

STAYING IN FOCUS

THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI, NUMBER 3 APPLICATIONS OF FOCUSING SEPTEMBER 2006

Focusing and Art Therapy: Bridging Inner and Outer Experiences of Creativity

By LAURY RAPPAPORT, Ph.D. REAT, ATR-BC, Focusing Trainer, USA

On the plane going home from the 2005 Focusing International Conference in Toronto, I sensed a deep calling to share the profound experience in the workshop, Focusing and Art Therapy. In addition to the stated goal of the workshop, to create a bridge between the felt sense and creative expression, we experienced an empathic connectedness as the universal language of art dissolved language and cultural differences.

Starting the workshop, I noticed that there were a greater number of Japanese Focusers than North Americans. I extended a warm welcome followed by a Focusing attunement in order to help everyone settle into their bodies, come into greater presence, and also listen to their wish or hope for the workshop. As I guided the group, I heard a beautiful, soft, musical voice translating my words into Japanese. Mako, a Focusing Coordinator from Japan, translated for the seven Japanese Focusers.

As each woman shared her name and wish, I noticed the dimension of time elongate, as we listened from English to Japanese, and Japanese to English. The group created an atmosphere of deep listening and acceptance, naturally reflecting qualities of a Focusing Attitude—"being friendly to" and "keeping company with."

I became aware of the diverse needs of the group—to go slowly enough so that the Japanese women could take in what was being spoken and to go fast enough to meet the needs of the North Americans who were ready to dive into the content of the material. I abandoned my more lengthy introductory talk about art therapy, spoke more about its essence, and shifted to the direct experience of art and Focusing.

To use art therapy with Focusing, it is essential first to familiarize participants with various art materials and to learn how line, shape, color, and image are a primary language.

Warm-up to the Art Materials:

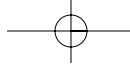
Prior to the meeting, I aesthetically arranged a variety of art materials, including white paper, colored paper, oil pastels, dry pastels, and markers. I invited everyone to attend to what drew their inner felt sense (e.g., notice if you feel drawn to white paper, colored paper, etc.). Each person was asked to select, from her felt sense, paper and drawing materials.

Learning the language of artistic expression: lines, shapes, and color:

The felt sense can be expressed through line (thick, thin, curvy, jagged, etc.), shape, and/or color. Participants were invited to look at a box of art



Bottom (left to right): Mako Hikasa, Laury Rappaport, Yoko Akiyama, Kumiko Odake, Top: Naoko Mogi, Chris Rex, Fuke Kimiko, Judy Schavrien, Kazuko Amaha, Grace Baldeserra (not in the photo: Maki Miyaki and Christel Kraft)



materials and to ask the felt sense, “Which color wants to be used now?” Using that color, make a jagged line . . . and another. Notice how it feels in your body when you make a jagged line. Now make a curvy line. How does the curvy line feel in your body? Additional configurations are explored, such as dots, dashes, heavy, light.

The goal of the “line” exercise is to explore the different properties of materials, such as shapes, textures, pressure, and to see how they connect to the felt sense. After experimenting for about ten minutes, participants usually begin to notice the connection between the felt sense and art-making—and feel a greater ease at expressing themselves through creative media.

One participant described her experience. “My felt sense chose the right materials and colors that it wanted. I understand how fully I can express my felt sense through choosing art materials. The outcome made me feel good and satisfied.” Another added, “I am usually too self-conscious to make art but the ‘warm-up’ exercises helped to free me from that restraint. I really appreciated this exercise which gave me many ways to express my felt senses.”

Conversation Drawing

As I listened to my own felt sense, it came to me that it would be wonderful to do an art therapy exercise called, “Conversation Drawing,” a paired drawing through art-making without talking. After describing the exercise, one of the Japanese Focusers, spoke with excitement, “You mean we don’t have to use words?” I responded, “That’s right. There’s no talking. Just have a conversation on one sheet of paper using line, shape, color, and/or image.” The participant said, “I’d like to work with someone who is not Japanese.” Others followed suit. The group formed three dyads each with one Japanese woman and one North American, one trio with two Japanese and one North American, and another pair of Japanese women.

