

HOW I TEACH FOCUSING - 1979

Eugene Gendlin
University of Chicago

These notes are not intended to cramp anyone's way of teaching focusing. On the contrary I would greatly value hearing from people how you teach, what you have found to work well, so that we could distribute that as well. I do feel that I would like you all to know what I and others have found.

1. making space

This first part has become much more important to me, in my focusing-teaching, than it used to be. It doesn't always work, but I do now always make a try for it at least. If it succeeds, it seems to me the subsequent focusing is much better.

I ask people to relax, perhaps stretch first, to be in a comfortable but not a sleeping position. Then I say:

"Put your attention inside your body, in the middle of your body, chest and stomach, and see how you feel in there, if you say to yourself: 'My life is going fine, these days. I feel OK about it all...' and just see what comes in there if you say that to yourself."

Then I might pause to let them do it, but quickly say the next thing, or I might have explained this next thing in advance: *(vorgehen, folgen)*

~~"Whatever comes there, don't work on it, just say 'Hello, yes, that's there, I might come back to it later. And make a space for it to be, next to you, where it can wait. A nice friendly space. Then say 'Except for this, would I be OK? If this were somehow all right, how would I feel inside?', and wait and see how you would feel."~~

In these above sentences I am being very specific about certain things which otherwise go wrong, and I'd like to say exactly what these are:

a. People have to put their attention inside, into their bodies, otherwise this space-making doesn't work. Sometimes one has to train people to do that first, or at least have a little separate time just to attend in the body but doing so brings up the second thing which then goes wrong:

b. Attending inside the body without the question "Do I feel OK about my life" or at least about some situation or topic, leads to problems. One finds some puzzling fluid feeling or some tension that is totally unrelated to life, and has no referent at all. This is one of the greatest problems in teaching focusing because unless someone is already skilled with focusing, it's much too hard to

work with something like that. Later on it can be good, but it stops one's learning focusing quite badly, since such an unrelated boy feeling doesn't very easily open, or shift. So I make sure that people attend in their bodies with the question "How's my life going?" or "How am I?", or with the idea that perhaps I am all fine and my life is going well.

c. Not everyone understands me when I ask them to say "My life is going fine..." Of course I expect that something will come, directly in the body, to contradict ^{widerrufen} that, and usually at any given time not just one but several things, one after the other. So there is an irony in saying this. Sometimes I prepare people in advance so they will understand this before they do it. The intention is to sense ^{wasste} what comes, so that the problems that arise are those the body is actually carrying just now (not some ~~list everyone has of their problems.~~) ^{behaupten} Also, I find it works much better to assert that everything is fine, and then wait to see what comes to say "No." It's better to say, and wait, than to ask if everything is fine (although that works too.) Least well works asking for what's not fine. But at any rate ^{Best} the notion of being all fine needs to be in there. It makes a big difference. Some people ^{schwierig} can't conceive even for a moment of the supposition ^{Voraussetzung} that they could be all fine, but it helps to have that.

d. It's important to keep people from instantly working on what comes, for many reasons. Right here the reason is that I'd like the other things the body ^{unbekannt} is cramped from, to emerge ^{austreten} as well, and be laid down. If they aren't told, people tend to go to work on it, instantly, in the middle of the problem.

e. It's important not to want to shove the problem away, get it out, put it out, then it often won't let itself be laid down. One man in Switzerland taught me this. He said: "When you said to put the suitcases out, this one wouldn't go. When I realized I had to be loving with it, just as when one of my children sleeps beside me leaning up against me, then I'm very still but I can think about all sorts of things, my space is free as long as I keep it right here, gently beside me."

f. Asking "Except for this, would I feel all OK?" brings the next thing. But also, it's important to know that quite often the problem doesn't let itself be put down, really, but when one asks: "Except for this, would I be OK", there is a shift and how one would feel without it comes, (that is to say, then it does in effect get put down.) So if the putting down doesn't work, I go on to this. The idea is "If this were somehow all right, somehow not a problem, how would I feel inside?", and then one must wait and see of course, not just say, or think that it would be better.

rather, without

Very rarely do I manage to get all these specifics right for someone, just by saying my instructions correctly. I usually have to explain and fix one or another of them, either by telling a lot of it in advance, or when I see what has gone wrong, or both.

