

## Body? What Body?

*Newly written for this book*

Focusing is a body-based process. It happens, we say, *in* the body. And this statement gives rise to much trouble, because, in fact, we do not all mean the same thing by the word “body.” What is even more problematic: People who know Focusing do not mean the same thing by “body” as non-Focusers do, because Focusers have had experiences that have transformed what “body” means to us. So we are communicating from two sides of a great divide, Focusers saying “Let your body show you...,” and non-Focusers puzzled, confused, uncomprehending what we could possibly be talking about. This gap must be bridged, for it may be one of the primary reasons that Focusing has not become more widely known and used.

As my friend Rob Parker pointed out to me, the traditional view of the body is that it is just another object in a world of objects. This means that it is normally dead; one has to add something called “life” to it to make it alive – and it is separate from the world, as every object is separate from every other object. Gendlin’s view of the body as interconnecting process is quite different from this. Our lungs imply air, our bones imply gravity, our stomachs imply food, our eyes imply sunlight, and so on. It is separation that is artificial; our bodies *are* ongoing living interaction with the environment.

With these two radically different views of the body, it isn’t surprising that we Focusing teachers encounter some communication gaps as we try to invite Focusing experiences in those who are new to the process. In some examples of Focusing, it is obvious to everyone – beginner and experienced Focuser alike – that something is happening in the body – the “body” as we both understand it. But in other Focusing sessions, beginners are mystified: How is *this* the body?

In this article I would like to give three examples of Focusing sessions that are easily seen as Focusing by Focusers, yet which puzzle non-Focusers who are trying to comprehend how Focusing is “in the body.” Then I will try to articulate the Focuser’s definition of “body.” I will proceed to delineate four positions from which people come to Focusing, and how each of these positions can be a place from which to find the Focuser’s “body.” And finally, I will give some examples of people for whom the word “body” does not facilitate learning Focusing, and what we can say instead.

Stan closes his eyes and settles down to do some Focusing on his longing for an intimate relationship. He waits, head lowered, and then he speaks. “Something holds back,” he says slowly. “It’s scared... no, not scared, exactly. Hesitant... yes, ‘hesitant’ is partly right. Cautious, that’s it. Hesitant and cautious.” He goes on to spend time with this “hesitant and cautious” part of him. By the end of the session he reports: “It’s changed. There’s a willingness now.”

Laurel, a person new to Focusing, has a question after watching this session. “When was he sensing his body?” she asks. Yet an experienced Focuser, also watching, had no doubt that Stan was Focusing. Why?

Before we answer that question, let’s ask Stan. Were you sensing in your body? “Oh, yes,” Stan replies. “Absolutely. And I was describing what I found there, and checking back with it all through the session.”

It turns out that Stan experienced himself as sensing in his body – he just didn’t use any body *words* that would demonstrate to Laurel that he was doing so. He could have said, “I’m sensing something in my chest. It’s holding back.” But he didn’t.

So how did the experienced Focuser know that Stan was Focusing? There were a number of clues, and although any one of them might have been missing, all of them together make up an unmistakable picture. Stan’s head was lowered, making it likely that his attention was below his chin. He spoke slowly, searchingly. The words he used, though not specifically body words (like “chest” or “throat”), had a grounded, embodied quality. (“Holds back” rather than “resistant,” for example.) And he was checking his words with something inside him that could tell if those words fit or not.

So now let’s imagine this scenario a little differently. Everything is the same except that after the session, when Stan is asked if he was sensing in his body, he says, “I don’t know. I’m not sure. Was I?”

And then the following dialogue might ensue:

Ann: So, Stan, it looked to me like you were sensing something that you could check with, so you could tell that the word “scared” wasn’t quite right, and the word “hesitant” was partly right. Yes?

Stan: Yes, that’s true. I was.

Ann: And it looked to me, maybe from the way you were holding your head, that you were sensing it somewhere *here*. (gestures in front of chest-belly area)

Stan: Well, yes. It was somewhere around here. That’s right.

Ann: So when you say you’re not sure it was in your body, I’m wondering if you could say more about what that means for you.

Stan: Well.... I guess because I wasn’t exactly feeling anything in, you know, my *physical* body.

