

**Notes for participants on Saying More of What You Mean, April 2022  
with Mary Jennings [jennings640@gmail.com](mailto:jennings640@gmail.com)**

Dear Friends

Many thanks for attending the seminar, *Saying More of What You Mean*. I hope you find it useful and enjoyable.

At the session, we touched on how to find ways into what Gene Gendlin 'the implicit intricacy'. When we have ways of entering into this intricacy, we can say more of what we mean. These notes refer to some of the ways that we touched on. They include contributions you made in the chat and Q&A during our time together.

I hope that you get the opportunity to reflect on these and make use of them, in your own way.

A longer course is being planned for Autumn. This will provide an opportunity to explore these in more detail. There are many other practices that are available to work with the 'implicit intricacy'; these will feature in the course. If you would like to know more about these plans - or if you have any questions, please do email me on [jennings640@gmail.com](mailto:jennings640@gmail.com)

Many thanks and wishing you all the best,

Mary Jennings

## Connecting with our interconnected web of experience - the 'implicit intricacy'

Gendlin says:

*"When I use the word 'body' I mean more than the physical machine. Not only do you physically live the circumstances around you, but also those you only think of in your mind.*

*Your physically felt body is in fact part of a gigantic system of here and other places, now and other times, you and other people. In fact, the whole universe. This sense of being bodily alive in a vast system is the body and it is felt from inside."*

Gendlin, from his book *Focusing*

He calls this 'implicit intricacy' – it is open to us to explore this ourselves. Gendlin provides some ways in to this intricacy as he points out:

"Language is always implicit in human bodies, so that a present body-sense always leads to the formation of fresh phrases if you allow it"

Gendlin, A Process Model Chapter 4 D

In the notes accompanying this paper, you might like to review what came from our our exploration of the implicit intricacy, inspired by the line from Blake's poem, the Auguries of Innocence: 'To see the World in a grain of sand'.

## Exploring the implicit intricacy: Here are some of the ways that we touched on:

### 1. *The Power of Pausing*

"Focusing is a force for peace because it frees people from being manipulated by external authority, cultural roles, ideologies and the internal oppression of self attacking and shame. **This freeing has to do with an ability to pause the on-going situation and create a space in which a felt sense can form.**" Mary Hendricks Gendlin, *The Revolutionary Pause*

"When you press pause on a computer it stops. When you press the pause on a human being they start – to reimagine and reorganise. A pause can lead to a new beginning." Thomas Friedman New York Times, 2021.

***Suggestion: Before we speak, respond or write, if we can pause, then more is possible; pausing helps us to get in touch with 'the more' of the felt sense– let it become an embodied practice.***

### 2. *Keeping it Open*

#### Using 'paradox' to keep the openness...

Something 'is and is not'- this practice is one way to open up words, concepts, ideas – it may reveal other implicit aspects and encourages us to explore before we commit to 'being right'.

- ▶ A paradox is a promise... of more
- ▶ Something is... and is not... at the same time
- ▶ Replace certainty with curiosity
- ▶ Keep the possibilities open....
- ▶ Encourages exploration

- ▶ There is time to get more precise#
- ▶ Openness can actually bring greater precision – when you find the right phrase, image or work, “the implicit talks back”

**Suggestion: Try noticing where you see paradoxes, contradictions and what they bring: e.g., from Yeats’s *Easter 1916*; ‘A terrible beauty has been born’—how does it resonate with you? In what way is *Easter 1916* a ‘terrible beauty’ and in what way is it not the case? See also the contributions from the session in our exploration of what a lighthouse ‘is and is not’.**

### Hints on using Paradox

- ▶ *Challenge yourself -- asking ‘in what way is this like this/in what way is this not like this? Make it a PRACTICE as you think through something*
- ▶ *Create paradoxical titles for something you are writing e.g. In a recent talk, the writer Caroline Bird called her topic:*  
*“The discipline of getting lost” – she already inviting the reader into an intricacy right there. I am already hooked and wanting more...*  
*Or the title of the art gallery show makes you stop and look at “The Memories of Loud Silence”*
- ▶ *Invite your audience to create a paradox about your own topic: e.g., “Would you agree that I am both right and wrong?”*
- ▶ *Play with it!*

### Using (...slots) to find more words that bring more...

Words cannot fully express all that we want to say. Language has its limits, yet, as Toni Morrison Nobel Laureate and author says, it’s what makes us human.