Also, all or most of these specifics (a -f) need to be learned to do focusing on a problem, anyway. So I get a chance to teach them here when now we are aiming at putting each problem down. It's a good place to learn these specifics.

When a problem does allow itself to be placed in a space made for it, there is a change in the body, something like a felt shift. Of course it doesn't seem like progress on the problem, not like a felt shift in the problem. But it does let people experience what a felt shift is like, and also, I believe, it is very helpful first to have put a problem down, let the body live without it, then work on it.

When all or several such now-coming problems have been put down, people often remark "Oh..I'm not the problem! I can sense myself as something different than it." There is also a vast breadth, a big space, that comes here, which has spiritual overtones.

If nothing like that has come (or, sometimes, anyhow) I say: "There is often also a background-feeling, some way you always feel, always sad, always rushing, always trying hard.—Whatever your always-feeling is, take that out too. That's another package." Often it is taking this one out, and putting it down first opens the big space.

I may then say that this, as far as we've gone, is a good thing to do before one meditates, or begins something important, or for other reasons and not just to work on one of these problems. I think this first movement of focusing is very important in and of itself, for many reasons. Only one reason is that one can much better focus on a problem, if one first has put it down and let the body live as the body would, if that problem were no problem.

I try to sense if the person is enjoying this space. If so, I'm glad to let them do so for a minute or two. If they will run in and work on a problem, however, then I don't want too much silence to go by right here. I may ask, or tell them not to work, just to enjoy the space or tell me if they're not doing that.

st,

usi

2. getting a felt sense: It is important to me that the problem is out there, if possible, and I begin by saying: "Now still don't go inside the problem. Leave it out there. Now, in here, in your body, see if you can feel all fine when you think of that problem out there." Probably not, but just see if maybe you can feel fine about the whole thing."

This is the fastest way I have found to get a felt sense of the whole thing. When one says "I feel all fine about it?" or "Could I feel all fine about it?" and then one waits, and attends in the body, what comes there to say "No" is the felt sense.

I can see it coming, very ^{slowly} swiftly, a few seconds after the person tries to see if feeling fine about it is possible. It's so fast, I have to notice the person's face carefully right after I speak - but of course first the person must attend inside, there must be a brief inward attending. If the person instantly says "No, I can't feel fine about it.", that is only a knowing, not the actual coming within the body, of the not-fine sense of the whole thing.

"There, whatever that is, that says 'No, not fine', please keep your attention on it, see what that is, that's the felt sense." I say, when I see on someone's face that, after the brief wait, it has come.

Sometimes I explain this in advance. I will say something like: "I know you don't feel fine about this problem. But if you could attend inside and just as if it could be, that you do feel fine about the whole thing, see if you do, then you would find something that will come, there."

Again, there are certain specifics, here, that I watch for, and might have to explain:

a) Sometimes people know ways to suppress, and they think I am asking them to make sure they feel all fine. So I need them to know that I would like a neutral really seeing what does come.

b) Sometimes it is hard to convince someone to leave the knowing - "Of course I don't feel fine" for a few moments, and really to ^{assume} assume that, one chance in a thousand, maybe it will feel all fine. But that is the best way, as if perhaps I will actually find that I can feel fine about it.

c) Having just put the problem down, people now think I am asking them to pick it up again, let it into the body again. I try to make sure to say "Leave it out there. Can you feel fine inside if you just think of it, just remember it." This is very specific. For a long time I confused people on this.

The felt sense is peculiarly of the whole, and one cannot have a sense of the whole without being in a separate standpoint in regard to it. Of course, often people haven't succeeded in the first movement, and so they will get this in another way, which I will describe later. But if they have gotten the problem to lay down,

it is important that they don't, right here, take it back in just the way it was before.

This whole way of working, to assert something and then wait for the body to agree with it, or for something to come to deny it, is very useful in many many ways. If it can be learned, there are big advantages. If not, I use other ways of getting a felt sense. Let me say more about this point.