And there is that mysterious gap. People can have experiences that are undeniably Focusing, and yet, if they are inexperienced with Focusing, may be unsure whether their experiences are legitimate – because they are understanding something by the word “body” (or “physical body”) that seems not to include the experiences they are having.

Let’s take another example.

Della starts her Focusing session wanting to know more about a situation at work in which she has a hard time speaking up for herself. She brings awareness into her body, and soon finds a tightness in her jaw, especially on the left. She puts her hand there, in order to help give company and attention to *something* she can feel in her jaw. As she attends to it, she begins to speak: “It’s tight. I’m checking that word with it... yes, it’s tight, and it’s worried. I’m letting it know I can sense how worried it is. There’s like a pacing dog in there, pacing up and down, whining.” As she says this, her hand begins to pull slowly away from touching her jaw, and stays about six inches away from her face.

“He’s whining. He’s really worried about something. I’m letting him know I see him, and I hear how worried he is. He’s a wolf-like dog, shaggy, doesn’t look like a pet. Is he a wolf? No... he’s a wolf-like dog. I’m inviting him to let me know what he’s worried about. Now he’s going back to pacing. It’s like he’s guarding me, worried that something will happen to me....” And she goes on from there.

Della started with a body sensation, but as she stayed with it, it became a vivid, emotionally-alive image, a “someone” rather than a “something.” Was she Focusing? Certainly we would say so, and for pretty much the same reasons we said that Stan was Focusing. She had something there she could check with, sense into, and stay with... and it even had a bodily location. That hand held six inches out from the face tells us that... although if she had dropped her hand, she could have been having the same inner experiences. But was her experience in her body, her “physical” body? That would depend on how you define “body,” wouldn’t it? When we say that Focusing happens in the body, *what body are we talking about?*

Let’s give one more example. Barbara is Focusing. Her hand cradles the left side of her belly... “It feels like concrete in here,” she says. “It’s filled with fear. I’m sensing what it’s afraid of... It’s afraid of this part over here...” – she gestures to her right – “afraid it will get out of control.”

Her gesture to the right is outside her physical body, seeming to indicate an area about two feet away from her right shoulder. Barbara continues to do Focusing with both parts, the one in her belly, and the one outside her right shoulder. Both parts have emotional content and interesting process to reveal in the rest of the session.

Can something be “in” the body and at the same time two feet away from it? We have a problem. We either have to say that this session wasn’t Focusing – and it was – or that Focusing isn’t body-based – but it is – or we have to re-think what we mean by the word “body.” Since the other two choices aren’t acceptable, we’re going to go with the third. As Sherlock Holmes said, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever is left, however improbable, must be the case.”

Experiences like these are not rare exceptions. They are part of the common coin of Focusing, and perhaps would even be more common if people weren’t held back from them by a belief that “body” means “within the envelope of skin.” Clearly, we can’t use a conventional, physiological definition of “body” if we want to include experiences like these as legitimate Focusing experiences.

We either have to say that Focusing can happen outside the body, or we have to re-define “body” as being something larger than a set of physiological processes bordered by the skin. In fact Gendlin clearly intends the latter. The following quotes are from *A Process Model*:

“We are setting up a new conception of the living body...” (p. 19)

“The body is usually considered the stuff within the skin-envelope. ... What we call ‘the body’ is a vastly larger system. ‘The body’ is not only what is inside the skin-envelope.” (p. 26)

“There is no body separate from process.” (p. 27)

“Among the tasks of this work are: to re-conceptualize *the body* so that we could understand how focusing is possible, how we can feel complex situations, how the body can come up with an answer to a complex human living question we cannot figure out, how body and cognition are not just split apart. That obviously requires a different conception of the body than physiology currently offers.” (p. 181, italics in original)

For Gendlin, there is an experiential space that is larger than the merely physiological body (and size is only one of the differences). This is the space where Focusing happens, while at the same time it is created by Focusing. (“And where does one look and let? That space too is new, and is generated. As one looks, so to speak, in the usual body-sentience, this looking finds itself carried forward by a change in a somewhat different space” p. 221).

Rather than defining Focusing as a bodily process, perhaps we’d do better to define the body by Focusing. Rather than saying that the body is where Focusing happens, we can turn the definition around, and say: Where Focusing happens, that is “the body.”