When there is something we want to say clearly, we may come up with a key word or phrase that seems to capture ‘all that’. Sometimes, there is a rush to ‘get it right’. In this practice, we pause, we check what other words might work (be employed, do the job, function). This is not about looking up the words in a thesaurus, it’s about checking with the felt sense of the whole situation – exploring all the facets (sides, examples, instances) that fit in this context, in this situation. Each one brings more... Try them out. Since you have explored your idea in this way, then the word you settle on does have a lot of ‘all that’ meaning for you. If someone asks you, ‘what does this word mean?’ you can answer them from this place of exploration.

By keeping it open in this way, you avoid the pressure to have ‘just the right word’ at the beginning. This is ‘Open Precision’ a term that has been coined to explain this practice more precisely. Being open at the beginning, leads to greater precision in effect.

**Suggestion: Try this out in different, everyday contexts as a practice. Get a feel for what other words might fit, checking with your felt sense of the whole situation, the whole intricacy; this keeps your work open -until what wants to be said emerges.**

### **More on Openness— it ‘talks back’ as the implicit continues to function**

Below is a quote from Gendlin’s *Thinking Beyond Patterns* (p48). The felt sense ‘talks back’ as it *implies* what can/must be said in this situation. A key point that Gendlin makes is that the ‘**implicit continues to function**’ – it insists, it talks back until it is satisfied. It is precise AND it knows the language. It’s not that the word or line is ‘there’, ready to be revealed, there is a zig-zagging, an ‘open precision’ process going on between the ‘felt sense’ of the situation and the language that emerges: we honour BOTH openness and precision.

Whether we are writing poetry or checking whether we agree with a particular norm or idea that is challenging for us, when we pay attention in this open way, we find more. Here is what Gendlin says:

*“The poet tries this line and that. Many lines come. Some seem good. The poet listens into what each of those lines can say. Poets constantly listen into an unexplored openness – what can this new phrasing say? A great many such lines come and are rejected. The poet reads to the end of the written lines again-and again. Each time the (...) comes.*

*----“the (...) is very verbal, it knows the language well enough to understand – and reject- all the lines that come. That blank in not pre-verbal; it knows what must be said, and it knows that the lines that come don’t say that.*

*The blank (...) is vague, more it is also more precise than the poet can as yet say. The (...) is an implying and it continues to function, work provide inspiration, insists until ‘what talks back’ or we might call the felt sense is satisfied.”*

### **The Seamus Heaney Poem (finished version) that we looked at shows how he revised the poem until the felt sense was satisfied with greater precision – even after first publication.**

#### *Postscript*

And some time make the time to drive out west  
Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore,  
In September or October, when the wind  
And the light are working off each other  
So that the ocean on one side is wild  
With foam and glitter, and inland among stones  
The surface of a slate-grey lake is lit (*hit in first version*)  
By the earthed (*bolt in first version*) lightning of a flock of swans,  
Their feathers roughed and ruffling, white on white,  
  
Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads  
Tucked or cresting or busy underwater.  
Useless to think you’ll park and capture it  
More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,  
A hurry through which known and strange things pass  
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways  
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.

