attributes, as is evident in the examples. However, autonomy was such a large component of most of the participants' sessions that I have placed it in its own subclass. The themes of the subclasses were titled using actual words of various participants, who are identified by their names in parentheses. The fragments exemplifying these themes have been given in a condensed form and without the guiding portions of the sessions.

Personal Growth Toward Self-identity

Given the classification system used for this results chapter, inarguably the greatest predominance of fragments fell into the subclass Personal Growth Toward Self-

identity. For the female adolescents, themes within this subclass were either of primary weight or equal to those in any other subclass. Of the males, only Adam was as heavily invested here as elsewhere. However, all the participants provided some evidence of interest concerning self-identity.

Analyzing, sorting, and throwing it this way or that (Mae). Reconsidering priorities permeated a number of focusing sessions. In the following fragments, this was the prominent theme.

Throughout many of her sessions, Mae struggled between discovering her personal value system and keeping it flexible so as to be able to reevaluate her priorities. By doing so, she could continue making the decisions required to take the action needed to become her own person:

I can see myself, one by one, analyzing each thing, sorting and throwing it this way or that. But I don't know what this way or that way means. It has a great importance, but I don't know what it is.

In the above session, Mae was exploring her life and relationship with her parent. She was contemplating those parts of it that were no longer important and those that were too essential to leave behind.

When Mae was focusing on her dream of becoming a performer, she listed those attributes about the profession she believed she would love: glamour, acting/singing, and high style, as well as those she would not: repetitive practice, exhaustion, being misunderstood, and leaving loved ones behind. She came to know she had two parts, both of which had a need for consideration. "Like they are on two screens going like this at an angle, and I am standing in the middle seeing all the things."

During another session, Mae focused once again on the need to reevaluate her priorities and set new goals:

The penny is like one of those just follow the bouncing dot when you sing the songs. It's a huge good feeling. I am seeing more of Eminem's music with musical notes dancing around with the penny on a stage. It's weird.

It's a stage I used to perform on when I was little. All the chairs in the auditorium are empty, and the people left behind their things, purses, clothes, trophies. When I look to the chairs I get a feeling of goodbye; there is no more pageant. But when I look toward the stage, I feel like that's going somewhere. The pageant is yesterday, no more of that, and the penny is today and tomorrow.

Later, she was being urged to reconsider totally discounting her past:

I am seeing a field of flowers, and they are all the same kind of flowers. The flowers remind me of my childhood. They have a fragrance and a feel to them. Me and my friends, Eve and Jack, are jumping up and down in the flowers having a good time. They remind me of fun memories about my past. The flowers are wanting to remind me of all those fun memories. They want me to remember them.

After noticing a constant plug in her throat and being tired and worn out, Mae found three images, each in a different area of her body. One was of her ideal, who was "out of reach." The second was of a possible boyfriend, and the last was of her current boyfriend. Mae needed to discover and then sort through her preferences concerning her choice of boyfriend and the possible actions she might take in regard to them. More than once, Mae contemplated leaving her current boyfriend for a more highly desired male:

I would have to go behind Tom's back to find out about Tyler. There is a card closing, but with collaged images of Tyler in every place I've seen him. They remind me of how much I like him - a glimpse of what my feelings are for him, but closing up for now.

She ended by rejecting deceitfulness in deference to respect for Tom and for herself.

A part of Eve seemed to want her to also consider a potential boyfriend. "I got a picture of a guy that is like floating with his thumbs up. I like him a lot." She then stated,

The warm and fuzzy tingling is overwhelming. It's too much. He is out of my league. It is heavy in there because of his friends. When I just notice, the heaviness lightens up. It just wants me to sit with it.

Eve chose a course of action in regard to pursuing a boyfriend that went against the wishes of one part of herself, and yet she felt lighter for having been with both parts.

Rhonda seemed to be enmeshed in the battles among the group of friends she kept. She struggled with her dislike of fighting and desire for harmony, as well as her wish to stay loyal to her friends and at the same time satisfy her personal needs. Rhonda reconfirmed her belief in the destructiveness of conflict. “The fighting and arguing doesn’t solve anything. It just leaves things worse than they were at the beginning.”

Kate spent one session listing the detriments and benefits of moving away from the home she had known most of her life. Her conclusion was that she needed to tell her mother how she felt about this potential change in her life.

One week, Oren was upset because of a disagreement he had had with his mother about the benefits versus the dangers of participating in a particular hockey league:

It’s angry because it feels that I can learn a new way to play hockey, giving me new experiences, particularly learning to play both offensively and defensively, like driving a car. . . . It’s mostly that she looks at the league as a place where the calls are uncalled, and people bash each other around a little bit [because of it]. From her point of view, it’s unfair and dangerous. But from my point of view, it’s just unfair.

For Oren, the value of learning more about how to play his game with expertise outweighed the latent necessity of keeping safe. Although he recognized the unfairness, he believed he could deal with it.

Unlike Oren’s session, Adam’s Focusing encouraged him to regard his physical self as worthy of his care:

There’s a shallow bowl on the side of my stomach that wants me to know something. When I asked if it wanted me to learn how to skate on a half dome, it disappeared. My body relaxed when I asked if it meant finger skating. It resonated yes to the question if finger skating was chosen because it’s not as painful when you fall down as it would be on a real

skateboard. When I asked if I should be more worried about my safety, my body relaxed. That was what it had been trying to tell me.

Adam's body led him to protect his personal safety and to recognize the value of learning through safe activities.

Akin to Adam, Peter exhibited a concern for his physical well-being. He came to understand that proactively taking care of himself physically allowed for mental relaxation and, consequently, enabled him to enjoy his activities without constantly having to worry about being cautious (in this case, of his chronic toe infection). He was learning to take responsibility for himself. He found that sensitivity to his personal needs was valuable, as it honored all parts of himself. "It says I should actually be doing all these things to let the pain go away, to help, because the rest of my body doesn't want it there."

In his first focusing session, Adam's body had let him know that it desired a quiet, relaxing kind of fun. Many of his later sessions centered around maintaining balance between a quiet indoor type of fun and an active outdoor type of fun. In one session, he was even encouraged to not "stop with a little bit of fun; do lots of fun." There was support for his discovering his maximum ability to have fun. During the sixth session, however, Adam once again uncovered his body's preference for a quieter lifestyle. "It let me know by relaxing that I can have an exciting lifestyle, but it would be better if I had a quieter one. There were no parts of myself that disagreed." Adam was sorting priorities.

I don't really need to worry, because I have the base (Ike). The adolescents participating in this study were personable with strong egos and healthy bodies. They demonstrated viable moral systems. They were coming to know this about themselves and finding within themselves the wherewithal to face their fears.

Though Eve was beginning to make decisions about her personal wants, she mostly needed to discover her potentials and then to allow them expression. In her session of herself walking through the jungle and seeing Sao dancing with the pink monkeys, she got that “it’s okay for me to go have fun.” At a later session, it became apparent she had followed through with this idea as she stated, “It’s happy and excited about last Friday. It’s saying, ‘Good job, you go girl,’ because I went for it. It wants me to have more fun. Now I am over there dancing around the chair, singing a song, and dancing around. Like that is it!” Eve was being encouraged to recognize her innermost bravery and to be a bit adventurous.

In the Individual Sessions Analyses section, Georgia’s sample session was centered on the anxiety and hopes she experienced as she contemplated going to summer camp. She moved from one symbol to another and back again as they transformed. After focusing on her session myself, and sensing into the felt rightness of my conclusions, I placed the majority of the meaning of the session under this theme about being confident in one’s self. While “butterfly-ish” about being away from home so long, she knew camp was going to be fun. As Georgia sat with the idea of so many things to do during camp, she began to feel dizzy. This was demonstrated through her use of metaphors about a rising whirlpool or those little toys that spin causing pictures on them to appear as if they are moving. But then the swan came, keeping her and the whirlpool company. They went up to a castle and looked right in the window, and it was all gold. The whirlpool was then like a Christmas tree. The thought of being away from home for a long time and being kept so busy with the many things to do at camp first made Georgia anxious. But during the session, the whirlpool of things to do transformed, leading her to a castle of gold. It

was as if she was being invited to accept a Christmas gift of discovery and delight. In spite of her original misgivings, Georgia only needed to recognize her innate gifts to know she was capable of coping with multiple new and exciting possibilities.

Much of Kate's Focusing centered around her hopes and fears as a new freshman in high school. "I definitely know that I want to go to college so I can have a good career, and grades have something to do with that." During another session, Kate said, "It wants me to have fun. But if I have fun, I won't be able to keep up. It wants to succeed by me doing the best I can. The ball with the lumps has gone away." She was being encouraged to judge herself based on her knowledge of her own abilities and efforts, rather than on outside sources such as, for instance, grades, and to be assured of her capabilities.

Like Kate, Oren was also about to enter high school. He was worried about the social requirements of a new environment. Oren came to know that being with one's own emotions, even fear, was acceptable:

I'm noticing something inside bouncing like Ping-Pong balls. I think I'm scared of next year in high school. It's like I'm not going to be able to make friends because I've always had the same friends ever since elementary school. It feels kind of strange. It seems like it covers my whole stomach and chest. I think it is all right to feel strange about new things.