How does someone who doesn’t know Focusing learn to find the experience of this differently conceived body? Not having experienced Focusing, some-

one will only have the usual concept of body as known by our culture. Of course this isn't the same for everyone. A person who plays a sport regularly and vigorously has a different body experience from someone whose idea of exercise is opening the door of the refrigerator. A person who has studied anatomy and physiology has a more specific and elaborated body picture than someone who hasn't. But all of these people, before Focusing, have their culture's ordinary view of "body." In Western industrial society, this is generally body as matter, as "stuff," devoid of meaning, at best a finely detailed and complex machine.

In 750 years we haven't really gotten farther than St. Francis of Assisi's view of body as "Brother Ass." Our bodies are still beasts of burden that carry us about. We still think of who we really are as separate from body, a kind of non-material spirit that rides on body's shoulders.

It's a long way from this view to the body of Focusing: infused with life meaning, vital with purpose, situated in a interconnected web of relationship, wise beyond logic and reason, inseparable from our identity.

No wonder people are confused and suspicious when we tell them, "Your body is wise." Their bodies *aren't* wise. More precisely: they don't understand and experience their bodies in such a way that "wise" makes sense to say about those body experiences. And we can't make them *think* their way into that kind of body experience. No wonder Focusing has to be experienced in order to be understood!

The people who don't find Focusing easily are not all alike. Beyond their individual uniqueness, I would venture to say that they fall into four broad categories.

(1) Emoters. These people can find themselves in danger of being emotionally overwhelmed, and tend to experience their feelings "all over" and "everywhere."

(2) Thinkers. There are people who are used to relying on a rational or cognitive approach to issues. When invited to sense inwardly, they will say things like, "It must be..." or "I'm sure it's..." or "I think...."

(3) Visual imagers. There are people who find visual imagery easily, and who go there when invited to go into inner contact. Visual imagery isn't necessarily connected to a Focusing place.

(4) Physicalizers. Often trained in body awareness, these are people who can find elaborate detail in their bodies, tracing a tension across a deltoid and down a trapezius... but don't get what this has to do with emotional meaning in their lives.

(See my paper "The Full Felt Sense" in this volume, and its introduction, for more about images, thoughts, emotions, and body sensations as avenues

of entry into Focusing.)

Let's explore these differences by encountering Camille, René, and Imogen, three (invented) people who don't know Focusing yet, and who have emotions easily (Camille), think easily (René), or get images easily (Imogen). I will describe how I would help each of them find Focusing, starting from where they are. Their conception of the body is not yet the Focusing conception, but they *are* helped to find Focusing by being invited into body awareness as they understand it. This fact – that some people are helped to find Focusing by sensing into their body as they understand it before learning Focusing – seems at first to be mysterious, now that we understand that the “body” of Focusing is different from the culture's general understanding of body.

But at second look, the fact that most people find Focusing through the body *as they understand it* (and, through doing so, then come to understand body in a different way) is not so mysterious after all, because Gendlin makes it clear that there is only one body. There isn't a physiological body *and* a Focusing body. We each have only one body, and it is in that one body that all these processes take place, or as we could put it, this one body *is* all of these processes: breathing, digesting, walking, cellular regeneration, ruminating, daydreaming, Focusing....

“[A felt sense] comes, something like the way an emotion comes, in the body, of its own accord, but in a somewhat different space than the literal space in the body. Indeed it is literally in the body... but it is also in its own new space” (*A Process Model*, p. 233).

As for the fourth category, “Physicalizers,” we will come to that below, and we will discover an intriguing and surprising fact: that those with easiest access to their bodies may have the most difficulty learning this body-based skill of Focusing. What are the implications of that? We will see. But first: Emoters, Thinkers, and Imagers.

Camille sits down for her first Focusing session. She has sought out Focusing in the hope that it can help her handle a time of stress and crisis in her life. As she tells me a little about her life situation, she begins to cry, reaches for a kleenex, and apologizes for her tears. “Sometimes I wonder if it's all too much for me,” she confesses.

If I only reflect what she is saying – and for a while that's what I do – she mostly tells me what she has already been feeling, what she is feeling now, and the repetitive thoughts that go with it. “I decided it's grief I'm feeling. I can't do without him and I can't have him in my life anymore. It's grief.” More tears. Although this is an emotional process, it is not a Focusing process – and it isn't helping her much, no matter how sensitive a listener I might be.