For example, when a person loses hold of a felt sense, or of whatever has come later on in focusing, one good way to get it back is, again, to say "I feel all fine about this problem, right? It's all solved, isn't it?"...and then wait, sense inwardly what comes. Usually whatever is not all solved is right back again. The same thing is good to do if one doesn't know how to go on focusing, say one had a shift a while ago, it's not OK to stop, but one has no idea what to do next.

Another good use of this way of working, is when struggling with some situation or behavior problem, something (for instance) I wish I could do, but I can't. I can say, "I'm going ahead,..." and imagine that I'm all free to do it...and sense inwardly. Of course, if I find that I am free to go ahead, that it seems fine, then (for the moment, at least) I celebrate. I go ahead and I see what it feels like to be going ahead. But, usually, whatever is still in the way will come very quickly, and I will thereby know what to work on next.

Other ways of getting a felt sense: If the above swift way doesn't work, then I use our older way: "Don't go in the problem" I will say, as usual, "Stand back from it, as if it were a big mural, and it covers the whole wall. You'd like to see it all at once, so you have to stand back a little bit.

Or, I'll use the big bag image. "Let it be one big whole thing. Everything that has to do with it, all the people, past things, everything you know about the problem, and everything you don't know. Put it all in one great big bag." (Or, "on one big pile; or "let it be all one thing.")

If I have tried "putting down" or "next to you" and the person doesn't find that metaphor useful, I try to avoid it for a while. All right, it's still inside, fine, "Sense it as one whole thing." Or, "How does the whole problem make you feel in your chest and stomach?"

3. getting a handle on it: "See if you can get a word or phrase, or an image, that just fits it, maybe a quality word like heavy or jumpy or sticky."

Again, I may have explained this in advance. I try to let the person know that a ^{handle} quality word might fit best. I want to leave it open that right here the best name for the felt sense could already be something about the problem. But, usually, it helps a lot first to get a quality word, phrase, or of course an image. Most people wouldn't, on their own, think of naming the sense of a problem with a quality word.

4. resonating the handle: "You may have done this already," I usually say, "but please say the word or phrase to yourself, and then wait and see if you get a signal in your body, that it's right. If not, what would be right to say?"

Here I am after several specifics:

a) To check a handle is a distinct act again. One must again propose the handle to the body, and wait to sense what response comes. One may sense the word or image fitting, but it is something more to place it before oneself, actively, or to say it, proposingly, and then to wait.

b) I find it helpful to say "If not, what would be right to say?, or, if it's an image, "What would fit?" One doesn't need to stay too long with the doubt. If that little signal doesn't come, well then, what would be right?

c) Many people, having heard me talk about a felt shift, expect a huge ^{unpleasant} signal, like me slumping and exhaling. But often (I have now learned to add) ^{release} the signal is very slight. You have to sense gently, "Is anything stirring" in response to this phrase or image. (The same point comes again about felt shifts. Any stirring or response counts, the size of it doesn't matter.)

d) I have changed "checking" to "resonating", first because too many people took me to mean that the handle must be wrong, since I asked them to recheck it. More importantly: to resonate means repeatedly, back and forth. If there is a bodily signal, a stirring, it is very important to maximize this just as much as possible. Often the second and third times I actively place the handle before myself and wait, that I really get a bodily response strongly, the first time was perhaps very slight. I consider this loosening, this stirring, as a major part of focusing. If the handle resonating makes a lot of stirring, then I know that change has already begun, and the rest of the process will go well.

So I usually point out, as I observe it, the bodily release, breath ^{rise} or loosening I see, and I ask the person to do it again, to get more of that if

more will come, or if the response will come again. I don't want to stick here too long, it cannot keep coming forever, but a few times if possible.

Now, I say "Take a little break. Once you have a handle, you cannot lose the whole thing anymore."

Little rests are very important! They aren't just rests, they enable the body to become all whole again. Only with a whole body do we get a very good process. Having been ^{desperant} tensely or ^{desperant about} intently sensing inwardly for the resonating, it's important to get a break and easing again, if possible. (This also applies when one gets a felt shift and has seen what it is. One should not go right on to the next question, even if one knows what is next. Take a little break, first.)

history

5. asking: The effort to get a felt shift comes here. I usually use my most general way first: "Say the handle to yourself and see if you can still sense something coming in response. Then when it's there again, just stay next to it, and see more what it is, what's in it."