While focusing on the effects within himself of being accused by a friend of causing the loss of a basketball game because of a mistake he made toward the end of the game, Ike realized that he believed it unfair to lay blame on any one circumstance in the midst of many. When all the plays were considered,

it can't be one play that caused the team loss. . . . [It's] mad about the hypocrisy. . . . The thing I'm getting is that I don't really need to worry, because I have the base, and I kind of know that I'm okay. . . . I know I'm not a bad player or anything. I get a yes feeling, like a good pleasant feeling, like a massaging.

Ike knew, from an inner conviction, he was okay.

Those are the kinds of things that bring joy (Clint). A basic premise within the philosophy of Focusing is that it is a practice that will bring to awareness new insights about events or feelings. Occasionally the insights concerning personal pleasures were relatively direct, as in the few sessions below.

During her last session, after many sessions being with the strife she was dealing with between herself and friends and with innumerable compromises, Rhonda finally stated,

There was a little dull pain that is pulse-like. All I can think about now is that my friend always gets what she wants. It feels like jealousy, like numb and mad and sad at the same time. It wants me to get what I want sometimes too.

Rhonda was beginning to understand that consideration for herself was important.

After briefly lamenting on canceled plans to meet with friends, Clint said,

It's only a small sad though, because I've set up to do something with them tomorrow, and there's also a kind of a relief and excitement. There is a good chance I will have a good time tomorrow. It feels good, and it's almost like everything inside is clearing up.

Something in him wanted Clint to realize that life has both disappointments and excitement. In fact, during another very brief session, given here in its entirety, Clint imparted, "In the upper abdomen, I notice happiness all about a lot of the things I remember from this week. Those are the kinds of things that bring joy."

Personal Growth Toward Self-assertion or Autonomy

Besides portraying their issues with self-identity, many of the examples in the above section and later sessions point to the movement toward autonomy that these adolescents were making. These sessions are briefly, if at all, addressed in this light in this section. Sessions included are those almost exclusively dealing with personal growth

toward self-assertion. This issue was of equal importance to both the young women and young men.

I'm forgetting something, but I really can't remember like it wants me to (Georgia). Most societies consider the growing acceptance of responsibility as a mark of approaching adulthood within their adolescent members. When these young adults have proven themselves able to recognize and commit to personal obligations, be they effortless or difficult in nature to execute, they have the ability and right to be autonomous. The body seems to want to remind adolescents of these responsibilities and to help reconcile them within their lives, perhaps in the interest of self-growth.

Oren had two sessions in succession based on remembering responsibilities. Both times he began with sensations in his stomach. They also both involved familial duties he had almost forgotten.

Georgia, too, spoke of responsibilities, both familial and personal:

I'm hungry. It's tight, like it's being sucked together, and it's grumpy because I didn't feed it. It's not too happy, and wants to go home now. It wants a sandwich at Togo's before me and Mom do our errands. It's reminding me that we have to go to the pet store.

During another session, Georgia stated, "It feels like I'm forgetting something, but I really can't remember like it wants me to. . . . I forgot to mail my cousin a letter. I just remembered, and it is real important. I'm glad I remembered."

I know that is caused by me, and I think I don't know why (Mae). Their bodies encouraged a number of the participants to recognize and accept responsibility.

Once Mae said, "At the exit light, this person is sitting there looking awful, all distraught and sad. I know that is caused by me, and I think I don't know why." This not knowing may be a reflection of her youth, but she was beginning to become conscious of

her action's effect on the emotional well-being of another, which is a first step in accepting personal responsibility for others as well as oneself.

Rhonda thought she was at the end of one of her sessions as she said, "Even so, you have to go with your friends. You can't ditch them over a guy." But, when she added, "Unfortunately, every part agrees with that," I told her that the part that was saying "unfortunately" did not agree. She responded, "The part that feels it's unfortunate is in my eyes. It means I might not be able to see him again, and it's disappointed. It's telling me that after I wait a month, I might get over being sad." Responsibility for consequences extends to oneself, even if the only feasible action is to recognize one's own state of being.

Adam found a spot in his chest that was a blue hotness. His body relaxed when he heard that it really wanted him to be in the next play. However, a consequence was that he was going to be wearing a hot, blue costume. As he got this message, the heat went away. Finally, he said, "I asked if it was going to be an awesome kind of hot, and my body relaxed as a 'Yes.'" Adam's body was encouraging Adam to choose to act, even though it meant he would need to deal with the fact of being too hot in his costume.

Pete talked about how familiar his toe pain was, and that his body was in a state of frustration because his sore toe restricted everything else he did, "everything I used to do or want to do." Later, Pete owned how foolish he was by ignoring what he knew needed to be done to take care of himself. He also saw how doing so affected so many aspects of his life negatively. Acknowledging responsibility for personal actions that affect both others and oneself was an important focusing result for these teenagers.

I was able to get messages through that were useful in making decisions (Pete).

Becoming adept at solving problems is a major step in becoming autonomous. Focusing enhances this ability. During his first session, Clint's body let him know that it was a source of counsel. It advised him to seek advice from others, and it warned him about the possibility of being humiliated. It was preparing him for managing a difficult problem.

During a later session, he received similar advice:

There's some confusion that feels a little bit weird and, also, uneasiness all throughout. It doesn't know what to do about a problem. It feels like the outcome is important. It just says that I have to consult with someone. I have to talk to him. If I talk to this person, then the problem should get easier. I should talk to this person as soon as possible. The sooner I solve the problem, the sooner I can be happy.

The new thing about this is the sense of urgency of the problem, and that I should consult with him, though not today, tomorrow. I can just relax today.

In addition to telling Mae that she needed to consult with an adult about a conflict she was having with a certain person, her body counseled her on how to choose that adult. After seeing herself in an audience of people who might help her, she stated,

Some people know me and would do it the way I want. Even though I like that others would help me, they wouldn't be the right ones. There are two people I see who really know what is going on, and they could get the point through to this person.

Eve's body also seemed determined that she would learn how to problem solve on her way to becoming autonomous. "I have a knot in my stomach like a rubber band ball. I would rather not sit with it with curiosity. The ball wants me to notice it's there and think about it." In order to be okay being with the rubber ball, Eve was told by the reluctant part that it "wants me to take one step at a time, kind of like taking one rubber band off at a time, but not unraveling it. It feels good that I heard that." After this statement and in the middle of this session, Eve saw a violet rubber band sitting by itself on top of the ball.

It seemed to be an illustration of what it would be like to solve a problem one part at a time. Finally, Eve said,

Frustration and confusion is coming from the ball, and pretty much the whole thing is about my boyfriend. The part that wants to deal with it wants to be free of my boyfriend. It wants me to think it through. It's finished.

Learning to think a problem through rather than taking action to solve the problem seemed to be the point of Eve's Focusing, particularly when it became clear she was not going to be able to solve it at that time.

On his continuing quest to find balance among the activities in which he could be engaged, Adam's inner knower not only advised him to go swimming but also gave him the reason for doing so. "I asked it if I wanted to go swimming in a pool, and it became smaller. It relaxed when I asked if it's because I haven't done a lot lately."

Oren noticed how annoyed he felt in his body with the sound of the air conditioning, "It's like a churning in my stomach, stirring everything around, and it's not stopping, like a fast vibration." He went on to state,

I'm noticing remorse about yesterday. We went skateboarding, and we are learning, but I think I could have done a lot better. I was getting it right and getting it right, and then I just stopped. I don't know what I was doing differently. It's telling me that I could have used my legs a lot more and not tried to get up so quickly.

My stomach feels settled. The air conditioner seems kind of normal now.

Oren received a direct answer to his question about what he could do to learn to skateboard more competently.

Kate was moving with her mother, leaving her brother to make a place for himself in another home. After noticing how she felt about the changes, both the happy, carefree

aspects and the sad ones, she concluded, “It feels helpless. It just wanted me to know. It wants me to tell my mom how I feel.”

Georgia had a problem with one of her teachers and a choice she needed to make. During her Focusing, she found three parts of herself who had opinions and feelings about the problem. The first expressed itself thus,

I am seeing an eagle soaring. Sometimes I feel like I could soar away from my teacher. . . . I’m really mad at her. She’s been really, really rude. I want to leave the school because I’ve been with her for 7 years now, and she really bugs me.

Georgia then stated the case for the second part, “It’s also scared and doesn’t want to leave because it’s afraid of other schools. It’s hard to be with that scared part. It wants me to stay.” (Georgia was beginning to recognize individual parts.) Finally, what I believe is her inner mediator appeared:

In my heart, it is kind of like it doesn’t know what to do. It’s just saying part of it really wants to stay, but the part that wants to leave has been there so long it’s almost as if it might be the right thing to do. But it is also saying, “Just gut it out, because you only have one more year.” Because it’s my graduation year, it’s going to be the best year. But still, if I got a new teacher, it wouldn’t be so bad. Even the old teacher is okay.

During the next session, Georgia said, “It’s the three parts again, but the part that didn’t know what to do decided to go with the scared part and just stick it out. They left. That’s all my body wanted me to know.” Her body had taken her from her feelings and the attendant thoughts to a satisfactory conclusion to her problem.

Kate, Mae, and Rhonda were also told to stick it out. Kate said,

It is like a clumpy ball in my throat, a bit of burning acid. It’s due to stress and pressure. School and teachers and the amount of homework are the problem. Only summer vacation can take care of the stress and pressure.

