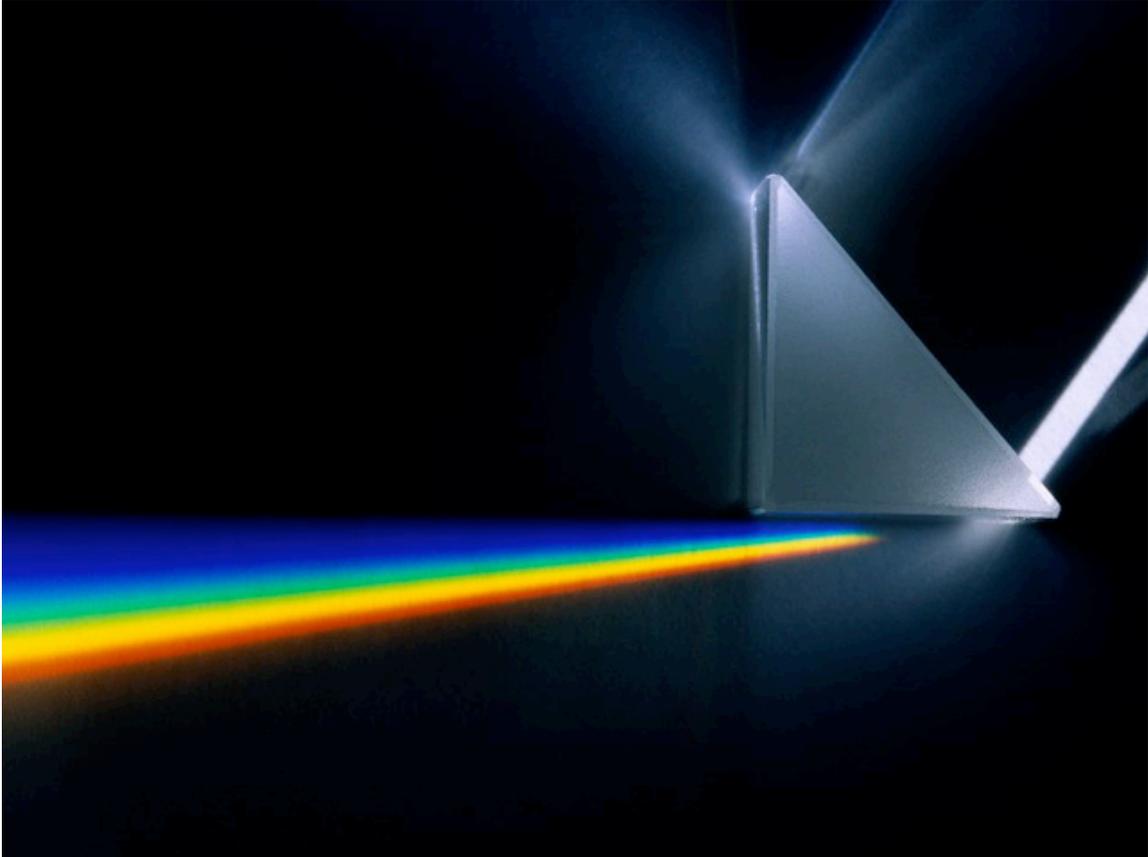


INSTANT “AHAH!”S MINI-MANUAL



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Introduction

In over thirty years of engaging in self-help practices, both for my own personal growth and in my work with Listening/Focusing Communities, I have found the following ten “procedures” to be gentle yet profound. They can enrich personal life, relationships, work in the helping professions, and decision making in groups, teams, organizations, and communities.

The more you learn about the core skills offered by Creative Edge Focusing™, Intuitive Focusing and Focused Listening, and their application in the PRISMS/S Problem Solving Process and The Creative Edge Pyramid of skills and methods, the more your practice of these simple procedures will be enriched by your growing skill. But they are meant to be instant “Ahah!”s – to immediately turn on a light bulb of growth and creativity and start you on a new path. Here they are. Page numbers give quick reference:

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In order to get this free download, you have subscribed to our **Instant “Ahah!”s newsletter**. The newsletter will give you a weekly reminder to:

- Pause for a moment to “ponder” at The Creative Edge for Intuitive Focusing
- Pause for a moment to give Focused Listening attention to your relationships
- Pause to enrich your personal, creative, spiritual, and organizational life with tips for Creative Edge living and problem solving at home and at work

You can also join the **Creative Edge Focusing™ e-discussion/support group** for ongoing online support, discussion, and demonstrations, as you work to incorporate the ten “Ahah!”s below, and the core of Creative Edge Focusing, into your life and relationships, at home and at work. Hope to see you there!!!

Dr. Kathy McGuire
Creative Edge Focusing™
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Disclaimer: Instant “Ahah!”s are offered purely as self-help skills. In providing them, Dr. McGuire is not engaged in rendering psychological, financial, legal, or other professional services. If expert assistance or counseling is needed, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 1
Focusing: *Find Out What Is Bothering You*
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Focusing On the Creative Edge

Intuitive Focusing is one-half of the two Core Skills basic to Creative Edge Focusing. Intuitive Focusing can be used any time to find out what is bothering you. Intuitive Focusing involves spending time with the vague, wordless “intuitive sense” that there is something....**something you can’t quite put your finger on or put into words...** but something definitely determining your behavior or how you feel or the inkling of an idea or solution.....

Intuitive Focusing can be used not just for personal problem-solving but for sitting with **The Creative Edge** of anything: a piece of creative art or writing, an exciting professional problem to solve, a good feeling that has a spiritual edge...

The Crux of Change

In the 1960’s research showed that the single most important variable predicting success in psychotherapy was, not what the therapist was doing, but the client’s own ability to speak from present, felt experiencing rather than intellectualization. Dr. Eugene Gendlin of the University of Chicago decided we’d better learn how to teach that skill to people. He called it Focusing and broke it down into six steps to teach it in a self-help way. His book, *Focusing* (Bantam, 1981), has been translated into over 15 languages and is used throughout the world.

