

The ‘Ladybird Guides’ to Gene Gendlin’s books *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* and *A Process Model*.

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These were written for the second, third and fourth years of the course ‘Focusing and the Power of Philosophy’ which I taught with Rob Foxcroft and Barbara McGavin on the Isle of Cumbrae in 2002-2004. The ‘Ladybird’ title is taken from a series of short books that was popular in the UK in the 1970’s - each gave a brief, but accurate and informed summary of knowledge in a particular field.

I have left them as they were for the Cumbrae course; a modified version of the material on *A Process Model* can be found in ‘A brief guide to *A Process Model*’ in *The Folio: A Journal for Focusing and Experiential Therapy*. Vol 19, No. 12 (2000-2004), pp. 112-120. Gene Gendlin read this through and suggested some changes, which I incorporated.

The Ladybird Guide to *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*

At the heart of Gene Gendlin’s philosophy is the notion of ‘interaction first’. Earlier he used the term ‘encounter’: the idea is that encounter is more basic than what does the encountering, that the interaction is more fundamental than the things which interact. Another way of putting it would be to say that things cannot exist as entirely *separate* things, and people exist only in relation to a world which includes other people. A poem by Rilke catches something of this (even in translation):

Alone I can never be.
Others before me going
and away from me flowing
were weaving, weaving
at the I that is me.

Human experiencing is through and through relational. We are born into, initiated into a network of human relationships. Yet we have our own identity. Indeed this identity is fixed by our place in the network - only you were born at just that time, in that place, from those parents. In principle someone else could have all your *characteristics*, but they wouldn’t *be* you. You have a unique place in the world.

The individual human being has their own special experience - the experience from just *there*, where they are. But their experience connects with, and wouldn’t exist without, the human network into which they were born. How does *that unique experiencing* connect with the network of human society, with the ways of thinking which characterise society, with the rules, conventions and forms of society, with

language? It sometimes seems that language and the rules of society can entrap our experiencing, but this doesn't have to be so. Language can *express* our experiencing, rather than imprison it. (Rilke's poem expresses an experience). On the other hand it can sometimes seem that the uniqueness of our experiencing isolates us - 'no one can really know what anyone else feels'. But again, it need not be so, and again it is through language (including music, dance and other symbolic forms) that we are not alone. The relation between experiencing and language in this broad sense is central to the human form of being; it is also the central theme of ECM.

These general and rather abstract themes lie in the background of ECM; they are what, for me at least, give book its philosophical interest. But ECM doesn't just discuss the theme of the relationship between symbols and experiencing in a general way; it shows in some detail how the relating of experiencing and symbols works in practice. In Chapter 3 we can see this happening. The first two chapters are more concerned to demonstrate that there is such a thing as 'experiencing', something which people interested in Focusing are unlikely to doubt! So one approach to ECM would be to start with Chapter 3.

Gendlin gives not one, but *seven* different ways in which symbols relate to experiencing:

(1) Direct reference. There is the sort of case where we refer to an experience which we have, without describing it. For example, 'that feeling I had when I met Cedric - I can't put it into words' But you have already put it into words! You have just *said* 'that feeling....' You haven't used words to describe the feeling, but you have used them to *refer* to it. Notice how in a way 'that feeling' wasn't exactly there until you got hold of it with the words - *that specific feeling* comes with the words. It is an odd half-way case between creating something and simply noticing what was there all along. Language is like that; it is odd, it is creative. This theme runs through ECM.

(2) Recognition. Next there is the kind of case where there already is a symbol available to us, for example a word such as 'ashamed'. When we encounter the word it calls forth in us a particular kind of experience. The relation here between experience and symbol is that the symbol pulls out the experience. Rilke's poem pulls out a particular experience. But also, when we encounter familiar situations the situation pulls out a particular kind of experience and that is what makes it a familiar situation, a situation which we recognise. We look at the chess board, and say 'That's checkmate'. The familiar situation which we are in elicits the same experience which the word 'checkmate' elicits. Situations can in this way function like symbols. There is a relation between the symbol (or situation) and our experience through which we experience a sense of recognition when we encounter the symbol (or situation).

(3) Explication. This case is the converse of (2). When we read Rilke's poem it elicits a particular kind of experience which we can recognise once we have experienced it. But when Rilke wrote the poem, the relation between experience and symbol worked the other way round. He started with the experience and then found

words that would express, render, or in Gendlin's term 'explicate' the experience, that is, render it explicit.

