

### **C) Settling In**

The Settling In stage occurs after “something” is there and after the Focuser has come into enough contact with it, usually by acknowledging and/or describing it, to be able to continue to deeper contact. In our bottle analogy, the Settling In stage is the “shoulders” of the bottle, where the narrow neck begins to widen into the fuller part of the bottle.

This stage can and should be done in very tiny baby steps, for maximum effectiveness. Getting stuck in the stage after this one (Deepening) can almost always be attributed to going too quickly in the Settling In stage.

There are three parts to the Settling In stage, and we recommend doing all three of them, even though the differences between them may seem very small.

**Settling In #1:** Sensing if its OK to be with it.

“See if it would be OK to be with that.”

“See if it would be OK to keep that company.”

“See if it would be OK to spend some time with that.”

These ways of saying it are all about the same. It’s important to use a phrase like “see if it would be OK” at the start of this invitation, because we are genuinely interested in any part that doesn’t find it OK to just be with this. (If such a part turns up, you would invite the Focuser to acknowledge it, and to sense which of the two needs attention first.)

**Settling In #2:** Sitting with it, with interested curiosity.

“Maybe you could sit with it, with interested curiosity.”

“You might just sit with it, like you’re wanting to get to know it better.”

This “baby step” adds the concept of getting to know it better, or interested curiosity--in other words, it suggests the attitude with which the Focuser is with it.

**Settling In #3:** Sensing from its point of view

“Maybe you could sense how it’s feeling from its point of view.”

The third part of the Settling In stage is to invite the Focuser to sense how “it” feels from “its” point of view. Perhaps the person had been treating the sense distantly, from the outside, instead of really empathizing with it. This suggestion brings empathy inward, into the sense itself.

When a person doesn’t yet know how to find this attitude, they will tell you how they feel rather than how it feels. They will be like the new Focuser who, when asked how it felt, said quickly, with a grimace, “It feels like I want to get rid of it.” The guide would say, “Yes ... and see if you can also sense how it feels from its point of view.”

Another way of phrasing this might be, “Send empathy into it and see if you can sense how it sees the world.”

### **A good reason**

Especially if the person senses the place as adversarial, it can be helpful to say, “Let’s assume that it has some good reason to be there, from its point of view, and just take time to sit with it and wonder what that might be.” I have found this phrase, and the attitude it embodies, to be increasingly important and useful.

Even if you are careful to phrase your suggestions with no questions in them, you will still encounter people who respond “It doesn’t talk,” or “It doesn’t seem to be saying anything.” This would be your opportunity to clarify that talking is not the main way that felt senses communicate anyway. I would say something like, “Yes, it doesn’t talk. And actually, it may not ever talk. It may communicate with you some other way, like with moods or feelings. You know

how you can sit with a friend who isn't saying anything, and you can sense what mood they're in? In that same way, see if you can sense what mood this part of you is in."

### **The power of its emotion**

When the Focuser can sense Its emotion, from Its point of view, a turning point happens in the session. The all-important relationship between the Focuser and the It is more fully engaged, more alive, more meaningful. Therefore the guide can be helpful by staying aware of this question: Has the Focuser yet sensed Its emotion? What suggestion might I give that could facilitate that?

Sometimes, if sensing its emotion is difficult, it can be helpful to invite the Focuser to make some guesses about it. It's as if this helps to teach them how to sense its emotion.

Focuser: [sensing a 'constriction'] "I don't know, I can't seem to get any emotion from it."

Guide: "So you might wonder if maybe it's a sad constriction, or an angry constriction, or a happy constriction, or..."

Focuser: "It's not happy." [pause] "It's scared."

Remember, even inanimate objects can have emotions in the inner world. If the Focuser is sensing something like a wall, or a rock, or a knot, It can have an emotion.

Focuser: "It's like there's this big concrete barrier right in the middle of my body."