Specifics:

a) It is very important to me that people don't ask without the felt sense being present again. Otherwise they ask into the blue, and get only thoughts, or a blank. ^{here} The handle is valuable because with it we can see if the felt sense comes (or, whatever does come), and then, when it's there, then only can you ask it.

b) An image is remembered. That is different than actively placing it before oneself, and waiting to sense what comes in response to it. If the handle is an image, it is a little harder to explain this. Words we can say. Either way it is the same, however. Does the felt sense (or, does something) come in response?

c) Sometimes I add, after a silence, "It doesn't have to answer right away, just touch it over and over, if you can do that you're focusing."

Throughout, but probably here, I say "If you can keep sensing something that isn't clear to you, but it's right there, then you're focusing."

(We put too much emphasis ^{on} getting a shift, it comes when it will. If the person can be taught to sense, to repeatedly touch, to stay next to, then focusing is being learned. If there is a shift right away, the person won't be able to repeat such magic at home anyway. A felt sense doesn't shift on command for any of us. Not the shift itself, but how to proceed so one can come, is what we teach.)

questions:

Sometimes I use this first question immediately. One forms it from the handle. If the handle is "X", the question is: "What's really so X about this whole thing?"

There are many ways of phrasing this. It is important to have the problem or situation still in mind (and the general way I described might have ^{omitted} omitted it, the person senses the felt sense but isn't keeping the problem in mind anymore. Then one can get stuck.) So the question is "What's so X about this whole thing?" This may surprise the person when I say it. I often get "Oh, you mean what's so ^{sticky} about my problem?" Then I know the person ^{lets} let go of the whole thing, and is just floating.

Sometimes the handle has to be phrased ^{oddly} oddly, to form this question, but that is all right. "Boxed in." The question would be: "What boxes me in about this whole situation?" It might also be "What is it about the problem that gives me this boxed-in feeling?"

Usually, even before I let the person try it out, I explain that one's mind always answers very quickly, and this is usually old information. I say something like, "Your mind might answer right away, just wait till that's over, and then use the handle again, to get the sense of it back again, and ask the question again." (It's all right to get the old answers, but it ^{distracts} distracts, so that the felt sense is gone again. To ask, one has to make sure each time that it's there again.) This takes time to explain, so I often explain it before we do the asking step at all. Then, when I say it here briefly, it is understood.

two more questions: "What is the worst thing about this?"
"What needs to happen?"

I spend some time with one question, getting it formed correctly, and making sure the person knows to expect a felt response, not a verbal answer without a felt response. Even this isn't specific enough, so I must explain:

a) This sense, for which you have the handle, will stir and open, perhaps, if you ask the question, and wait. (I don't always explain this further, but people can get a thought which then rouses a feeling, then they think they are focusing on a feeling...but it isn't the felt sense for which the handle fits, but some other feeling, usually from self-critical thoughts, that has been dumped on top of it. One must take such answers and feelings together, and place them aside, and use the handle again to see if the felt sense will return. It is quite different if the felt sense itself shifts into some feeling, that feels like relief.

and has continuity, not like an interruption.)

b) I have to explain what we're looking for: the felt sense itself will stir, open, shift, move, the felt sense will answer. Don't you answer. Just ask and wait. Of course this instruction is just verbiage and makes no sense if one hasn't experienced a felt shift, but what I try to convey is that the felt sense is supposed to do something, in answer, rather than getting an answer in words, only.

c) There are many ways to phrase this question: "What's the worst of this?" "What is so bad about it?" Or, if the handle is, say "X", one can ask "What's the best thing about this whole thing?" (For instance, sticky. OK, What's the stickiest about this whole business?) "Where does it get me the worst?" Any version that makes sense to people, their eyes light up as if that makes sense to ask, will be best. The spirit of it is asking after the crux of the whole thing, or the crux of the handle-named quality, in the problem or the situation.

d) What if the worst thing is how some other person is, in the situation? OK, then the question is "Sure, this would bother anyone, but where does it get me the worst?"

"What needs to happen?"