(4) Metaphor and (5) Circumlocution. Often when we have an experience we can explicate it (make it explicit in words or other symbols). If we are to do this the words must already be there for us to use. For instance, we stay for a moment with that feeling we got when we met Cedric, and then realise that it was a feeling of being ashamed. 'Ashamed' calls out just that experience which we got from meeting Cedric; there is a fit - *that's* what I felt. But sometimes there is no word available which quite fits the experience. Then we have to bring into play words which have their own meanings (the experiences which they usually call up), but which can be used in a new way to call up *this* meaning. That is what happens when we make use of a metaphor. There are two aspects to the use of metaphor, which are related to each other in the way in which recognition and explication are related to each other. First there is the kind of case where we read a poem which contains a metaphor, such as 'weaving' in Rilke's poem. 'Weaving' has its own meaning in connection with cloth manufacture, but there are aspects of this meaning which can be applied in quite new situations. In particular there is the aspect of different strands of material being brought together to form a whole. When Rilke thinks of himself in all his aspects the image of weaving draws out a particular way in which he can see himself - as having been woven by those who came before him, by all those who have contributed to him being as he is. When *we* read the poem the relation between the words and the experience works the other way round: we read the word 'weaving' and this draws out in us that felt sense of having been woven which Rilke started from. Gendlin use the term 'metaphor' for the relationship in which we start from the word which then creates the experience. The other relationship, in which we start with the experience and create the metaphor, Gendlin calls 'comprehension': the metaphor pulls together or comprehends the whole intricate thing which we were feeling.

(6) Relevance. Understanding the meaning of a symbol always involves understanding other meanings; symbols come in connected webs of meaning. For instance the understanding of 'weaving' in Rilke's poem involves the understanding of cloth-making, which involves the understanding of people as needing clothes, and so on. For any particular felt meaning, such as the meaning of 'weaving', there are other meanings which are relevant to the understanding of *that* meaning. These other meanings come into the having of *that* meaning.

(7) Circumlocution. We saw that (5) (comprehension) relates to (4) (metaphor) in the same way as (3) (explication) relates to (2) (recognition). The last category (7) (circumlocution) relates to (6) (relevance) in a similar sort of way again. In relevance (6) we start with the felt meaning (of, say 'weaving') and enquire into what other meanings are relevant to understanding it. In circumlocution (7) we create the possibility of someone else understanding the felt meaning by talking around it, by referring to this and that, to people wearing clothes and clothes needing to be made from strands of material put together in a criss-cross sort of way, until the person we are talking to gets a feel for what 'weaving' is. Then if the person understands what

weaving is, but doesn't yet understand how a person can be woven by others, we need to talk about the different aspects or *strands* of a person and how these connect and sort of ... interweave...you see...? Here we are creating a new meaning for 'weaving' out of old meanings.

Gendlin is concerned throughout with this theme of the *creation* of meaning. Meaning is not just invented, but it is not just there waiting to be discovered. One aspect of this is that we can't just choose (invent) what the meaning of our lives will be in the way some existentialist philosophers seem to think is possible. But nor are we just as we are with no hand in being what we are. We *create* our lives, much in the way that a poet creates a poem. This, I think, is one of the central themes of Gendlin's work.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the creation of new meanings, and Chapters 5 and 6 go more deeply into the philosophical implications of it all. The Introduction, and Chapter 7, explore the relevance of the discussion for psychology and psychotherapy – these are less philosophical chapters and can be read separately, which would be an alternative approach to the book.

The Ladybird Guide to *A Process Model* - Part 1

In a note to Rob Foxcroft Gene says "I do know that the Process Model is difficult to read partly because I don't explain what I am doing until the last section of III and the section IVAd. These might be put first. I also think that some part of VIII is understandable near the beginning because that's where the concepts come from."

The last section of III is the one titled 'Some motivations and powers of that model so far'. In this section Gene says that his project is 'to create an alternative model in which we define living bodies in such a way that one of them can be ours'. And - 'We can speak from living, and we can make rudimentary concepts from speaking-from, and especially from focusing and from the process of explication. Since these are possible in reality, they can lead us to an alternative set of "basic" concepts of a "reality" in which we would not seem impossible.'

Gene believes that our current ways of thinking don't really allow for the existence of human beings in the world. Our current ways of thinking separate 'the world' from 'what the world means to us'; once that is done 'what the world means to us' is *outside* the world. Gene wants to bring meaning back *into* the world. But there is no place for meaning if we think of human beings as physical (physiological) systems. So to make room for meaning in the world, the world has to be re-thought. Gene's concepts constitute a framework for this re-thinking.