As the group made their Conversation Drawings, a quiet, deep connectedness unfolded. Typically, I ask people to talk about their experience immediately following a “Conversation Drawing.” However, I wanted the group to learn how Focusing can express the felt sense in art, and also to see how a felt shift can be seen in visual art.

Expressing the Felt Sense and Felt Shift in Art (handle/symbol)

I led the group in a guided Focusing to notice how it was inside the body after engaging in the “Conversation Drawing.” They attended for a felt sense and then noticed if a handle (symbol) that matched the felt sense arose. The handle might come as an image, lines, shapes, color, a word, phrase, gesture, or sound. The group was then encouraged to create the handle through art-making. After drawing the felt sense, I guided the group back to their bodies to notice how it was after drawing. Was the felt sense the same, or had it changed (a felt shift)?

After completing both drawings, the pairs were invited to talk about their experience. Suddenly, the challenge of language returned—as some pairs felt they needed a translator and others struggled to speak and to understand.

Each pair or trio showed their art and shared the excitement of the fun and the ease of feeling a sense of empathic understanding and connection using art, without words. One participant’s handle was “fun, fun, fun.”

Conversation Drawing The following exercise demonstrates how much can come from Focusing and art, how the Focusing steps can be integrated into the process, and how art bridges language differences.

Ana (from North America) and Takara (from Japan) (not their real names) describe their experience:

Ana: “One of us began with a red line. The other followed with blue. At first we were tentative, then it started to flow, and halfway through we became a coordinated team.”

Takara: “She came close to my line but she never invaded my line. The more lines I drew, the more free and playful I became. When I drew the yellow monster in the middle of the paper, our conversation became more playful. The words, ‘Playful and Fun’ describe my felt sense.”

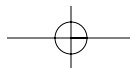
In Focusing after the “Conversation Drawing,” Ana’s handle came as a sound—joyous and content. Takara’s felt sense came as an image—a red tulip with yellow stars. She shared, “They symbolize the fun and playfulness of the experience. The tails of falling stars express the coming (opening) of the fun and playful felt sense.”

Checking the felt sense after drawing, Takara was surprised that her felt sense had shifted. She said, “Something covered the brightness of the tulip and stars, so I colored all over the paper with a soft grey. I didn’t know what this ‘covering’ thing was. I just knew it dampened down the fun, playful, and enjoyable feeling.”

Sharing: “Asking” and “Receiving” Steps

During the large group sharing, I invited Takara to go back to the felt sense, to keep it company, and perhaps ask it a question. Guiding her gently to be friendly to the felt sense, “Can you ask it ‘What is this ‘covering’ thing?’”

Continued on page 4



The Use of Focusing in the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress: An Exploratory Study

By CATHERINE HUDEK, *Focusing Trainer, Canada, Masters Candidate, University of Manitoba.*

I was fresh from completion of a two year certification program in Focusing and PTSD when the time came to select a thesis topic. After 30 years of work with survivors of severe and ongoing childhood trauma, I was very excited about the gentleness and precision which Focusing brought to my work and impressed with the healing that I myself experienced from vicarious traumatization combined with my own load of personal baggage. The fact that I was unable to find any completed research on the use of Focusing in the treatment of posttraumatic stress further persuaded me that this was the topic I wanted most to study.

I taped face to face interviews with fourteen professional therapists who were actively using Focusing in their work with trauma survivors. A semi-structured interview format was used. The results are presented in nine tables, each addressing one of the interview questions, and are illustrated with numerous examples either summarized or directly quoted from the interviews.