I have two main choices for how to invite her awareness into a Focusing place. I can simply have her notice what she's feeling in her body as she's saying these things, or I can, with her permission, do a somewhat longer "Leading In" that will help her find some Presence in her body as well as the felt sense of her trouble. (See "Facilitating Presence" in this volume.) In either case, helping Camille get a felt sense is unlikely to be very difficult. Once her attention is invited to her body, she will almost certainly have a body feeling connected with what she is going through. She is so definitely aware already of the life connection and emotional content of her process that bringing awareness into her body will probably be all she needs to do to find Focusing – that, and a sensitive facilitation to help her stay in Presence with what she's feeling. Someone with Camille's type of process does tend to get identified with her emotions – but if she can be helped to stay in Presence, Focusing isn't hard for her to find.

René is a bit of a tougher job for a Focusing teacher. He is a thinker; sometimes he even identifies himself with his thoughts. He's come to learn Focusing because he'd like to make better decisions and not doubt himself so much. He tends to doubt and second-guess even the decisions he's already made. Having told me this much, he certainly isn't about to cry (unlike Camille), and an invitation to sense what he just said in his body will get me a puzzled look.

But if I take René through a "Leading In" that starts with his arms and hands, which he is likely to be able to feel, then his legs and feet, then any parts of his body that are in contact with something... that much he can do, and since it doesn't take any thinking, he is now already in a different state than usual, a state of greater receptivity than he might have expected. I then invite him to sense in the middle area of his body, the area that includes his throat... his chest... his stomach and belly... and to invite a sense of how he's feeling in there as he senses how his life is going.

Very likely René now feels something in his body, and even has a pretty good sense of what it's about. The sense may be vague and elusive, and he may wonder at times if he's making it up, but patient facilitation can keep bringing him back to it. He'll be helped greatly by being guided to describe what he's feeling and check the description back with his body. At times he will probably move into a mental process, since that's what he knows well, and say things like, "I think it's sad," or "It must be about ...," but all I have to do is listen for those telltale signs that he's slipped out of direct contact with something, and invite him back into contact again. ("So maybe you could check with *it*, if that's right, that it's feeling sad.")

Imogen gets images easily. Perhaps she's just naturally that way, or perhaps she's learned a method like Shamanic Journeying that has given her practice in forming and following images. (People can be slowed in learning a new method by having previously learned a somewhat different method.)

She has heard about Focusing from a friend and hopes it will help her get past some experienced blocks in her life. Whether I choose a general "Leading In," or whether I ask her what one of those blocks is and offer a "Leading In" tailored to that issue, she is quite likely to get images once she closes her eyes.

The relationship of those images to a Focusing process depends a lot on how they are treated. We need to recognize that images are not all alike. In a distinction shown to me many years ago by Dave Young, there are visual images and body-based images. Visual images appear in the visual field, in front of the eyes. They are easily changed by will ("I think I'll untie the rope") and tend to move quickly, either with a series of quick flashes or like a movie.

Body-based images are in the body. The person points to the chest and says, "There's a wall here." Body-based images are not easily changed by will. If I were to say, "Make it something else, not a wall," the person would rightly think I was nuts. It is a wall. Nor does it change quickly. If it changes, and it may, the change will come as a result of keeping it company as it is. In other words, this body-based image behaves very much like a felt sense – and that is what I am going to say it is.

But Imogen is not getting body-based images, she is getting visual images, and it is my job to help her find Focusing from there. What do I do?

It helps if I invite her awareness into her body, just as I did with Camille and René. This way we establish a "there," a place to sense into. If she is a persistent visual imager, here is what is likely to happen. After I say, "When you're aware of *something*, you might let me know" (see Leading-In, below), she says (for example), "I'm seeing a row of blackbirds on a wire." The phrase "I'm seeing" tells me that this is probably a visual image, but let me check and make sure: "You might notice where you're feeling that in your body, a row of blackbirds on a wire." If it's a visual image, Imogen will say, "It's not anywhere in my body."

Now my first thought is: I want to respect that image. It has come for *some good reason*. I don't want to give the message that it should go away, that body sensation is somehow better than imagery. At the same time, we need more than visual imagery, or we will not be doing Focusing.