The central concepts which he develops are drawn from focusing and the process of explication. It might seem strange to base a whole way of looking at the world on *these* things, but it is not really so. Focusing and explication are activities where there is the creation of meaning, so that in them we have the crucial thing which is left out

of the current way of thinking. If we can develop a new way of thinking which allows for focusing and explication, then we have a way of thinking which allows there to be *us*.

In focusing a felt sense forms which carries us forward in a way that is different from the way we are carried forward in logic or mathematics. In these disciplines what was there, such as '7+5' carries us forward to '12'. Or, from 'All men are mortal' and 'Socrates is a man' we are carried forward to 'Socrates is mortal'. The premises of a valid argument imply its conclusion. But in focusing, in explication, in the completing of a poem, the next step is 'implied' in a different sense of 'implies'. This new sense of 'implies' is one of Gendlin's central concepts. Implying is the converse of 'carrying forward': if one event implies another then the second event is carried forward by the first.

Gendlin introduces this new sense of 'implies' in Ch 2, where he says that hunger *implies* feeding. This is not a logical implication (it is not part of the meaning of 'hunger' that it is always followed by eating). Nor is it a causal implication (since hunger can occur without eating following it). It is rather that eating is what will satisfy hunger, that hunger will continue until eating - or something else (such as intravenous feeding) - takes place. In the hunger there is the implying of feeding, but what 'feeding' amounts to can't be specified as any particular form of event. Feeding has to be defined in terms of 'that which removes the implying of feeding'.

Gene says (p. 9) 'hunger *is* being about to search for food, find it and eat it'. Hunger is both an occurrence and an implying. In Gendlin's scheme nothing is just itself - it always implies other things. In this way his scheme is different from the one that is familiar in science. In science we usually start with separate things (e.g. atoms or cells) which can in principle exist on their own. Then complex bodies are seen as being built up from these elements. Of course there are connections between the elements in the shape of the laws of physics or chemistry, but the laws could in principle change without the elements changing. In the 'atomistic' view a thing doesn't imply anything beyond itself. Everything is, in Hume's phrase, 'loose and separate'; the connections are supplied by us, by our theories.

In Gene's scheme there are no loose and separate entities. Each entity implies others. One 'other implied entity' is that which will carry forward the implying. For instance eating is what carries forward hunger. But there are also other implied entities - hunger implies a body, and a body implies an environment. There is a distinction here which Gendlin suggests lies at the basis of our concepts of time and space. He sees these concepts as being less fundamental than the concepts of implying and occurring. Time is a more abstract notion which derives from the fact that there are implying which are carried forward by occurrences; space derives from the other implying. Rather than begin with space, time and matter, as in current ways of thinking, Gene begins with implying and occurring. The detailed discussions of space and time strike me as some of the most difficult parts of PM, but I think we need to appreciate

that what Gene is doing is quite radical, so that we can get some feel for why PM starts in such a peculiar way with the b-en terminology.

In his introductory note Gene says that he will ‘lay down some terms as if they came out of nowhere’. Of course, the terms do come from somewhere - they come from what is needed if he is to be able to talk later (in chapters VII and VIII) about meaning, focusing, and human things generally. But at the start he wants to construct some concepts for talking about living things which will later allow there to be human beings and meanings in the world. There is an important sense in which PM starts with Chapter VIII, with the fully human world in which we discover/create meanings. This world can’t be constructed out of the physical-biological world as it is presently understood. So Gene reformulates the physical-biological world in a way which inevitably seems very odd if we don’t know why he is doing it.

Section IVAd-2 is the next section in which Gene pauses to reflect on his strategy. He says ‘Our model begins with concepts which begin with interaction’. This is the principle which he calls ‘interaction first’. In the model there are no fully separable things, events or processes. Everything is what it is through how it is affected by other things, which themselves are what they are through how they are affected by the first thing. Gene’s story of the IF cans (in IVAe) may help us to get a first feel for this. It is the same point as is touched on by Paul Weiss on p. 26 of ECM. (But remember that the IF cans are only a machine analogy. They differ from ‘interaction first’ in that (1) the adjustments are made in sequence, whereas in ‘interaction first’ or ‘inter affecting’ everything is there in one time instant, and (2) the adjustments are made from outside the system in accordance with a human goal, whereas in organic inter affecting the ‘goal’ emerges as what Gene calls the ‘focaling’ of the inter affecting. See IVAf for ‘focaling’.)