The following excerpts provide a small taste. Under **Benefits**, a sampling of responses:

The client has a choice: they can go in deep and change things or can just learn how to contain--refine that skill so they can at least keep the past out of the way for now. (Interview 2, p.93)

Focusing gives people tools they can use throughout their lives. It impacts what they do, just about anywhere, any time, just because they have this resource now ... that they can utilize more fully, which is their gut. So they sense, they get into situations and they sense. They have the wisdom of that, of the gut sense of their intuition, their spiritual knowing and connecting. (Interview 1, p.94)

It gives them dignity; it gives them a little more self-respect. They maybe don't judge themselves so harshly, when they realize, "Wait a minute, this isn't my twenty-six or thirty year old self that is reacting to this. This is that place from when I was way back then, where I have gotten stuck". They start to understand that their reaction comes from a different place and not from today. (Interview 13, p.97)

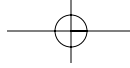
Data analysis is presented under the following headings:

- 1) How Focusing is being used in the treatment of trauma survivors?
- 2) What are the purposes for which Focusing is being used in the treatment of trauma survivors?
- 3) How do these fourteen Focusing practitioners perceive the benefits of Focusing in the treatment of PTSD?
- 4) Are there special considerations for the use of Focusing in the treatment of people with posttraumatic stress?
- 5) What drawbacks, limitations and barriers are therapists encountering in using Focusing in the treatment of PTSD, and how are these being addressed?
- 6) What do these therapists see as indications and contradictions for using Focusing in the treatment of PTSD?
- 7) How does Focusing, as implemented by these therapists, compare in practice to guidelines for the treatment of PTSD set out in the literature?
- 8) How does Focusing, as implemented by these therapists, compare in practice to The Standards on Social Work developed by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (1995)?
- 9) Is Focusing worth further exploration as a treatment approach for PTSD?

The findings support the view that Focusing is well worth further exploration as a treatment approach for people who have suffered either simple or complex trauma, as described in the following excerpt from the data analysis



Catherine Hudek did her Focusing training with Shirley Turcotte. You can contact Catherine at cathudek@gmail.com



summary. The numerous and sometimes striking benefits cited by the therapists in this study are can best be conceptualized by identifying four core categories.

Benefits related to the approach inherent in this method: Focusing is seen by these therapists as a safe and gentle approach, even when dealing with traumatic experiences. Since the client is in control of the pace and direction of the therapy, the process feels safe and is empowered. The Focusing approach is also seen as a good “fit” with aboriginal values and traditional ways of healing because it is holistic, involving mind, body and spirit. It is also seen as a respectful and normalizing approach, one in which the client feels heard and attended to.

The potency of Focusing as a tool for achieving resolution of trauma: Focusing is efficient and precise as a tool for identifying and accessing the specific aspect of the trauma experience that most needs attention, as Focusing connects to “what the body knows.” Through this process, most of these therapists find that major breakthroughs are possible and over 35% stated that clients gain a change in perspective. Finally clients can achieve closure even after deep work, so they leave the session feeling present, centered and in control, rather than upset or emotionally charged after recalling trauma. These are all especially useful benefits in work with trauma survivors.

Client empowerment: Two major benefits noticed in this category involve clients acquiring new personal, life-long tools. Additionally, clients learn to attend to themselves when symptoms arise, making them less dependent on the therapist for assistance in times of crisis. Two additional benefits that emerge directly from these are that clients find their lives more manageable, and that clients experience reduced reactivity to triggers. A number of participants noted client empowerment itself as an advantage of Focusing. Also noticed were benefits that enhance feelings of empowerment, such as heightened self-awareness and increased trust in self.

Benefits to the therapist: While benefits in this core category were raised by fewer study participants, they include helping the therapist remain present, enhancing therapeutic skills, and reducing the negative effects on the therapist, vicarious traumatization and countertransference, benefiting the therapist in a direct way, as well as the client. (pp. 143-145) A further analysis of the data strongly suggests that the work of these therapists meets both social work standards and current guidelines for the treatment of PTSD.