Guide: "You're sensing something like a big concrete barrier, right in the middle of your body. ... You might see if it's OK to just be with that. ... Maybe sit with it, with interested curiosity. ... And you might sense how It feels from Its point of view."

Focuser: "It's very determined."

Inner children are ideal for sensing the emotions of.

Focuser: "She's got pigtails and she's swinging on a swing."

Guide: "You might want to sense her emotion, her mood, as she's swinging there."

Focuser: "She's feeling lonely."

### **D) Deepening**

"You might let it know you hear it."

Whenever the Focuser reports that the place says something, or wants something, it can be very helpful if you guide the Focuser to let it know that s/he hears it.

Focuser: "It doesn't want to talk much, it just wants to be there."

Guide: [OK] "It just wants to be there."

[Better] "So let it know you hear it, that it just wants to be there."

Notice how this adds a whole other dimension to the session, beyond giving a listening response. If the guide says, as in the first response, "It just wants to be there," then the guide is listening to the It. However, by saying, as in the second response, "So let it know you hear it, that it just wants to be there," the guide leads the Focuser to listen to the It. Since the Focuser is the most important listener to their own inner world, and since listening improves the quality of any relationship, the guide adds a helpful dimension by suggesting that the Focuser be the inner listener. Another example:

Focuser: "It seems to be saying that it wants me to stay with it some more."

Guide: "So let it know you hear it, that it wants you to stay with it some more."

See how the guide follows the instruction to "let it know you hear that" with a quoted listening response, so that the Focuser will find it as easy as possible to do the instruction.

(Remember our cardinal principle of helping the Focuser be successful by making our suggestions easy and possible.) However, it doesn't have to be done that way:

Focuser: "That place is letting me know how hard it has been working."

Guide: "So really let it know you hear that."

This can then be combined with a suggestion to check and sense more:

Guide: "So really let it know you hear that, and see if it feels understood by that [or 'really complete with that'], or if there's a sense of more there."

This kind of suggestion also serves to avoid the kind of conflict between parts that would arise if the person thought they had to do what the It was asking.

Focuser: "It's letting me know that it's tired, and it wants me to quit my job."

Guide: [silence]

Focuser: "I'm explaining to it that I can't do that."

But compare:

Focuser: "It's letting me know that it's tired, and it wants me to quit my job."

Guide: "You might just let it know you hear that it wants you to quit your job, that that's how tired it is."

Focuser: "Yes."

These invitations to the Focuser to (in effect) give listening responses to the something are very powerful in supporting the inner relationship.

Focuser: "The whole thing is not really about the breakup with my girlfriend, but there's just something so hard about going it alone."

Guide: "It's letting you know there's something so hard about going it alone... and just really letting it know you can understand how hard it is."

It's especially important to guide the Focuser to a compassionate relationship with parts that are feeling mistrustful or angry of the Focuser. The suggestion to say back to it what it is saying is the ideal way to invite compassion.

Focuser: "It's telling me it isn't sure it trusts me."

Guide (OK): "Maybe you could be compassionate to that."

Guide (Better): "Maybe you could just say to it, 'Oh, you're not sure you trust me.'"

This invitation to the Focuser to let It know they hear It is a further enhancement of the Inner Relationship, in that you are guiding the Focuser to be an active listener to their inner experience, without responding to it first. Listening makes the Inner Relationship even richer, just as it does when another person gives us this kind of listening.

### **Sending empathy**

In some sessions there comes a time when the Focuser needs to do more than just listen to the inside place. It can be helpful to ask the Focuser to empathize with it, and to have the Focuser say something like, "No wonder you'd be feeling X, if Y happened to you." Or, "Of course you'd be feeling X, if Y is how it seems to you." Here is an example:

Focuser: "It's so tired. It's exhausted. It had to be ready to guard me all the time."

Guide: "And maybe you could send it some empathy, and say to it, 'No wonder you would be tired, if you had to be ready to guard me all the time! ...'"

Phrases used to send empathy are "no wonder" and "of course." We've discovered that these phrases are especially helpful when the "something" seems to be holding an outmoded belief.