The spirit of this question is forward, rather than what's so bad. It is sensing what direction is right, what would feel like fresh air? What would be a good step. How ought it to get resolved? What would be right for me, here? Which way is forward for me?

Again, of course, one must remind the person "Your mind will answer, that's not it yet, ask it again and wait for a body-sense, something coming or shifting inside, in answer to the question.

6. making a good space for whatever has come: Before going on to another round of focusing, it is very important to spend some time with what has come. ^{alone} Rushing on soon thins everything to a stop.

Staying with what has come, one makes a good, friendly space for it. This is very odd to most people, and they don't usually do it of their own accord.

I believe that a main reason people don't, with me, get deeper than feels good, is because I spend time making a good space for each bit of whatever comes.

There are specifics in how to do that:

a) I try to tell people in advance that focusing comes in steps, and whatever comes as a first step is just that, a first step. In a few minutes it will change, so let it be OK with you, whatever it seems to be at first.

b) Whatever has come, one again allows the body to be whole and separate, without thinking about that as such, if one allows what has come to be in a space. It is right here, next to me, and I can breath again. Taking a break is another simple way to put it. One can see the person's body untensing.

c) It is important to become friendly toward whatever has come. In a minute we will see what's in that, and then it will change, but for now we're glad it came to speak to us.

d) Some things, often at the very first step, are overwhelming, scary, or threatening. It helps instantly, to find that one can let all of it be in a space of its own, that one doesn't have to stay stuck, overwhelmed.

Sometimes I say "Make a door, keep your hand on the doornob, you can later open it a little or not, as you want. You know where it all is, it can wait." Or, I may say "Just say to yourself, all right, that's more than I can handle in one day, all at once. Now I know where it is. I'll take it a little at a time as soon as I can."

People mostly have learned only to run away or to be sunk in something like that. So, they naturally fear that it might not let them run and they would have to go home feeling bad. Actually in one moment they can find that third stance, neither running away, nor going in. It's a big relief. Having experie nced this, focusing stops being work and becomes the friendly process it is.

Sometimes it helps to make a place next to a felt sense that hasn't shifted yet. Let's pitch a tent here, put in firewood, prepare to stay here a while. Check into this place a few times a day, just gently, see if there's anything new there. Don't avoid it, don't be there all the time, just make it a comfortable place to be. After a while there will be a shift, something will come there.

general teaching ways: I like to teach focusing to an individual alone, best. Workshops are much more difficult, one can't sense how the process is going as it goes.

I like to put on a tape, tell the person the tape is to take home. I think it is much too hard to remember all the instructions and also to let the process happen. At home they can listen back..

The person should tell me a little bit about the problem. I say something like "Focusing is private. You don't have to say anything about the problems except what feels easy, and only a very little of that. Of course you can say more if you want to. But I probably won't let you say very much anyway. (And I don't let it be mostly talk, though I vary how much I am willing to listen and respond to.)

If I can know say three sentences about the problem, it helps a lot. That also breaks the ice so that usually the person tells me their handle-word, perhaps only the first handle-word, then the second, better word might already be private. Even so, I can get a sense of what's happening, and where it is going wrong, if there is a little reporting, every few minutes.

I keep saying "You don't have to say, get it for yourself, then you can see what you want to say." Without an inward ^{assumption} of the power to privacy focusing doesn't work. The presence of the other person changes things before they even come. But I also want to indicate that I would like to hear what's happening, and a little of the problem-solving steps, whatever is very easy to say. Without that it is hard to help form questions, or to sense when the self-critical voice is making feelings, rather than the focusing process, (and much else, too, is difficult.) ^{right}

If the person is quiet for two minutes or so, I will ask. "When it fits in, I'd like you to say what's happening," or something of that kind.

When I give an instruction I often add "Does that work?" or "Is that possible?" after a little silence. I try to indicate that it doesn't surprise me if something I say doesn't work. If I can hear what happened instead, I will know what to suggest next. ^{understand}

I usually respond either ^{directly} client-centeredly, or with a focusing suggestion, nothing else, while I teach focusing, if the person says ^{zufrieden} content.