Description of Gendlin’s Six Step Focusing Process

First, I will describe Gendlin’s process, then I will walk you through some actual instructions below. Here are **Gendlin’s six steps** for use of this inner, meditation-like problem-solving process in a self-help way:

- (1) **Clearing a Space:** setting aside the jumble of thoughts, opinions, and analysis we all carry in our minds, and making a clear, quiet space inside where something new can come.
- (2) **Getting a Felt Sense:** asking an open-ended question like “What is the feel of this whole thing (issue, situation, problem)?” and, **instead of answering with one’s already-known analysis, waiting silently** as long as a minute for the subtle, intuitive, “bodily feel” of “the whole thing” to form.

- (3) **Finding a Handle:** carefully looking for some words or an image that begin to **capture the “feel of the whole thing,”** the Felt Sense, The Creative Edge: “It’s ‘jumpy;’” “It’s scared;” “It’s like the dew of a Spring morning;” “It’s like macaroni and cheese – comforting,” “It’s like jet propulsion! Something new that needs to spring forth!”
- (4) **Resonating and Checking:** taking the Handle words or image and **holding them against the Felt Sense,** asking “Is this right? Is it ‘jumpy’?, etc. Finding new words or images if needed **until there is a sense of “fit”:** “Yes, that’s it. Jumpy.”
- (5) **Asking: asking open-ended questions** (questions that don’t have a “Yes” or “No” or otherwise fixed or “closed” answer) like “And what is so hard about that?” or “And why does that have me stuck?” or “What was so beautiful about that moment?” or “And how does this apply to everything else?” and, again, instead of answering with already-known analysis, **waiting silently for the whole-body-sense, the Felt Sense, to arise.**

At each Asking, the Focuser also **goes back to steps (2), (3) and (4)** as necessary, waiting for the Felt Sense to form, finding Handle words, Resonating and Checking until there is a sense of “fit”: “Yes, that’s it.” This often physically-felt experience of tension release and easing in the body, this sense of having found the right words, is called a **Felt Shift** by Dr. Gendlin. Dr. McGuire calls it a **Paradigm Shift** It can be a small step of “Yes, that’s it” or a larger unfolding, a huge insight, with many pieces of the puzzle suddenly falling into place and a flow of new words and images and possible action steps. Sometimes there is also a flood of tears of acknowledgment and relief or the release of other pent-up emotions. **This is an Instant “Ahah!”**

- (6) **Receiving:** at each new step, each Felt Shift, **taking a moment** to sit with the new “intuitive feel,” simply acknowledging and appreciating your own inner knowing for this new insight. Then, **you can start again at step (5),** Asking another open-ended question, (“And what is so important about this?”; “And why did that have me stuck?”; “And where does my mother come into all of this?”, etc.). **And, again, step (2), waiting for the Felt Sense to form, step (3) finding a Handle, step (4) Resonating and Checking until there is a Felt Shift, a sense of “That’s it!”, another Instant “Ahah!”.**

A First Attempt: Find Out What Is Bothering You

Set aside at least 30 minutes for this first attempt. Remember, Focusing is a skill usually taught in 10 two-hour classes or two weekend workshops ---so, if it doesn’t work for you immediately, don’t give up! Find a nearby teacher from the Focusing Institute **Listings** (www.focusing.org) or arrange for phone sessions with Dr. McGuire or another Creative Edge Consultant at www.cefocusing.com .

But, some people are natural Focusers and just say, “Oh, yes. I’ve been doing this all my life. Now, I can just do it better, more predictably, whenever I want. Give it a try: (You can read these to yourself now or into a tape recorder for playback -- or purchase Complete Focusing Instructions CD as part of our Self-Help Package at www.cefocusing.com -- leave at least one minute of silence between each instruction)

Step One: Clearing A Space (Relaxation exercise in this case)

---Okay... first, just get yourself comfortable...feel the weight of your body on the chair...loosen any clothing that is too tight....
(one minute...)
---Spend a moment just noticing your breathing....don’t try to change it....just notice the breath going in....and out.....
(one minute...)
---Now, notice where you have tension in your body (pause).....
(one minute...)
---Now, imagine the tension as a stream of water, draining out of your body through your fingertips and feet (Pause)....
(one minute...)
---Let yourself travel inside of your body to a place of peace.....
(one minute...)

Step Two: Getting A Felt Sense

---Now, bring to mind an incident or a situation that was troublesome for you this week (pause as long as necessary)...Think about it or get a mental image of it.....
(one minute...)
---Now, try to set aside all of your thoughts about the situation, and just try to bring back the **feeling** you had in that situation (pause)...not words, but the “**intuitive feel**” of **yourself** in that situation.....
(one minute)

Step Three: Finding A Handle

---Now, carefully try to find words or an image for that feeling.....
(one minute)

Step Four: Resonating and Checking

---Go carefully back and forth between any words and the “intuitive feel of the whole thing” until you find words or an image that are just right for it.....
(one minute...)

Step Five: Asking

---Now, gently ask yourself, “What is so hard about this situation for me?”, and wait, at least a minute, to see what comes in your wordless intuition, your whole-body sense....
(one minute)

---Again, carefully find words or an image that exactly fit that whole feeling.....going back and forth until the symbols are “just right.”
(one minute...)

---Now, imagine what the situation would be like if it were perfectly all right.....
(one minute...)

---Now, ask yourself, “What’s in the way of that?” and, again, don’t answer from your head, what you already know, but **wait, as long as a minute**, for something new to come in the center of your body, more like a wordless intuition or whole-body sense.....
(one minute...)

---Again, carefully find words or an image for that, “whatever is in the way”.....go back and forth until the symbols are “just right.”
(one minute...)

---Now, see if you can find some small step you might be able to take to move yourself in a positive direction....again, **don’t answer from your head, the already known, but wait as much as a minute for the wordless, intuitive “feel,”** the bodily felt sense of an answer to arise.....
(one minute...)

---Take a moment, again, to carefully find words or an image for this possible next step.....go back and forth until the symbols are “just right.”
(one minute...)

---Check with your “intuitive feel,” “Is this right? Is this really something I could try doing?”.....If your “intuitive feel” says, “Yes (some sense of release, relaxation), I could try that,” then you can stop here.

---If your “felt sense” says “No, I can’t do that” or “That won’t work,” then ask yourself again, “What small step in the positive direction would work?”, again, waiting quietly, as much as a minute for an intuitive answer to arise, then making words or an image for it.....going back and forth until the symbols are “just right.”
(one minute...)

