

M M

MORE than MINDFULNESS

Leonie's Focusing Guiding notes

(Includes adaptations from Ann Weiser Cornell and Jane Quayle)

Body Scan Words (and a Lead in for Focusing) (Student's workbook p 17)

Perhaps you could just get comfortable in your chair and lower or close your eyes. If you notice you are thinking thoughts at any time just bring your awareness back to the body scan.

- So take your time to begin to let awareness come into your body
- Notice how you are sitting in the chair and where your legs and back touch
- Notice how those parts touch the chair and how it supports you, and feels.
- So, perhaps now become aware of your feet, how they are touching the ground, how they feel. Feel the earth beneath you and know you are connected and supported by the earth and something larger than you.
- Perhaps now bring awareness up through your body (go slowly): your feet, ankles, your calves, shins, knees, front and back of your thighs, where you are sitting in the chair, lower back, mid back, upper back, stomach, chest, maybe even on the inside -heart and lungs. Now bring attention to your right and left shoulder, upper arms, elbows, lower arms, wrist, hands and fingers. Now bring awareness to your neck and throat, (Notice how your neck supports you head. Feel free to move if you need to).
- Bring awareness to your face (chin, cheeks, lips, teeth and tongue, nose and nostrils, eyes, eyelids, eye brows, forehead, ears). Now bring your attention to your head and scalp. Maybe notice how your hair hangs on your head.
- Notice that you are aware of your body from your head down to your toes, maybe even the outer edges of your body.
- Now I invite you to take 3 or 4 big deep breaths breathing right down into your tummy. Now let you breath return to its normal rhythm – your body knows how to breath so simply allow it.
- And now I invite you to follow your breath in; to that whole area of throat, chest, belly and below. And just be there.....

Let your awareness rest gently in there. If you like you can just focus on your breath now for a while.

If Focusing your listener can give you a gentle invitation like:

What wants your awareness now? Or What wants to come and be known?

Or Remember that issue about.....Hold all 'that' about 'that' issue and allow a bodily quality to come....(Maybe invite it to sit down next to you or hold it in front of you and take some time to invite your body's 'felt sense' of that whole thing?)

And when you are aware of something you might let me know

ONCE FOCUSER SPEAKS initially just listen and mirror or echo.

If they don't say anything....**So now you are just sensing how it feels or you said hello and now you are just being with it.**

Maybe you can notice if there is a word, or phrase, an image or gesture or something else, which describes it.

Clearing a space – Guided exercise and suggestions to do with your partner



These are guiding suggestions – a script. If at any time they don't work for you allow your body to be your guide and stay with whatever is present for you. Simply acknowledge whatever is present for you and allow it to be just as it is.

Maybe you can allow your eyes to close so that you can pay better attention to your body. If you are not comfortable with closed eyes you might like to lower them.

Notice how your feet are making contact with the floor. Notice how your body is making contact with the chair. Notice if its even on both sides. What sort of pattern would it leave on the chair?

Now notice your breathing, observe your breath going in and out of your body.

Become aware of your body from the inside. Allow your attention to rest inside your body. In that area which includes: your throat, chest and lower abdomen.

In a friendly, gentle way you can ask yourself, *“Is there anything in the way of me feeling really good”* or *“what are the issues in my life that are bothering me”* or maybe *“What wants my attention now”* and if you become aware of something, notice how the whole thing feels in your body, say hello to it. Maybe, see if there is a body sensation, word, a phrase, an image, gesture, a sound, or something else, that seems to describe the whole of it. And you might like to just say it back silently to yourself.

Then *check and see what would be just the right distance between you and it* you might imagine setting the whole issue with the feeling aside. Perhaps, put ‘it’ on the floor in front of you, or on a bench beside you or out side of the room or on an island in the middle of a big ocean. Using whatever image or metaphor feels right to you. Checking where it might like to go. And if you find you can't set it aside, that's ok too. Just be with it in any way that feels right for you.

Allow your awareness to come back into your body and sense *and just see how it feels inside without that issue, maybe there's just a little more space.* Or perhaps you could ask your body *“How would I feel inside if I didn't have that whole issue?”*

Stay for a moment with the feeling that results from having found some distance from that issue. And now in friendly, gentle way, once more place what is bothering you on the outside. Do this until all your issues are on the outside.

If you sense that nothing is standing in the way of your feeling all ok right now, then sense into whatever is there for you and spend some time becoming familiar with that.