She came to know that she must wait 2 weeks for school to end. In Mae’s case, she felt “like it is telling me ‘just wait’ and then ‘that’s enough. You really don’t know what’s

going to happen.” Shortly thereafter, she said, “I am getting a sense that now that it has told me this one thing, that’s as much as it wants me to deal with during this time.” For Rhonda, there were two parts. One drew her toward looking at her problems, and the other did not want her to do so. Eventually, the first gave up and her body felt relief because she could “just sit down and rest.” Sometimes the recognition that there were no immediate solutions for a problem was all that was needed to come to completion.

Like Georgia, Pete also had a controversy with one of his teachers and was thrown out of the classroom. Because of that and some other disciplinary practices of this teacher, he wanted to do something “to try to change it.” While looking at his hand, Pete said,

What is it? What else did he say I could do yesterday? It’s kind of going back and forth, between my body and my brain. He gave us something yesterday. What was that? He gave us the review sheet. It was something I wanted to do, a piece of paper. Something we could get back to him on Monday.

That’s it! He gave a piece of paper that said any suggestions we had we should give to him. About what he should do different. That’s why I want to do it. I feel relieved, clear inside. Thank you, body. It’s like the body said, “Finally.”

Afterward, Pete said, “I completely forgot about it, even though I had written it on my hand. That’s why I was looking at my hand.” He wanted to declare his opinion. His body helped him remember how to go about it. As Pete stated in his final session, “I was able to get messages through that were useful in making decisions.”

I am screaming at the top of my lungs, “Stop!” (Eve). In all the above sessions, in which adolescents’ bodies were enabling and encouraging them to be autonomous, the adolescents displayed no evident hesitancy in believing that they could carry through with their plans once they were prepared. They did not talk about the actual act of being

self-assertive. The substance of major fragments of the sessions below was the actual expression of their self-assertion or of their intention to be self-assertive.

Rhonda learned she had a part that wanted her to defend herself in the face of disloyalty and abandonment. “There’s like a full, not empty, space. It’s anticipating. It wants Anthony to come with me instead of Travis. Travis and Scott might go off and leave me. It would get satisfaction if Anthony came.” Her Focusing was prompting her to honor her own worth and to remember to value herself by acting on her own behalf.

I consider the two sessions following the time I expressed my anger about Eve’s and Mae’s interference with each other’s Focusing an expression of their move toward autonomy. Eve’s body outright refused to focus on anything but its determination to not focus as it was not feeling safe. Mae was a bit more abstruse when she said, “A black purply-gray nothing all over. There is nothing my body wants to tell me right now, and I don’t know why. I usually get something.” Their bodies were rebelling and protecting against my anger even if their minds were not ready or willing to do the same.

During one of Eve’s early sessions, it seemed, at first, that she was opening to possible choices for her future professional life. However, the scene quickly converted to a large crowd, cheering her on, telling her to

go this way, go this way, go this way. I am feeling myself getting frustrated because I don’t know which way to go. I am seeing myself get really mad, and I am screaming at the top of my lungs, “Stop!”

All the cameraman and crowd goes away. By myself, I relax with the doors and windows open. I am going outside on the balcony, taking a deep breath, letting the wind pour over me, smiling with relief.

Eve had to be strong in her determination to ward off all the voices before she could determine, for and by herself, her future.

Mae was given an example of what being assertive could look like:

In my chest, where my heart is, I am seeing a bouncy ball rolling fast down the street, like it is going somewhere on its own even though it is just a ball. . . It just wants to do its own thing, bouncing. If someone is watching, it feels like it can't do what it wants.

It stopped on a tile floor. I feel like I should pick it up, but then I don't know if it would be aggravated with that or if it is all right to pick it up. It feels like I should do what I feel like doing, pick it up. Now it is just floating and rotating with that light, above my palm. [Approval of her doing what she wanted?]

It wants to be by itself, with me, but not with me. Ohh! There are different feelings, like a tingle and a click. It's not in a rude way, like go away, but like something I can understand, even though it's a ball. It wants me to just let it alone, do what I'd been doing, and let it alone in my pocket.

Mae was given a more direct message during another session. "I'm feeling something like a knot in my stomach. It's not big, but seems like it's weighting me down. I'm getting a picture of a closed, locked box. It might be something that is holding me back." After discovering that the box is not completely locked to her, Mae then came to realize that the person who may have been "holding her back" was not the one responsible for all her decisions. She was beginning to realize that it was up to her to assume more and more of that power. "In my stomach, I'm seeing everything but am getting a sense of encouragement. Like I could leave, even though it would be difficult." Another day, Mae also judged whether her relationship with herself was more important than a smooth relationship with another. "I'm getting a spinning penny landing heads up on my collar bone. It wants me to see Eminem again because I like him, and in spite of my boyfriend being jealous. . . . It's like having something bright in my path."

When confronted with an audience of people who thought they knew what was best for Mae and wanted to go ahead and do it for her, she said, "And I say, 'No, no, you have to let me know [first]. So just wait [so I can choose].'"

Transpersonal Psychology

The previous class, *Personal Growth*, includes the examples of focusing sessions that conform to psychology as it is commonly defined, that is, pertaining to the ego and its development. Under this class, *Transpersonal Psychology*, I have included two subclasses: (a) Inner Relationships and (b) Transformative Moments. As presented in the Literature Review, Focusing is considered a transpersonal process based partially on its inherent promotion of relations with one's inner self which can lead to an understanding of self and Self. On occasion, a focuser may be directed to an experience of profound compassion or an inner place of peace.

Inner Relationships

Establishing an inner relationship is a natural outcome of Focusing and can be an elemental portal into awareness of one's transpersonal Self. This awareness manifests through transformative experiences that do occur during Focusing. All the adolescent participants occasionally spent part of their focusing sessions establishing an inner relationship, usually relatively easily but sometimes with difficulty. The latter was especially true for Ike, for whom becoming open to and compassionate with his inner self was the preeminent theme of his Focusing.

I can't really hold on to anything (Ike). Ike spent seven of his sessions shadow dancing with his body, attempting to find a comfortable way to be in relationship with himself. He would move toward and then away from awareness of the sensations he was being guided to receive by both myself and his own inner self.

My body feels as if you're looking up at the sky, and there's all these stars and all these moving things. It's like they're little glimmers of things, a flick here and a swivel there. I can't really hold on to anything.

Another time, Ike said,

Okay, I felt a couple of feelings, but I didn't really stay in them on purpose, because I didn't want them to go away. It was kind of a thin layer on the skin of my stomach, there but not really there. It was more than nothing but less than most things.

At one point in his Focusing, Ike expressed a feeling inside like a shield that was trying to block his feelings. At another time, he got a confirmation that he was not able to move on from the felt sense to other topics and themes because he "was not taking Focusing seriously." Once, he expressed guilt because he did not complete his session with any important feelings, "only minor ones." Besides the shield and other blocks mentioned, he stated,

I have a lot of memories of feelings in my throat. Kind of like I am sad, and I'm holding something back. I want to cry, and I don't want to. I feel like something locked in my whole entire throat is trying to leap out of my mouth, and it is pressuring all over my throat. Yeah, there is a lot of pressure to keep the crying part from crying.

Ike was torn between staying with the painful feelings his inner self was bringing forth and wanting to stay away from them. These messages seemed to explain the dance. Even in this dance, Ike's body was teaching him how to understand and relate to his inner self.

Only twice in the 10 times Ike focused was he able to move past this challenge to a theme other than the challenge. Endeavoring to be present to and for himself took precedence. At the close of one session, Ike said, "When I said no to going on, I kind of felt a weight on my shoulder, like that pleasant thing. The lighter feeling was like, 'Yes, it is time to finish.'" Ike often expressed feeling something pleasant, a kind of encouraging and inviting boon, during the session or when a session neared completion. Other than Ike, the participants most often seemed to easily move into an inner relationship with themselves and to open to the insights their bodies were imparting.

I can't find anything. It's a white, white flat nothing (Rhonda). Usually, the felt senses were the opening for movement from the unconscious to the conscious. The sessions that began with a felt sense of a type of nothing and then proceeded to an awareness are compiled under this theme. For example, Rhonda went from her thoughts about a white nothing, to snow at Christmas, to remembering a vacation with a favorite cousin, and then to a promise she had made to her cousin that she had not yet kept. Those sessions that began with an immediate emotion, thought, or other overt meaning are not included under this theme. Words in italics are meant to draw the reader's attention to the association of the earliest awareness to an eventual understanding of the body's message.

Kate began her first session noticing a "presence is missing" and then realizing there was someone she missed, though she did not know who. Something inside Kate she called "it" became curious about how all of this was connected, which led to her realizing that she was missing a friend who had become involved with a boy and who was "no longer a presence" in her life. Kate ended the session by saying, "I'm okay now. I didn't know I felt that way." She had been crying slightly.

During Ike's first session, he stated,

I'm not really feeling anything, kind of like a space that's hollow, like literally a clear nothing that's not really there. In my stomach and chest is a strong nothing. It's a big strong nothing blocking everything else, a feeling inside.

