

COMMUNITY WELLNESS FOCUSING A Work In Progress

Patricia Omidian, Ph.D. and Nina Joy Lawrence, M.S.

This paper describes a process of ‘Community Wellness Focusing’, which began in 2000 for Nina Joy and Patricia. As with any beginning, we had to start from where we were and with the needs of those in front of us. It came by taking the step in front of us.

*“The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began...”*

Bilbo... used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary... ‘You step into the Road, and... there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to’” (Tolkien, 1965).

FIRST STEPS

When we started teaching Focusing to Afghan refugees, we didn’t jump half way around the world to do it. We were already in Pakistan. Patricia worked as a psychosocial technical advisor for an Afghan aid agency and Nina Joy accompanied her geologist husband. Nina was a novice Focuser when it came time to take that step out of her door, which led to sharing Focusing with people who didn’t know it yet. Patricia and some Afghans came looking for something helpful so we worked together to find the way forward. From that experience we know that one doesn’t have to be an expert to start sharing Focusing.

Not being experts helped. We had no choice but to work collaboratively with those who wanted to learn Focusing, to find how to share it in this new context. Our first attempt was a half-day workshop for Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), the Afghan aid organization that was employing Patricia. It turned into a full day when the director, Abdul Salaam Rahimy, experienced how valuable it was and asked us to continue for the rest of the day.

HURDLES

It may seem from this retelling that the beginning was smooth and easy. It was not. Over the next five months Nina Joy met with any workshop participant who wanted to practice, following an individual counseling model of Focusing. We didn’t know how to set up an ongoing program that would spread out. We found that Afghans weren’t comfortable Focusing in pairs unless one of us was the companion. So the mode of spreading Focusing that came from our learning experiences — teaching through workshops or to individuals, and

then encouraging people to continue practicing in pairs — wasn't going to work there. Fear of gossip, a strong motivating force for social control, seemed to be behind the reluctance to work in pairs.

Changes groups didn't work either. No one had the leisure or opportunity to meet in a group of their choosing outside of work hours. So how were they going to practice? We found they did Focus alone sometimes, but that wasn't going to keep Focusing alive nor encourage it to spread. Eventually, Patricia and our Afghan colleagues found that people preferred sitting in community or work place groups, being guided by a leader, while doing their own individual Focusing. They liked sharing in the group afterwards about the inner 'guests' they met [more on this below] and the changes that came in their lives. We also discovered they would teach family members and neighbors, who then could Focus with them. Community Focusing came naturally from the Afghan way of living.

Just as we were getting started with this very tentative process, Nina Joy left for the United States. When Patricia continued teaching, she felt very unsure, and often wondered if she was doing more damage than good. The first time a group fell apart in tears when imagining their gardens during a 'safe place' exercise that we had devised, Patricia worried that she hadn't protected them. We didn't yet know the power of the 'Guesthouse' metaphor, which we had discovered in literature by the Sufi poet Rumi, and had used from the first day. We started to learn its helpfulness as participants showed they felt safe even with strong emotions *when they were being* the 'guesthouse' for their 'inner guests' who had brought the tears. For more about Guesthouse Focusing, you can find articles and a slide show about the Afghan work on the Focusing Institute website.

BREAKTHROUGHS MAY NOT BE OBVIOUS

Patricia's experience in aid work and development, as well as community mental health training programs, gave us the background we needed for community training. She also found ways to put little parts of Focusing into psychosocial training for classroom teachers and gender awareness training for aid organization workers. This breakthrough of adding bits and pieces of Focusing training to other ongoing training projects didn't seem special to us at the time. Abdul Salam Rahimy, director of CHA, knew it was important and encouraged us to continue.

We had many concerns. Would Focusing get confused with other processes? Would Afghan people understand? Would Focusing people disapprove because we were teaching what we called Focusing, when it was a few bits of Focusing added to other kinds of training. Eugene Gendlin and Mary Hendricks Gendlin wrote us with questions about our methods of teaching using Rumi's Guesthouse poem. They were concerned that Afghans might think that Focusing was just discharging feelings. From what we saw, that wasn't happening, but we carried our own 'worried guests' about all this.

However, by the time Eugene Gendlin spoke at the Focusing Institute Summer School in August 2006, he saw this way of spreading Focusing as a major breakthrough.