It is important to note that the findings of this study strongly support the view that Focusing must be adapted in order to be used safely with this vulnerable population, as illustrated by the following: Two limitations raised by participants speak to the difference between trauma survivors and other client populations. With trauma survivors Focusing can be very intense/scary, and symptoms may worsen at first. Eight more of the limitations address the special measures that should be taken when using Focusing with this population. It is important not to push too fast; trust and safety are needed before beginning. Focusing with trauma survivors can be unsafe if it is therapist controlled rather than patient led, or if the process is not adapted for trauma work. The therapist must remain fully present during the session. It is crucial to close the session properly. The process must be individualized to adapt to the needs of each client, and some people need preparation before beginning to use Focusing in treatment. Another three limitations identify considerations for the context of therapy with this population: experience is required for optimal effectiveness. Therapists must deal with their own baggage, and supervision is essential. (p.146)

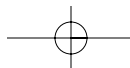
The good news is that for each drawback or limitation to the use of Focusing in the treatment of PTSD identified in this study, there is a solution and/or mitigating factor identified elsewhere in the data.



Focusing and Art, continued from page 2

After a few moments, she said, “It’s my loneliness. I had enjoyed the fullness of connection, and now there’s a separation (tears).” Can you ask the loneliness what it needs. Takara listens and shares, “It wants me to give the drawing to Ana. Then she can take it home, and the connection will continue.” Warmth filled the room as Takara handed the drawing to Ana.

The group was moved by the power of art to symbolize the felt sense, unfold its wisdom, and cultivate the immediacy of empathic connection beyond language and cultural differences. Others exchanged art and, thanks to digital photography, everyone has a visual reminder--bringing back the felt richness of the experience. After the workshop, a follow-up questionnaire asked if there was additional to share. One Focuser wrote, “I wish peace will be achieved through the power of Focusing and art.” May this article encourage steps in that direction.



Focus on: *Teruyuki Chikada, Focusing Coordinator, Japan*

By MASUMI MAEDA, *Focusing Trainer, Japan*



Teruyuki Chikada, at Mt. Takao, a sacred mountain near Tokyo, which he climbs frequently.

Teruyuki Chikada, professor of clinical psychology and psychotherapy at Tokyo Woman's Christian University, may be unfamiliar to the international Focusing community, since he has appeared only once at the 1998 Focusing International U.S.A., but he is, in fact, a very important figure in Japan. He has a profound understanding of Rogers' *Client-centered Therapy* and Gendlin's *Focusing-oriented Psychotherapy* and has substantially increased the number of Focusing practitioners through his outreach and teaching. This article is an important opportunity to share Chikada's contributions, which have been underplayed even among Japanese Focusers because of his extremely modest personality.

MM: When was your initial encounter with Focusing?

TC: Focusing came into my life when I was a graduate student in the 1980's, studying directly under Takao Murase, the first to introduce Gendlin's work to Japan in the 1960's. Murase was famous for his strict training, thanks to which I learned much about Rogers and Gendlin. Somehow, however, I wasn't drawn to Focusing as much then as I am now.

After graduation I became a therapist in a university counseling center. After several years of dealing with difficult cases, I felt stuck. I tried various approaches including psychoanalysis, but nothing seemed to work. In desperation I went back to Murase. Then I re-encountered Focusing, which I absorbed and accepted as though it were magic. It was a totally different experience from my first encounter.

I began to assist Murase in teaching Focusing and in no time, found myself thrilled, excited and intrigued by the power of Focusing. Shortly afterwards Murase fell ill and handed the work over to me. I used Focusing in my therapy and became totally convinced that Focusing training is absolutely essential for becoming a true Rogerian Client-centered therapist. I still have the same belief that in order to become a compassionate, empathic therapist who is a congruent listener, Focusing is essential.

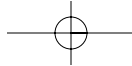
MM: What was your next step?

TC: In the 1990's I formed a Focusing community in Tokyo with people who had participated in workshops. We—especially Mako Hikasa, Teruko Miyakawa, Tadayuki Murasato and myself—were a group of enthusiastic Focusers and read and studied many books on Focusing. Some of us traveled to the U.S. to gain further knowledge. We invited Mary Hendricks, Elfie Hinterkopf, Ann Weiser Cornell, Mary McGuire and Janet Klein to teach in Japan. The Japan Focusing Association was founded in 1997.