At this point, Ike was able to get his first message from his body. He stated, "I said, 'Is it *blocking minor feelings?*' I kind of feel like my chest is getting lighter and slightly going up like it does when you take a breath. It feels like a yes."

Pete's ninth session began by him saying, "There is a nothing that's empty, like a black hole or cave emptiness. The emptiness is in my head like a headache around my

right eye.” From this point, he went on to say that the pain came from not getting enough sleep, and that was caused by his waking night after night after having a recurring dream. The dream left him feeling angry and scared in his head. While focusing on the dream, Pete related,

I don't know what gets that part so scared, but I remember I wake up because it felt like I was falling, had fallen. I was scared because I would eventually hit bottom, but I woke up before I did. It was scary because I didn't know where the bottom was, maybe a long ways down or maybe not even there.

The scared part feels a little bit better. It's saying it's afraid that I would never hit bottom, or that I would get hurt if I did. There is nothing else.

Even though Pete did not continue with this topic to a complete understanding of his fear and an effective solution, the session is an excellent example of movement from the unconscious to the conscious. It continued the inner self-examination that the dream had begun.

It feels helpless. It just wanted me to know (Kate). As in the instances of both Pete and Adam above, often a session ended with no solution to a problem but with a sense of completion coming entirely from the act of being present to the body, letting be, and being with. This occurred during 25 of the 84 transcribable focusing sessions and at least once for every participant. There were, however, a number of sessions during which the participants were specifically told that their being present and listening was exactly what was sought.

During a time of upheaval, Kate focused on the feelings engendered by each of the events she was experiencing or believed she was going to be experiencing. After she expressed how helpless she felt, she said, “It just wanted me to know.” Similarly, Oren became aware of how badly his hands were hurting from misuse of a rope the day before.

He stated, "I think they just wanted me to know how they hurt." Pete began a session with a "sharp hurt" in his rib. He focused on the resonance of truth or nontruth regarding a variety of possible causes for the pain. He eventually found the correct one. Finally, he stated, "There is nothing I can do about it, but it feels better to know what it is about." At one time, during a session of Adam's, I was overguiding, interfering with the natural focusing process, and inadvertently causing a small red pain to disappear. Adam stated, "My body relaxed when I got that it didn't want to answer." Later, after the pain returned, Adam asked "whether it just wants me to be with it, with no interference?" He finally concluded, "It doesn't have to answer anything if it doesn't want to. It doesn't have to be there if it doesn't want to. And is that what it wants me to know? I got a yeah answer."

In her incubated session, Mae told of a rock and a bird. The bird wanted to go fly with its friends. The heavy rock sat on the bird, insisting on gaining its attention "even though it doesn't know what it wants." She finished by saying, "I think they probably equally want attention."

Clint was seeing an image that was not doing anything, but it looked like it was angry. "It's near the stomach, and it just got smaller. It wants to be noticed, and it keeps getting smaller." Another time, he stated, "There's an all over exhaustion. It seemed to just want me to know I was exhausted. Now there's a dark and silent relaxed feeling that feels good." Being heard was important to Clint. In his incubated final session, he gave his opinion about Focusing. "All over, it was happy with the Focusing. It also says Focusing was refreshing. It felt good to be listened to."

It feels good that I learned how to accept what my body is saying (Oren). The participating adolescents never indicated that they were skeptical that the experiences

they were having while focusing were directly from their bodies. They also indicated that they were finding truths about themselves and guidance for themselves. The following fragments are those occasions when they spoke specifically about their willingness to look toward their inner selves for information and direction.

Besides the theme statement for this section, Oren also stated during his incubated final session, “On the question of how my body feels about Focusing, it’s kind of saying that it feels good that I learned how to do it, because now I can do it whenever I need to see what is going on. And that’s it.”

Even though Ike had difficulty moving through his feelings, he became very good at following his inner direction when it indicated it was time to quit the session:

Basically, it was kind of saying, “Okay, I’m done with this feeling. I can move on.” I do feel a very mild pleasantness, kind of like a residue. I guess I’m kind of feeling good because I can tell when my body feels when it’s done.

Pete came to a conclusion about his inner knower after becoming aware of teeth pain caused by braces.

I don’t know why just paying attention makes it hurt. There is something more than just bringing the hurt to my attention. It is because I am paying attention, it can tell me something more.

There is a part that wants me to know there is a knowing part of me. Yeah, that is it! That’s what it wants me to know. It is a good feeling that I know there is something that does know what I don’t know.

It feels right just to be with my whole body while it’s happy (Clint). Whereas Clint expressed a direct connection with his body, Mae did so on a subtle level. This was particularly interesting because it occurred during her incubated final session, in which she talked of how she and her friend were giggling watching children playing in a backyard. The session ended with an expression of sadness about how the whole sense of

being present was ending. It was never clear that Mae understood how this was related to what her body wanted to express about Focusing. Other participants were guided to stay with the relaxed and happy feelings that often came to them at the end of a session, but they gave no direct or indirect comment about whether doing this affected them positively.

Transformative Moments

A small collection of moments during the adolescents' Focusing seemed transformative in their expression of a move toward mature compassion, love, joy, and peace. Kate first stated that she had a scared feeling about one of her friends, though she did not know what caused it. She then spent time discovering how worried she was about a friend who had stated she would consider suicide if she did not know that she could leave home soon. She ended the session with an exemplary statement of love and compassion: "My body just wants me to be there for her to make sure she's okay."

Clint began by noting a "sick feeling of depression" in his stomach. It let him know that it wanted to be alone and to be quiet. After a period of silence, he said, "There is nothing else it wants me to know. The feelings went away. It's kind of relaxed in a way I've never felt before." He had found peace within.

Following is Pete's entire session.

There is a nothing, like an empty room painted black, very quiet and still. Inside me and all around me it feels calm and relaxed. It is a good feeling. My life is okay right now just the way it is.

Pete received a similar message during another of his focusing experiences.

It's like everything, located everywhere, feels good. Every word I think of fits. Joy! Relief! Happiness! I don't know why it is this way. I just can't place it.

It's like perfection. There is nothing wrong. Everything's perfect. A sense of relief is part of it. A sense of happiness is part of it. It feels great.

When it seemed that Adam had completed one of his sessions, he asked, "Now what do I do?" I answered, "Whatever you want," thinking he was through with Focusing. To my surprise, he continued on with his eyes closed.

It's sort of like at the back of my stomach, and it's like when you're out in the middle of the forest all by yourself. There are birds chirping, and it has a calming effect, and it's also very relaxing.

When I asked, "Is it true that I can do whatever I want to do here in the forest," my body relaxed. It told me I can come here any time I want. I don't really have to do anything special to get there. Just sort of go there. It's a place for going to and just relaxing.

When I asked if he had known previously he had that place of inner sanctuary, Adam answered, "No."

Summarization Tables of Contexts and Themes

Table 6 summarizes the number of participants and the number of times for each participant that their Focusing centered on certain contexts. The contexts are those found in the Context Content Analyses section as the primary classifications. Table 7 summarizes themes in a manner similar to that in which Table 6 does contexts. However, the subclasses are listed first followed by the themes that are included under them in the text. The themes for the subclass Transformative Moments are collated under the subclass title.

Table 6

Context Content Analyses Summary

| | Occurrences for each participant ^a | | | | | | | | | | Subtotal | % of total |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|------------|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R | | |
| Friends | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 25 | 27 |
| Fun | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 18 |
| Family | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 11 |
| Sports | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 9 |
| Physical Body | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| Focusing ^b | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 13 |
| Future Aspirations | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Positive Mental State | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | 91 | |

Note. The number of contexts for each participant may be more or less than 10 because sometimes there was more than one context presented during a focusing session. Also, some sessions were not transcribable.

^aParticipants are designated by the first letter of their names: A (Adam), C (Clint), E (Eve), G (Georgia), I (Ike), K (Kate), M (Mae), O (Oren), P (Pete), R (Rhonda). ^bNot included are responses to the incubated 10th session's question, What does your body want to express about Focusing?

Table 7

Thematic Content Analyses Summary

| | Occurrences per participant ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | C | E | G | I | K | M | O | P | R |
| Subclass: Personal growth toward self-identity | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| I'm analyzing, sorting, and throwing it this way or that | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I don't really need to worry, because I have the base | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Those are the kinds of things that bring joy | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Subclass: Personal growth toward self-assertion | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| I'm forgetting something, but I really can't remember like it wants me to | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| I know that is caused by me, and I think I don't know why | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| I was able to get messages through that were useful in making decisions | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I am screaming at the top of my lungs, "Stop!" | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Subclass: Inner relationships | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| I can't really hold on to anything | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I can't find anything | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| It just wanted me to know | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| I learned how to accept what my body is saying | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| It feels right to be with my body while it's happy | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Subclass: Transformative moments ^b | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Note. The number of themes for each participant may be more or less than 10 because sometimes there was more than one theme presented during a focusing session. Also, some sessions were not transcribable.