*Postscript* by Seamus Heaney, from THE SPIRIT LEVEL (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996)

***Suggestion: As you read the poem, check out the difference sense that comes from the word ‘hit’– Heaney’s first draft and the word ‘lit’ works in the finished poem (highlighted above). What difference, if any, does the change make to the whole sense of the poem, not just the changed line? Something In Heaney’s felt sense was not satisfied with the first draft: the implicit talked back and he listened.***

### **3. Reframing, reusing myths and legends for your purpose**

Stories, myths and legends persist because they hold the ‘implicit intricacy’. They can be endlessly explored, reused and reinvented. Often, they provide a bridge from something that may be commonly understood in a culture to something that you want to say freshly or in an accessible way. Even if the story or myth is not commonly known in a particular culture, it can still be a hook, using to communicate complex ideas simply. We saw that in the way that Donata Schoeller used the story of *The Princess and the Pea* to make such a bridge to her key point about ‘freedom to make sense’.

Here is what Donata wrote:

#### ***Freedom to make sense’ Dr Donata Schoeller***

*‘The princess can see feel a point she cannot yet demonstrate but felt sense it. Layers of habituated ways of saying something... get in the way.’*

*‘Freedom of speech that is disconnected from lived experience produces inflammable material: Freedom of speech needs freedom to make sense with methods that can bear complexity and clarify layers of meaning.’*

Writers, poets, speechwriters and others often draw on old sources – it’s one way of entering into the implicit, using, as Donata said, *methods that can bear complexity and clarify layers of meaning.*’

In this instance, Donata uses the story quite deliberately and openly.

There is another way to use stories, myths and legends to find fresh ways of saying more, particularly when dealing with the big themes of life. By holding a familiar story in awareness, one that seems to speak to your current situation, you can draw on the implicit intricacy that is already in the story, built up over many generations, in different versions and retellings, to say more about what you are working on now, in this new situation.

We touched on this in the poem by Leanne O Sullivan, *Leaving Early* where she drew on the Irish legend of *The Children of Lir*. It is often used as a symbol of love, of transformation, endurance, the power of the human voice and more, many of the themes of the modern poem.

It’s important to note that the poem stands on its own, without us having to know one of its sources: that source helps the poet to say more about a situation that’s hard to express. For her own purposes, she explores and draws out the implicit intricacy of the tale as it helps her to capture that sense of mystery and the other-worldliness of the whole situation, with her husband literally in another kind of world, in a coma in the critical care unit of a hospital.

In the page below, see the (very shortened) story of *The Children of Lir* side by side with the poem which you might like to explore further how Leanne drew on the story and yet, at the same time,

Saying More of What You Mean, TIFI Highlights. Mary Jennings, April 2022

created a poem that speaks to our time, particularly this time of pandemic, although it was written several years ago. In this example, the legend is inspiration for the poet, not the audience as such.

### Explore the source for the poem

#### The story: *The Children of Lir*

*(Extremely condensed version)*

The barebones of this Irish myth is the story of four children who, through a spell cast by their stepmother, Aoife, were turned into swans. She was jealous of the love her husband, Lir, had for his children. The spell could not be broken for 900 years. They were to ensure much cold, hardship and loneliness in this time as they travelled over sea and lake.

Their father was heartbroken. Aoife did relent when she saw his grief and allowed the children to have beautiful singing voices. Their father came to listen to them as often as he could.

One of the four children, the eldest, was Fionnuala. She cared for her siblings by taking them under her wing. The name Fionnuala means the 'fair shouldered one.' 'Finn' being fair or beautiful and 'ul' means shoulder. The 'shoulder' of a bird is its wing.

The story goes that after 900 years the children landed back home and returned to human form. They immediately became old and frail. An addition to the story was they were cared for by a monk who baptised them before they died. They were buried beside the lake near their home.

The story is part of a larger cycle of stories (*Over Nine Waves*). It is one which many people in Ireland would be quite familiar with it. It holds a place in our collective memory and culture. But it speaks to humans everywhere.

It is often used as a symbol of love, of transformation, endurance, the power of the human voice and more.