Some people need to be shown that one can talk about how the focusing process is happening or not, without having to say anything about the problem. Also, sometimes I show that one can talk feelings without telling intimate situational information. "I have a situation that ^{verursachen} scares me, and that fear, when I have it, has to do with how mad I get at myself, .. See, that way one can say a little about a problem without saying anything about what the situation is."

workshops: I am never quite satisfied with my workshops - unless they include individual time for each person. I now think workshops should be offered as a package together with individual hours. At least individual hours should be offered and the fee ^{honored} stated, so people going home with a little sense of focusing can avail themselves of the offer.

My current workshops begin with Linda Olsen's (originally Mary Hendricks') exercise: Pick something you love, not a person, it can be a thing or an activity or whatever. The first thing you think of might be best. Last time I picked my new suit (or whatever). Everybody have it? (Wait.) Now, why you love or like that thing? (Wait a minute or less.) Who has gotten their reasons? (Usually, all.) See, that comes very fast! Those are our old answers that we knew already.

Now, I'd like you to do something different. This is much slower, and in a different place than those fast answers. Try and sense your loving or liking feeling directly, (and see if you can get one word, or a phrase or image, for capturing that sense of loving. Sometimes I let this be a separate step.)

Who was able to sense the loving feeling directly? It's not easy to say what that is, right? Just stay near it and try to sense what's in your sense of loving that thing.

Sometimes I outline the six steps (1-6 above), with a single word or phrase for each, and keep that on the blackboard or wall. Then I can use the love exercise to teach each step.

Six steps Übung

Other times I leave that for later and use the exercise only for the essence of focusing, as I see it, which is to sense directly what is there but not yet clear or known. Either way people discover what very, very different reasons arise from the sense of loving, directly, as compared with their first reasons. This lets them have an example of a felt sense. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO DISTINGUISH FEELING AND MERE HEAD STUFF, RATHER, THEY NEED TO EXPERIENCE A FELT SENSE, what is directly there, but cognitively ^{unbestimmte} vague and ^{tauschbar} unrecognizable, which then turns out to open up and have a whole texture inside it. If they had the experience of sensing something like that, even if it didn't open, that's fine. They got a sense of what focusing is.

Going round the room and saying something from what happened in this exercise makes a nice warm room. People are lovely when they tell of what they love. I find it better than saying where one works, and the usual self-introducing stuff, so I do the exercise first.

If I haven't done it already, I explain the six steps, enough so that I don't have to say everything during the process. Then I give focusing instructions.

Doing just the first movement alone has sometimes been very good, and again most people report very important ^{entdecken} discoveries about being separate from problems, finding a vast open space, some relief at least. (Sometimes I do the love exercise and this first movement together, and then I ask people each to say something, round the room.)

Once I have given the full focusing instructions, I know and say that at first this won't have worked for more than half. I expect that. I want to hear where each person got stuck. ^{stache} It might be lunch time by then, so this happens in the afternoon. Also during lunch, as soon as I've eaten, I invite people to work with me individually. The more people I can work with a few minutes individually, the better my workshop.

It is not too good to work individually with a large number of people watching. A small group, 6 or 8, is good, the fewer the better. I try to make another activity in another room, so that only those watch, who wish to, and only as long as they are interested to see me work. After three or four people, many of the group want something else, though they might not want to miss their turn. Various arrangements work. The best one is another person doing something with half the group in the other room, and then we switch. That way everyone gets everything, noone misses anything.

Without individual work at least of some kind, focusing is not-learned--usually. I explain that any difficulty the person has, helps me teach.

There need to be many pauses when people can talk to each other, so I make many breaks.

It is good to have some little groups, some paired sharing, something other than the constant hard work of focusing-teaching. Put in whatever you like best.

A second focusing; I no longer give instructions. I ask them to pair up, the six steps are on the wall or can be written down, people spread out. First I carefully give the rules: the person focusing has control. Unless asked, the "teacher" only gives the six steps. The focuser will give a signal when the next instruction should be given. That way the timing fits. If the focuser wants to talk, fine. Don't respond, just nodd, unless the focuser wants something else. Don't switch roles till I come around, use your time for you, don't entertain the listener, soon you will be the listener for that person. I will come around when there is only two minutes left, so don't stop abruptly.