---Keep going back and forth between the “intuitive feel” and possible words and images as long as you are comfortable, or until you experience “Ahah! That’s it!”.
(one minute or more...)

Step Six: Receiving

---Whether a “solution” has arisen or not, **appreciate yourself and your body for taking time with this, trusting that pausing to take time is the important thing -- solutions can then arise later.**

(one minute...)

The crux of change is just spending quiet time paying attention to the “intuitive feel.” If no clear next step arises, just remind yourself that at least you have gotten a clearer sense of the problem. Because you have spent quiet, Intuitive Focusing time with the “feel” of “the whole thing,” you have started a process of change. Something new may “pop up” later, as you go about your day.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 2
ACTIVE LISTENING: *Short-Circuit An Angry Confrontation*
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Reflect, Don’t React

Someone comes at you, seemingly out of the blue, absolutely furious. You are stunned and want to fight back. Instead, you can diffuse the other person’s anger by simply responding in an Active Listening way:

- “Wow, something is really upsetting you...”
- “You’re saying you are absolutely furious that I forgot to show up for lunch”
- “You are really upset because you are not getting the service you expected”
- “You are really mad that you’ve had to go through four other departments just to reach me”
- “It really bothers you when you have to go through all those mechanical phone responses just to get to a human being”

Yes, this is the behavior which I wish customer service representatives had all been taught so that, when I call them, furious, they would just respond, “I’m sorry that you are so upset. Tell me more about what is bothering you so we can fix it,” instead of adopting that rigid, “I’m just following the rules,” “We never make mistakes,” “There’s really not anything I can do for you” attitude that just makes me more and more angry!

Bottom Line: deflect and diffuse anger by simply responding with empathy: “Boy, I can see how this is hard for you,” “I’m really hearing how frustrating this has been for you.”

Maybe this seems like the same-old “reflective listening” that Carl Rogers and others have been advocating since the 1950’s – but, let’s face it, has it entered our world as a Core Skill of “human literacy,” the center of “emotional intelligence”? Let’s give this another try, really incorporating Active Listening into our every day home and work situations!

Reflect the Words...and the Feeling Tone...

As opposed to Passive Listening, where you simply give your silent attention to the other, at the most saying “Ummhmm” or “Ah, hah!” or “Wow!”, in Active Listening, you set aside all your typical responses (advice, argument, opinions, problem-solving, judgments) and simply try to say back what the other person is saying, with an emphasis on the feeling tone, if you pick up any:

Example One: Customer

Customer: "I've just had to wade through 16 phone messages to get to you, and I was cut off and had to start all over. It's taken me ten minutes already."

Customer Service: "Wow! I'm so sorry! You've already been through ten minutes of frustration, and I'm the first person you've gotten to talk to."

Customer: "Why can't there just be a simple way to talk to a human being?! I hate these phone messages!!"

Customer Service: "It is so frustrating to you to have to go through this waiting and confusion everywhere you go."

Customer: "Damn right! Okay, let's get on with it. This is the problem. I changed my mailing address for my bills, and they are still going to the wrong address, and then I end up getting late fees."

Customer Service: "Okay, let me take a look at your account right now and see what we can do."

Example Two: Spouse

Wife: "How could you have forgotten that we had a dinner engagement at 6PM with the Smiths????!!!!!!!"

Husband: "Wow! You are really angry. I must have slipped up somewhere. You're saying I forgot a dinner engagement with the Smiths?"

Wife: "Yes, you idiot! It was at 6PM, and I've been trying to reach you on your cell phone. How humiliating!!!! Where were you????!"

Husband: "So you've been trying to reach me ever since 6PM, and it's been embarrassing for you, having to make excuses to the Smiths. And you're wondering where I was."

Wife: "How could you not answer your cell phone!!!! That is what they are for, emergencies like this one!!!!"

Husband: "So, to you, this really was an emergency, and no way to get through to me. You're wondering why I didn't answer my cell phone and where was I anyway????!"

Wife: "Yes, that is exactly right! So, where were you?"

Husband: "Okay, I am so sorry. Let's try to figure out how this happened. I got held up at an emergency meeting with my boss, and I couldn't answer my cell phone. He would have gotten even madder at me....I guess I was so upset by this confrontation with him that I just absolutely forgot about the Smiths....I should have had the dinner in my Palm Pilot, but I guess I didn't hear that either...I was just driving and thinking about what to do with the work situation. What can I do to make this better now? Do you want me to call the Smiths and make another plan?"

Wife: "Oh, that's okay. It's over now. Why don't you tell me what happened at work while I find you something to eat...."

Example Three: Child

Child: "I hate school, and I'm never going again. Teachers are all idiots!!!!"

Parent: "Wow, something is really upsetting you today. Sounds like a teacher did something stupid that bothered you..."

Child: “No, it didn’t bother me!!!! I’m not going to get bothered by fools like that. I don’t care what they think!!!! I’m just not going anymore!!!!”

Parent: “So, it didn’t bother you. You’re not going to be bothered by fools like that. You don’t even care what they think. And, right now, you’re saying you are never going again.”

Child: (tears of hurt coming) “She said I’ll never be a writer...that I don’t even know punctuation (crying).”

Parent: “So your teacher said, ‘You’ll never be a writer...you can’t even do punctuation,’ and that is really hurting you. Writing is very important to you.’

Child: (more tears) “There is more to writing than punctuation....what I’m saying is way more important....I’m pouring my heart out.”

Parent: “So, for you, writing is not about punctuation but about what you are saying, that you can really pour your heart out. That’s what’s important.”

Child: “Yes (fewer tears)...that’s what matters to me. Next time, will you help me with the punctuation so that she can’t make fun of me?”

Believe it or not, this diffusion of anger, usually to hurt, will happen. And what have you got to lose by trying? There really isn’t any other miracle way in these situations!

Perhaps the idea of just “reflecting” the other person seems silly to you, like a parrot. However, when you are on the receiving end, just hearing your own words back without judgment or “fixing,” you will be amazed at what a rare blessing and relief it is just to be heard.