### Explore how the poet dipped into the 'implicit intricacy' to say things that are difficult to express

#### The Poem:

***Leaving Early*** Leanne Osullivan

*My Love,  
Tonight, Fionnuala is your nurse.  
You'll hear her voice sing-song around the  
ward  
lifting a wing at the shore of your darkness.  
I heard that, in another life, she too journeyed  
through a storm, a kind of curse, with the  
ocean rising darkly around her, fierce with  
cold, and no resting place, only the frozen  
rocks that tore her feet, the light on her  
shoulders.  
And no cure there but to wait it out.*

*If, while I'm gone, your fever comes down  
if the small, salt-laden shapes of her song  
appear to you as a first glimmer of earth-light,  
follow the sweet, hopeful voice of that  
landing.  
She will keep you safe beneath her wing.*

#### 4. **Patterns and Instances – noticing, using them and creating them**

Tapping into our own lived experience, can find patterns or examples in ‘instances’ (stories, examples, ‘the moral of the story’) that can provide us with ways to carry forward from something that is familiar (felt, recalled,) into something that is newly forming or not yet clear. And we can use this method to communicate effectively with others; we do this all the time in any case, e.g., we use phrases to explain something such as *‘it’s like that time when.... or ‘what comes to me now is....’ - ‘well, it’s like that in this situation I am talking about now’*. In other words, we are drawing on our lived experience to say more about new or current situation.

The practice, as outlined here, is an encouragement to do what we do quite naturally, only much more deliberately and in a structured way. Our experience is valuable; we have something to say that’s valuable for the world and we have lots to learn from others’ insights.

#### **The power of instances – they carry patterns we can use to carry forward what wants to ‘life forward’**

- ▶ Instances are as useful as concepts, Gendlin says
- ▶ They carry THE PATTERN of what’s needed to carry you forward
- ▶ They are more than a generality – they bring the implicit with it
- ▶ They are small stories that carry intricacy – your intricacy
- ▶ They can work you AND for the wider world

#### **Using instances on a common topic – saying more about it**

We began to see how ‘instances’ in our work together that allowed us to say more about the topic of ‘friendship’. (See the contributions from our session at the end of these notes).

When you want to write about something or say something, first reflect on all the times that you have had ‘instances’ of this -notice what memories come, stories, little unexpected things you find yourself thinking about.... what is the pattern THERE that you can bring to HERE: there is treasure there that you can use now, if you explore it fully. Below is a one way to work on ‘instances’ which we used at the session.

#### **Opening up the concept of ‘friendship’ using instances**

1. Pause, allow all about ‘friendship’ just to be there, all about that
2. When you find a memory, story, example, an INSTANCE coming, recall ‘all that’ so you have it again, all the detail and be aware of what aspect is strongly there now. Note (briefly) about that the story/memory but we are looking for the general pattern.
3. **Now, dropping the story, what’s the general pattern in this instance**, the general pattern in your story might be: ‘friendship survives years of separation’/ ‘friendships can be fragile’...)
4. Repeat 1&2 twice more so you work with three different instances and identify three (or more) different patterns or facets if you can.



You already here many different aspects, facets, patterns about friendship that you can share (and there is more).

**Suggestion: Use this method to say more about any topic. Start by finding instances or experiences about it, find the patterns or core elements in those instances and use these to communicate your ideas, based on your lived experience.**

### 5. On 'Naked Saying'

"What do you mean?" is a question we may be asked about something we are trying to say but is new in some way – but we know it has implicit precision – but it's not yet fully articulated perhaps. We might need new, fresh language that can, in time, add to the store of things-that-can-be-said.

Gendlin says in *Thinking Beyond Patterns*, "We feel a need to answer with clear categories and known meanings. We defend what we said by claiming that we "really" meant those clear categories. If we cannot say we meant *them*, if they don't cover what we said, then we are *uncovered-naked* in what we said...."

*Naked Saying* is the *kind* of saying that we don't define in terms of the usual kinds (categories, cleanly patterned distinctions). We first say something 'nakedly' so to speak; then, they may become part of our story of knowledge: 'implicit intricacy' is one such naked saying.