There are a number of ways to go. I can invite her to form a relationship with what's in the image. In doing so, I avoid using the word "image," which is distancing. Instead I refer to the content directly: "You might want to acknowledge [or say hello to] those birds on a wire." From this acknowledg-

ing, she may move into emotion: “I feel sad as I look at them.” After I reflect (“You’re sensing something in you is sad, looking at them”) we’re almost certainly in Focusing territory. Or, after saying hello, she may sense that *they* are sad. Same result.

Or I can invite her to get a body sense *of* the image. “Maybe you could invite a whole body sense of those birds on a wire, what comes in your body as you see them there.” If Imogen doesn’t know Focusing yet, she may not get what this means, but it’s worth a try – something may come.

Or we can go with the image, let it play out awhile, perhaps give some gentle Focusing invitations, and notice whether the process becomes Focusing-like. What does that mean? Let me give an example.

Imogen: “It’s not anywhere in my body.”

Ann: “And it’s a row of birds on a wire.”

Imogen: “That’s right. They’re huddled together, like there’s a cold wind out there.”

Ann: “They’re huddled together. You’re sensing maybe they’re cold.”

Imogen: “There’s a cold wind.”

Ann: “You’re sensing there’s a cold wind there.”

Imogen: “Some of them are flying away, but some are just staying there.”

Ann: “And you might want to acknowledge them, the birds that are flying away, and the birds that are staying there.”

Imogen: “It’s like they’re resigned to the cold, the ones that are staying.”

Ann: “You’re sensing the ones that are staying, it’s like they’re resigned to the cold. See if it’s OK to stay with them, continuing to sense them, how they are.”

Imogen: “They’re sad.”

Ann: “Ah. You’re sensing they’re sad. M-hm.”

Imogen: “Those are the ones that no other bird is near. They’re on their own.”

Ann: “And you’re sensing they’re on their own, no other bird is near, and they’re sad.”

Imogen: “There’s especially one of them, huddled and cold and sad.”

Ann: “Ah, you’re sensing there’s especially one of them. It’s huddled... and cold... and sad...”

Imogen: “No, not exactly sad.... He’s more... hard to put into words...”

And somewhere along the line, without an invitation to sense in her body, Imogen has started Focusing.

I hope it is clear from this fragment that what started out as a merely visual image has enriched into a more wholistic experience, infused with emotion and meaning, and undoubtedly connected to Imogen’s whole life situation.

Imogen is now in the place where we found Stan, Della, and Barbara at the start of this paper: she is Focusing, yet without specific reference to a physical body. She is in contact with something within her that is rich and intricate, that has more to it than can be put into words, that can be checked with, and that, as she says with it, “makes steps” – evolves and shifts into its own next steps.

The fact that this is a Focusing session puzzles many people who get imagery easily and are trying to learn Focusing. To understand what is happening we need to remember that the body of Focusing is not merely the physical body; it includes that, and is more. By the time Imogen’s experience of the birds on a wire has become rich enough to include her sensing that they are sad, this *is* in her body. It doesn’t matter whether she would point to her chest, or use words like “throat” or “belly.” She doesn’t need to be asked to sense the sad birds in her body, because, in the Focusing sense of “body,” they are already there.

There is a persistent spatial model that keeps coming to me as I work with these three types, and the fourth one we will discuss below. In it, the four process types or “starting places” for Focusing are placed as if on four points of a compass. In the center, between them, there is a space where these separate experiences are not so separate. Images are *in* the body. Emotions have a body location. Thoughts have emotions. At the center, there is something alive, something with eyes that can meet our gaze and that has its own point of view.

I see a person starting out at one of the compass points, in emotion or thought or image or body, and moving from there into the center, into contact with something that is all four... and more. That happens in Focusing all the time. I might start out with a tightness in my throat, but as I stay with it, I can sense its fear, at about the same time that I begin to get what in my life it points to, my relationship with M perhaps. If I am patient and compassionate, if I relate to it, It begins to relate back, as if it were alive, letting me know how It feels. By this time, calling it just a “tightness in the throat” or “fear” or “thinking about M” would be inaccurate, because I no longer experience it as any of those things separately. My awareness is very likely not even with my throat any more, but in a space which came into being because of this attention, where I can sense “It.” Instead of starting with a tightness, I could have started out feeling afraid, or thinking about M, and then noticing the tightness in my throat. Wherever I started, I would move from there into that space (more “central” in the model I’m proposing) which is somehow all of that, and where I can sense the edge, the “more” that is not yet in words or symbols. Focusing happens there, and “there” is the body.

