

Weiser Cornell's Focusing Steps



“With focusing there is hope, because focusing is an excellent method for dealing with pain that seems overwhelming. Focusing lets you touch the pain a little at a time: if the pain is a whole ocean, Focusing lets you stand on the shore” Weiser Cornell, (2005) p 248

Weiser Cornell has a slightly different approach to Gendlin (although she was taught by Gendlin). She does not believe you need to clear a space but that you can just do a gentle lead in and see what wants your awareness. Her steps are included here as a variation to Gendlin's as they may suit some people better.

She says once there is a “felt sense” (A full Felt sense has a body sensation, emotional quality, imagery or symbolism and life connection or story. Weiser Cornell, (2005) p. 239) the process follows these steps:

1. Acknowledging – You might like to say hello to that place, let it know you know it is there

2. Describing – And notice how you would describe it. Or offer it that word “tightness” or other words that seems to work and see if it fits; does it resonate, almost as if "it" can reply and say "I hear you".

3. Being with – Notice if it is OK to just be with this. (Disidentify, sense it from its point of view, what kind of contact would it like)

4. Inner Empathy – Take some time to sense how it feels from its point of view (Weiser Cornell (2005) p. 97)

Acknowledging and describing allow the focuser to come into direct and present contact with the “felt sense”. “Being with” and the “inner empathy” allow the focuser to be in relationship with the part, by listening and getting a feel, for what it wants or does not want, what it needs or how it wants the “I” to be with it. The key is acknowledging and non-judging acceptance of whatever comes and just being with it and waiting for it to unfold with interested curiosity.

When we use Focusing with a partner they will listen and respond with heart and understanding and empathy and non-judging presence. They will enable you to check back what you say or see or feel against some inner being or place: your “felt sense”. As the listener supports you hopefully you will be able to maintain a positive inner relationship with “something” that is there for you. This will enable you (your “I”) to be with an “it” (Weiser Cornell (2005) p. 149).

“The genius of focusing is this “Third Way”, we neither identify nor dissociate”. We don't just have 2 choices of: “I am angry” or “I am not angry”. You also have “I am sensing something in me is angry. This allows you, the focuser to come into relationship where an “I” can be present with a “something” that needs your awareness (Weiser Cornell (2005), p. 45).By being in relationship with our own inner experience we can facilitate a shift