^aParticipants are designated by the first letter of their names: A (Adam), C (Clint), E (Eve), G (Georgia), I (Ike), K (Kate), M (Mae), O (Oren), P (Pete), R (Rhonda). ^bThe examples for the subclass *Transformative Moments* are consolidated.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This research was not about making conclusions on the effect of Focusing on personality development, self-esteem, or actions in the classroom, home, or other environments, as did Barba (1984) and Gardner (1995). It was primarily a study of the focusing process for young adolescents and of the themes and content of their Focusing. Even though the adolescents' lives centered on their involvement with school, home, friends, and activities, they were all capable of redirecting their awareness inward. It seemed to be a natural process for them. Focusing allowed them to make that shift from the external to the internal. At first, Adam noticed nothing. He found the place above his stomach where the nothing resided and eventually was able to describe that nothing as empty like a hole. Ike stated he wanted to feel his feelings before looking for them but found that was not working. After he allowed himself time to look inside, he discovered stress at the end of his throat. With help from the coaching or guiding that Focusing entails, the participants were able to develop a vocabulary that enabled them to describe their internal experiences.

Adults report on "upset" emotion. To go beneath that upset to a deeper level of experience, that kinesthetic, visual, auditory, and more subtle level, is difficult for them as they do not easily have the words. This may be due to acculturation away from their bodies and emotions and the language needed to describe both. My personal therapist, Errol Schubot, uses the basic practice of Focusing in much of his process work with clients, thus enabling their minds to reconnect with their inner sources of knowing and emotions.

With help from the coaching or guiding that Focusing sometimes entails, the young participants were able to develop a vocabulary that enabled them to describe their

internal experiences. Children are not taught those words. There is no schooling for the vocabulary that describes inner experiences. Focusing created the context in which these adolescents began to learn the skills of using language to express what was happening inside. As they practiced, they became more confident and proficient in the language they had found for themselves. “Something inside bouncing like Ping-Pong balls” and the “warm and fuzzy tingling is overwhelming” are just two of the multitude of expressions the participants experimented with to describe their inner feelings. Their bodies encouraged this practice. Adam said, “It hit against the side of my stomach like a loud bump, confirming my description, not once but twice.”

There were many problematic life circumstances for the teenagers—not doing as well as they wanted to do in school or in sports, not having the friends they wanted, not agreeing with adults, not finding fairness in consequences—for which there were no immediate solutions. Yet, through being with themselves in a focusing way, they were led to a state of equilibrium and a tacit ability to cope with their problems more effectively. They gave themselves space to be with what was true inside. The participants reported many instances of a felt shift from a form of negative experience to one of relief or other positive state. Sometimes the shift came entirely from knowing their personal truth, without even discovering an answer to a problem. At other times, it came just from their being attentive to what was present. The young men and women found appreciation for their lives and for themselves. Clint reflected on the things in his life that brought him joy. Pete liked knowing there was a wise inner self that could help him understand himself and find solutions to problems. Eve rejoiced in the encouragement she was

getting from her body to go out and enjoy life. Ike was elated that no matter what occurred in his outer world, inside he was okay.

Although the purpose of the research was not to verify that Focusing was useful as a practical application toward the furtherance of the individual growth of the participants, which Frager (1989) stated was a concern of transpersonal psychology, the results of the research certainly depict Focusing as an effective tool for discovering inner attitudes, concerns, and opinions. Further, one of the primary goals of Focusing is to foster that naturalistic change that emerges from being with what is inside in an attentive, persistent way. After a number of sessions, Rhonda came to know that it was important for her to take care of her own needs as well as those of her friends. She changed her choice of companion in order to keep herself from the potential of being abandoned. She retreated from her peers' conflicts into an internal place of safety. These were defense mechanisms. Whether they are mature or childish would have to be the subject of another study. I believe they were at least efforts toward maturity. Oren became confident that he could convincingly state to his mother his case about his choice of a sports league. Kate concluded that staying present and open to hearing her friends' troubles was her optimal supportive path. It was as if Kate's body was declaring that what Kate was doing for herself was the most beneficial thing she could do for her friend. This last is interesting because it may have been another form of the numerous times the adolescents' bodies encouraged them to be present and open to themselves. If Kate had been a therapist, her conclusions could be interpreted as a projection or as countertransference. These internal movements indicated that natural changes were occurring. Whether they were lasting could be a topic for another research project.

The first four of the five identity elements described by Erikson (1968) were definitely featured in the adolescents' Focusing. He believed that adolescents needed to trust in themselves and others, exercise free will, explore a wide range of creative ideas for their futures, and feel satisfied with their own abilities and uniqueness. The summarizations in the Results chapter support the idea that these needs were being discovered and met through Focusing. Malmquist's (1985) stance that the adolescent's first function is to test reality was also validated. Most of the participants' sensations, attitudes, and stories led to discoveries about personal truths. However, on occasion, the participants were inwardly directed to an action that exemplified the implementation of these truths. When participants did undertake the prescribed action between sessions and then focused on the results, they discovered a form of satisfaction about what had resulted. As Clint stated, "There is a sense of relief and happiness because I did what it advised me to do."

The fifth of Erikson's (1968) elements includes the need for both sexual and ethnic identity. Except for the prevalence of issues about boyfriends for 3 of the female participants, and the emphasis on sports for 3 of the males, there were no obviously feminine or masculine issues that arose. Even the boyfriend and sports contexts were thematically more relevant to other of Erikson's elements. There was a lack of any emphasis on ethnic identity, even though 3 participants are members of either racial or religious minorities. Erikson qualified this last element by stating it appeared in the "face of new doubt." During their Focusing, the participants revealed no doubt about their sexual or ethnic identities. Perhaps this was due to their friendships being based in the

Caucasian, Christian majority, or perhaps this element is more associated with older adolescents.

Erikson (1968) described adolescents as isolates coming together in subcultural groups. Through their Focusing, it became obvious that all of the participants belonged or wanted to belong to a group of their peers. Rhonda focused on the many struggles she had with her friends. Oren and Kate worried that as they moved into high school they would not be able to make friends. Georgia and Pete wanted to find a means to rescue their friends from an abusive teacher. Ike mourned the loss of a friendship. Clint regretted the absence of his friends during summer vacation. Adam discovered a desire to become part of activities that had the potential for developing friendships. Eve and Mae were best friends and markedly dependent on one another.

Winnicott (1965b), in his collected works, explained teenage isolation as the wish by the adolescent not to be found before being there to be found. “The preservation of personal isolation is part of the search for identity, and for the establishment of a personal technique for communicating which does not lead to violation of the central self” (p. 190). Winnicott stated that adolescents abhor the idea of counseling. Focusing is closely linked to process therapy and is in many instances a viable substitute when used by a knowledgeable focuser and guide. The practice of Focusing is inherently tailor-made for an isolate experience whether it occurs with or without a guiding witness. All but Ike seemed very comfortable in this experience, and Ike might have been uncomfortable because of being witnessed and not because of Focusing itself. He spoke of other times when he was alone with deep feelings as if those times were natural occurrences.

None of the participating adolescents spoke of a personal relationship with God or Spirit, which is essentially non-isolating. In view of the number of researchers claiming that children can have a strong relationship with Spirit and my own experience of God in my youth, this was a disappointing outcome. However, I had focused for 8 years before my Focusing specifically directed me toward a step in my spiritual practice. Also, Pete did discover a wise inner-knower, even though he did not associate this with an idea of God. Finally, those times when sessions ended with peace, joy, and calm were similar to the descriptions of the states spiritual beings describe when they speak of unity.

In an effort to become autonomous, the adolescents were distancing themselves from their parents. They tended to gravitate toward peer groups for a measure of their identification. However, Focusing offers a way for people, especially these adolescents who were just establishing an autonomous identity, to expand and elucidate their ideas about themselves from an internal point of view and with new language for intracommunication. The tables illustrate a variety of examples of how the adolescents in this study experimented with language in order to articulate their internal sensings.

The participants did constructive work. From under that which Winnicott (1986a) called a normal manifestation of confusion and doubt emerged an ability to discard maladaptive childhood defense mechanisms and fears and an enhanced clarity about how to bring their actions into alignment with their beliefs and needs. The participants discovered new priorities by sorting through the old beliefs they held about what was important to them. (Rhonda came to accept that she needed to value herself as much as she valued her friendships. Kate realized that she needed to equitably balance her time spent on school activities with that spent with family and friends.) They determined those

actions that were open to them and would lead to desirable and/or pleasurable ends. (Eve chose to act more aggressively in establishing friendships. Adam decided on his best options for having fun. Georgia had contemplated changing schools in order to avoid a teacher with whom she was in conflict. After processing with three internal parts, she decided to remain in her current classroom and graduate with her classmates as she desired to do.) They affirmed their strengths and options. (Clint and Mae decided to ask an adult for help in solving their problems instead of neglecting them. Ike recognized his inherent worth as a basketball player and team member.) They took responsibility for the effects of their actions or inactions. (Oren remembered chores. Pete recognized his culpability in his lack of self-care.) The participants did this work without referring to how they were viewed by others but by searching inwardly.

The participants creatively found new meaning and depth as they examined their concepts of themselves. For instance, Mae realized that although the stage work she had done as a pageant contestant was over, it retained importance from its value as a stepping stone to the future she envisioned. Focusing sessions gave the adolescents the time they needed to do this self-exploration with the added advantage of it being through their bodies' use of creative metaphors and other of Piaget's concepts of formal operations (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958) and not just through their minds, when mind is defined as a function of the brain and not of the entire body and its energy field.