Now bring your attention back into your body and sense *how it feels inside without those issues, maybe it's just a little clearer in there, maybe a little more space...*

perhaps lighter, warmer.... Maybe there's just a little more comfort or ease. Just notice how it is for you – whatever is there for you perhaps you could just notice it ... and welcome it if that feels right.

Maybe invite a word, an image, a movement, a body posture, a metaphor ... or something else, which seems to capture the whole of how it is for you right now. You might like to check if you want to set that aside ... or perhaps you'd like to invite this to stay with you ...

We have taken some time here today to identify and place aside some of the issues of our everyday life, a little like unpacking a suitcase when you come back from a holiday. Some of things that you set aside may need some attention a little later. If there is something like that for you maybe let it know that you'll come back to it Gently bring your attention back into this room.

Or after you have cleared the space, you can choose one thing to work on or Focus on now. See the section on Focusing in the book for more detailed information and the other handouts on Focusing in the workbook.

Adapted from Jane Quayle

NEXT TIME SOMETHING IS BOTHERING YOU TRY THESE 5 STEPS

1. Instead of saying "I AM (eg anxious, nervous, worried, angry, frustrated, sad, upset etc) try this instead:

SOMETHING IN ME IS _____ (eg anxious, nervous, worried, angry, frustrated, sad, upset)

When you do this you are still in contact with the feeling but now there is a **BIGGER YOU** – if you like there is an "IT" ("a something") and there is a "YOU".

Now you can turn towards it, to be compassionate to it.

Most people find when they do this they don't feel so defined by their emotions, they have some distance, and somehow there is a bit of a shift, a bit of give or relax or a breath. (Not that the problem or issue has gone away but somehow it feels a bit better.)

Once you have done Step 1 the next thing to do is:

2. **TO SAY HELLO TO "IT"**. (Hello is not "I Love you". You don't have to like the feeling or be glad it is there, you are just saying "Hello" – acknowledging it)

So it sounds like this: "SOMETHING IN ME IS eg NERVOUS AND I AM SAYING HELLO". AND THEN, SAY HELLO!

Now notice the difference that makes. The gift of saying HELLO is that you meet "IT" as "IT" IS.....

(Rather than ignoring it or trying to deny it or shoving it down).

You are meeting "IT" as "IT" IS and that gives "IT" space to change. You are allowing and acknowledging "IT"

3. The third powerful practice for **GETTING BIGGER THAN WHAT IS BUGGING YOU** is to **PLACE A GENTLE HAND** on the part of you that you can sense or feel. Trust your hand, it knows where to go. When you do that remind yourself to bring a friendly quality of keeping it company (a bit like keeping a child or animal company when they have hurt themselves – a kind "there, there")

So this is simple:

You become aware of an emotional reaction, which may not be a pleasant one, and you say:

“SOMETHING IN ME FEELS NERVOUS” AND YOU SAY “HELLO” TO ‘IT’ AND YOU LET A GENTLE HAND MOVE TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE FEELING “IT” AND STAY THERE A FEW MOMENTS, AT LEAST, AND KEEP IT COMPANY.

When you do this you are accepting yourself and whatever comes. All feelings change, especially when they are accepted. Change will also come from our inner wisdom.

4. You could now also add: “I AM SENSING SOMETHING IN ME THAT IS EG NERVOUS AND I AM SAYING HELLO AND KEEPING “IT” COMPANY AND I AM PLACING A GENTLE HAND WHERE I FEEL “IT”

When you say, “I am sensing”, you are indentifying with your larger self. You are bigger than the “something” that is bothering you.

The final step is:

5. NO WONDER I feel this way. For example if you are feeling nervous before a big netball game or disappointed after a game, say “NO WONDER” – and remember anyone would be nervous before a big game. This is showing ourselves compassion and self-acceptance.

So next time you feel an emotional reaction try these steps

1. I am sensing Something in me that is _____(your feeling) and
2. Say “Hello” to “IT” and keep “IT” company in a caring way
3. Place a gentle hand on the place you are feeling “IT”
4. And say “No wonder”, and then just wait a moment or two

Now you can see what allowing, acknowledging and being with your “somethings” in a gentle way brings

It is not always that easy, but it is truly that simple. (Adapted from Ann Weiser Cornell)

The Steps of Focusing – Summary (Student’s workbook page 27)

1. PAUSE
2. FELT SENSE
3. DESCRIBE IT (HANDLE)
4. DOES THAT FIT (RESONATE)
5. ASK (SOME QUESTIONS)
6. RECEIVE (THE ANSWERS)

