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FELT SENSE LITERACY
 Mary H G.

Our Vision Statement says that our aim is to bring focusing to everyone, or to a “substantial proportion of the population in all countries, cultures, and social classes.” We are still far from this vision, although we are on the way.

We have made good solid steps towards creating a Focusing-Oriented Therapy movement, establishing FOT. It is being taught all over the world. Because Gene is a philosopher and decided to apply his philosophy and his *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* to psychology, the main development of focusing has been in psychotherapy. Most of our focusing teachers are psychotherapists. But therapy clients are not “a substantial proportion” of people in all countries, cultures and social classes.

We have long puzzled why it is that after learning focusing people often ask us this question:

“Why haven't I heard about this before?”

One reason is that focusing disappears into the therapy office when the door closes. The sessions are one on one and confidential. In therapy focusing cannot be seen by anyone else. Focusing has not been very visible. We have long worked with the *Changes model*, the *Partnership model*, and Community Wellness which do provide visibility, but psychotherapy has been our main avenue.

Another reason focusing isn't better known, is that it takes some time to learn. To become a trainer typically takes some years.

A third reason is that focusing cannot be described in words and concepts. When people ask “What is focusing?” Most of us become tongue tied, or we tell about the benefits. We tell how the body carries the situations, but this is not understood by people who don't usually attend in their bodies. Therefore our people tend not to talk about focusing. They don't tell about it in all their groups and organizations and to everyone with whom they live and work.

We have close relations and shared trainers with other groups that teach new experiential discoveries, such as NVC, DF, and others. Many focusing people have developed very effective combinations because they add to each other. One learns these with one's body. Learning any one of them improves how we are going to do the next ones we learn. And focusing greatly improves all the others. But most people find it impossible to communicate about focusing in other groups, so these combinations has been limited so far.

For these reasons: the limitation to therapy, the slow learning, and the difficulty of talking about focusing it has been difficult to launch a world-wide movement across all populations on the scale of “a substantial proportion” of all populations.

Now we think a new approach has been developed which will make a world-wide initiative more possible.

The pause:

From my “Revolutionary Pause” (available on the web page) William Hernandez has developed a way of teaching the pause. This does not include all of the focusing process, but it begins by teaching the body directly. The body immediately has access to a felt sense.

Their three-hour workshops take place in rural provinces as well as in the cities. The workshops involve simple interactional activities and eye contact. When the trainers return a month later, many people from the community are already practicing the pause. Officials from other provinces come to Quito to request workshops.

Part of our excitement about it is because through teaching the pause it takes so little time to become aware of a felt sense. And when one pauses, the silence is visible to everybody, and becomes contagious like yawning. There are no explanations or descriptions. One can communicate it just by doing it. It is simple, yet profound. So this can make it possible for us actually to spread the felt sense to everyone.

Collaboration with FECD:

FECD is a development corporation in Ecuador. William Hernandez is the CEO. He is also a focusing coordinator. Gene and I have been meeting weekly with William for a year now, to work out a collaboration. FECD will provide funds for a world-wide initiative.

Focusing coordinators or trainers who are especially interested may be invited to Ecuador to observe the workshops there. FECD will also send teachers to any of us who will arrange two or three three-hour workshops of 10 or 15 people. All participants need to be new to focusing. We know this way works with newcomers, but at the moment we are not sure it will work so directly with people who have had our more verbal training. There would be no charge to the participants.

We are always looking for ways to get focusing into an existing infrastructure such as a school system, so that it can be applied by everyone in that system. For example, in Argentina the national teachers union has published a book, and is now publishing a second one consisting of teacher reports of using focusing in class. We are ourselves now a world-wide infrastructure. We have hundreds of trainers in 49 countries. We can quickly get information to and from one country to another.

We would like to invite you to join us in this social experiment and to participate in shaping the world-wide initiative along these and other lines. Of course you would shape your use of it to your particular way of teaching.

Felt Sense Literacy:

We all agree that focusing is a natural process. It is a capacity of every human being. Making an analogy with reading and writing, focusing is something everyone should be enabled to discover and develop. To view it along the lines of “literacy” places focusing at the most basic level. It is something everyone can naturally have.

As a *natural process* focusing should not require money from people to learn it. To demand money from them would be something like corporations selling people their own water. We are able to offer a three hour workshop at no fee to the participants because we are being funded for the project. Focusing teaching and Focusing therapy are both done on a fee basis.

To teach this *natural* focusing should not require experts. People can share with others the pausing to get a felt sense. It may be hard for those of us who are therapists to recognize that focusing is not primarily a mental health practice. As something universal like literacy it feels different in the body. We experience it as grounded in this wider universal human function. *Reading and writing are universal.* It took a century from the first efforts to spread literacy to reach most people and that is still not complete. So we are taking small steps in a much wider sphere.

With the term "*Felt Sense Literacy*" we are launching a world-wide *Felt Sense Literacy Initiative.*

If this vision is exciting to you please send an email so we can discover how you might want to participate.

Please contact me at: mhgendlin@focusing.org or William at: whernand@fecd.org.ec

Warm Regards,

Mary

Marion Hendricks-Gendlin, Ph.D
Co-Director of The Focusing Institute
www.focusing.org
mhgendlin@focusing.org