Here's another example:

"*Follow the smiling thought*". It's not a usual kind of sentence, but it captures something that Frans Sandberger and René Veugelers observed in their work with silent/withdrawn children. When they followed the thought or behaviour that made the child smile, they used this as a way to connect with them. "*Follow the smiling thought*" is a new way for Frans and René to explain their work with young people. They have broadened this to give everyone the invitation to 'follow the smiling thought' – to sense into what is not yet known but brings you joy. See what emerges for you as you develop your ideas and thoughts.

### Summary: Ways of Saying More of What You Mean

- ▶ Pausing
- ▶ Openness
  - ▶ Using (...slot) to find more words
  - ▶ Using paradox to keep an openness so more can come
- ▶ Working with the implicit – that which 'talks back' – honour it
- ▶ The power of myths and stories – using them, reinventing them, re-telling them for your own purposes: they carry intricacy.
- ▶ The power of instances and patterns for articulating your own experiences about a particular topic allows you to say more.
- ▶ We can have 'naked saying' - new terms that say what are. They are new because they don't fit existing categories, so we create a new category or kind of saying.

- ▶ From private to public – it's important to bring our experiences to the world, they are valuable: we must take 'the freedom to make sense'
- ▶ We have ways to do that – we have explored some here – there are lots more

### **The Hare's Corner – enriching the environment**

The term, The Hare's Corner is an old farming expression for the corner of a field or an area of hard-to-reach rough ground was 'left to nature'. A new project from Burren Beo ([burrenbeo.com](http://burrenbeo.com)) has a project to help farmers to create pocket-sized habitats – mini woodlands, mini orchards and small ponds in these areas to promote bio-diversity and climate change resilience.

***Suggestion: What's in the corner of your mind that you want to say more about? Perhaps you can use some of the practices we explored together to help you? You can bring diverse experiences to the world, creating a richer environment for everyone.***

These and more practices will be explored in courses to be offered in the autumn, with opportunities to try these out for yourself, on areas of interest to you.

Below, please find the summary of your rich contributions to the session on some of the topics we explored. Thank you!

Mary Jennings, Spring 2022

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## Contributions and comments from participants on topics shared

### 1. To see the world in a grain of sand - exploring the implicit intricacy

- The formation of the earth, the history in the many grains
- The repetition of shapes at different scales
- In small there is big
- Implies all the other trillions and trillions of grains, the entire atomic components and the reality system of those atomic elements
- A grain of sand is a connection to all that has come before and all that will follow
- The inter-connectedness of everything
- A most complete system
- The grain of sand exists because the universe is
- It's warm within and cool underneath...space is relative and even here among so many peers and yet I am whole, complete within myself
- Feeling the anguish of others, yet not quite the collective unconscious
- As above so below
- Everything in the universe implies all of the rest of that universe. You could take a grain of sand and build the whole universe again, using the information that is implied.
- Memories of beach holidays and the resonance of that
- Moving from the bottom of the ocean to the desert
- The tiniest element brings the wholeness
- To see the ocean in a wave
- Sand comes out from stones broken by the weather elements. Sand is where the sea splashes
- The shore, where land and sea meet "On the shore of endless worlds, children play"  
*Tagore*
- Like seeing with the eyes of a child
- You have to pick it up. Hold it close. Look with eyes that are not designed for this particular task. You have to trust that the doorway has something on the other side.
- Sand could come from an asteroid from long ago, and came to the planet during the dinosaurs,
- Power of the human mind to interpret reality
- The grain is in contact with other grains and with other grains, that are in contact with the shore, with the water, and on and on....
- Aeons of movement, of building up and tearing down, of grinding, of rolling, of being still
- Whirling atoms of minerals in relationship suspended
- Movement across time and oceans
- It was part of a gigantic Mountain, travelling through oceans and times

## **2. Paradox: A Lighthouse is... and is not...**

- Exposing and hiding
- A lighthouse is a warning and a protection. It is not a guarantee of immunity to running aground.
- A wonderful precision
- One pointed but not all-encompassing
- Is alone and is connected to all the ships
- Hope and peril
- A beacon and is not beckoning
- Is floating nearby. You can climb the stairs and use it any time.
- Earth and sea
- Constant and intermittent
- Switch on and switch off
- Giving direction and not telling you where to go...
- Coming home and going out
- A wise man and not a fool.
- A comfort and is not safety