The Focused Listening Core Skill of PRISMS/S at Creative Edge Focusing (www.cefocusing.com) is more than just reflecting. Through Phone Coaching or classes with Creative Edge Focusing Consultants or trainers of The Focusing Institute (www.focusing.org), or through the manual, CD, and DVD of our Self-Help Package, you will learn many nuances:

- how to “ask for more” about words with “neon lights” around them,
- how to use Focusing Invitations to help the speaker sit quietly and “sense into” the “feel of it all,” facilitating a Paradigm Shift, and
- how, sometimes, you can offer your own Personal Sharings (advice, information, own similar experiences), as long as you go back to Active Listening, reflecting the impact of your words on the other person.

However, always, simple Active Listening, saying back, reflecting the words of the other, remains the core – the one, simple, most powerful thing you can do to increase communication with another person, while, at the same time, helping them to find their own solutions to their problems.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 3

LISTENING TURNS: *Stop arguments with friends, partners, children*

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Passive Listening: Just Being Quiet, Not Interrupting!

This is going to be extremely basic... and, maybe, extremely difficult!! All you are going to do is exchange equal, timed, passive listening turns with the other person, instead of arguing.

But, it can also be the most extremely powerful and successful intervention you can make in your relationships, so, please, give it a try. Through the Self-Help Package or Phone Coaching/Consulting available at www.cefocusing.com, you will learn even more powerful Focused Listening skills which go way beyond passive listening.

But for now, you are just going to practice passive listening – being quiet, listening, not interrupting. Try to imagine what the whole world could be like if everyone knew just this one, simple self-help skill!

Agreement On A Signal During A Peaceful Time

It helps to get an agreement from the other person ahead of time to give this process a try, so invite your significant others to read through these instructions and rationale with you when there is **no battle on** – in a peaceful, non-conflicted time, and see if they will agree to give this a try.

Then, you want to **agree upon a signal** you will use in the heat of the moment, when it is time to try the procedure – some simple word or action or gesture that someone can remember to use to bring an argument to a halt and start the agreed-upon new process.

So, the two of you need to agree upon a word or action that will be able to break through the argument and get everybody’s attention --- like “Turns!” or “Chairs!” or “Time Out” or sitting down on the floor or motioning the “Time out” signal referees use – or saying “popcorn!” or any ridiculous thing – something that can break through the intense energy and remind everyone of the agreement to try LISTENING TURNS.

Set A Timer and Take A Seat

Then, here is all you have to do. Get out a timer or a watch which you keep handy for this purpose and set it for **five minutes**. Sit down in chairs or on the floor, facing each other, but at a safe, comfortable distance. And now just start **uninterrupted turns**, first

one person talking without interruption until the timer goes off , then setting the timer again and switching sides, the other person talking without interruption.

USE THE TIMER TO KEEP TURNS EXACTLY EVEN.

NO PHYSICAL CONTACT ALLOWED.

Yell At A Blank Wall

If there is a lot of anger initially, it can help to have each person turn toward a blank wall and **shout at it**, instead of directly at the other person...It's a lot easier to hear the sense in someone's anger when it is not landing directly on your body, paralyzing you.

As each person continues having turns, the initial bluster will run its course, and a **more vulnerable, more creative, more flexible part will appear**. New, creative possibilities and solutions, even warm feelings for the other person, will start to arise.

Just Keep Going

Just keep exchanging equal, timed turns until you get somewhere. And you will!!!! Simply from listening to what the other person has to say, instead of arguing, you will begin to understand new reasons for the person's behavior or position...and this will happen in both directions.

And simply speaking, without being argued with or "fixed," allows you to get below your initial reaction and into the deeper meanings under your response to the other.

A clue: underneath anger, there is almost always a very vulnerable hurt, even tears, -- when that comes out, it is very easy to love the other person. Underneath helpless, victim-like tears, there is often anger. That, too, can make the other person's behavior more understandable.

Caution: Professional Help Needed?

Caution: if the two of you will not agree to stop arguing and take equal PASSIVE LISTENING TURNS as described above, then, there can be a bigger problem that needs addressing with a professional coach or counselor. Because, any time people can't be equal, then there can be issues that can use outside help. See www.focusing.org for a list of Focusing Professionals throughout the world who might be able to help you.

Online Support For Conflict Resolution

At www.cefocusing.com, you can sign up for our **e-newsletter** for continuing tips and practice in incorporating Intuitive Focusing and Focused Listening into your home and work life.

You can also sign up for our **Creative Edge e-discussion/support group** for actual advice and demonstration with Dr. McGuire of how to apply PRISMS/S™ in your every day life.

Or, you can arrange a **Free Phone Consult** with Dr. McGuire on how best to proceed in applying PRISMS/S and the Creative Edge Pyramid™ of skills and methods in beginning to use Interpersonal Focusing to resolve interpersonal conflicts at home and at work.

Imagine what the whole world would be like if everyone knew just this one simple skill of “human literacy” and used it as automatically as reading and writing to diffuse angry situations!

INSTANT “AHAH!” 4 FIVE-MINUTE GRIEVING PROTOCOL

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“Opening Up”, Not “Breaking Down”

Most of the time, we walk around “being” our symptoms instead of “relating” to them. The physician’s office is a place where accidental openings into the “felt senses” underlying symptoms have an increased likelihood of happening. It thus becomes important for physicians, and other health professionals, to capitalize on these moments where the defenses fall, and the preverbal felt experiencing underlying symptoms, becomes available for transformation.

Inter-office conflict or stress at home can also cause a co-worker or employee to “break down” and start crying. Or a friend may become teary while sharing. Instead of being afraid of a “break down,” see it as an “opening up,” an opportunity to unblock and build anew. See Creative Edge Focusing at www.cefocusing.com to understand the Core Concepts underlying growth and creativity.

People Are Skilled At “Not Crying”

Five minute grieving is based upon the following premises, drawn from my 25-year experience as a psychotherapist and peer counseling teacher:

1. In general, people do not fall apart and cry and cry without stopping. In general, people do not cry for more than a few minutes at a time.
2. If tears are present, it is healthier for body and mind to allow their expression than to repress them. Tears also are the doorways into The Creative Edge, the possibility for change.
3. In general, people have a life-time of experience in being able to call up their defenses again, and go on as needed after a few moments of crying.
4. In the few cases where crying is uncontrollable, it is better to discover this vulnerability and get help, by referring to a counselor for psychotherapy and/or a psychiatrist for exploration of the appropriateness of anti-depressant medication.
5. In general, spending a few minutes making words for the “intuitive sense” underlying the tears will bring relief to the person, energy to the Listener, and a deep feeling of bonding and care between the two.
6. Allowing the tears also actually releases energy, letting the person go on to next steps of problem solving and action to be taken.

