

Focusing Short Form 25

Self-Awareness Module

Focusing is a skill that can help us discover what is keeping us from feeling wonderful at any given time. It can also help us understand feelings, problems, dilemmas, and conflicts in greater depth than we may initially understand them. Once we become clearer and more aware of what is keeping us from feeling wonderful, we usually feel better. Knowing and accepting what is bothering us in and of itself can make us feel better. However, it is only when we fully understand our feelings, a problem, a conflict, or a dilemma that we can do something about it by changing ourselves, our situation, our environments, and/or our relationships. The outline below is my adaptation of Eugene T. Gendlin's Focusing Process.

Steps in the Focusing Process Short Form

Find a time and a place to sit quietly for a while without any distractions. Stop after each question (when you see...). Don't try to answer the questions with your thoughts or thinking brain. Allow your answers to come from the place where you feel. At some point, you will feel the problem changing, like you are getting closer to figuring it out, like you are getting warmer, like remembering something you forgot. There will be a shift, a feeling like "this is right." Continue until you have an "ah ha" experience, that "yes, this is what I am feeling and why I feel this way." A problem is like an iceberg. You initially see the tip, but you must go very deep to discover the base, the part that is making you feel less than wonderful.

1. Ask yourself: "How do I feel? Why don't *I* feel wonderful right now? What is bugging me on this particular day? Stay quiet. Listen. Let what comes come. Let all the problems come up and out, making a mental or written list. Don't get snagged on any one issue. Keep listing the problems until you hear something within you say, *"Yes, except for those, I'm fine."* Make a mental or written list of everything keeping you from feeling wonderful right now...
2. Ask: "Which problem feels the worst right now? Don't try to make an intellectual choice. Let your body decide which problem feels the worst on this day. Let the answer come from the place where you feel. Ask: "Which problem feels the worst right now...?"
3. Now ask yourself: What is the crux (main part) of this problem? What is the worst of it? What is the main thing in it that makes me feel bad? Ask the question, then wait. Let the main crux of the problem come to you—not from your thinking brain but from your felt sense itself. Ask: What is the main part of this problem (what is the worst of it)...?
4. Now, take what you consider the worst of it and check it to make sure it fits your sense of the problem. Ask yourself: "Do these words and the felt sense match the problem exactly? Wait for an answer to come from the place where you feel. Ask: Do these words and the felt sense match the problem exactly...?"
5. If you are still stuck, if you haven't had the "ah ha" this is what I am feeling (like remembering something you forgot), ask yourself the following questions and let the answers come from within:
 - What is the worst of this feeling?
 - What's really so bad about this?
 - What does it need?
 - What should happen?
 - What would it feel like if it were all O.K.?

If you still feel stuck, if you have not had that "ah ha," this is what I am feeling (like remembering something you forgot), you can stop and return to it later.