Mako Hikasa and I organized a number of Focusing workshops including our annual Focusing training courses in Tokyo. We provide basic, advanced, and trainer-training programs to over 100 participants each year. During the past seven years we have trained over twenty certified trainers. In addition, six other coordinators/trainers are involved in private Focusing sessions. Currently, I teach Focusing at over a dozen counseling training institutions and two other universities beside my own. I prefer staying in the background, connecting people and encouraging those around me. However, as I look back, I realize I have always been at the center of the Focusing community, particularly in Tokyo and eastern Japan.

MM: When teaching Focusing in your workshops, what do you keep in mind as important?

TC: I try to make an extra effort to see to it that every single participant really grasps the essence of Focusing, especially the felt sense and Focusing attitudes as profound bodily experiences. For that purpose I offer both theoretical background and experiential exercises by (1) using no technical terms, just simple and precise expressions that any-

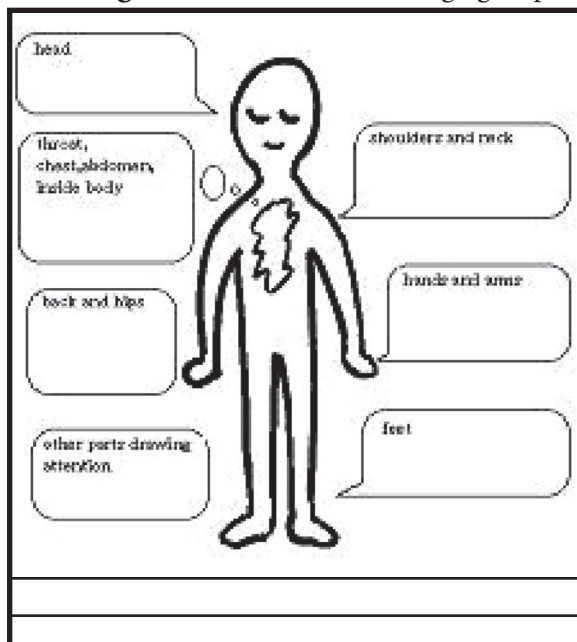


one without prior knowledge of counseling or psychology can understand; (2) creating a safe environment by explicitly stating the how and the why of what we do; (3) preparing useful handouts and textbooks; (4) keeping the workshop size smaller than twenty participants and maintaining staff/participant ratio of 1 to 5 (or less) whenever possible; (5) assisting participants to form their own Focusing communities after the workshop; and most importantly, (6) making whatever small changes necessary to best suit the participants, in terms of contents, language, order of presentation, and exercises. I always try to be innovative in search of new and better ways. So far, I have made hundreds of small adjustments toward the improvement of the delivery of training.

MM: Could you give us an example of your recent improvements?

TC: I would like to illustrate with an exercise my newly designed and modified instructions.

Checking Sheet Exercise: for a large group and beginners. It takes 10-20 minutes. Instructions:



1) I tell the participants that we are going to check body sense.

Then, I name each part of the body, stopping as each part is named, taking plenty of time to notice what comes up, and ask that they write whatever they felt in the space beside that part on a diagram of the body. Then I end by asking whether anything else was noticed in other parts of the body and instruct them to write down anything they noticed.

2) What draws the most attention? On the lines below the drawing, I ask participants to write down anything additional that they noticed. (The instructions could be, "What you noticed before may change, become stronger, move/disappear, or you may find yourself more comfortable/tired now.")

3) Then I say, "Look at the picture (which represents yourself) very kindly, and accept whatever is there by saying, 'Yes, now you are with such feelings.' At this point, if you were to say something to it with the utmost tenderness and warm feeling, what would you say and how would you say it? Feel what comes and write it down on

the lines above the body drawing."

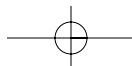
NOTE: Because of the sensitive contents of this exercise, sharing is done only voluntarily. By using this checking sheet, it becomes easier to check, feel, and stay in touch with the body senses, which tend to make ongoing and often subtle changes. In addition, what is noticed is more easily retained when it is written down. By looking tenderly at the whole self-image objectively and speaking to it warm-heartedly, it becomes easier to gently accept ones own internal body sense and oneself in general. I consider the addition of this last step particularly important.