## **3. On Friendship – patterns (core elements, qualities) discerned from specific instances**

- Friendship survives conflicts
- Friendship can show us a better way to handle something that may need healing in ourselves
- Care for each other's dreams
- Awareness of each other's aliveness
- Friendship is a mutual freedom to share what is close to the heart and know there is mutual caring
- Friendship is a sense of safety and trust with another
- Friendship is original sharing that is specific to that relationship, original to it that is created in tandem in a series of instances that point back to that relationship
- Being able to be a complete support in a situation of great grief
- Friendship is a container that gets stronger and deeper through more listening and sharing, more intimacy
- Friendship is a dance with caring, trust and mistrust
- Loving leaning towards each other - like trees - happens without thinking
- Friendship is being more than one separate individual
- Feeling accepted and sharing the love of nature and art while sharing and listening deeply with one another
- A knowing, deep look into the other's eyes, not needing words
- A transcendence of the notion of 'what's yours' and 'what's mine'.
- Real friendship remains alive, like a tree; but can become a monument - something you visit and are loyal to

- Friendship has a 'future' synchronicity
- Friendships take time to build
- A simple and practical kind of help in a time of great sorrow
- Friendship is a heart connection that can happen in an instant
- Warmth, welcome, recognition, back-and-forth, building something together
- Listens and stays with the whole
- Recognition as in: This person is one of mine
- In friendship, I feel a similar and unique vibrational tone. This vibration, this energy, felt familiar and I recognized this person as "friend"
- Friendship - mutual felt experience, feeling more connected to myself, making me alive and world becomes alive too then
- There are two things for me in friendship: liking and commitment. I can like someone, but when there is no commitment, it is not a friendship. And I can be committed to someone (for example in a work context) but if there is not enough liking that won't become a friendship neither
- Friendship can be an immediate ease in mutual recognition
- Friendship is navigating together in a shared interest toward more and more discovery
- Friendship is a dance of reciprocity offering and receiving within our capacity
- You can feel friendship with someone who does not feel the same
- And liking and commitment can change over time, this why friendships can be fragile- or why they can grow

#### 4. General points

- I'm loving the idea that the implicit intricacy talks back. Like we are having an exchange in relationship with the intricacy. I've felt this, but didn't have language for it. Such a gift.
- A very joyful way of playing with language & exercising finding implicit meanings, thank you!
- A whirlwind tour. It would be wonderful to have more time and practice together, e.g., Focusing conversations.
- It helps us be in the world in a more authentic way because we are engaged in a living way
- Was helpful and enjoyable. Helpful because it is something I can use right away. I really like the section on using instances and taking this from the TAE process.
- I am really looking forward to using this in my own writing, a memoir that could use more opening up
- I feel inspired to "hold-open" thoughts and ideas, and not rush to understand it. I'm excited to explore more in relationships and communication and in my work.
- Experiencing ... Creation of Meaning ... beautiful whirlwind tour with Mary and everyone today - thank you and best wishes
- Validating, thought-provoking and soul-nourishing, thank you. Off to practice...

- As someone who walks through life wearing my implicit intricacy “on my sleeve” (i.e., noticing/exploring the complexities of a situation) I often find others who become frustrated when they only see things in “black and white” .....So many ideas to play with out in the world!
- Like TAE in a nutshell
- Particularly love the "finding the Hare's Corner" as a way of being
- Letting this sift through will take time
- Seems that a key here is being alert to our habits of speech and writing. What do I want to mean? and pause to sense.
- I need time to go deeper and try to really integrate it all. Thank you very much!
- I love your focus on the power of instances. This has been incredibly helpful to me. Thank you.
- Thank you, Mary, for showing us how you use TAE. Very much appreciated being here.
- Thanks for your wonderful tour of entry points into the intricacy
- "The person in there" ... "the Corner where something grows"
- Wonderful tones and living words