In this section (IVAd-2) Gene says that ‘interaction first’ applies as much to temporal as to spatial relations. The present is a carrying-forward of the past, and the past implies the present. What we experience in the present clearly depends on the past, but what we experience as the past depends on what else is happening in the present. The notion of a time sequence in which events occur in sequence without inherent connections is a late development in human thinking, which belongs with the notion of a physical world as made up of independent particles moving in empty space. The real, lived world, however, is one in which nothing exists independently of its relations with everything else.

In the sections following IVAd Gene continues to develop the concepts he requires. Sections I-V of PM are his general model. The model applies equally to bodily processes, behaviour, culture, language and focusing. In Chapter VI he uses the model to rethink behaviour, in Chapter VIIA he uses it to rethink prelinguistic human culture, and in VIIB does the same for language. Roughly speaking, Chapter VI is concerned with the world of animals; in it Gene develops his ‘interaction first’ notions of behaviour, consciousness, perception, and motivation. These form a cluster of concepts which have application in the case of animals (sentient beings), but not in

the case of plants. Human beings come into the picture in Chapter VII. Here all the concepts which applied in Ch VI still apply, but now there is another conceptual 'layer' which is associated with the *symbolic* ways in which human beings interact with one another. Chapter VII is concerned with what one could call 'traditional' ways of being human; the kind of human life which is rooted in standard cultural and linguistic forms. Gene sees the modern world as going beyond such forms (while retaining them in the same way as the human level 'retains' the animal level). The modern developments involve a growing awareness of *alternative* conceptual schemes, with the result that there is no longer a single agreed tradition of what will carry us forward. Focusing can be seen as a response to this situation, in which all the available ways of seeing a situation are brought together in a felt sense. Then action carries forward from the felt sense rather than in any of the traditional ways. This way of being human (Chapter VIII) is different from the traditional way (Chapter VII).

One way of thinking about the structure of the book is, then, that Chapters I-V lay out the new conceptual scheme which centres around 'interaction first', and show how it applies to organisms in general. Chapter VI applies the scheme to animals, Chapter VII to 'traditional' human beings, and Ch VIII to 'modern' human beings. There is an important sense in which the concepts developed for organisms in general are retained, but elaborated on, in the case of animals. Then the concepts which apply to animals are retained but elaborated on in the case of traditional human beings, and similarly for the transition from traditional to modern human beings. This scheme, in which the human world elaborates the animal world, and the animal world elaborates the vegetative world is very similar to that of Aristotle (Gene is among other things an Aristotelean scholar).

However the way in which each level is transformed into the next is unique to Gene's philosophy. Roughly speaking, the transitions occur where a process at one level is not carried forward at that level. It is familiar in focusing that a process at the VII level (traditional human) may not be carried forward by anything which is traditionally (culturally) available. For instance, in a traditional society the response to an insult might be to throw down a gauntlet, which would lead to a duel, and hence to a resolution of the conflict. But that is hardly an option in contemporary society. One might, in more metaphorical ways, throw down a gauntlet, but the modern human being will more likely reflect on what really would be the best thing to do here, on what it would be authentic for *me* to do, being me. They would in short do something like focusing. The environment no longer provides a traditional solution to the problem, so rather than make a symbolic gesture (as one does at the VII level) one does something quite new (focusing - level VIII) which nevertheless involves symbolising. One symbolises to oneself all the possible ways forward, but does not yet act on them. Action, when it comes, comes not from the traditional symbolic context but from the individual's felt sense.

But just as focusing (VIII) presupposes symbolising (VII), so symbolising presupposes behaving (VI). In chapter VII Gene outlines the very complex way in

which symbolising can arise out of situations where behaving does not carry one forward. The natural behavioural response to an insult would perhaps be anger and attack, but in human cultures such 'natural' responses may not carry us forward effectively. Instead of actual fighting, something is said, or gestures are made, and the situation carries forward on that (VII) level. Gene shows how this transition is prefigured in animal threat displays. Nevertheless, speaking or gesturing is still a (specialised) form of behaviour.

Then again, behaviour presupposes biological tissue processes. Speech and gestures, like any other behaviour require muscle movements and nerve firings. During some portions of an organism's life behaviour is not required. (Plants don't have behaviour at all - their needs are satisfied without any moving around). However, in the case of animals, the environment does not provide for all physiological needs without the necessity for behaviour. The physiological processes associated with hunger stir the animal into action which continues until feeding has taken place. Then the animal rests, becomes more like a plant for a while. The behaviour is the animal's way of carrying forward physiological processes which are carried forward in plants without behaviour. With social animals the patterns of behaviour become increasingly complex: the animal may not only have to hunt but also to threaten another animal which is about to steal its food. If it is a traditional human being it may express this threat verbally, and if it is a modern human being it may reflect on whether this is a situation which, for them, is best met by assertiveness or patience, or ... something more subtle but more appropriate to *this* situation.