Here follows a first step into the Creative Edge Core Skills of Intuitive Focusing and Focused Listening which I call “Five Minute Grieving,” especially for health professionals, but also for co-workers and friends in a pinch, if someone tears up or starts crying.

FIVE MINUTE GRIEVING

Example from a physician’s office:

You have just told a patient that tests have shown her to be infertile. Tears well up in her eyes.

1. **Invite** her to cry. Say something like the following:

- "In a minute we can discuss options, but let's make room for your tears."
- "It's okay with me to let your tears come."
- "It's okay to cry."
- "You don't have to hold back your tears."
- "It's important to let yourself cry."
- “Just be gentle with yourself. Put your arms around yourself.”

2. **Empathize** with the feeling without trying to “fix” it or take it away:

- "I know it seems bleak right now."
- "I know it's hard."
- "I see your sadness."
- "I'm sorry for your sadness."

3. Help her to **find words or images** for the tears. After she has cried for a while or at a natural pause in her tears, say something like:

- "What are the words for your sadness?"
- "Are there any words or images with your tears? It helps to get a handle on the feeling."
- "Can you say what's the worst of it?"
- "Can you say what you're thinking?"

Just be quiet and give the person some time to grope for words.

4. Empathize again, often by **paraphrasing**:

- "So it's (her words: "the fear that you'll never be a mother;" "feeling like a dried up stick," etc.) that's hard."

5. Continue Steps 1-4 as long as makes sense.

6. Establish **closure**:

- "We have to stop now."
- "We only have a minute before we have to stop."

- "I have to go, but you're welcome to sit here for a minute until you're ready to go."
 - Or, if you are now going to continue with other aspects of the visit, "Let's see if we can put aside the tears for now so that I can give you some more information and we can look for solutions to your situation."
7. **Orient** the person, if necessary, by doing a "present time" exercise:
 - "I want to make sure you're back out in the world before I send you off to drive home (or before we continue talking) . How about if you name all the circular (or orange, or striped, etc.) things in the room?"
 8. At the end of the appointment, make a referral to a counselor or support group as appropriate and/or make arrangements for the person to check back with you for a future appointment.

Of course, Five Minute Grieving is just a first step toward fully incorporating Core Skills of Intuitive Focusing and Focused Listening into your personal and professional life. I hope it will whet your appetite to pursue further training in PRISMS/S and the Creative Edge Pyramid for application of Listening and Focusing at all levels and at home as well as work .

You can begin with Free and Purchased resources by clicking on the Icons in the right sidebar at www.cefocusing.com . Helping professionals can order Dr. McGuire's manual, *The Experiential Dimension in Therapy* and, in a Free Phone Consult with Dr. McGuire, can explore joining our Experiential Focusing Professional Training Program.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 5 COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING

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Coordinated Collaboration: The Best of Consensus and Hierarchy

Here are some *Task-Roles* and *Impasse Resolution Procedures*, for use when a group has a limited time to make decisions. This model can also be used, as **Coordinated Collaboration**, as a way of gathering information and input, in work groups where there is a boss, a Project Manager, or a Coordinator who will make the final decisions.

As with all the Applied Methods of Creative Edge Focusing, the procedures create quiet, protected moments where participants can pay attention to the “intuitive feel,” The Creative Edge, and create innovative ideas and solutions.

The tasks can be rotated in a "**shared leadership**" model, where appropriate, each person on the team learning the various skills. Or, for instance, on the Board of a Corporation or Non-Profit Organization, the formal Chairperson might serve as the agenda keeper more regularly.

Shared Leadership Tasks

The group appoints or gets volunteers for the following tasks:

1. **Agenda keeper:** This person watches over the content of the meeting, while the process monitor is watching over its process. This is like the typical chairperson, who :
 - Collects an agenda of items to be discussed and/or decided-upon.
 - Prioritizes them in terms of order and amount of time allotted to each. The group helps with this.
 - Makes sure that the group adheres to the agenda and the time limits for agenda items (see also below, under “time keeper”). When the group wants to spend more time on an item, the time has to be taken away from another item, if the ending time of the meeting is fixed. Redistribution of time must be a conscious decision of the group.
2. **Process monitor:** This person watches over the process, as the agenda keeper watches over the content of the meeting. The process monitor :

- Keeps a list of people waiting for a turn to speak (they raise a finger to indicate this desire). Now participants can listen to others instead of trying to figure out how to interrupt and get a chance to speak.
- Calls on people from the list. This is especially important when conversation becomes heated and everyone wants to talk at once!
- Enforces a limit of 3 minutes (or another agreed-upon length) on any speaking turn. A polite way to get on to the next speaker. (See also below, under “time keeper”).
- Reminds people that "No interruptions are allowed". A ground rule of the group process is "No Interrupting".
- Can suggest that the group use **Focused Listening** to resolve a conflict or make sure someone can be understood.
- Can suggest that the group use some of the other suggested procedures for "**Creative Edge Impasse Resolution**" (see below).

Anyone in the group can ask for **Focused Listening** or **Interpersonal Focusing** between two people, but it is the Process Monitor's job. This is plenty to do without trying to monitor content, or the agenda, as well.

3. An Alternate Process Monitor:

- Takes over if and when the Process Monitor needs to enter the discussion at the meeting and can't do this job for a while!

4. A Time Keeper:

- Keeps time for 3-minute speaking turns (see above, “process monitor”).
- Keeps track of time allotted for each agenda item (see above, “agenda keeper”).
- Insists that the group re-negotiate time if it wants to continue on with an item after the time limit is up.

5. Recorder:

- Takes minutes.
- Notes any decisions which have been reached on items.
- Asks the group to state any decision made before moving on, if no decision has been formally made. It's surprising how often a group will spend time discussing an item then drift on to the next without making a decision.

