



FOCUSING RESOURCES
FOR DEEP EMOTIONAL HEALING AND LIFE CHANGE

Focusing: The Second Year

Curriculum and Lesson Plan

Week One: Focusing While Speaking

As part of our Focusing in Daily Life theme, today we will practice Focusing while speaking. We will have introductions in the group, each person saying something about what this course means to you and how it fits with your life. But instead of just talking, we are going to practice felt sensing while speaking... which means you speak slowly, pause when you need to, and sense your connectedness with what you are saying.

Week Two: The Power of Partnership

As we get ready for 20 weeks of Focusing partnership, taking on new skills that will help us go deeper with Focusing, let's make sure that the container of partnership is strong and can hold this deep work. This week we will review the most important essentials and the agreements of Focusing partnership, and share discoveries about how partnership can be even more supportive.

Week Three: Being Self-in-Presence, Helping Your Partner Be Self-in-Presence

In the IRF theory there are only two states: Presence, and Partiality. Theoretically, we are either Self-in-Presence or we are identified with a Partial-Self. In practice it's not so black-and-white though: Self-in-Presence as an ability and a way of being can feel very "thin," like we're nearly being pushed out of it and we're holding on by the skin of our teeth. Or Self-in-Presence can feel spacious, relaxed, open, and welcoming of anything. This week we will review and deepen ways of being Self-in-Presence and supporting Self-in-Presence in another person. We'll also go over some common misunderstandings about Self-in-Presence, such as the idea that you can't feel bad and be Self-in-Presence.

Week FOUR: More about Self-in-Presence - When It's Not So Easy and What to Do (or Not Do) Then

There are times when it's harder to be Self-in-Presence. Many of them occur in daily life and not just while we are Focusing. Getting hijacked by anger or anxiety... getting sunk in feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt... getting taken over by a part that needs to indulge or escape... We will gather more resources for dealing with these times, and also for doing Focusing with what happened so it happens differently next time. We'll practice the idea of being Self-in-Presence in daily life, not only in a formal Focusing session.

Week FIVE: Not-Wanting

Not Wanting/Wanting is a powerful process developed by Barbara McGavin and myself as part of Treasure Maps to the Soul. It can enable deep change in parts that have been taking fixed positions of inner conflict, even if they have been unchanging for a long time. We will practice the phrases of the Not Wanting invitation, going "down the stairs" with Not-Wanting to the deeper needs and motivations of these parts.

WEEK SIX: Wanting

Sensing what a part is wanting for you can be a powerful transformational process when done in the right timing, releasing the forward life-energy of the part into the whole being. We will learn three entries into Wanting, and how to go deeper. Also included: How to support life-forward energy when it comes, both in yourself and in your Focusing partner.

Week SEVEN: Working with Parts: Protectors

Applying Inner Relationship Focusing to some of the more challenging life issues - resulting in deeper process and more satisfying and fulfilling change - basically involves being able to work with parts, or "partial selves" as we sometimes call them. This week we will review how a Companion can help a Focuser be with parts. And we will explore the characteristics of a "Protector-type" part - often showing up as an Inner Critic - what are its qualities and what it needs in order to transform.

Week EIGHT: The 'Helpful' Protector: When a Protector Masquerades as Presence

The most familiar Protector is an inner critic, telling you what you should do and what's wrong with you if you don't. But that's not the only way Protectors try to influence you and your other parts. We can recognize the 'helpful' Protector because it is trying to INFLUENCE parts. As Self-in-Presence, we have no need to influence our parts. They can be as they are. Any attempt to influence a part of us to change, actually slows the process of change! This includes giving reassurance and giving suggestions to the part. We also need to watch out for parts talking to each other.

Week NINE: Working with Parts - Defenders

Defender-type parts are present-oriented, impulsive in action (which can include refusing to act), and are often relatively silent or not verbal at all. They are usually bodily felt. This is the type of part that reacts to Protectors, and which Protectors are talking to... but that is not all that Defenders do. They also take action – or refuse to take action – to soothe pain and try to help – though, like Protectors, they may not initially seem helpful. We will learn what Defenders need and how to give it to them.

Week TEN: Working with Parts - Small Ones

There is a third type of part that primarily needs relational contact and careful attentive sensing and symbolizing. It's called "The Small One." This week we will also learn how parts come into existence around stopped process, and why the Small One is the first part that forms.

Week Eleven: Review, Refresh, Return

On our first session after the holiday break, we review what we have done so far, check if there are questions, and try a new Focusing question: "How does it feel to be me, living my life?"

Week TWELVE: The Relational Dimension of Focusing Partnership and Working with a Partner Going Through Hard Times

Gendlin says the most important thing is to be a person with a person. When you are a Focusing Companion, do you feel that you are there, you as a person? Do you feel you can be natural, and allow your feelings of warmth, tenderness, enjoyment, and

interested curiosity to shine through your voice? We will also spend some time with special considerations about being a Focusing partner to someone going through hard times, especially grief and loss.

Week THIRTEEN: Working with Action Blocks, Part One, Framing the Issue

The first step to working with Action Blocks comes when the Focuser talks about an issue. Hearing an issue, the Companion might recognize the Action Block 'frame'. The Companion then proposes to the Focuser, "Could we say it this way?"

Week FOURTEEN: Working with Action Blocks, Part Two, Inviting the Part that Doesn't Want to

To work with an action block, we typically invite the part that doesn't want to do the action. This week, we will spend time with how to do that, and what happens next.

Week FIFTEEN: Action Blocks, Part Three, Inviting the Part that is Impatient to Do the Action

There is one more part that is key in working with Action Blocks, and that is the part that is impatient to do the action. Since Action Blocks are about wanting to do something, and we have spent time with the part that doesn't want to, you might think that the "counterpart" is the part that wants to do the action -- but not necessarily. Wanting to do the action might not be a part. It might be your whole self that knows that doing the action would be right. But a piece or an angle of the wanting side may be held by a part, and it's often a part that feels impatient or urgent or worried about the action not getting done.

Week SIXTEEN: Working with Decisions, including Past Decisions

Not all decisions are difficult. Some are easy to make. Some are not easy, but we know why: we don't have the information we need, or someone else needs to do something first. This week I will offer my paradigm for working with tough decisions by identifying four parts in every decision.

WEEK SEVENTEEN: Working with Decisions, Part Two: Regrets

One of the most common reasons for hesitating to make a decision is the burden of the belief that past decisions have been made wrongly. Regrets can haunt us and can be painful many years later. We will learn a process for working with regrets that is non-shaming while at the same time not saying that what happened was OK.

Week Eighteen: Longing and the Heart's Desire, Part One

What were the messages you received around "wanting"? Is it OK to want something you might not get? A part of you might even feel ashamed of wanting what you can't or don't have – and shame can be very painful. Perhaps there is a part of us that protects us from wanting, or from wanting too much. This week we will explore making a space for desire AND for the parts that are worried that having desires is dangerous... and work with them both.

Week Nineteen: Longing and the Heart's Desire, Part Two

When a desire persists through time even though it is unfulfilled – and even though another part of us is ashamed of it, or calls it silly, or urges us to "be realistic" – we can be sure that there is something powerful at the bottom of it all. We will practice making space for all the wantings of the parts... and of the whole Self... whether or not they will ever happen. And we will see how to go deeper with wanting (even addictive wanting) to get down to the essential aliveness underneath.

Week Twenty: Review and Wrapping Up