However, even the modern human being focusing on their dilemma has to say *something*, saying something involves physical behaviour, and physical behaviour involves tissue changes. Focusing in itself involves the manipulation of symbols, symbolising involves a complex background of changing behavioural potentials, and these involve physiological changes. It is for this reason that focusing can ultimately be seen as a physical process which has physical effects. Of course it *must* have physical effects if a person is to be different in their actual living. But what the 'physical' is, has to be re-thought in a way which allows us to understand how focusing can do this.

I have said something about the structure of PM insofar as that structure relates to the different 'layers' of bodily process, behaviour, culture, language and focusing. There is much more to the details of each of these: in the chapter on behaviour (VI) Gene shows how sentience and perception can be seen as arising out of behaviour that does not involve consciousness, and how this involves a new kind of space (behaviour space) in which the animal moves. In VII he discusses how symbolic and linguistic forms of behaviour can develop and, with them, the forms of space and time with which we are familiar. In VIII he elaborates the theory of focusing on the basis of what has been developed previously, showing how in focusing we again enter a new kind of space with its own characteristic objects. It becomes clear here that focusing as we know it is just one example of a way of experiencing associated with all

creative innovation. There is much more also in the section (I-V) on the general model, some of which will be familiar to readers of ECM.

In addition to all this there is another theme running through PM. As we have seen Gene pauses at times and reflects on what he is doing. What he is doing comes from Chapter VIII, the chapter in which creative innovation is discussed. PM is itself a creative innovation; Gene builds PM through developing concepts in a way that is theoretically underpinned by the material in VIII. He himself sees the method of concept formation (which is formalised in TAE) as more important than the theory which he has developed to explain it. This is the same attitude as that which he takes in *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, where he says “If you don’t like this theory, don’t let it get in the way of the experiential steps which the book describes. They are not based on theory. You don’t need the theory for them...Theory does not represent what “is”. Theory makes sense, but sense-making is itself a kind of step which expands what “was”. That opens to further steps, and these need not stay consistent with the theory.”

For more on Gene’s theory see Appendix B of *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*, from which the above quotation is taken, and also the theory section of his paper ‘The client’s client: the edge of awareness’ in RL Levant & JM Shlien (eds) *Client-centered Therapy and the Person-Centered Approach*. New York: Praeger (1984). These are much easier to read than PM itself, but of course they omit much important detail. You might also look at Greg Walkerden’s useful summary of PM ‘How I read the structure of the PM text: what is a “kind” of process?’ This is on the Focusing Institute website.

The Ladybird Guide to *A Process Model* - Part 2

This part is in two sections. The first section is taken from my chapter on Focusing-oriented psychotherapy in *The Tribes of the Person-Centred Nation* (edited by Pete Sanders, PCCS Books, 2004). It is meant to give an overview of the main themes in *A Process Model*. The second section goes through some of the themes in more detail, especially material in Chapters V – VIII.

Section One

Gendlin sees human nature as being essentially interactional. A child is born into a relationship with the world and can survive neither physically nor psychologically without interacting with the world. There is a level of interaction which we share with inanimate things: as physical beings we are the way we are through the interplay of physical forces which constitute and act upon us. Then there is the level we share with plants: our bodies are complex organic systems in which each element is what it is partly as a result of the impact of other elements, which are the way *they* are partly because of the way the first element is. In Gendlin’s terminology a living organism is an ‘interaffecting whole’ which cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. The

inter-affecting extends beyond the physical boundaries of the organism: organisms are what they are partly because of the way the environment is, and the environment is the way it is partly because of the way the organism is.

Then there is much that we share with sentient animals, in whom there is a new kind of interaction: an interaction between the animal and how it *registers* or perceives its environment. Unlike a plant, an animal reacts not exactly to its environment but to how the environment is *for it*. If the animal's temperature-regulation system is faulty, for example, it will behave in terms of the temperature it *registers* rather than in terms of the actual temperature. With sentience comes a whole new kind of interaction with the world. Finally, human beings have a mode of interaction with the world which involves our construing it in terms of concepts and general principles. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that we can guide our lives by general principles which we can learn from others, without the need always to start from scratch by ourselves. For instance, we may know that it is not a good thing to drink salt water in order to quench our thirst, and this may make a difference to whether we survive when shipwrecked. All that which comes through language and tradition comes to us in terms of general truths or helpful principles, that is, the truths or principles of the culture which we are born into. But there is a catch, which is that where there are truths and helpful principles there can also be falsehoods and misleading principles. We can get caught in the general and fail to check whether the general principle really applies in our particular situation.