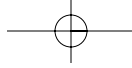
MM: Tell us about your recent books, *Focusing, the Best and Gentlest Way to Acquire Counselor's Basics* and *Focusing Workbook*. (Note: Both are written in Japanese. The titles are a tentative translation.)

TC: As I taught Focusing in various institutions, I became puzzled by why so many Rogerian therapists (hundreds of them in Japan) had no knowledge of Focusing, or even have a psychological barrier against it. Having seen those who attended my workshops overwhelmed by the power of Focusing, I felt a need to communicate more broadly to help therapists understand the close relationship between Focusing and Client-centered Therapy, how indispensable it is in actual practice, and additionally, what a gentle method Focusing is for both clients and therapists. My other objective in my first book was to clarify the meaning of Gendlin's expressions. I devoted a lot of energy to helping Japanese therapists, beginners in particular, get an exact and thorough understanding of the meaning of "experiencing." There was a need to 1) establish guidelines so the quality and essence of Focusing is maintained, and 2) introduce various ingenious and useful applications. As one of the editors of the workbook, along with Akira Ikemi (Chairman of The Japan Focusing Association), I wrote the section describing what Focusing is.

MM: What are your prospects for the future?

TC: Increasing the number of people who use and practice Focusing comes first. I will continue my efforts to communicate, in easy and understandable terms, the essence of Focusing and its power. I am also contemplating holding Focusing retreats in the mountains. As a means for my own self-care, it would be nice to have more time for mountain-walking and for Focusing for myself on regular basis.





SHORT EXCERPTS FROM A LONGER PRESENTATION:

“The Town” and Human Attention

By *EUGENE T. GENDLIN, Ph.D.* Talk given at the first Focusing Institute Summer School, August 25, 2006.
 Transcribed from DVD by *Nada Lou*

We are in the beginning stages of a really gigantic development of human beings. Partly my message is going to be --don't be discouraged. There has been an incredible development of the mass of people all over the world--in my lifetime, which is little longer than yours, but not that much. Now in a town that you never heard of, somewhere in Northern Ghana a kid goes to the movies on Saturday and sees television all week and knows everything that's going on . . . and this is a tremendous development of people. There is literacy in half the world, but even where there is no literacy, there is tremendous awareness that a mass of people have gotten much more similar and much more developed. That's my first thing to say.

Secondly, there has been a smaller development still of millions of people who are now psychologically sophisticated. Not just in the West or in Japan, but in many places. What I mean by that is--you sit on the bus and the woman behind you is telling her friend “I am not his mother!” for instance. And you realize that there is a level of sophistication that has come, psychologically to certainly not the majority, not to the mass of people, but nevertheless to some significant hundred million people or so who are aware of all this stuff and coming in closer to the center! There are all these so called methods, that are our neighbors so to speak. Several hundred of those, ten of which at least you've heard of. There are all kinds of training, and interaction in energy, and in Non Violent Communication, and in Dialogue, a whole list of these things that are all happening, developing human beings to be much more sophisticated than that first thing I mentioned which is world wide. This is a kind of a creative minority.

In the shift from agriculture to industry everything changed. The man went to work in the factory, the kid went to school, the woman went to see her friends, those were all totally different people. The people that man met in the factory were not the parents of the kids that went to school with the kid, and they were not related to the friends that the woman had in the town. That split up everything and made all the conditions of living different.

So some people say, it's an external change that determined the difference in the people. But it also goes the other way. It required a human development for people to run machinery. They had to be taught how to read instructions, they had to be taught how to be careful with powerful machinery, they had to be taught to be there at 8 o'clock in the morning, because the whole factory can't work unless everybody is there, because they are working on the assembly line and when two guys are missing the whole thing stops. So everybody had to buy a watch, everybody had to learn numbers. There was this tremendous development of people, inside and outside.

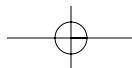
And it's happening again. Because now it's enough for 5% of the population to do industry and produce things. So everything is made in China, and we are doing something else. What are we doing? What's the new product?