## Physicalizers

If we thought that Focusing was about sensing in the physical body as already understood by our culture, then the people who ought to be best at it, and find it most easily, would be the people already familiar with sensing in the body: massage therapists, bodybuilders, practitioners and students of any of the many body-based physical practices, from Tai Chi to Feldenkrais to Authentic Movement.

In fact, as any Focusing teacher can tell you, familiarity with sensing the conventional physical body can actually interfere with finding Focusing. I remember Ray, a medical doctor and cranio-sacral trained bodyworker, who wasn't helped at all by the usual Focusing instructions to sense in his body. The word "stomach," for example, brought him a vivid anatomical image of where his physical stomach was and what it looked like.

I know I'm sitting with one of these people when their first description of something sensed has a great deal of expert detail ("It's along the left side of my diaphragm, just below my spleen"), and further descriptions keep coming from the physical dimension, instead of bridging into imagery, emotion, or life meaning: "It's got a kind of tension to it, like it's stretching. It's stretching more on the right, like it's elongated there. And there's a pressure, sort of underneath...."

If I have some reason to guess, before the session starts, that I'm dealing with this kind of person, I will try to offer a Leading-In that doesn't mention the physical body (see below). While I welcome physical awareness and physical descriptions as I welcome everything, I will gently and persistently invite such a person to sense "its emotion" and "its connection to your life." Just as sessions that don't include the physical body as narrowly defined may still be Focusing, sessions that include *only* the physical body may *not* be Focusing. Let us be clear: Focusing is not following physical sensations around in your body, and nothing more. Focusing is (as Gendlin said again recently, in a teleconference sponsored by the Focusing Institute) "paying attention to some unclear sense that you can feel in your body that is about, connects with, something in your life." He meant, of course, in your "body" as understood by Focusing.

## When the Word "Body" Doesn't Help

In addition to Physicalizers, there are other people who are not helped by language that points them specifically to their bodies. Do we want to insist that they first learn to feel in their physical bodies, and then help them find Focusing? Or can we, knowing that the Focusing experience is not necessarily in the purely physical body, find a way to help them go directly to Focusing, without the interference of the word "body" as they understand it?

Brenda is having her first Focusing session. She was referred by her Focusing-oriented therapist, who felt that Focusing could really help her, but found that the usual invitations to sense in the body didn't seem to work for Brenda. My first impression of Brenda is of an intelligent and sensitive woman with a heightened awareness of language. Having been warned, I decide to try to help her find Focusing without mentioning her body.

As we're talking about what she wants from the session, Brenda tells me that she wants to be able to listen to herself and trust her own inner knowing about her life. I ask her if she's familiar with the experience of knowing that certain words *don't* fit, aren't right, to describe what is true for her. Brenda's eyes immediately tear up; she's deeply moved by my question. "Yes!" she says. "The right words are so important to me! And people think I'm strange for that!"

I have a feeling that Brenda already has Focusing-type experiences, and this sensitivity to words fitting accurately, or just right, points to these experiences for her. What *doesn't* point to these experiences is the word "body." When invited to sense how "the right words" feel in her body, she gets a puzzled expression on her face. What does that have to do with her body? We would do Brenda a disservice by expecting her to follow a conventional instruction like "Notice how that feels in your body." Instead, I spend the session making invitations like: "Notice if you have a *sense of rightness* for that." "Notice if that feels like it fits." Soon Brenda is gesturing toward her chest – although she's unaware that she's doing so, and it would distract her if I pointed this out. One time I forget, and suggest that she sense how a "sadness" feels in her body. A confused look comes across her face. "I don't know," she says. I apologize, and say it another way.

You might be wondering how I would categorize Brenda. Evidently she's not a Physicalizer or an Imager. Might she be a Thinker? Perhaps – but in her case I doubt that it matters. We have to face the fact that our four categories, helpful as they may be some of the time, don't always help us understand the process of the person sitting across from us. Categories are inherently limited, and are never as complex and subtle as the real person. This much we know: Brenda isn't helped to find Focusing by the word "body" – and we need to be ready to find other words that help her.