Gendlin emphasises that our situations are always more subtle and intricate than can be articulated in terms of general concepts. For example, suppose that a person is in a state which may correctly be described as 'angry'. That is an application of a general concept. Yet there is more to that person's experience: they *are* angry, but with an undercurrent of hurt, and not even exactly angry, but more full of resentment in connection with what was done to them, yet also angry with *themselves* for letting it happen, and upset because they have let this happen *again* when they had only yesterday realised that this is what they always let happen... There is an intricacy in the lived experience which is fully captured by the concept of anger.

For Gendlin, human life is an interplay between the rich, intricate sensed experience of our situations and the concepts which we employ to articulate those situations. It is an interaction between *this* - my immediate sensed experience now, and the forms or concepts in terms of which I express it. However, it is not as if my experience is sitting there, whole and complete, and just waiting to have the appropriate labels put on it. Immediate experience is not like that. It is something which prior to articulation has no fixed form; or we could say that the forms which are to come are there only implicitly. If we give our attention to our experiencing we can often sense something there which cannot yet be articulated adequately. (It can be articulated a *bit* just by saying 'I feel something there', and that is already to draw it a little into the realm of the explicit). But *what* it is cannot yet be said. Gendlin often uses the example of a poet who is trying to get the final line for a poem. The poet tries out various possibilities, but as they do so they feel - physically feel - the not-rightness of

these proposed endings. There is a physically felt sense that these endings are not right. They don't connect with that other felt sense of what the poem needs. In order to get a satisfactory ending (and it may never come) the poet has to stay with the felt sense of what is needed, and *wait* for what may come. When the right line does come there is a sense of release, perhaps a deeper breath - 'Ah! - That's it'. Now that the last line is there the poet may sense the need to *change* some of the earlier lines before the work is done. This last point shows vividly that one could not possibly get from the earlier lines to the last one by any process of logic.

In Gendlin's terminology the earlier lines *imply* the last line in a novel sense of 'imply'. It is not that the last line is determined by the earlier lines, but nor is it that any old last line would have done. There is an implication, but it is one that arises out of the felt sense of what has come before and of what is now needed. The example of the poet is just an illustration of what is involved in any aspect of our life which is not entirely governed by explicit principles. Much of our life *is* governed by such principles, and it would be foolish not to employ them when appropriate, but general principles, by their nature, are inadequate when we are faced with novel situations, or situations where we can all too clearly sense that none of the standard options are going to be satisfactory. In these situations we are stuck, and we have to let go of the general principles and familiar concepts for a while and dip down into the felt intricacy of the situation.

In that felt intricacy there is much that is implicit, and which may be of help to us. After all, we have built into our natures millions of years of evolution, and many years of experience with complex situations; also many imagined situations, situations about which we have read in novels or myths or biographies and so on. All this could not possibly be set out in an explicit way, but it is there in us, in an implicit interaffecting way which, if we will give it a chance, may give rise to a creative possibility. What emerges may not be *right*; we will have to see...how would it feel if I tried that?...Liberating? Constricting? What is the felt sense of this new possibility that has come? What, actually, does this new thing amount to? Even if it would be absurd to do exactly *that*, I might be able to find some non-absurd thing which still preserves the spirit of what has come.

In brief summary, Gendlin's view of human beings is that we are beings who are always moving between our own immediate individual experiencing and the *expression* of that experience in words, images, dance, music and so on, which allows our experiencing to be in communication with others' experiencing through its formulation in some way which is not just ours, but sharable. What we are able to share makes a difference to the cultural forms in which we live, just as much as the cultural forms make a difference to how we construe our experiencing. Human life is an experiential interaction process between what is private and individual and what is public and communal.

Section Two

Chapters I-V

I will try now to summarise the essential points in the first part of PM (chapters I - V), focusing especially on points which there was not time to elaborate on last year.

Gendlin's model is a *process* model. The more familiar model starts with individual things (such as atoms) and then develops the notions of change, and connections with other things. The things in that model are essentially separate, and are only linked externally through being existing in the same space-time framework, and being subject to the laws of motion. In this model the problem is how to explain change and interdependence within a basic framework in which the things (the atoms) stay the same, and are separate from each other.

In Gendlin's model the problem is the opposite: we need to be able to account for stability (lack of change) and for individual entities, within a basic framework in which everything is in flux, and everything depends on everything else.

