

## What is Focusing?

*From The Focusing Student's and Companion's Manual, 2002  
co-authored by Barbara McGavin*

*The core of Focusing is a natural human process of sensing within and resonating the symbols that emerge with your inner felt experience.*

When was the last time you sat down and let yourself become quiet, and then brought a listening, getting-to-know-what's-there type of awareness to your own inner self? If you're like most people in modern developed countries, such moments are rare. It seems our lives are moving faster and faster, with less and less time to listen to the whispers within.

Focusing is a radical departure from the usual ways we operate in our culture. When you learn Focusing, you learn to be with your own sensations and feelings, and you discover that they have communications for you. You learn to turn toward what you are feeling with interested curiosity, rather than being caught up in feelings and acting out of them. You find out how to include and accept all sorts of inner experiences, with no need to take sides in an inner war that labels some parts of you as "bad."

At first, it will be easier to practice Focusing by setting aside a special time to do it, ideally with a friend, as we will show you. But after you learn Focusing you will be able to do it sitting, standing, walking, driving... You will be able to live your life from a Focusing place, in a Focusing way. You will be able to know, from moment to moment, whether what you are doing is coming out of your truest sense of yourself, and how that feels.

Focusing is used in many areas: with personal problems, combined with art, writing, movement, health care, psychotherapy, with children, stress management, in relationships, education, developing new ideas in philosophy, art, architecture... The list goes on and on. Focusing can be everywhere in your life, at work, as you do your shopping, talk with your children or partner, read a book, go for a walk in the woods, write a poem.

In our culture we are used to associating intelligence with the brain. Learning and practicing Focusing will bring you in touch with a larger intelligence inside you, an intelligence that is body-based and that can sense what needs your attention – that you can trust and follow.

In these pages we will show you what we consider a "simple" form of Focusing. Even so, it has many stages and may seem rather complex. We invite

## 10 🍀 The Radical Acceptance of Everything

you to remember that Focusing itself is simple – far simpler than the words that can be said about it. The stages we teach are like training wheels: they are there to help you until you don't need them anymore. As you practice Focusing, more and more you will find yourself setting down the book, setting down the cards, and just following your body's sense with interested attention. That's Focusing.