

MEETING NOTES April 11, 2017 - discussion of the ILC's proposal for naming Coordinators:

PRESENT:

From the ILC: Akira Ikemi, Hejo Feuerstein, Roberto Larios

Others: Catherine Torpey, Heidrun Essler, Jim Iberg, Jane Quayle, Nada Lou, Sherry McDonald, Ria van Hage, Aukje Strandstra, Beatrice Blake, Suzanne Noel, Heather Rogers, Tine Swyngedouw, Christel Kraft, Monica Perez Iturraspe, Derek Mc Donnell

NOTE ON THE NOTES (from Catherine): I have tried to capture the flow of the conversation, without attributing comments to the speaker, except where it seemed necessary for clarity. I tried to convey the meanings in short, clear sentences, both for brevity and so that those using Google translate will (hopefully) get accurate translations.

Akira opened by simply asking participants to make any comments or ask any questions regarding the document.

Sometimes people start with one Mentoring Coordinator and then move onto another. What role would the first one have in the Support Team?

Response: Maybe we could invite previous mentors to be part of the Support Team

I'm concerned about the cost to the CNT. How would the CNT pay for so many people?

Response: That needs more thinking, but we had imagined that the members of the Support Team (other than the Mentoring Coordinator) would be volunteers and not be paid.

What about specialties such as Children Focusing? Would there be designations of "Children Focusing Coordinator"? And what about FOTs -- are they included in this process?

Response: Yes, FOTs are included. For specialization, maybe it will be like a physician's license; first, they are all MDs, and then they move onto specialties.

But WHO will say "Now you are a Children Focusing Coordinator?" Who will say, "Now you are an FOT"?

Response: As a next step, we might need to think of having a board for Children Focusing, and a board for Art therapy, etc.

Response: But even from the beginning, the way Focusing is taught can vary based on the specialty. The way an FOT teaches Focusing, even from the beginning, can be very different from the way someone teaches Children Focusing, for instance.

As we talked about specialties, there seemed to be a sense in this group that having one designation of "Coordinator" makes more sense than having specialties designated. Those in this meeting seemed to lean toward the idea that many will have specialties, but their title would be simply "Coordinator."

WHAT should a Coordinator be in the future? In some places it's just a trainer for trainers, and in other areas it's a promoter of the experiential approach. I think we need a group of people (and I think it should be the Coordinators) who carry forward the Focusing approach in the world. This means that a Coordinator should know more than just their special field. They should be an expert on the broader issue of Focusing.

It's also about representing the Institute. The criteria are important for clarity about the relationship between the Coordinator and the Institute and what the mutual responsibilities are.

There is a vague statement in the list of criteria which refers to "other qualities." What does that mean?

Response: It is useful to have a vague statement because there are always things you can't list. If you don't have a vague statement included, then it leaves the impression that every possible criterion was listed.

I like the idea of having some kind of periodic review of the Coordinator. Maybe every few years, a Coordinator should check in. Is it a lifelong status? Some people withdrew from the community in 2013-2014 when there was so much contention. How do we want to deal with that type of situation?

If someone stops paying dues, are they still a Coordinator? These kinds of questions have been debated for a long time. I think it needs to be discussed, but some things (such as the question of dues) probably are up to the discretion of the Executive Director.

The whole idea of what a Coordinator is will be different after this is adopted. This document would mean that anyone who becomes a Coordinator in the future would be committed to actively working for the promotion of Focusing in the world. There

would be an initial commitment as part of the reason that this person would be promoted. In the past, Mary and Gene chose people that they HOPED would do that, but now we are making it a requirement.

That brings you back to the criteria piece. If you're taking on the role of Coordinator, you need to be clear about what you will fulfill. It's important to have clarity in the role, to make the expectations explicit.

Catherine: The Strategic Plan will be published soon from the Board and ILC. The plan raises the issue that we need a series of conversations to clarify the role of Coordinators and the relationship with the Institute.

The Coordinator who makes you a Coordinator is meant to make it clear to their CNT what a Coordinator is. Mary and Gene never made it clear. There isn't such a thing as "spelled-out" criteria.

When the document talks about "qualities," it says "commitment to decisions and guidelines made by the community." WHO is the community? Who gets to decide who decides?"

Response: I think the idea is that the Coordinator is agreeing to remain in conversation with the community, and not to simply say, "I am going to do whatever I want." It's not an effort to make people obey, but rather, to remain in conversation. This meeting is an example. By coming here, with your ideas, you are acting in a way that respects the community, even if you are here to disagree.

But WHO is the "community." Is it the "community of Coordinators"?

Response: Yes

Response from Catherine: From my vantage point, I am aware that the Board always has a role to play. If they were to see the Coordinators make a decision that they felt uncomfortable with, then they would have a duty to do something. So, we can identify the community as "the community of Coordinators," but this other piece has to be kept in mind.

Response: Perhaps the line under consideration ("Commitment to decisions and guidelines made by the community") should be clarified to say "the community of Coordinators." Or perhaps that whole line is redundant and should be taken out. The lines before it might say enough.

The wording isn't right. "Collaboration" rather than "decisions," and "respect for" rather than "agreement" are more in keeping with Gene's philosophy. "Respect for" is better than "commitment to."

There is nothing in this document about ethics. What if someone is a Coordinator and behaves unethically? We had a person once who had been named as a CNT. Many of us Coordinators were concerned that this person was not appropriate. With this proposal, who is going to decide if a CNT or Coordinator isn't appropriate? What happens if someone is not following the rules? Response: We have to create processes for that. Every organization has these issues. If you have criteria, you need a way to deal with it when people don't live up to the criteria. You need to deal with those issues in a way that is fair and transparent.

In Gendlin's process, ethics are richer than the ethical criteria. The felt sense is always richer than that. If we're thinking of a way to appoint Coordinators, we also need to be clear that it can be revoked. What would be the due process?

Response: Maybe when a CNT has a Support Group, there could be a way for people to contact that support group. If there were concerns, people could contact the Support Group. I think it would be helpful to have some kind of transparency; the Support Group could seek information about this person.

Response from Catherine: "How would you feel about some kind of representative body of Coordinators, maybe working in conjunction with the ILC, which could deal with questions like this? The thing about the Support Group is that it goes away once the person becomes a Coordinator. So maybe a representative group of Coordinators could deal with things like dealing with ethical lapses."

I would like to say, "There aren't any rules that the person would be breaking, but there could be times when what the person is doing could be crazy." We've had situations in the past, and we've dealt with it.

In a university, the faculty decides who is a faculty. The Coordinators should decide who is a Coordinator.

It would be helpful if each Coordinator submitted an annual review, so we would have an update of what each Coordinator is offering toward the world of Focusing. It could help with the accountability and also with keeping things fresh. It's also about the Institute holding the space through you -- the forward movement.

Akira ended by saying that in this meeting, he came away with the following:

- Clarifying the line which refers to "the community"
- Saying something about how we "un-name" someone as a Coordinator