The Process Model *begins with* change, process, interaction.

It starts with 'implying', which is already a concept involving connection and change. Into the implying something occurs, which may or may not carry the implying forward.

If the implying is not carried forward, the process is stopped, and the implying *remains the same*. This is the first point at which, in starting from change, we get to something which does not change.

When something occurs which resumes the process it is as if that something is 'recognised'. There is again something that is 'the same'.

We don't yet have the concept of a body, but there is already a distinction between the stopped process and the other processes which continue. Here is a first *separation* within the interaffecting whole.

We can say that the body is what continues when a process is stopped.

The body carries the stopped process.

Processes interaffect. They are what they are through being affected by other processes which have already been affected by them.

An occurrence is a focaling of all the involved processes.

pp. 75-7 Intervening events develop in a stoppage – Gendlin calls them 'stop/on's'. Some of these involve repetition or reiteration (leafing) - the first bit of the stopped process repeats with minor differences.

We will see this pattern itself being repeated at different 'levels' later – what is stopped at one level carries forward on another level.

The reiterations are versions of the stopped process. (They version that process).

(Consistently with the model, Gendlin tends to turn noun forms into verbs, so that we get terms like ‘versioning’ and ‘sequencing’).

80-82 There are two distinct kinds of change, that of interaffecting, and that of occurring. This is important, but needs some explanation:

Consider two processes, such as those of walking and breathing in some organism such as a bug.

Interaffecting:

Walking and breathing interaffect since the bug is an interaffecting system. The walking would be different if the breathing were different and vice versa. Any change in the walking is also a change in the breathing, and vice versa. Any change in walking happens at the same time as a change in behaviour, and that is the end of the matter. The walking and the breathing are two aspects of what is occurring. In interaffecting it doesn't take time for one aspect to affect the other. ‘This is basic to what an implicit order is’ (p.82). But if this were the whole story, there would be no *sequence* of changes.

Occurring:

Now suppose some dust falls onto the surface on which the bug is walking. This is an en-change which is not an interaffecting change (the falling of the dust is not caused by the bug). The bug's walk now stirs up the dust, and its walk changes because walking in the dust affects how its legs can move. This change happens immediately the dust falls, but nothing more happens as a result. In the new en the bug has a different walk. Again, there is no ongoing sequence of changes.

However, in reality there are both interaffecting changes and en changes, and it is this which generates the *sequence* of changes:

The bug's walk changes because of the en change. The changed walk stirs up the dust. The dust affects the bug's breathing. The changed breathing by interaffecting is also a change in the walk. This changed walk makes a difference to how the dust is stirred up, and that again affects the breathing etc.

The changed walk/breathing is an actual occurrence, caused by the en change. The change in the walk due to the change in the breathing is an interaffecting change.

Chapter VI

One kind of intervening event (occurring within a behaviour stoppage) is reiteration, where the first bit of the stopped process repeats. These repetitions version the stoppage. If there are many such reiterative processes we can think of these as a special sector of the organism. This sector is ‘pulsing’ (as if sending out radar

signals) and changes in the en or in the rest of the organisms body are registered by the changes they make in the pulsing.

The reiterative sector ('the registry') of the organism is thus especially sensitive to changes. It registers changes, both in the en and in the rest of the organism.

It is not only that changes in the en and in the rest of the body produce changes in the registry. Also, the changes in the registry produce changes in the organism - the organism changes; it moves as a result of what it is registering. These movements are not simply effects of en changes (like a hole being worn in a shell by the sea), they are movements the organism itself makes because of what it is registering. The organism is now *behaving*, not just moving.

Its movements are themselves registered along with the changes in the en.

93-4 A new kind of carrying-forward develops here. The behaviour is a version of the stoppage of a process. That process is still implied in the behaviour. If the appropriate en-aspect occurs the process will resume (in a sense the process 'is still there', it is there implicitly). It is as if the organism 'recognises' the en-aspect. (That is the old kind of carrying-forward). But while the stoppage is there, and the behaviour is occurring, there is a new carrying-forward: the organism's movements result in changes in the registry, which in turn affect the organism's movements. The organism's movements come to imply changes in the registry, and if these registry changes actually occur they carry forward the implying. If what is actually registered is different from what was implied then that behaviour sequence stops (the lamb stops at the cliff edge).