“I have a wonderful quote from Afghanistan. I think that the work being done there is probably one of the most significant things happening right now.” (Gendlin, 2007).

NOT SPREADING AND SPREADING

Where we thought Focusing would first spread out into Afghanistan turned out to be wrong: it didn't stay with the CHA aid organization. Their health-related field programs and media groups we thought were poised to take it into all areas of Afghanistan were not able to do so, for safety reasons. However, the support of CHA was crucial, as it provided the chance to develop and test ways of collaborative teaching that work in Afghanistan.

Focusing began to spread when Patricia incorporated the techniques into an International Rescue Committee's teacher training program and manual (Omidian, P. and Papadopoulos, N., 2003). Focusing was also picked up by the Afghan Ministry of Education to be included in their teacher training. All the training was given in a participatory model that encouraged people to share what they learn in their families and communities, so this took the teaching further. Next, Patricia became the Country Representative for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, the Quakers) and from this platform was able to move forward with institutional support. Trainings in psychosocial wellness and Focusing became part of the AFSC Afghanistan program, with staff trained in Focusing, community participation, peace building, and psychosocial wellness. Jerry Conway from Birmingham, UK, came to Kabul for two and a half months, supported by The Focusing Institute, to help in the training. Internships were developed for students from the Psychology Department of the University of Kabul. These young people have been key in spreading the process outward. UNICEF provided two years of funding to test Focusing and psychosocial wellness models in domestic violence programs in rural communities. By incorporating Focusing into 'community-based wellness' programs, spreading the model became much easier.

COMMUNITY-BASED WELLNESS

Teaching Focusing to village communities is like sharing hygiene or agricultural techniques.

Community-based wellness is a public health approach that comes with a number of assumptions. The first is that most illnesses are preventable, including various types of mental illness. The second assumption is that the community itself contains many solutions to its own health needs and already has many resiliency techniques. Finally, health is best achieved when it comes through a partnership of local prevention and caring treatment, clinical referrals where necessary, and hospitalization as the last resort. Our work in Afghanistan is based on these assumptions.

According to the National Mental Health Directorate for the Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan, over 65% of the adult population of the country is clinically depressed, with some reports placing the number as high as 98%. Yet, most individuals are functioning and

very few have the luxury to stop work — they meet their basic family obligations. Currently, there is only one Afghan psychiatrist working in the country and very few trained psychologists. International backup is very sparse. There are only three agencies that focus on mental illness. Their advisors are internationals on short-term contracts. Providing adequately for Afghan mental health through a primarily clinical approach is unlikely, given the lack of professionals and the security issues that exist.

Afghans' mental health problems commonly present as somaticized illnesses, and thus most mental health issues are dealt with at the local clinic, using the same medications that are prescribed for almost all complaints: antibiotics, pain relievers, vitamin B12 and diazepam (commonly known as valium). With most Afghans living in poverty, the money for such unnecessary medications is very dear. It means they have to forego some other necessity — like food or fuel. In addition, they use multiple local remedies, together with special diets, over the counter medication from the pharmacist without a doctor's advice, and visits to local healers or religious leaders.

In public health, when an illness affects a large percent of the population, it is assumed that a clinical approach would be inadequate to address the problem. To use the case of diarrhea as an example, if ten percent of the population of Texas (a state approximately the same size and with about the same population as Afghanistan) suffered from an outbreak of dysentery, public health officials would act in the following ways: 1) identify the cause of the illness in order to begin preventive measures; 2) treat most of the cases at the local level; and 3) refer the most severe cases to acute care hospitals (tertiary centers). Community measures would be sought to prevent further outbreaks of the illness. Reminders would be published regarding general hygiene and hand washing, proper handling of food and water. Within a short period of time the matter would be dealt with, and the remaining campaign would be one of prevention, probably including school health programs.

In contrast, Afghanistan, with its population of close to 30 million, most of whom live in rural areas and have limited access to any health care, cannot cope with any major outbreak of illness from a clinical approach. They struggle to contain polio, TB, malaria, leprosy, and maternal and child mortality. The scarce resources are spread very thin, and there are few qualified health providers for these dreaded diseases.