It appeared that one of the new concepts of themselves the participants were engaged in developing involved the idea of justice for both themselves and others. All but 2 of the participants exhibited concern with this concept at Kohlberg's Conventional Level II stage of moral development, which was the level in which he placed most young

adolescents. Only 1 of the participants seemed primarily involved in Stage 3, which concerns itself with relationships and interpersonal conformity. The other 7 participants seemed to be present in Stage 4 and concerned with social systems and conscience. At the same time, they were beginning to question the merit of maintaining social order for its own sake, as evidenced by the participants' questioning of the so-called right actions of adults in their lives who represented societal mores. The most distinct examples of this questioning were Oren's disillusionment with his coach because of the unfair choices the coach made when selecting members of an all-stars team, Ike's recognition that singling out one person's mistakes as the cause of a game loss was hypocritical, and Pete's determination to influence his teacher's treatment of his fellow students. Given the participants' ages, it seems that this questioning would be a natural extension of, and motivated by, their movement toward autonomy.

On the other hand, a few of the participants seemed to be questing for ways to be autonomous without separating themselves from their friends and family. Mae wanted to make her own decisions, but she also realized it would be difficult to leave her parent. She elected to not do anything for awhile. On another occasion, she crafted a plan to include her friend in her future. Oren felt remorse when he remembered his neglected duties, which segued into a need not to anger his father. It may be that the incidents reported during the participants' Focusing did not necessarily provide a sufficient amount of information to determine where the adolescents were developmentally. Instead, they may have reflected situational dynamics. Without further research, it is difficult to generalize with a high degree of certainty.

Unlike Kohlberg's idea of Stage 5, the participants seemed to come to know that their sense of justice was relative to and formulated by their personal experiences and not necessarily with reference to any group of which they were a member. Even the youngest female participant, who was struggling with what Gilligan (1993) described as the dilemma of helping others at the expense of harming oneself, and Wade (1996) described as the necessity to realize that love cannot resolve every problem, began to sever herself from the detrimental requirements (involvement with forms of violence) for relationship within her sphere of friends. She acknowledged that her personal sense of justice demanded equal opportunities for everyone rather than for only the dominant. Perhaps healthy adolescent groups are formed by individuals who come together because they are of like minds, and unhealthy groups are formed to provide membership, which detrimentally cultivates like minds. Focusing may help direct young people toward healthy groups.

All of the males in this study readily fit Wade's (1996) description of internally driven, achievement-oriented individuals. Although the idea that exploitation is acceptable within limits was not a noticeably common occurrence, one time Oren did debate with his mother the value of practicing with a team in which rules and safety were not considered particularly critical. He concluded that what he would learn was more important than what it would entail to learn it. None of the other young males exhibited interest in possible avenues of exploitation, limited or otherwise. Of the females, 1 seemed to fit into Wade's achievement category. One, the youngest, was taking steps to move beyond the conformist category and, most likely, into Wade's Affiliative stage. The

other 3 females were harder to place and were probably shifting between Wade's Affiliate and Achievement stages.

Fragar (1989) described various forms of conscious states. Only once did a participant explore dreaming, one of those states, even though another participant indicated an interest in a dream during a session that was thereafter prematurely aborted. The data gave no definitive evidence that these adolescents experienced other types of altered states while focusing or at other times. However, if spirituality includes the concept of inner places and feelings of peace and joy, the data suggest that teenage focusers are capable of these. They can occasionally, and at least briefly, recognize those places and qualities in themselves. They can encounter and perhaps embrace the peace and joy of their spiritual natures, as did Adam in his forest and Pete in his black room.

Although the participants were young adolescents in early stages of puberty, and, over time, they did display an array of moods and problems, it was not obvious whether the number of these features was exacerbated by physical or environmental influences attributable to their age, such as was hypothesized by Buchanan et al. (1992). Focusing promotes the emergence of emotions in almost all focusers. In my opinion, there was no more emotional expression than I have observed in the Focusing of other ages, including adults. Only 1 of the participants did not convey an emotion while Focusing and 1 out of 10 focusers may be an average number of beginning focusers who do not relate an emotion while Focusing. Future research including a very large number of focusing participants could provide this kind of information. No such research has been found in the current literature. Even the 1 participant who did not express having felt an emotion may have eventually done so had he been focusing over a longer period of time.

The young adolescent participants' personal experiences of Focusing clearly fell into Wilber's (1995) first domain, which he defined as the subjective or interior-individual, and which he claimed was the fundamental starting point of transpersonal psychology. From the first entry points into their bodies, through their immediate lived movements, to their final disclosures, physically, emotionally, and/or mentally, the participants uncovered themselves from an interior perspective. This perspective may have been affected by exterior influences, but, if so, they had been completely integrated by the participants, such that all experiences flowed through and from an internal creative source.

Wilber's (1995) first domain includes consciousness, introspection, and interpretation. The participants' bodies seemed to encourage them toward introspection. Clint asserted, "Now there is a sense of curiosity spread through the whole middle area. It wants to know what happens now." A number of times, some of the participants were able to disidentify from their inner experiences and to serve as an interpretative witness to their inner self, as demonstrated when they changed from "I" to "it" statements. Less often, but on several occasions, the participants displayed a remarkable ability for brief, but profound, introspection. It was like a bud blossoming when Mae opened her eyes and exclaimed that it was not her parent that needed to let go, but she herself who must become responsible for her own actions. It was as if a light switched on when Ike owned that the fear inside was an expression of his own fear of portraying himself. When not focusing, the participants had little patience for either interpretation or introspection. Their body language and their words told of their keen desire to reenter their outer worlds. After all, teenage years for most young persons are a very outer-directed time involving performance and appearance and popularity.

Limitations and Delimitations

My referrals for 9 of the participants ultimately came from neighbors and friends, parents or grandparents of the participants, and from previously qualified participants. Each of these adults and participants knew my criteria before they gave me their recommendations. Of the 10 participants, I knew 3 personally, though secondary to my relationship with their parents. Oren and Pete are sons of friends of my daughter. Georgia is the daughter of a fellow student at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. She dropped from the study after five sessions, although she did give permission to have those sessions included in the research. Assessing the effect of recruiting participants through personal sources was not possible. The focusing style and reticence or enthusiasm of the participants did not seem related to their degree of connection to me, with the possible exception of Ike. Ike, alone, was referred to me through an impersonal source. His lack of any previous contact with me or anyone I knew may have accounted for some of his difficulties in establishing an inner relationship in my presence. However, my sense was that not knowing me actually gave him more confidence in the confidentiality of the study.

One delimiting factor was the intention to exclude adolescents who had obvious psychological and social problems. This was decided in order to limit the possibility of dysfunctional behaviors affecting the research procedure and to protect such children from conceivable negative effects of Focusing under these circumstances. However, Focusing was found to positively influence the behavior of a fire-setting child (Barba, 1984). Further research might determine the feasibility and desirability of guided focusing for these adolescents as well as provide important comparative data.

Second, those who followed a strong religious path were excluded by their parents even before a preinterview. These parents only knew of me through their child, whom I had met after presenting my proposal at their high school. Not having a personal acquaintance with me may have been as much of an influence on their decision to exclude their child from this research as any reluctance the parents had because of proclaimed religious influences.

I did not screen participating adolescents for their language expression abilities other than to note their general capabilities. Personality factors were not considered. The adolescents' beliefs and attitudes about transpersonal phenomena were not explored, and any previous transpersonal experiences were not ascertained. Maturity of sexual development was not critically assessed and was not weighted, as there were no obvious large degrees of differences between the participants in this matter. Reasons why some adolescents volunteered for this study and others did not were not considered.

I did not assess the participants for their focusing abilities. Although it became obvious that they utilized different styles and required more or less guiding, these factors did not significantly affect their ability to go within and become aware of their inner sensations. Even the single participant who had a difficult time establishing a trusting and open relationship with himself pursued this relationship through a strong focusing perspective.

I aimed for and achieved an even number of males and females. Most of the participants were 13 or 14 years of age with the exceptions being two 15-year-old boys. I also limited the numbers to a maximum of 10 participants. These factors might or might not have inhibited generalities in the conclusions. Braud (1998) stated that, "the

researcher expects to be able to find indications of these [general, universal] laws in any and all research participants—in small, purposive samples as well as in large, random ones” (p. 56).

Although the locations and times chosen by the participants were not always the same even for an individual participant, this did not affect the outcome of most of the sessions in any obvious manner. The exceptions were the first four sessions of 2 participants who were friends and wanted to focus in each other’s presence. When it became clear that this was distracting for them, and more importantly, influenced the subject matter of their Focusing, I stopped this practice. They focused separately after their fourth sessions, as explained further in the Results chapter.

I believe that Focusing is beneficial in all relationships, both intrapersonal and interpersonal. Although this belief may have influenced the study, my personal focusing sessions, prior to those I guided for each session with a participant, should have, and I think essentially did, eliminate any of my own biases. This was affirmed in the review of my work by my peer. Focusing is an ideal process to use when one is interested in learning about people’s reactions and experiences without biasing the outcome. (See Appendix H for researcher’s qualifications to guide.) The guide’s aim is to avoid asking leading questions or otherwise influencing the direction of the course of the session. Facilitation for Focusing is intrinsically nondirective. It simply invites the person’s awareness to what he or she is experiencing in each moment and gives open-ended suggestions for eliciting each next step.