- We **first settle ourselves using breath and or a grounding technique** and then **follow our breath into the inside** of our bodies, mainly in our torso area.
- Then we ask: “What is getting in the way of feeling fine right now?” Or “**What feels like it most needs listening to inside me right now?**” Or you can focus on a particular issue you are struggling with. We can ask “What does this whole thing feel like?” or “**What sense do I have of this whole something**” and we wait.....**PAUSE**..... **(1)**


People, especially young people, are surprisingly good at this and intuitively know how our body speaks to us

- A physical sensation may come...a tightness in the chest, butterflies etc (or sometimes words or a phrase or metaphors or images or gestures or even sounds). Sometimes it is hard to find the words, be patient.
- **A “felt sense’ starts to form (2 - felt sense)**
- We wait and let that felt sense emerge and unfold. **We make sure it is OK to spend sometime with it. We describe it and spend some time with it (3 - handle - describing).**
- **We check if the description fits (4 -Resonates).**
- We ask it some (process) **questions** and we let it respond **(5 – Asking)**
- **We receive the more that comes (6- Receiving).** We **thank our body** for what it has shown us.

Please note: You can start by clearing a space first if you like. See separate handout on clearing a space.

Focusing – Gene Gendlin www.focusing.org

Focusing Questions you or your listener can ask



- **Does this something I am being with have a mood?**
- **Is it scared of something or not wanting something to happen?**
- **How does it want me to be with it?**
- **Is it trying to show me or tell me something?**
- **Is it trying to let me know its point of view**
- **What is the worst of it (or best)?**
- **What is the crux of it? (At the bottom of this, at its core or root or underneath)**
- **What is possible now?**
- **Is there a forward step here – what I can do? (Even if it is small)**
- **Is there an easing (settling on the inside, sigh, yawn, out breath, gentle tear)**

Guiding notes for Focusing

1. Decide who will focus first.
Look inside – and ask: “Would I like to be the listener or the focuser?”
2. Listener then asks the focuser if they want a lead in and what sort? Listener can tell focuser their other preferences
3. See “The Lead in” handout to help you with the lead in
4. Listener then says: ‘When you are ready perhaps you can ask yourself:
 - a. “What wants your awareness now?” or
 - b. “What feels like it needs listening to inside you right now” or
 - c. “What sense do you have of this whole something/issue that is bothering me” and then
5. **PAUSE**.....(STEP 1 - Pause) for at least 30 seconds. We are after the bodily feel/sense of this whole thing – its quality, eg it is sharp, or shaky or twisted. This separates the body feeling from the rest of it. It may also come with an image, a metaphor, a sound, a gesture
6. **A FELT SENSE** (STEP 2 – a bodily felt quality – **Felt sense**)
7. **DESCRIBE IT** (STEP 3 – **Description** – a bodily feel or quality) – take your time to describe it. After you describe it the listener will say back your words to you. For example you may say: ‘It is a tight, swirling something here at my chest” and the listener says” “you are sensing something that is tight and swirling at your chest” or you can even say “tight, swirling” (red light words). A ‘FELT SENSE’
8. **SEE IF IT FITS** (STEP 4 - **Resonating**) – When the listener says it back to you, sense if the description fits. If it does good, if it doesn’t sense again and make any changes you need to make. And say the newer description. The listener will say this back to you.
9. **SAFETY QUESTION**
 - a. **Check if it is OK to spend some time with it.** The listener asks you if it is OK to spend some time with it. If you say yes you move to 9. If no see if it is OK to spend some time with the something that doesn’t want to spend some time with it and then move to 9. Or you may just end the session here. If you end the session here. Ground yourself back in your body. You may also like to ask your body to show you what “all ok feels like”.
10. **SAY HELLO AND KEEP ‘IT’ COMPANY** (The “I” the bigger part of you turns towards the “It” with kindness)– The listener then says: ‘Perhaps, you can

turn towards this something you are sensing and say hello and keep it company in a gentle, friendly way (and if not gentle, curious). Pause and see if anything changes
(A '**FELT SHIFT**' may happen)

11. ASK 'IT' SOME QUESTIONS (STEP 5 - Questions) In the school, the focuser asks their own questions.

For example:

- Does this something I am being with have a mood?
- Is it scared of something or not wanting something to happen?
- How does it want me to be with it?
- Is it trying to show me or tell me something?
- What is the worst of it (or best)?
- What is the crux of it? (At the bottom of this, at its core or root or underneath)
- Is there a forward step here – what I can do? (Even if it is small)
- Is there an easing (settling on the inside, sigh, yawn, out breath, gentle tear

12. RECEIVE THE ANSWERS (STEP 6- receive the answers) Acknowledge what your body has shown you and find a stopping place. **THANK YOUR BODY**

13. When you are ready bring yourself back to this room, sitting on this chair, feet on this floor, grounded to this earth, to a larger system

SWAP places – this will take about 12 to 15 minutes each.