Ultimately, the journey of making the Focusing process one's own will be different for each person, and the privilege of facilitating that journey will remain a compelling one, calling on all our creativity, empathy, and improvisation.

As Focusing teachers we can't rest on any assumption, least of all that we comfortably know what the word "body" means to each person we say it to.

Felt sensing, brought to our awareness by Gendlin, is something never before described, and our languages are missing the concepts to describe it. It's not that we humans have never done it before – creative people at least have done it, as far back as art and invention have existed – but we've never seen it, we've never stepped back to understand what it was we were doing when we sensed the whole of a situation rather than following a given set of emotional responses.

The very process of using words to facilitate Focusing takes us to the edge that Focusing teaches us about: the border between what can be sensed and what can be said. If Focusing were easy to find – if the instruction to allow a felt sense to form were as easy to follow as, say, the instruction to boil water – this business of finding words for it wouldn't be so complex, but it also wouldn't be so interesting.

The purpose of this article has been to open up a dialogue about the concept of “body” in Focusing, and in our usual language. If I've opened a space for curiosity about what we mean when we say “body,” I am satisfied.

### General Leading In

So, take your time

to begin letting awareness come into your body.

Maybe first being aware of the outer area of your body—  
your arms, and your hands.

[Noticing what your hands are touching, and how they feel.]...

Being aware also of your feet....

Noticing what your feet are touching, and how they feel....

Bringing awareness up through your legs, your lower legs, your upper legs...

Being aware of the contact of your body on the chair {couch, what you're sitting on}... Letting it support you. Letting yourself rest into that support....

[Bringing your awareness up through your back, sensing your back... Sensing your shoulders, your neck, your head on your neck... and letting movement come there if it wants to... And being aware of your head, and your face...]

And then letting your awareness come inward, into the whole inner area of your body, into the whole area that includes your throat, your chest, your belly {stomach and abdomen} {stomach and below}.

And just be there.

Let your awareness rest gently in that whole middle area.

[And any part of your body may be calling for your awareness, and that's OK, and we'll just start in this middle area, throat, and chest, and belly.]

And give yourself a gentle invitation in there, like you're saying,

“What wants my awareness now?”

or “What wants to come and be known?”

and then wait.

[and when you're aware of something, you might let me know.]

## Leading In Tailored to an Issue

So, take your time  
 to begin letting awareness come into your body.  
 Maybe first being aware of the outer area of your body—  
 your arms, and your hands.  
 [Noticing what your hands are touching, and how they feel.]...  
 Being aware also of your feet....  
 Noticing what your feet are touching, and how they feel...  
 Bringing awareness up through your legs, your lower legs, your upper legs...  
 Being aware of the contact of your body on the chair {couch, what you're sitting on}... Letting it support you. Letting yourself rest into that support....  
 [Bringing your awareness up through your back, sensing your back... Sensing your shoulders, your neck, your head on your neck... and letting movement come there if it wants to... And being aware of your head, and your face...]

And then letting your awareness come inward, into the whole inner area of your body, into the whole area that includes your throat, your chest, your belly {stomach and abdomen} {stomach and below}.

And just be there.

Let your awareness rest gently in that whole middle area.

[And any part of your body may be calling for your awareness, and that's OK, and we'll just start in this middle area, throat, and chest, and belly.]

And remember that issue, [that whole issue about \_\_\_\_\_,]

[like you're inviting it to come into the room and sit down with you]  
 and invite your body to give you its feel of that whole issue right now  
 {and take some time to sense how your body feels with that whole issue right now}

{Take some time to invite your body's sense of that whole thing about \_\_\_\_\_.}

and then wait.

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[and when you're aware of something, you might let me know.]

### Leading In Without the Physical Body

So you might take your time  
to just be aware of yourself right now, as you're sitting here...  
and to begin slowing down...  
and turning your awareness inward, in to your inner sense of yourself..  
just as you are right now..  
taking some time just to be aware of how you are,  
how you're sensing yourself right now..  
[and remembering that you have in you an inner knowing,  
an inner sense of what feels right...  
and maybe now could be a time to invite that inner sense of knowing to be  
with you here... ]  
and invite or turn toward whatever in your awareness is wanting your atten-  
tion right now

and then wait.

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[and when you're aware of something, you might let me know.]