Possibly, the principal limitation of this research study was the lack of a tool for assessing the effect of Focusing on the participants’ everyday lives. Before the research

began, a decision was made to not perform any type of pretest and posttest to determine any changes over the period of the focusing sessions in the participants' attitudes and assumptions about themselves in regard to their inner beliefs and goals concerning who they were and what they were doing. This decision was based on my negative biases about testing children, which had blocked formulating the method for this research early in the development phase. Therefore, conclusions about how Focusing altered internal self-regard and everyday experiences for the participants are not possible. They can be only speculative. Oren's mother did once relate a time, a year after his focusing sessions, when he had a problem and she reminded him that he could go inside and find the answer, and he did.

Conclusions

When the young adolescents volunteered to be members of this research team, they precipitated a personal calling to awareness. The internal awareness they quickly found and came to expect, through the process of Focusing, unfolded a path, which invited them to journey into relationship with that which was deeper than they had contacted and comprehended heretofore. Focusing also fostered their discovery of a language that enabled them to give meaning to the bodily signals that emerged as a result of their turning awareness inward. Subsequently, they began establishing an inner relationship with those deepest places through compassion, curiosity, and patience. In various forms, the adolescents encountered the contexts and themes that many of the renowned philosophers and researchers on adolescence have expounded in their collected works. They did so with a sophisticated level of expression.

There was no evidence that these young persons experienced, either before or during Focusing, any of the spiritual phenomena that Armstrong (1984) and others (e.g.,

Piechowski, 2001; Wade, 1996) proclaimed were possible and evident in research and literature. However, my spiritual teacher, Adyashanti, has spoken many times in his satsangs about how extraordinary experiences are often detriments to finding enlightenment and then living within it as a functional human being. He has always called for returning to inner awareness as the path toward unity, wisdom, and joy.

Future research involving focusing by adolescents has many possible directions, some of which have been mentioned. It would certainly be worthwhile to verify whether Focusing could be used as a substitute for therapy for those teenagers who need personal counseling but are not diagnosed as critically dysfunctional.

It would be worthwhile to interview the participants in this study to discover if they were continuing to focus in some fashion or were interested in future Focusing. Value might be found in research of a similar nature to this one, but over a longer period of time and beginning at younger ages, which incorporated interviews to determine if Focusing affected attitudes, behaviors, and choices of activities in a meaningful and healthy manner. Such a study might discover whether, as adults, they had not split from their authentic selves after a lifetime of Focusing.

I dreamed a dream. It began with me offering to teach a psychology class in a senior high school. I would give each of the enrolling students a private focusing session and then spend 1 year teaching the first two levels of Focusing. The beauty of this dream was that the class would be spread over enough time that, when completed, the students would have acquired the knowledge and practice necessary to continue on their own with companions they would have met within the class. This would give them a lifelong and valuable tool for personal development. Besides, studying psychology can be rather dry if

it is undertaken without personal involvement. I know, because I did just that in Psychology 101.

My sincere wish is that my young participants experienced as much joy in being with their inner sources as I did in sharing that experience with them. My hopes for the 10 young adolescents selected for this research to find truth and meaning for themselves through their exposure to Focusing appear to have been fulfilled. Perhaps at some stage in their lives when they are desiring to have a lasting relationship with their inner selves, they will remember their Focusing as being a creative source of possibilities and inspiration.

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Appendix A

Focusing Definitions

Focusing means “spending time with something bodily sensed [felt sense] but unclear (until it comes ‘into focus’)” (Gendlin, 1996, p. 34) so that new steps come. “Focusing is a systematic, knowing way to let something implicit [felt sense] open” (p. 53). “Focusing requires self-responses that create a climate of safety and receptivity to anything that arises from inside” (p. 303).

Felt Sense is an awareness or sense of the “source” of emotions, images, physical feelings, and so on, as a place or “‘border zone’ between the conscious and the unconscious” (Gendlin, 1996, p. 16). “This awareness is always much richer than what one says in words, and one cannot know all that it is or could be in it” (p. 17).

Felt Shift occurs when a felt sense opens and moves. “Change steps come from it. Bodily changes come along with such steps” (Gendlin, 1996, p. 61) without one’s knowing how or why.

Focuser is the person doing the Focusing.

Companion is a person who is “holding the space” for the focuser and may also reflectively listen saying back those words of the focuser such that the focuser can easily hear them and check them back with the inner resonance, which confirms or disavows.

Guide is a person who acts as a companion who reflectively listens and holds the space as sacred and as a coach who makes suggestions to the focuser that may more easily lead to the next step or direction. (See Appendix C and Appendix D for examples.)

Appendix B

A Partial List of Potential Growth Directions

Originally Proposed as Potential Results of the Focusing Process

These potential growth directions have been derived from a number of sources, (e.g., scholars, personal and transpersonal assessments, and class notes) as well as from my own experiences of Focusing. I adhered to scholarly references when I sorted them into personal or transpersonal categories, in particular, to the meta-study of Lajoie and Shapiro (1992). Lajoie and Shapiro's discussion of the definitions of transpersonal psychology included those philosophers and psychologists who considered personal growth directions as being part of the broad definition of transpersonal psychology and who clustered the following two Classes as one.

Personal Growth toward -

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Imaginative scope in aspirations | Self-assertive |
| Sense of adequacy | Self-identity |
| Exercising free will | Spontaneity |
| Self-acceptance and self-respect | Self-defense |
| Protectiveness toward others | Goal oriented |
| Personal power and self-direction | Playfulness |
| Sensitivity to own feelings and needs | Laughter |
| Physically felt rightness | Zest for life |
| Democratic character structure | Personal privacy |
| Flexible value system | High self-worth |
| Appreciation and respect for life and all creation | Close trusting relationships |

Transpersonal Transformation toward -

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Affirmation of one's being | Spirituality |
| Spaciousness, timelessness, and openness | Wholeness |
| Crystal clarity of truth | Creative flow |
| Inner directed or "Self" directed | Joy in life |
| Honoring the sanctity of life | Sense of love |
| Letting be and being with | Mysticism |
| Transilience or spontaneity | Altruism |
| Relaxing in safety | Awe |
| Paranormal experiences | Love |
| Peak Experiences | Compassion |
| Synchronicity recognition | Wonder |
| Felt sense of connection | Bliss |
| Profound Peace | Gratitude |
| Movement from unconscious to conscious | |
| Unity with the earth and all living beings | |
| Experiencing God's will and revelations as those of "Self" | |
| Opening to the mystery of God and the unknown | |

Appendix C

Induction

Following is the induction to be used prior to all sessions of Focusing and as formulated by Ann Weiser Cornell (1996):

Take your time to begin letting awareness come into your body.

Maybe first being aware of the outer area of your body—

your arms, and your hands.

Noticing what your hands are touching, and how they feel.

Being aware also of your legs, and your feet.

Noticing what your feet are touching, and how they feel.

Noticing the contact of your body on the chair . . . and how that feels.

Notice whether you are comfortable.

Then letting your awareness come inward, into the whole inner area of your body, into your throat and chest, your stomach and lower abdomen.

And just be there.

Let your awareness rest gently in that whole middle area.

(Any other part of your body is OK to notice,

but maybe start in this middle area,

throat and chest, stomach and abdomen).

Alternate 1:

And give yourself a gentle invitation in there, like you're saying,

“What wants my awareness now?”

or “What wants to come and be known?”

and then wait—

and when you're aware of some thing,

you might let me know.

Alternate 2 (if the focuser is working on an specific issue):

And remember that whole thing about _____,

let it come into the room here,

and invite your body to give you its feel of that whole issue right now.

and then wait—

and when you're aware of some thing, you might let me know.

Appendix D

Focusing Session General Format

(Modified from a workshop handout presented by Cornell in 1997)

- I. Acknowledging/welcoming what comes (whenever a new feeling emerges).
 - A. See if you'd like to say hello to that.
 - or
 - B. See if you'd like to acknowledge that.

- II. Describing any body sensations, images, moody feelings, life connections.
 - A. If focuser didn't describe it while acknowledging it:
 - 1. You might take some time to sense how you would describe that.
 - or
 - 2. You might take some time to sense how that feels in your body.
 - B. After focuser first describes it:

So take that word "_____" back to the feeling in your body, and see if it fits and feels like just the right word, or if another word fits even better.

- III. Being present and following what is.
 - A. See if would be OK to *be with* that, or *spend time with* that or *keep that company*.
 - and/or
 - B. You might sit with it with interested curiosity.
 - or
 - C. You might sit with that place that feels "_____" with interested curiosity.

- IV. Being a listener for it—sensing/asking/wondering: listening for what wants to be heard.
- A. Take some time to sense how it feels from its point of view.
and/or
- B. You might sense if it has an emotional quality or what mood it is in.
and/or
- C. You might ask it, “What gets it so _____”?
and/or
- D. Ask it what it needs.
and/or
- E. Ask it to show how *all OK* would feel.
- V. Receiving its message: When it says something, let it know you hear it. (This will be used, as appropriate, throughout the focusing session.)
- VI. Ending the focusing session
- A. If ending after spending time with “good feelings”:
1. Take time to notice how that good feeling feels in your body.
or
 2. Let your body get the feeling of that. Let it be there as fully as it wants to be.
- B. If ending otherwise:
1. First, find a stopping place. Check in your body to see if it’s okay to stop soon, or if something more wants to happen first.
 2. Second, build a long-term inner relationship. Let those places know that you’ll be back and thank your body and the parts that have been with you.