These are very basic structures that can be tried in any task-oriented group situation immediately. This approach really can work for board meetings and other situations where people have to make decisions in a fixed amount of time.

Creative Edge Impasse Resolution: When the Going Gets Rough

When the going gets rough, the group can stop and do a variety of methods from The Creative Edge Pyramid™ which increase access to The Creative Edge, and thus to creativity, innovation, and win/win decision making:

- a **Group Intuitive Focusing** exercise, taking a few moments of quiet, each person sensing into the “intuitive feel” of the question or issue is facing the group
- a “**Round Robin**” after a Group Focusing exercise, where each person gets one - three minutes to have their say on an item, no interruptions allowed
- **Interpersonal Focusing:** a **Listening** facilitator, can, by turns, use **Focused Listening** to reflect each of two speakers who are having a conflict or difficulty understanding each other, allowing a creative solution to emerge
- **Focusing Partnership** break out: breaking out into pairs or triads for equal Focusing/Listening turns on an issue, then coming back with perhaps a Round Robin for sharing new insights
- Brainstorming and any other techniques helpful in other forms of group process, followed by Group Intuitive Focusing and Round Robin sharing of new “intuitive feels”, Creative Edges, stirred by the technique.

Training in PRISMS/S, with its Core Skills of Intuitive Focusing and Focusing Listening, and the seven methods from The Creative Edge Pyramid™ for incorporating PRISMS/S at every level of organization, can be explored through a Free Phone Consult with Dr. McGuire of Creative Edge Focusing , arranged at www.cefocusing.com, and the many Free and Purchased resources found there.

For a complete explanation of the theory behind access to The Creative Edge and innovative decision making, you can download Dr. McGuire’s comprehensive article, “Collaborative Edge Decision Making Method, “ for free when you email her to arrange a Free Phone Consult.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 6 EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION: *MOTIVATING FROM THE BOTTOM UP*

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Motivation = Engagement : Apathy Is The Enemy!

You are charged with finding that “one small thing” which will get every employee or volunteer or citizen fully engaged in your larger projects. No apathy allowed in a Creative Edge Organization! You want to become alert to noticing apathy, people at any level who are not caring, not involved, and then work at involvement. You want every person actively involved at The Creative Edge, the lively, creative, energized “intuitive feel” of being a living, thinking, involved Co-Creator or Collaborator.

Finding “One Small Thing”

In the ongoing life of your Creative Edge community or organization, the weekly exchange of Listening/Focusing turns in Focusing Partnerships and Focusing Groups or Teams will keep individuals involved at their own personal, unique Creative Edge. However, in addition, or perhaps first or independently, you can use the “One Small Thing” method to find one over-arching project that will get everyone involved.

You want to find “One Small Thing” that every person in the community or organization can become involved in with minimal effort but maximum sense of satisfaction in contributing something to the larger mission. If the first step of involvement is too big, too difficult, then most people won’t be willing to do it.

So, you have to keep looking until you find something so small that everyone can do it, easily, willingly, yet so important that it will feel like a real contribution, a first step of commitment to the larger cause. Then, you can invite these involved, engaged people into further Collaborative Decision Making about the project.

If your “One Small Thing” project is not having the desired effect, then the step is too big, requires too much motivation or commitment. If that is the case, then you need to look for a smaller step until you find the one that works.

Example One: Achieving Corporate Buy-In

At Old Navy (*Business Week*, June, 19, 2006), Innovation Champion Ivy Ross, catching the MySpace-type lifestyle of today, used a facebook-style CD in an effort to bind old and new employees into one new group. Every employee filmed three minutes of “something so personal it would take years to discover it.” Ross had new and old

employees hungrily viewing the CD. They quickly became bonded into one, new group, “infused...with a close tightness essential for innovation.” Ross had found the “One Small Thing.”

Example Two: Revitalizing the PTO at a public school

The PTO of a public school was languishing. A handful of parents was doing all the work. A new property tax bill dramatically cut funding to the public schools, wiping out PE teachers, art, music, librarians, nurses....The parents suddenly had to raise a whole lot of money from a population of middle to low income parents.

The small group of committed parents started selling Grocery Store Gift Certificates. The PTO could purchase the “scrip” at a 5% discount, resell it to parents to use to buy groceries, and make a 5% profit on something parents had to buy anyway. Everyone had to buy groceries! They sold “scrip” in the front hallway before school and at school events and PTO meetings.

Suddenly, everyone was buying “scrip” – grandparents, neighbors, as well as parents and teachers. People were coming into the school to purchase “scrip” and staying to paint walls or help with reading. The only people who were unhappy were parents who were on food stamps – they were furious that they couldn’t contribute!!!! The PTO had found the One Small Thing that allowed everyone to become involved.

Now, parents had a “stake” in how the money would be spent. Attendance at PTO meetings grew to thirty, making decisions about how to distribute the funds, how to enlarge the “scrip” program. Teachers came to present proposals for funding.

In the first year, the PTO raised \$11,000 (at the 5% net profit, gross sales of \$220,000!) to hire a part-time PE teacher who would teach the other teachers how to run PE classes. The “scrip” program spread to other public schools and, ten years later, a large banner in front of the town high school reads “Buy Grocery Scrip”.

But, more importantly, the entire school was revitalized. The parents had to establish a “volunteer lounge” at the school to accommodate all the volunteers!

Hypothetical Example: Global Warming

You are Al Gore. You want to get every day citizens involved in the issue of Global Warming. But most people feel apathetic: “Oh, there is nothing that one person can do...it is up to governments.”

Well, maybe it is up to governments...but non-apathetic, engaged citizens are the ones to put pressure on governments. So, you are looking for that “one small thing.” “What is one small thing that masses of people would be willing to do and which would act as a first step toward full engagement?”

Here's a possibility: Purportedly, "idling" your car greatly increases the output of pollutants. Yet, everyone, without giving it a thought, "idles" at drive-up banks, fast food take-outs, school pick ups. What about a "Stop Idling! Stop Greenhouse Gases" campaign? With bumper stickers, flyers on car windows or handed out at drive-up locations....the double-entendre "Don't idle and don't be idle!".....

If you can get people, all over the world, to "Stop Idling!", you will have them engaged in thinking about global warming every day...and primed to engage in other actions which you initiate.