Well, up to here I am sure I am right. From here on in--we'll see. I think the new product is called INTERHUMAN ATTENTION. I think what people are doing in developed countries is paying attention to each other. Some people call that the service industry. Some people call it the business world. It's mostly having meetings the whole day and writing memos to each other.

So I look back to this history, and I say what were the new people doing in that first shift to Industry? Because now we are the new people. First of all they lived in towns. So I would like to introduce a new term and call us THE TOWN. By which I mean all the new methods, not just Focusing. All the new methods, all the psychological sophistication, all the interactional training, all the therapy, all that stuff, is the town. And we need to become conscious that we are producing a new product. And the product is HUMAN ATTENTION. And the product isn't very good right now. Mostly right now that attention is not great.

So there is this large development; and inside of that is what I call “THE TOWN” which is these peculiar people who are specialized in attention--in raising the quality of the attention. And inside of that I think is Focusing, is us.

I have a wonderful quote from Afghanistan. This is a village woman commenting after a Focusing workshop. We are teaching Focusing to people, not only to therapists. “I went home and I listened to my sick uncle, and he brought all his medicines for me to see. And I listened to him. He was very happy and told me his whole heart.”



So there is something that we are bringing to the middle of this whole development--which goes right in. It doesn't require any kind of training or complications. It's like she learned that and she went home and did that. It worked right away. So you can look forward to a time when the things are going to get a lot better than they are right now. Don't be discouraged.

There is something though that I would like to point out that's difficult. This "town" that I am talking about is not conscious of itself. We are conscious that we are teaching Focusing to whoever listens . . . villages, management, it doesn't matter. We teach it to anybody, but we don't think yet even of each other as the town. When I keep saying "learn everything else please don't just do Focusing" I am talking about the "town." We are still all these separated entities, if you just learn Focusing--it is never true. You need more than five things. Together we are a change happening in the world.

It's a much better world that goes with it where people are aware of each other as people. Everything will be different. And it is getting different. But it's not getting different fast enough so that you feel good when you read the paper. But please read the paper. A great many Focusing people that I know are no longer reading the paper--it hurts too much. And they can't do anything about it anyway, and the way the issues are cut you can know in advance that both sides are going to be wrong. Either you want to kill all of these people or you want to kill all of those people. And then they want you to choose. So to hell with that. You have to allow yourself to think about it yourself. With any issue, you are going to have to say, Well I haven't yet heard anything that makes sense or anything that I could choose.

The latest process that we developed is TAE, which is teaching people that you can actually think freshly. YOU can! What we learned in school was that we can't. We are not supposed to think freshly; we are supposed to learn 20 concepts and keep rearranging them. That's the only way you get good grades. So fine, we learn how to do that. But thinking is something else. Thinking is like Focusing. Only in Focusing we always talk in terms of a particular situation, where in Thinking we would be saying, well what is wrong there with this issue--that either I am supposed to do this or that? That can't be like that. Why do I feel it can't be like that? Then you've already got something. If you allow yourself to allow language to flow out, then you get different parts laid out. You say, oh look I've got five things now--where as before I only had "uh?" Now I have 5 things well let me list 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Oh, there is the 6th; well, how do they go together? And in there we have a way for people to be able to think.

This whole philosophy can let you realize--and it only takes you a few moments--whatever it is you care about: reality, people, yourself, your kid, anything . . . it doesn't come in categories. Fortunately, it doesn't come all chopped up in graph paper, it doesn't come like that. So you don't have to stay with the categories that they give you. In fact you can't stay with the categories they give you anyway. So I would ask you not to give up, because things are changing and things are very interesting and you can think about them if you don't fall for "economics" or "neurology" or any of those kind of things. Then you become aware that those people who have charge of everything--they are still thinking in the categories, so no wonder things aren't going so well.



*The Focusing
Institute Summer
School staff, from
the left:
Melinda Darer,
Lucy Bowers,
Kevin McEvenue,
Gene Gendlin,
Nada Lou, Akira
Ikemi, Atsmaout
Perlstein and Ann
Weiser Cornell.*