The situation for mental illness is much more dire, as the first round of funding by international donors excluded mental health. It is now on the agenda and is funded, but at low levels, with a focus on clinical care for the severely mentally ill. Yet, most women admitted to the small mental hospital in Kabul are there because they are depressed and or tried to commit suicide. Those with illnesses such as schizophrenia are often abandoned by their families, left untreated, and locked up in prison-like conditions for the rest of their lives. There is clearly a need for a wellness approach that relies on community-based services that are accessible, cheap, and replicable. Such services help prevent and treat illnesses such as depression at the local level, and help families to care for those who are ill.

It is because of these numbers and because of the acute need for a non-clinical approach that the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) office in Kabul, as well as

other groups, started programs for mental health promotion and illness prevention. AFSC's various activities target depression, war trauma and family violence through a program that combines resiliency and Focusing. The training approach is participatory and tailored to adult learners. Community participatory methods are used because they are proven to work. As with any public health issue, community work is not done as an alternative to clinical care, as if it is second best. It is done because it gives better results and is more cost effective.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Adults learn best within participatory processes that recognize their own knowledge, experiences, and capabilities. The web is full of sites for workshops, workbooks, and documents on this topic. One excellent example was developed for gender awareness trainings by OXFAM (UK). We recommend a search of the Internet to browse the possibilities. It is important to pay attention to methodologies that allow participants to think through their own answers, within cultural contexts that are familiar to them, and to come to group consensus in most cases. One of the formats for participatory/adult learning includes the "training of trainers" or TOT. In this model the learning style allows participants an opportunity to practice teaching as they learn new material.

Community participation is more than a training style; it is also an attitude that has a very important Focusing component. The attitude is one that assumes group processes carry with them a special dynamic that works best when people listen to their inner selves. Community participation means that one will not know the result of the process and should be willing to allow the group to work through whatever issues come before them, including community peace and justice or psychosocial wellness. As each person in the group brings to the group his or her own experiences, expertise and knowledge, Focusing allows the group to develop as a unit toward a common goal as they check inside and pay attention to their inner places. In Afghanistan we invite people to find their own state of being (that Cornell and McGavin call Presence, a state recognized in Islamic mysticism) that is without judgment, without bias, without goals. This helps them stay 'centered', and keeps egos at bay, allowing amazing things to happen in the group.

EXAMPLE: RESILIENCY, A GREEN STICK, AND A DRY STICK

An example of participatory learning is our module on resiliency. We often start our workshops with a discussion of resiliency, and since most of the Afghan languages don't have the word, we start with an illustration using two sticks, one fresh and green, the other dry and brittle. The dry stick represents someone who has had so many hardships in life that they don't think they can face another problem without feeling like they will be destroyed. The group talks about the hardships they and their neighbors have faced because of the many wars in their country: loss of home from rocket fire, death of family members, having to move to new locations to escape fighting, or fleeing the country to live as refugees.

The dry stick is bent a bit at each difficult thing they contribute, and the snap when it finally breaks illustrates what some people feel will happen to them when the next problem comes. Then we talk about resiliency, and of all the people we know who have survived and seem to be doing well. The green stick is bent a bit after each difficult thing is named again and shows that it does not break when it is bent even double. It represents resiliency as it returns to its normal state when the bending pressure is removed.

At this point the group of participants are divided into small working groups to brainstorm and list all the ways people in their society and culture show resiliency. If the group isn't literate, they gather the list orally or with pictures. The lists can be quite long. They are encouraged to find as many words as possible, without evaluating what is written. After about 10 minutes the small groups come back together and discuss what they have gathered. Afghans list such things as belief in Allah, hope for the future, ability to laugh and to cry, and the ability to help someone in need, as signs in their communities of someone who has resiliency. As we introduce Focusing to groups, we introduce it as a resiliency skill that helps them to remember their connection to Allah, and to touch into a full range of emotions in a safe way.

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLNESS

In our training groups in Afghanistan, and now in Pakistan, we make use of positive adaptive models within the framework of psychosocial wellness. Psychosocial wellness is a concept in common usage among development fields, international aid work, and education. It is a resiliency model that holds that each individual is part of a community and needs both psychological wellness, as defined by that culture, and social connectedness in order to be a healthy person. In societies like Afghanistan, group connectedness is vital to mental wellness and trauma recovery. Studies by Miller et al. (2006) confirm this in research that shows those with the strongest social connections, in spite of traumatic events in their lives, are the least depressed and score in healthy ranges on various mental health tools. In our community training, in what we call the Level 1 class, we spend time on psychosocial wellness as a way to help people understand their bodies' physical reactions to stress and trauma, to find ways to help repair damage within social connections and to promote resiliency (Omidian, P. and Miller, K., 2006). We include activities and discussions on

- stress and stress reactions
- awareness of what is normal in their culture (such as ranges of hierarchy, individual decision-making, or group orientation)
- listening skills
- conflict resolution
- peace building

Much of this is introduced from a Focusing perspective, allowing participants to check inside to see what comes, before meeting in small groups to discuss the topics.