Intuitive Focusing on "What is the One Small Thing?"

Your Turn

So, let's use the **Intuitive Focusing** skill (see Instant "Ahah!" 1. above and also www.cefocusing.com) to find the "one small thing" to engage and motivate your target audience, be it consumers, citizens, volunteers, or employees. This could be the most important decision you make, so, one small session may not be enough, but it will start you thinking about Creative Edge engagement. It will put the pot on the burner so that creative insights can arise now or later.

You can do this first step alone, by yourself, but even more productively with the appropriate group of problem solvers, benefiting from the Creative Edge Collaborative Thinking of many people (see Instant "Ahah!" 5 above).

However, the best way to generate ideas for the "one small thing" is to initiate a Listening/Focusing Brainstorming process with the people at the bottom! We are not going to do that here, but it is essential to the process of motivating from the bottom up.

As a group or individually, sit down and get comfortable, preparing to spend up to twenty minutes letting right- and left- brain problem solving interact. Add another twenty minutes for group sharing. Keep a blank pad of paper in front of each person for gathering ideas.

In a group, have one person read the following instructions aloud to everyone else. Everyone except the reader, close your eyes, "focusing" inward, on The Creative Edge...or, at least, look off "into space". You want to access right-brain, intuitive thinking before you turn to more traditional "brainstorming" methods.

Upon hearing the instructions, pay attention, inside, looking for the "intuitive feel" of answers – not what is immediately, intellectually known, but the right-brain, intuitive, murky, vague feel of what you know that is "more than words".....leave at least a minute of silence between each instruction:

Intuitive Focusing Instructions

---Close your eyes and get comfortable...let your “focus” turn inward, your attention toward the “intuitive feel” that is more than words...
(one minute or more...)

---Just notice your breathing going in...and out...don’t try to change it. Just notice your breathing as a way of coming inside, more in tune with your intuitive-knowing....
(one minute or more...)

---Take a moment to choose an area of interest, or, if the problem to be explored is already known, name it: “I (or we) are going to spend some Intuitive Focusing time on the problem of (name it)...
(one moment or more...)

---Now ask yourself, “Where is the apathy that I am concerned about? Who is it that I want to engage in this project? “ and just sit quietly, bringing the whole concern into the center of your attention, setting aside the already known, and letting an “intuitive feel” for “the whole thing” to arise....
(one minute...)

---Find some words or an image or make a drawing....try to capture the “intuitive feel”... Don’t worry if you don’t get a clear answer...you are drawing closer to an “intuitive feel” for the whole situation... If you want to write anything down, using Mind Mapping or any other method, take a few moments to do so...
(one minute or more...)

---Now, ask yourself, “What could be ‘one small thing’ people could do, ‘one small thing’ this audience would be happy to do, which could be a first step toward full engagement?”...
(one minute...)

---Don’t get into thinking the “already-known”...set aside what you already know and just pay attention to The Creative Edge...the “intuitive feel” of the whole thing that is more than you are already thinking.....don’t try to do anything...just notice the “unclear feel” that comes up....
(one minute or more...)

---And find some words or an image that can capture that “intuitive feel”....if you want to write anything down, feel free...
(one minute or more)

---If you are working alone, you can go back-and-forth, internally, trying out an idea in your mind, sensing into how people might react, imagining how it might work...going back and forth between trying out possibilities and checking with the “intuitive feel”: “Would that work?...How would that be?....” Take notes as needed or desired...continue as long as you want.

---In a group, after the initial Focusing Instructions, let people quietly take notes or Mind Map to capture their fresh “intuition,” then use a Creative Edge Round Robin sharing structure (see Instant “Ahah!” 5 above) for an initial go-round. Someone keep time, limit turns to 3 -5 minutes per person. Each person gets an uninterrupted turn to say what came up during the Intuitive Focusing, paying attention to the “intuitive feel” while speaking, creating fresh, innovative words and images.....Everyone else just listens, taking notes as desired, noticing what new ideas or Creative Edges arise as the others speak.....

After this initial sharing from the Creative Edge, the group can turn to a more traditional “brain storming” method, bouncing ideas off of each other, interrupting if that stimulates creativity...but returning to the Creative Edge Round Robin sharing structure, time-limited turns with no interruptions allowed, if more access to The Creative Edge of intuitive, right-brain problem solving is desired.

Then, of course, try out any ideas that have come up...test them on co-workers or focus groups... ask the people at the bottom what would work for them...follow your usual product development and marketing strategies, the measure of success being whether people willingly become engaged... or, if they are not stepping up, consider if the step too big, in which case, it’s back to the drawing board, The Creative Edge, to come up with a smaller step, until the “One Small Thing” is found.

INSTANT “AHAH!”⁷ CLEARING A SPACE: INSTANT SERENITY

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Feeling “Totally Okay”

Clearing A Space is often the first step in a longer Intuitive Focusing process (see Instant “Ahah!” 1). But, it can also be used as a stand-alone procedure for instantly setting down your burdens and experiencing at least a few minutes of being free of cares, of resting in a peaceful place, of feeling “Totally okay.” It can be especially helpful when carrying long-term burdens, like chronic physical illness or job stresses.

In order to “clear a space” inside of yourself, first you have to notice that every issue that you carry has an “intuitive feel” that goes with it. You will sit down in a quiet place, usually shut your eyes, and just begin to notice what comes up when you ask yourself an open-ended question, like

- “How am I today, really?” or
- “What am I carrying subconsciously, as bodily stress?”

Taking An Inventory

You can notice not only burdens or concerns but also positive experiences. In a way, you are “making a list” or “taking an inventory.”

However, as different from just “making a list,” when each item comes up, you will look for a specific Creative Edge, the “intuitive feel” of how your body is carrying this thing right now (no problem-solving, just noticing allowed!!!!). Although this may be a specific physical experience (“a pain in my jaw,” “a tension in my shoulders,” “nausea in my belly,” “a smile on my face,”), it can also be a more global or “intuitive” feel of the whole thing, like “heavy” or “scary” or “sad” or “excited” or “happy” or “pleased.”