Appendix E

Advertising Flyer Calling for Participants

My Picture
Here

Date

To: Adolescents, their Guardians/Parents and Counselors

Subject: Potential participants in doctoral dissertation research

Hello,

My name is Louanne Ellison, and I am a student of psychology completing my doctoral research at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto. I am very interested in teenagers and their experiences when using a technique called Focusing, a body-oriented method of creating an inner relationship with the self first described by Dr. Eugene Gendlin at the University of Chicago in the 1970s, and which, since then, has been used successfully by many adults worldwide.

For my research and to discover how these experiences may help teenagers, I am planning on guiding several volunteers between the ages of 13-15 years through 10 focusing sessions over a period of 5 weeks. I am hoping that they will come to greater self-understanding and will find Focusing an aid in enabling them to make satisfying and beneficial life choices.

If you are interested in being a participant in this research or know of someone who might be interested, and would like further details, please call me at 1 408 406-6690.

Thank you very much,

Louanne

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form

Dear _____,

I appreciate your agreement to support my research by acting as a participant.

This Consent Form refers to the study described below, the resulting dissertation, and any subsequent publications or presentations that may result from this research.

Participants in this research project will be guided through 10 focusing sessions of approximately an hour each by me personally. I have studied and taken classes on Focusing for the last 4 years, and am certified as a teacher/trainer by the International Focusing Institute. Focusing is the process of listening to your body in a gentle, accepting way and hearing the messages that your inner self is sending you. It is a process of honoring the wisdom that you have inside you, becoming aware of the subtle level of knowing that speaks to you through your body. Participants will also be asked to respond to questions that may arise concerning their experiences of these sessions during the sessions and as they may be seen to influence their lives. Lastly, participants may be asked to review discussions of the transcriptions of their tapes and to correct them for inaccuracies and misconceptions on the part of the researcher. This last will take 1 additional hour for a total of about 11 hours.

Anonymity will be maintained by giving a pseudonym (made up name) to the participant that only I, the primary researcher, will know. The sessions will be audiotaped and kept in a private safe; these initial tapes will be copied onto other tapes substituting coded pseudonyms for the real names, and these second tapes will be those used for

transcription and discussion. Any deviation from these security measures will be done only with the agreement of the participants and their guardian/parent.

Although Focusing is not considered a therapeutic method in itself, deep personal issues may arise. Focusing can be done without revealing the nature and details of these issues. However, if information regarding child abuse should be revealed during the term of this research, the researcher will abide by the American Psychology Association's guidelines, which requires reporting such information to Child Protective Services.

Guardian/Parent—By signing this consent form you have volunteered to permit your minor child to participate in a research project conducted by Louanne Ellison-Cole, a graduate student in the doctorate program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California. As the guardian of your child, who is considered a participant in this study, you are entitled to any information pertaining to data collection, analysis, or reporting that concerns you or your child personally. You will have the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns this study may have raised for you. You also may withdraw your child's participation any time during the conduct of the research phase, the 5-week Focusing period, without prejudice or penalty. If you decide to withdraw your child from the study at that time, all materials relating to your child, such as tapes or transcriptions, will be given to you. Any future questions concerning this project can be directed to:

1. Louanne Ellison-Cole, M.A.—Researcher, [telephone number]
2. Jenny Wade, Ph.D.—Chair of Dissertation Committee, [telephone number]
3. Robert Schmitt—Ethics Committee Chair, [telephone number]

Participant—For the purposes of this project you have the same rights as your guardian's/parent's as listed above. In addition, you may refuse to answer any question posed by me, the researcher. The location for the guided focusing sessions will be determined primarily to fit your needs and personal choice, and secondarily to suit the requirements of the research study, which means a place of quiet that is available throughout the 5 weeks of focusing sessions.

Over the course of the 5-week period during which you will be Focusing, you will be learning the Focusing process for your future use. It is my hope as researcher that you may find this method of value for the rest of your life as a way to help determine the path in life that reflects your personal needs and desires.

As a matter of general policy, the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology does not assume responsibility for any psychological or physical injury resulting from research conducted by its students. If, during the course of this research or afterward, you discover something about yourself that is uncomfortable, I will help you deal with it to the degree of my ability. If it is a large difficulty beyond my abilities, I will provide appropriate referrals. Most importantly, Focusing itself provides ways of discovering and utilizing your own safety nets. Finally, I, as your focusing guide, do not intend to ask leading questions or otherwise influence the course of the session. Guiding for Focusing is quite nondirective and simply invites a person's awareness to what is their experience at each moment.

I, as participant or guardian/parent, understand the purpose of this study as stated above. I am entering into this agreement without feeling pressure has been applied to encourage my cooperation. I realize my (or my child's) role in the research involves:

1. Participation in 10 audiotaped focusing sessions of approximately 1 hour each once or twice a week for 5 to 10 weeks, and answering related questions.

2. One additional hour's review of and input to the research's discussion and results, for a total of 11 hours.

3. Opportunities for me to address my concerns and the opportunity to withdraw from the study throughout the course of the 10 focusing sessions retaining all personally related materials.

Participant's Printed Name _____

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Guardian's/Parent's Printed Name _____

Guardian's/Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

Mailing address if you as participant or guardian wish to receive a summary of the research findings.

Street /Apt #

City

Zip Code

Appendix G

Background Survey

This survey is part of the dissertation research, and the answers are considered confidential and fall under the same guidelines as described in the Consent Form. If you have any objections or questions about any or all of the following questions, please talk to me, Louanne, about them.

1. Your Full Name _____

2. How you like to be called _____

3. Birth date _____ Year in School _____

4. Name/Age/Relationship to you of people living in your home.

| Name | Age | Relationship (such as Mother, Aunt, Guardian, Stepfather, Sister, etc. . . .) |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

Please list any others on the back of this survey.

5. Who would you like me to call in case of an emergency? State their relationship to you and their phone number.

/ _____ / _____ / _____

/ Name / Relationship / Phone

6. Give your phone number and the best times for me to call you to set up appointments.

_____/_____
 (Number) (Time)

7. Give your family's cultural background, such as: Native American, or primarily Irish, or probably southern European, or many generations in the United States and it is hard to tell.

8. If you attend church or any other organized religion please state how often you attend, and check (x) whether you think your family is devoted to the religious practices of your faith on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being strongly devoted, and 4 never devoted.

_____/_____(Religion/Church)

(How often services attended)

1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____

(Strongly devoted) (Moderately) (Occasionally) (Never)

9. Check those practices below that you personally follow:

Frequent journaling or keeping a diary Yes ___ No ___

Regularly meditating or praying Yes ___ No ___

Practicing Tai Chi or other martial arts Yes ___ No ___

Confiding in someone special whom you trust Yes ___ No ___

If you checked any of the above yes, please briefly describe below why it/they is/are important to you.

10. Yes or no answers are all that is required for the following.

Are you currently on probation? Yes ___ No ___

Have you had past arrests? Yes ___ No ___

Do you have gang affiliations? Yes ___ No ___

Do you use drugs other than those given to you by guardians/parents or doctors?

Yes ___ No ___

11. If you have any objections, hesitations, or questions about Focusing, or being part of this research, or both, please let me know about them below or please let me know you would like to talk to me about them.

Appendix H

Researcher's Qualifications as Focusing Guide and Human Instrument

When I first started therapy in 1986, I came, tears flowing, to my therapist's office without any idea of what was going on inside myself. My therapist, Dr. Errol Schubot, referred me to Gendlin's book *Focusing* (1978) and began focusing with me as an addition to his therapeutic processes. Focusing brought me to my body for the wisdom and answers it held about how I was living my life, what I believed and valued, what choices I made that felt right to my body, and the source of my emotions. It also directed me on my own spiritual path. Privately, I have practiced Focusing daily through the years immediately after my divorce and since, and have found it a primary source of personal information and transformation.

I obtained Focusing Institute certification as a teacher/trainer under the guidance of Ann Weiser Cornell and Katherine Bell Dever. This followed 66 hours of course work and 1 1/2 years of internship. During the internship, I aided in teaching Focusing to beginning students and in guiding these students in private sessions. I attended seminars sponsored by the Focusing Institute, both in Wisconsin and Budapest (designed specifically to study Focusing with children). I am also licensed as a grade 7 through 14 teacher by the State of California, and have taught in both junior and senior high schools.

Appendix I

Note of Appreciation

Date

Louanne Ellison-Cole

Institute of Transpersonal Psychology

Dear _____,

[Participant's name]

I am immensely grateful to you for your participation and cooperation in the research required for my dissertation. It was of critical value to the dissertation's successful completion. Enclosed is a summary of the final conclusions derived from the discussion of the results for those who requested the summary. If, at this time, you would like a summary, please call me at 1 408 406 6690.

I enjoyed getting to know you and sharing the past experiences with you. I hope it was as rewarding for you as it was for me. If I can ever be of future service to you, it would please me greatly to do so. Also, I would love to hear about your present life and activities. You have my current phone number, and I can always be reached through the Alumni Association of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.

Thank you so very much,

Louanne