USE OF METAPHORS: LOCAL IMAGES, GARDEN, SAFE PLACE AND GUESTHOUSE

We feel that an important reason for the success of this way of teaching is the use of a locally recognized metaphor that is easily identified by the Afghan participants. Because it is a Muslim country, Islamic imagery and practices are used to help people feel comfortable and to sense the connections to which we refer. For example, in order to talk about “going to the center” we can refer to the *ayat* (verse) from the *Quran* that says: “God knows you better than you know yourself because He is closer to you than the vein in your neck.” This points to the connection to the divine within each person. And Afghans “know” that this is true, that they can find solace and a space for waiting inside. This use of local imagery and metaphors helps people connect Focusing to their own lives and places of meaning inside themselves.

Gardens have both metaphoric and real connections to Afghan culture. In the Quran, paradise is described as a garden of endless beauty, alive with flowers, trees and flowing rivers. We start the Focusing training with an invitation to go to a Safe Place inside. The process starts with an invitation to visualize a place that is calm, safe, and beautiful. Then we lead the group in a body scan that brings them into the center of their body. At this point we invite each person to bring that image of their safe place into their center and to sit there in that place. Most describe feeling relaxed and calm, some fall asleep. Those who cannot find that safe place inside the first time are reassured and encouraged. By the second day of the trainings, all participants have been able to find and be in their own safe place.

For Afghans, their safe place is often a garden or a place under a tree by a river. The Guesthouse is usually felt to be in front of this safe place. In a world as unsafe as Afghanistan, locating a place inside that gives refuge is important for most with whom we work. And Patricia is finding that it holds an important place for Pakistanis as well. This Safe Place allows the Focuser to find the connection to the divine, where infinite support can be found. From there they move into their Guesthouse.

The metaphor of the Guesthouse, with the place inside that is safe and beautiful, gives the space needed to hold whatever comes in a way that Cornell and McGavin call the “radical acceptance of everything,” with no goals, no bias, no judgment (Cornell, 2005). In Farsi this is: “*beh hadaf, beh taraf, bedune qazawat*”. It allows the Focuser to hold whatever comes in a kind and gentle way.

CULTURAL METAPHORS THAT FACILITATE FOCUSING

Many Focusing Teachers practice spotting natural Focusers. They are able to facilitate Focusing by helping people see, name, and strengthen their abilities. Focusing-oriented psychotherapists are trained to find the near-Focusing moments in the therapy hour and give space for these to unfold, gently inviting the person to slow down, take a pause, and sense inside instead of racing on with the story. We discovered we can do something similar for cultures when we find the cultural metaphors that encourage Focusing. In literature, poetry and religious practice over thousands of years, we can find reference to humans pausing and kindly paying attention to their inner process. These references can be supportive of

Focusing in a particular cultural context. One example is the poem we use to teach Focusing in Afghanistan. “The Guesthouse” was written over 700 years ago by the Sufi poet, Jalaludin Balkhi, known in the West as Rumi, known in Afghanistan as Maulana:

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond (Translation by Barks, C. and Moyne, J.
1997).*

We find metaphors that encourage Focusing have these characteristics:

- Pausing
- A big space
- Strong, gentle, curious awareness
- Sensing or noticing
- Allowing something to arise

In this way we can be with anything about our life situations, not getting identified with aspects of ourselves. The metaphor helps if it invites this strong, peaceful attitude around all the uneasy places and makes room for more to come about the whole situation. The Guesthouse metaphor fills this space for the Afghan, who values a guest as a gift from God. Rumi himself connected the metaphor of hospitality for guests to paying attention inside to inner “guests” that come in our bodies.