95 The organism now is registering the changes as it moves - it is *feeling* them. It is conscious. The registrations themselves can be thought of as *perception*. So far, feeling and perception occur only as aspects of behaving. (Feelings and perceptions separate from overt behaviour only come later, in Chapter VII). The behaviour continues until the stopped process resumes: this resumption could be thought of as the 'goal' of the behaviour (though this would be a 'too-early' use of 'goal'). We can also say that the behaviour is *motivated by* what would resume the stopped process.

102 Many behaviour sequences develop. They form a 'space' in which each has implications for the possibilities of the others. As we shall see, with the development of a new 'level' there comes a corresponding kind of space.

109 Behaviour sequences can generate stable objects, such as the registry of the bird when the cat chases it. Objects 'fall out from' the animal's behaviour. What these objects are for a particular animal depends on that animal's life and behaviour. Objects are not just there, the same things for all animals.

Chapter VII

122 Much behaviour occurs in relation to other members of that species. When a behavioural interaction with another species member is stopped, the first bit may still occur, and repeat. This is gesturing, 'the dance'. This is the beginning of the next level.

The first animal gestures and the second responds to that gesture. The first animal's gesture is a rendering, a versioning, of its current behavioural context. In responding to the gesture the second animal reflects back to the first this versioning of its behavioural context. The first animal which already has feelings and an awareness of its environment, now has some awareness of its own feelings.

This self-awareness happens initially only in the presence of another animal, but later such awareness can be triggered by objects which are relevant to the behaviour context.

At the same time a new kind of space is forming, a space in which there is the possibility of standing back from behaviour, symbolising it without actually performing the behaviour. This kind of space is very different from behaviour space, which is constituted by all the possible implications of one behaviour sequence for the others.

The new kind of sequence involves both self-awareness and awareness of the looks (sounds, images) of things. This is the beginning of the form of awareness in which there are *kinds* of things - a look is the look of *that kind* of thing, although 'kinds' have not yet fully appeared.

Sounds are similarly the sounds of kinds of things. Moaning is the sound of that kind of behaviour context - it is how the wounded animal is expressing its situation. It is inherently connected with how the body of the animal is at that point. But then other things can begin to have looks or sounds. There can now be the moaning of the *wind* as well as the wind itself.

Sounds, especially, come to express behaviour contexts, and this is the beginning of language. At the start the sounds are ikonic (onomatopaeic) symbols - they are the sounds *of* that behaviour context. But as the sounds of various behaviour contexts develop and interact in new contexts, the direct link between sound and context becomes attenuated. The sound patterns begin to form a system of their own. Nevertheless language is not a matter of mere convention; it is rooted in the body and behaviour processes out of which it emerged. (This is why rituals can have deep effects).

At the same time the interactions between the animals become more prominent and significant. Instead of gesturing (communicating) being an occasional pause in action, action now becomes oriented towards communication. The world is now transformed into one in which there are *kinds* of things which are determined by human interaction-contexts. This is the FLIP (165), after which we are in a fully human world.

Summarising up to the end of Chapter VII:

Body-process can be stopped, and behaviour then emerges as a detour in the process. The behaviour is still body-process, but has in addition a new form which is 'layered over' the original kind of body process. The behaviour is a version of (it versions) the stopped body-process. It is a sequence of changes in the stopped process (it sequences the process).

Similarly behaviour can be stopped, and gesturing, symboling, language then emerge as a detour in behaviour. Symboling is still behaviour, but has in addition a new form which is 'layered over' the original kind of behaviour. The symboling (gesturing, speaking, dancing) is a version of (it versions) the stopped behaviour. It is a sequence of changes in the stopped behaviour (it sequences the behaviour).

Chapter VIII

Now in the same way *symboling* can be stopped, and as before something new emerges. Symboling is stopped when we can't find the word (image, gesture, etc) which will carry us forward. This is the situation we are often in when focusing. As in the other cases of stoppage, the first part of the usual process occurs – we try out first one word (image etc) then another. But we are beginning to do something new here: we are sensing into 'all that which we can't yet express', and awaiting what comes. There is still symboling going on, but it is going on in a new way, just as in gesturing behaviour is still going on, but in a new way. And just as gesturing brings with it a new kind of space (symbolic space, image space), so focusing brings with it a new kind of space. It is a space in which we can stand back from our experiencing *as a whole*. This space is different from image-space, which belongs in VII. We know for example that if we imagine (visualise) putting a problem down while focusing, there still remains the question of whether it has *really* been put down. It can be put down in VII space without being put down in VIII space.

It is only with the concepts of VIII that Focusing can be described adequately. But because each level is built on previous levels, changes which occur through Focusing are at the same time changes in symbolisation, in behaviour and in bodily process. That is why Focusing can change us.