Then I ask: Do you need a monitor, a third person, in this group, or can you keep quiet and refrain from advice, talking, etc, other than the focuser needs? ^{enthalten} (In some groups a third person is needed, there are too many irrepressable people. I decide this.)

I am available to be called over, when people have difficulty, and if I can have more people who can help, of course that is better.

various
Miscellaneous points:

Everyone can have imagery, with their eyes open. "Where did you sleep last night? You can see the bed, right? Now go to the bathroom from the bed." "OK, in that same space you can let an image pop in, if you first attend to the felt sense."

If one is asking "Could I feel all fine about that..." and one finds one does, really, (there is then a big relief and much expression of surprise), that's fine of course. Doesn't happen very often. Then the person can just sense and imagine themselves with this problem all solved. Later we can pick another problem.

When to stop focusing? People ask this. Also, in trouble-shooting individually when do I stop? I say "Some times even though it's not solved, if you try to go on you'll sense that something inside says , no, no, let me stay here, I just got here." Other times, if you try to stop, it will say "no, no, don't leave me here, please." "Don't decide in your head, I'll say." Most people in their heads will want to go on and on."

Although the main questions are as I outlined, one learns to form one's own questions from sensing the problem.

Euler

It helps a new group to take a minute, (or a new person), and on purpose, without reference to anything, to exhale and slump, as if a great relief were felt. Also, (separately), to nodd one's head, as if something or other were deeply true. I say this is letting the body know trhat it's OK here to express itself this way. Later, during focusing, of course, we don't do this on purpose, but only if it comes. But it's good for the body to have done it a few times, so it knows that mode of expression.

The critical voice in everyone needs to be distinguished from one's own deep source. This is vital. Everyone recognizes it, when I describe that voice that tells me I'm no good, nothing I'll do will work, and so on. I explain that of course this makes feelings in us. We constrict, feel bad, sink, when that voice attacks, These are not the feelings to focus on. Put the voice and the bad feeling out in the hall. Let it wait. Also I say to my voice: "When you have something new, let me know. I've heard all that already." Or, I say, "Even if what you says true, anybody that talks to me in that tone of voice isn't trying to help me. I don't have to listen to it."

I try to give immediate feedback for any small part of focusing when it happens. "There... that was a good breath." "I saw your head nodd, I think that might be the way it feels when the body says 'yes, that's right'..." "That's the kind of ^{unintentional} involuntary nodding that comes, I think..." "There, you were just touching it, I think, without knowing what it is yet, that's focusing."

It seems important to tell people focusing can be ^{use} brief, like while going to the bathroom sense how that whole situation is going that you're going back into afterwards. Or, see how you are. Find what's there, say Hello, find a space for it. Why carry stress all through the day? Focusing needn't be done only at certain times, very religiously and regularly. It can be. But it's like a little time just for you. It isn't work. People think of these things like hard work, so then they don't practice. "Practice", too, sounds like work.

If a person is angry about some way of being or feeling, then there are two spaces needed. One for the feeling, the other for the anger about it. Making space (also between alternatives, or conflicted two ways of feeling) is a great ^{under} easing. "Just don't let one feeling beat up on the other." Both can be here, but separate them, this one here, that one there.

Sometimes checking is best done by seeing, if this weren't so would the feeling about the problem then be better or OK. For instance: "Whats so scary about that situation?.....it's that I might be pushed into something, ah, I'm not sure if that's right. "Try to sense, if you were absolutely sure you wouldn't be pushed into something...would that relieve this scary? Wait and sense if it would."

Any step that comes ought to be checked, that is, the step is actively placed before oneself, and one waits to see if there is a body-stirring, something budging or moving.

Attending in one's body, for focusing, means the middle of the body, chest and belly, perhaps also throat, (but not shoulders, tension between the eyes, legs, etc, that is best dealt with by asking what sense of the problem comes in the middle.)

^{Lincoln}
It helps to make a slot for what would be right, what would be a solution, even before one has any loads on it. "If you were to feel better, would you sense in your body if there's something there that would like that?" (If one is very depressed, it takes a little while to hear from something like that.) It's important to let oneself feel what would be right, and hold off the critic, even though one doesn't yet have any idea how one could arrange it. ("Time away from my kid, but it's impossible.")