The Guesthouse metaphor has worked in communities that have a strong value of hospitality. It has now been used for seven years to teach Focusing in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and more recently in Turkey. Afghans, like other people in high context cultures, live their lives continually making time and space for guests coming to their homes. They treat the guests honorably whether they like them or not. They know in their living tissues how to do this, so they can easily turn their kindness to guests inside themselves when they learn of this possibility. They can get quiet and spacious and kind even with big guests that can feel overwhelming. For more about Guesthouse Focusing find articles and a slide show about the Afghan work on the Focusing Institute website.

EXAMPLE:

Maybe someone feels, “I’M SO ANGRY I WANT TO KILL HIM!”

If they are using the Guesthouse metaphor they might then notice,

“Oh, maybe it is a guest rushing into my inner guesthouse. Ah, I can stop, and sit with it...”

The Focuser then sits and becomes the guesthouse and host for the angry guest. The inner felt sense of this metaphor can automatically bring a big enough space that anything else about the situation can come too. There is room for the violently angry part AND the part that cares about the other person, AND the part that doesn't want to end up in jail, for example. The Focuser sits, sensing/listening... knowing that a gift is coming, that a guest is a messenger from beyond. The Focuser receives what the guests want to tell or show. The whole situation may start to feel different in the body. The person becomes able to move forward in life, in ways that work better for everyone.

We are exploring to find metaphors that tend to facilitate the learning of Focusing for a whole group of people. Once a metaphor is found that helps the Focuser make space and hold what comes with kindness, we can anchor in that metaphor and collaborate with other people in that group to develop it further. In this way we can share focusing through something that is familiar and powerfully felt inside each person in the group.

EXAMPLE: THE NATIVE AMERICAN METAPHOR

Dr. Catherine Swan Reimer, an Inupiat, born in Katzebue, Alaska, now living in Portland, Oregon, developed a helpful metaphor during a Level 4 Focusing workshop with Nina Joy in April, 2008. As a psychologist, Reimer finds that a sense of deep belonging in the natural surroundings is still strong for herself and most Native Americans. Because of their own experience of the land around them when growing up, she and others can feel their own home place as a tundra, desert, or forest inside themselves. People can find space, peace and grounded strength in their bodies from sensing how they are in their natural place. In this attitude, they can invite into their awareness any animal, plant, wind, or other source of nature that might want to speak to them. In this natural setting they wait. Something may come or speak or show them something. Through this process they can listen, sense, describe and check with what comes, in a Focusing way.

Reimer uses the book, *Who Speaks for Wolf: a Native American Learning Story*, by Paula Underwood and Frank Howell. The story was passed down to Paula Underwood through five generations of her family's Native American tradition. It shows the importance of listening for all the animals that might have a message. This makes it an excellent metaphor for Focusing because it also encourages attending to the whole situation, not acting from partial awareness.

EXAMPLE: NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATIONS AND FOCUSING IN EL SALVADOR

Beatrice Blake tried to replicate our lesson plans in El Salvador, but found that using Marshall Rosenberg's Non-violent Communication seemed to work better in that culture. She now sees NVC as a potential door into Focusing. The NVC invitation to say one's own feelings and needs can make a pausing time and take people to that inner sensing process.

The Salvadorans were very receptive to learning skills to deal with conflict and enjoyed the lively and engaging NVC teaching aids that Beatrice shared. She intends to return to El Salvador to teach NVC as a door to Focusing, and to incorporate our use of culturally appropriate metaphors to help people understand the Focusing Attitude. (Further details can be found in the El Salvador Blog on the TFI website.)

In a similar manner, Ed McMahon and Peter Campbell use metaphors especially meaningful to Catholics and other Christians in Biospiritual Focusing, (McMahon and Campbell, 1997) and Rex Ambler finds ways of using Quaker metaphors that are helpful for Quakers (Ambler, 2002).

TEACHING FOCUSING THROUGH METAPHOR

Focusing can be taught through the use of metaphors. After reading the Guesthouse poem, we talk about the meanings it carries within the Focusing paradigm. We include:

- Safe Place
- Listening with no taking sides, no goals, no judgment
- How to sense inside and find inner guests
- How to spend time with guests in an inner listening way
- How to describe the guests and check the description with the guest
- How to find attitudes we are identified with, and invite them in as guests
- Other Focusing skills

EXPERIMENT FOR YOU TO TRY IF YOU WANT

People are experts in their own cultures and groups. It is important to take time to sense what could work for you and others. Working collaboratively in groups can support wellness for people and communities. We suggest that you might want to try this experiment to find a metaphor to use as a support for Focusing for yourself and others.