Focuser: "It's scared. It thinks anyone can just knock over its protection and come into its space."

Guide: "Maybe you could say to it, 'No wonder you'd be scared, if it seems like anyone can just knock over your protection and come into your space.'"

We aren't disagreeing with the belief, nor arguing with it in any way. We aren't even naming it "a belief," which sounds doubting. But by having the Focuser empathize with a "no wonder," we are containing the belief as something held within the part, at the same time that we are affirming how understandable it is. This tends to have a remarkably releasing effect.

### **Hearing more**

As long as there is still "something" there, there is still something more to be heard. Perhaps the Focuser will say, "I let it know I heard it, and it relaxed a little, but it's still there."

We have seen elsewhere that it is not a good idea for the guide to ask the Focuser a question. These same reasons also apply to the inner relationship; it is usually not a good idea for the Focuser to ask "it" a question. Instead, the Focuser needs to be interested and open to hearing what "it" wants to communicate, and we the guide need to facilitate that interested and open attitude.

"You might let it know you're interested in any more it might want to show you or tell you" is preferable to "You might ask it what it wants to tell you." The former is simply more likely to work, to bring a further opening of process; whereas the latter, an instruction to ask an inner question, will often bring a blank stare or a vanishing of the feeling. Questions are pressuring, and just like ourselves, our "Its" don't like being pressured!

Another nice phrase is, "You might notice if there's more that you're sensing that you haven't quite put into words yet."

What we don't say: "You might ask it, if it could speak, what would it say." This phrase I have heard used by people with training in other methods is not recommended, for all kinds of reasons.

### **Being with "fresh air" -- something positive, relieving, enjoyable**

Whenever something positive comes in Focusing, it is worth pausing to take time with it. Positives are always welcome. It can be easy to forget this, especially at the beginning of a session when it can feel like you're trying to help a person have a felt sense of a problem. But positive senses are just as rich to focus on as anything, and in addition they enhance the person's experience of inner wholeness, so be glad when they come.

By a "positive feeling," I don't mean something the guide feels is positive, but something the Focuser experiences as positive. If you're not sure, but you see a smile or some other clue, you can say, "And maybe that feels kind of good." Then if the Focuser says "Yes," you can say, "So really take some time to receive [or enjoy] that." Or "Let that be there as fully as it wants to be." (Notice how that is better than, e.g., "Let that get bigger." Maybe the positive doesn't want to get bigger.)

Another welcoming phrase is, "Take some time to really let your body have the feeling of that \_\_\_\_\_." (Use their word.) Or "Really get acquainted with that positive feeling, almost like you were walking around in it." Remember that most people know how to feel bad much more easily than they know how to feel good. Feeling good is worth staying with, worth practicing! The other material will come in soon enough (either in that session or in a later one), and if the good side has been felt fully first, the Focuser will have a solid sense of self from which to sense

and be a friend to the rest. What we are offering with phrases like these is extra encouragement to feel in the body. People can feel something good without having really allowed it to be embodied fully.

Even a nice short phrase can help the Focuser stay with the positive experience longer: “Just taking that in.” “Just letting that be there.”

Especially if the Focuser says, “I don’t usually feel this [relaxed, peaceful, ...],” we will help them stay with it. “So really savor it.” Another lovely phrase I heard, “It’s a gift you’re giving to yourself.”

Remember that a positive, enjoyable feeling, especially one that comes as a shift, is not a part, and should not be treated as a “something.”

Focuser: “That brings a feeling of relief.”

NOT: Guide: “You’re aware of a part of you feeling relief.”

RATHER: “So take some time to really have that feeling of relief.”

If the Focuser feels something positive, and that’s all they feel, and they want another suggestion, here’s a nice one: “You might let your body show you how it feels to walk around in your life feeling that \_\_\_\_\_.” Or, “You might imagine moving forward into the next steps of your life, still feeling this \_\_\_\_\_.”