

The Weeklong 2022: An Experiential Point of View from a Participant

by Beth Mahler



A human experiment of a superhuman kind, this year's Advanced and Certification Weeklong lifted its voices Sunday to Friday, October 16-21, 2022, and was a truly magnificent worldwide Focusing event. This year marked the first ever hybrid Weeklong. The superstar coordination team of Beatrice Blake, Tom Larkin, and Dan Morten Schachter aligned schedules to successfully and simultaneously facilitate in Ireland, USA, and via Zoom. With the support and collaboration of Executive Director Catherine Torpey, Administrative Assistants Elizabeth Cantor & Rita Kirsch, and the many contributing Coordinators and Zoom tech hosts, 60 participants plus 8 volunteer staff from 26 countries (in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa) attended together. The team skillfully created an immersive experience of connectivity and community for Focusers around the globe. We truly lived the practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Participants were guided through a stream of ongoing felt sensing, Focusing attitude practices, new learning explorations and education through a plethora of workshops. Advanced Focusers, along with our newly emerging and graduating class of 2022, Certified Focusing Professionals, Trainers, and Therapists, took time to receive the gifts of Focusing while offering the gift of attuned, fully-present listening to classmates and workshop participants.

If I were to give you the essence of this Weeklong, it would be this: Incredible & Edible: A Restorative Pause to Runwind. Of course, you may not fully understand this sentence. You might be reading this and perhaps consulting a dictionary to define or translate, where you'll find all the words - incredible, edible, restorative, pause - and their many meanings. But as any Focuser understands, when you get to chapter eight in Living the Process Model, new words form: runwind. As Focusers, we let this happen and even embrace its integral part in the living process. You won't find "runwind" in any dictionary, because it came from a uniquely defining moment in my Focusing history and felt sense experience. It guides me through the way to distinctly define and understand that which can only be described with this precise word. This new word

captures a microsecond of explosive energy (of the good kind); rewinding into past experience memory while being in the present moment, while moving forward in life experiences. It captures the essence of exercising the physical and emotional body toward healthy living by going in the opposing direction that is habitual or patterned-thinking behavior. This is so we can “check” the felt sense and let it move us in the direction of self-realization and actualization.

Full disclosure here: I was skeptical of participating in the experiment of 2022. And I was too exhausted with Zoom fatigue to do much of anything to help support the Contributing Coordinator team this year. Luckily, I have had five delicious experiences at past Weeklongs, prior to the pandemic. Because of this, I knew the group of Coordinators and the community of Focusers would allow me to engage and question the experiment and what it had to do with living my life. What I knew clearly was I NEEDED an in-person Weeklong to restore my Zoom-fatigued body, mind, and soul.



We were lucky in Tallaght Village, Ireland at the Dominican Retreat Center. Dan Morten Schachter and Tom Larkin hosted, facilitated, and held space in caring, feeling presence. Our first night in Ireland, Tom shared a historical treasure with us - that this very retreat house was the home of many Focusing classes, workshops, and gatherings led by Ed McMahon and Peter Campbell, who generated BioSpiritual Focusing in their very own ‘chapter eight’ many years ago.

A special thanks to the team of Coordinators and Collaborating Coordinators for all your hours of effort and volunteerism to make this year’s Weeklong successful. What was felt deeply was your care in taking into account time zone differences and our human needs for nourishment: giving us time to eat, walk the labyrinth, pause in meditation, sleep,

engage in structured and unstructured time for Focusing partnerships, walks in nature, in-person and Zoom workshops, singing and dancing, yoga, ukulele, and new learning.

The home group time each day provided us with a place to land, rest, and be present to our ongoing experience, tapping into what wants to grow in each of us. Giving opportunity each day to partner and Focus inward in a group space, Dan Schachter held the ongoing thread in my home group by bringing our curious attention to instances of transformation.

The virtual Living Room was a new idea and nourishing space to pop in for informal connecting time on Zoom. This proved to be essential for me and contributed to a small

BIG example of the caring, attuned presence that was skillfully thought through by the Coordination team.

Initially, in heading off to Ireland, I felt torn in three directions and unsure of where to go. I had a wanting to be present with two of my graduating students in person in Ireland, and a wanting to be fully present to my five graduating students online by Zoom, and a wanting to just be a participant after a lengthy stretch of nonstop teaching and training with the absence of in-person Weeklong participation. Before I chose a direction, it was important for me to Focus with this felt sense of “torn in three directions,” and a wish for human cloning was realized. The International Focusing Institute was already making this possible.

One of the highlights of my week was the Living Room hour on Thursday night. As I sat with Michelle Krenzeloek in the real-life living room, which was where our Home Group was held during our in-person week, we popped into the virtual living room on Zoom. There we created a breakout room with four other graduating students who were participating online all week. It was the night before the certification ceremony, and a delighted and heartfelt sad joy washed through me. The moment was but a glimpse into how these magical and precious human beings were going to runwind out into communities in their corners of the world. In those corners they would hold new spaces and places for human healing and growth, to energize and potentialize a caring presence and the Focusing attitude for many lucky humans, who will be gifted with their presence.

Another meaningful experience for me was spending this week of Focusing community with a mentee of mine who has been with me on Zoom for a year in a training course. We finally got to meet in person! Also meaningful was to be witness to the first in-person meeting of the Irish Focusing Network, a group which has only known each other by Zoom for several years.



Life does not happen without glitches. In a Focusing Weeklong, it is amazing to see the energy of human compassion, empathy, and resourcefulness rise to the surface in participants. Every glitch is met with a smile. Focusers get right down to being curious about its synchronicity, what gifts it has to hand us, and what learnings of life experience it offers.

Whether the world is flat or round, one thing is true: with a grassroots group of Focusers and Executive Director Catherine Torpey at the helm, everything is possible!

Wishing all the new graduates lightness as you step, and clarifying vision as you look out at what the world needs from you. With a willingness to not-yet-know where you're heading, and the forever-support of your mentors and colleagues, RUNWIND in a multitude of directions!



Beth Mahler

A special thanks to Beth Mahler for capturing her experience of the Weeklong so beautifully!

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