To start you might want to center as you usually do for Focusing and then invite a felt sense of each of these qualities or actions:

- pausing...
- a big, inclusive space...
- strong, gentle, curious awareness...
- sensing or noticing...
- allowing something to arise...

Then you could invite an ordinary life situation to come into your awareness that would bring these sensations in you...

Wait and when something comes you could explore it, sense it, describe it...

When it feels right, you might want to try it as a container for Focusing.

EXAMPLE: THE JAZZ JAM SESSION METAPHOR

In a workshop sponsored by The Focusing Institute at Garrison, New York, June 20-22, 2008, 'Focusing and Psychosocial Wellness: A Community Resiliency Approach to Working with Trauma', we experimented in the above way with finding helpful metaphors that might speak in the cultures of the international participants.

When Nonie Potocki from New York gave that invitation to herself, she found a jazz jam session place where there was time for pausing, a friendly space for waiting with interest and goodwill to see who showed up. Anyone could come and bring their instruments. All were welcome. In experimenting with this herself, she said what came most easily to her was the whole feel of the music that was played.

(Nina Joy's voice)

I tried using the metaphor that Nonie discovered as a Focusing metaphor for myself. I sensed myself being at the same time the jam session space and also the listener that hears in an accepting and interested way. I waited for what might show up. Something came like the beating of a steady drum, with the words "take a break, take a break, take a break..."

So I acknowledged the player in me that really wanted me to take a break from writing. I waited for more... A slow, low cello feeling came, showing me how tired something in me was. I said hello to that, and stayed with it a bit. I sensed something else, a background of ... oh my gosh! ... a steamroller type thing, rolling over everything else, with a huge intent to just keeping on working! It felt like a dull, insistent roar in my body. Oh, hello to you too...

As I was checking the description back with that sense in my body, it shifted. It was not a steamroller anymore, but the pushing-gushing strain of birthing. Ahhhh ok. Suddenly I felt free to take a break from writing this article, knowing the creative process won't get lost. It will be here when I get back. The jazz jam session place certainly worked as a metaphor to support my Focusing.

WHERE FROM HERE?

As we experiment with finding metaphors that work for whole groups, we experience that they are not as widely effective in cultures that value individual identity more than group identity. At the same time, we notice people in individually oriented cultures like those in Western societies, do continue to belong to and value groups. Metaphors that speak to groups within a culture can be found that may help when inviting people of those groups into Focusing.

We would like to encourage Focusing people to look around in their own communities and see where they might feel drawn to offer Focusing in functioning, ongoing groups. Many Focusing Trainers are already doing this. We would like to broaden the effort to include more of us, since we have experienced that novice Focusers can also begin to share Focusing effectively if it is done collaboratively. What steps might be in front of you?

The steps right in front of us now are completing a manual on the Community Wellness Focusing approach, and responding to requests for this way of teaching. These have recently come from people in Turkey, Kenya, Croatia, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Iraq, Canada, China, Indonesia and other places.

During the Garrison workshop referred to above, a wonderful international support group, the 'Community Focusing Lab', was developed collaboratively. We support each other in taking Focusing into our communities in a psychosocial wellness way. The formation of the lab is another example of co-creation, the collaboration basic to this approach. We meet in phone conference once a month, have small working groups in between, and let each other know what we are doing through e-mail and a blog. One of the small working groups has gathered around encouraging and helping the manual become a reality.

CONCLUSION

This process of community Focusing and the use of metaphor has been slow and very discouraging at times. It is only with hindsight that we can see the amazing direction from which we have come. Neither of us had any expectations when we started, except to help Afghans cope with lives as refugees. We had no idea how far it would go, but we knew it was a path worth walking.

*"The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Until it joins some larger way,
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say" (Tolkien, 1965).*

Bilbo and Frodo were little, ordinary folks, who took small steps. With lots of help from all kinds of *other* beings, together they accomplished a huge undertaking that healed Middle Earth. Many of us little, ordinary people are taking Focusing into different niches of our own societies, and different areas of the world. We are grateful for the efforts of each one and all the supporting people also. We are all doing this together, and the journey continues.

ENDNOTE

We appreciate Eugene Gendlin, the philosophy wizard, who found this ancient process happening and described it for our time, and who has so enthusiastically supported our

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