Guiding notes for Focusing for Listener



Listener

1. Do a lead in
2. Ask the focuser one of the following questions of their choosing:

“What wants your awareness now?” or
“Feels like it needs listening to, inside you right now?” or
“What is in the way of feeling OK?” or
“What sense do you have of this whole something/issue that is bothering you?”
3. (*Focuser describes their “felt sense”*) Listener just repeats what they say (echo) start with: “You are sensing something in you that _____”
4. Ask the Focuser, ‘Is it OK to spend some time with it?’
5. Say, ‘Perhaps, you can turn towards this something you are sensing and say hello and keep it company in a gentle, friendly way (and if not gentle, curious).
6. Say, ‘You might like to notice if something has changed (or not)?’
7. ‘Would you like to ask it some questions? Open your eyes and choose 2 from the Focuser’s guiding suggestions. Take your time and pause after you ask each question. You can share with me (or not) what comes.’
8. “You might like to receive the answers and find a stopping place and thank your body for what it has shown you’
9. When you are ready bring yourself back into this room and feel yourself sitting in this chair, grounded to this earth, connected to something larger than yourself.
10. Swap places

Guiding suggestions for Focuser



Focuser

1. Decide whether you want a lead in and what type
2. Listen to the Listener's invitation and **PAUSE (Step 1)** and get a sense of the bodily feel or quality of this whole thing "**FELT SENSE**" (**Step 2**)
3. **DESCRIBE IT (Step 3 - handle)**
4. **CHECK IF IT FITS (Step 4 – resonate)**
5. *Make sure it is OK to spend some time with it SAFETY QUESTION*
6. Say **HELLO** and **KEEP IT COMPANY** (gently, with curiosity)
7. **ASK "IT" SOME QUESTIONS** (you choose) just 2 or 3 (**Step 5 - Ask**)
8. **HEAR** what your body tells you (**Step 6 - RECEIVE IT**)
9. Find a stopping place and **THANK YOUR BODY** for what it has shown you
10. **GROUND YOURSELF** (a '**FELT SHIFT**' may happen, it can be subtle).

Please note: This is a 'being with' method not a 'doing or fixing' method. However, it often brings a little easing and a forward movement because as Gendlin says: 'Your body knows how to fill itself in'.

By just allowing and acknowledging the 'somethings' we find, in our inside place, can unfold a way forward.

Words that may help when you are with someone helping them focus:



Some examples of guiding suggestions when a person is on the edge of a 'felt sense' are:

(When a felt sense comes the 'I' becomes bigger in relationship to the "it" or something)

- "Let's pause" or "perhaps we can pause" or "I invite you to pause"
- There seems to be "something about" this thing/issue that is getting you eg confused, angry, tight. "Perhaps you can just be with it" or "Maybe you can get a sense of it – the whole of it"
- "What is in the way of feeling all OK now"? or
- "Perhaps you can get a fresh feel/sense for this whole thing (eg about your father)
- "Perhaps you could just be with that something you are sensing that's like anger" and see if anger fits or what might fit better or
- "I am going to say those things back to you, so you can sense how they fit".
- "Perhaps you could 'keep it company' or say 'hello' or "stay with it a bit longer". (The therapist is also holding the space and can let the client know)
- There is "something about" this whole thing that gets you eg upset.
- You might want to sense how it feels "from its point of view" or
- ask it "what it wants or needs" or
- ask what "it doesn't want" or
- Check if it has an "emotional quality" or
- Sense "what the crux of it is" or
- "What is the worst of it" or
- What is a "forward step".

There is something about allowing, acknowledging and simply 'being with' the 'somethings' that come that brings relief. It is a worthwhile process to do in and out of the therapy room (Weiser Cornell 2013 Ch 4).

Also Gendlin says "we are interaction" So when sitting with people notice what is going for your too. Get a sense of your "felt sense". Also Experience is a "carrying forward" and we have an "implicit intricacy" not already there, it unfolds