

## SPECIAL FOCUSING EXERCISE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS SITUATION

[Exercise to carry out on your own while self-isolating, as a group Zoom or Skype]

### PRIOR TO FOCUSING IT IS BEST TO RECALL:

In Focusing we distinguish between an emotion and a 'felt sense'. The felt sense is wider and refers to a **whole body sensing** right now in the present. When people fall into an emotion or an altered state and get swallowed up inside, Focusing tries to help them **stay back and find the right distance** from which to be in relation to whatever the whole thing is. Mary Hendricks, Ph.D.1998]

Focusing starts with something **SLIGHT** – not simply feelings. It was discovered that we can often disregard a **SLIGHT** subtle bodily quality that often has meaning. One must be willing [to touch a territory that is not clear](#), **staying with something that is not clear is when you are doing Focusing – to go beyond your conditioning**. When Focusing be willing to go through what Gene called a 'murky zone'.

- **Starting from INSIDE bringing freshly something out that did not exist before.**
- Once the unknown takes centre-stage in our consciousness and becomes known, a person's understanding of themselves deepens and they move further towards healing.
- "Focusing is inherently a process of getting lost and becoming found. ("I once was lost, but now am found—famous line from the song, *Amazing Grace*)." [\(re: Domain Focusing/ Macro shifting/3 person Learning Formats, R. Lee, Ph.D. , revised 9/1/2018\)](#)
- **Letting go of your usual way of thinking, feeling and of talking to yourself.**
- Letting go of the feeling of trying to do something or get somewhere.
- Letting words or images come from, match or fit your body sensations (change does not come from purely mental solutions)
- **Being willing to allow the possibility of change** (even though that may not feel possible at the time you are focusing) to occur.
- Being willing to stay with when you are feeling stuck and let it unfold as the next step.

### STEP ONE/PART ONE: CLEARING A SPACE/RELAXATION

Take a moment to relax. Get comfortable --- feel the weight of your body being fully supported by the chair - loosen any clothing that is too tight -Close your eyes and turn inward

- Spend a moment just noticing your breathing
- Massage your face, neck & shoulders.
- Take a minute or two to come in touch within your body
  - Centre of your body around the chest and heart.

**STEP ONE/PART 2: CLEARING A SPACE/RELAXATION**

I'd like you to ask inside ... what concerns do I have about the Coronavirus situation in my life? – **WAIT**. See what **comes within** to answer..

Whatever comes, **don't work on it**. Do whatever you need to do **to make a friendly nurturing space** for all that arises.

**Is there is a list: e.g. being alone, feeling anxious – helpless - scared, sense of fear - anger, confused, splintered, feeling vulnerable, simply worried of having to self-isolate, anxiety about not able to visit a close family member or friend.**

**Choose one to focus on.**

Using your imagination, place the list some distance away and far enough away so that you feel relatively comfortable with the sensations and emotions that go with the list.

**Now take the concern you have chosen to focus on. Something that seems right for you to follow at the level of difficulty you feel willing to deal with**

**STEP TWO: GETTING A "FELT SENSE"**

- Lets go within and see what is there.
- **Allow yourself to arise what we call a *felt sense* of "this whole thing" you have chosen to focus on.**
- **Allow this to form**, as a vague, preverbal sensing within, an unclear body-sense of this whole thing.

**STEP THREE: FINDING A HANDLE**

- While paying attention to the *felt sense*, describe "this whole thing" to yourself as vividly as you can.
- Locate the centre of the *felt sense* and **WAIT**.
- **Now** be aware of an image, word, phrase or sound that arises as you pay attention to the centre of the **felt sense**.

**STEP FOUR: CHECKING AND RESONATING**

Does the image, word, phrase or sound match the felt sense?

Sit quietly with it all - going back-and-forth between image, word, phrase or sound, checking to find the symbolization that is "just right" in capturing the meaning of the *felt sense*.

What happened if the image did not match the felt sense?

### STEP FIVE: ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

#### **Ask yourself**

- What is so important about 'this'?
- What is the worst or most difficult of 'this'?

[Note: "One senses it as a whole, to sense what about it is so bad. One awaits the body "to stir" as the answer, rather than deciding anything" (ref: *Experimental Psychotherapy*, Gendlin, 1986)

### STEP SIX: RECEIVING

Welcome what comes and be glad it spoke. What is your *felt sense* now?

Ask what is needed now? WAIT and receive what answer that arises from the felt sense

#### **Be certain to protect it from critical voices that may come to interrupt**

Now that you know where it is, can leave it and come back to it

Is this a good stopping place?

#### **Do whatever you need to do to finish the exercise but be certain you are not left hanging**

Do you want another round of focusing?

(Note: Staying with a felt sense in an **accepting way** will bring something that Gene Gendlin named a "***felt shift***." A beautiful term for a sense of both relief and hope at the same time!

### QUESTIONS TO ASK TO THE GROUP

1. Recall how you felt when you started focusing - the same or different?
2. Did you find something that matched? What happened to the *felt sense* when you found something that matched?
3. Can you accept that it is only one step to resolve what you have been focusing on and not the last?
4. Do you best call a friend to discuss what happened to you in doing this exercise.