Setting Each Item Outside

When you have noticed the “intuitive feel,” then you will take the “whole thing,” the item on the list and the bodily feel of it, wrap it up like a package, and lift it out and simply set it outside of yourself, (Ahhhhhh!... Just saying these words always brings a sigh of tension release from me and, hopefully, will for you!!!) using the image of a park bench or a picnic table or a shelf – whatever works for you.

For these few moments, you are not going to try to solve or change or go more deeply into any item. You can tell them that you will come back later to problem solve, if needed. Right now, in order to “clear a space inside”, you will just wrap “the whole thing” up in a package (Ahhhhhhh! I’m sighing again at the thought!) and set it outside of yourself, on the bench or table or shelf.

You will often feel a large or small sigh of relief each time you lift something out and put it outside (Ahhhhhh!), even though you haven’t solved or changed anything. Your goal during “clearing a space” is simply to set everything outside – and see what is left inside.

Empty of Problems, Full of Peace

And what is left when everything you have been carrying in a subconscious way has been named and set outside of yourself? Not emptiness, but an expansive feeling of being “Okay, just as I am.” A few moments of relaxation, freedom from carrying your loads. Sometimes, an even larger spiritual space: a sense of Oneness with more than yourself.

You will want to linger in this space as long as you can. You can also make words or an image for it, so that you can get back to it quickly, at many times during the day when a little “break” would be welcome.

So, now you can try it out. Here are some simple instructions you can use any time you want to “clear a space” inside. You can read them to yourself now, download for repeated use, and/or read them into a tape recorder and play them back, **leaving at least a full minute between each instruction**. You can also **purchase audiotapes** with these and other relaxation instructions:

Trying Out Clearing A Space

Taking An Inventory, Making A List

(Neil Friedman, www.neilheart.com , created the “park bench” image below)

Set aside at least ten, hopefully 20 minutes or more.

---Sit down in a comfortable, quiet place where you won’t be interrupted...

Loosen any clothing that feels too tight...find a comfortable position...you may already experience a sigh of relief...

(one minute...)

---Close your eyes, if you can....spend a moment just noticing your breathing....don’t try to change it....just notice the breath going in....and out....

(one minute...)

---Now, imagine yourself sitting under a tree in a beautiful park.....beside you is a park bench.....now, you are going to let yourself daydream, just asking yourself, “What issues or good feelings am I carrying inside, right now?” and wait quietly for the first thing to arise...

(one minute or more...)

Now, take this first thing and ask yourself, “How am I carrying this subconsciously?” and look for the physical experience or the more intuitive feeling that goes with “the whole thing”.....

(one minute...)

Setting Each Item Outside

---Spend a moment just acknowledging this item on the list and its intuitive feel.....Then, imagine just wrapping “the whole thing” up like a package and setting it out on the park bench.....hopefully, you experience a sigh of relief here (Ahhhhh!).....

(one minute...)

---Continue in this way, making your list of difficult and happy things that rise up inside as you wait quietly, each time looking for the intuitive feel of “the whole thing,” acknowledging that, then wrapping the “whole thing” up and setting it out on the park bench.....hopefully, there is a sigh of relief each time (Ahhhhh!).....

(turn off the tape until you feel done with this part...).....(five or ten minutes, or more.....)

---Don’t forget to scan for happy or anticipated things as well as troubling ones...spend a moment with the intuitive feel, then wrap “the whole thing” up and set it outside on the bench.....notice any sighs of relief.....

(one or more minutes...)

Any Additional “Background” Feelings?

---Now, at the end of your list, ask yourself, “Is there anything else standing between me and feeling totally okay?”....look especially for any “background” feeling, like depression or fatigue or fear, that is always there like wallpaper.....again, get the body-feel of that “whole thing,” wrap it up, and set it outside.....

(one minute or more...)

---Keep going until you are really finished with your list and have acknowledged and set outside each thing.....

(a few minutes...)

Empty of Issues, Full of Peace

---Now, just spend some time in the “cleared space” that is left inside ---not empty, but peaceful, blessed, completely “okay.”.....(five or ten or more minutes)

---In closing, you might want to make some words or image for this restful place which might allow you to come back easily in the future, throughout the day.....

INSTANT “AHAH!” 8 **SHARING YOUR DAY : *INSTANT INTIMACY***

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Time = Love

With your significant other: Every day, and I mean religiously, set aside about 40 minutes to sit down and “share your day.” Get a drink or a snack or go in the hot tub –an uninterrupted space away from other family members.

At a separate time, you can also do this with your children, each person having an uninterrupted turn.

Just Warm, Silent Attention: No Interruptions, No Criticism

Each person gets to talk without interruption, refreshing in his/her own mind and describing to the other the events of the day, usually in chronological order, often starting with the night before: anxieties, dreams. The speaker gets to share every event of the day which rises to consciousness, no matter how trivial it seems. This can easily take about twenty minutes

The other person simply listens quietly, not saying a word (Well, maybe an occasional “Wow!” or “How interesting!” or “Oh, no!” or “Yikes!”).

Then, when the first speaker is done, it is the other person’s turn – same deal: No interruptions, no opinions, no judgments.

No Problem Solving

And no problem solving. At least initially, save problem solving for another time, or do it before or after. Too easily, problem solving can eat up the sharing space, and intimacy is lost. Problem solving can also bring up conflicts, not wanted in this sharing space. And fear of problem solving can make people dread sharing time, instead of looking forward to this peaceful, intimate lull in a busy day.

Intimacy = Sharing

That’s it!!! You will thoroughly understand what your significant other does all day, the frustrations, the tedium, the other people in his or her world, the small joys, the conflicts, the stresses, the successes, the low points, the high points. And each person will feel that their life is valid and valuable, no matter how trivial or repetitious it may seem to be.

Over time, you will get to know each other intimately, and this intimacy will carry over into other areas of your shared life. Intimacy increases sensuality and sexuality between partners. Intimacy also leads children to turn to their parents when needing help.

Instant “Ahah!” s 2 and 3 show how to use both passive and active listening for problem solving. But, here, you are using passive listening simply to let your partner or child be the center of attention. At the same time, the speaker becomes the “center of attention” to him- or her-self, taking the time to fully receive his or her day.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 9

CREATIVITY: *FROM BLOCKS TO PREDICTABLE “AHAH!”’S*

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Focusing On the Creative Edge

Often, naturally, artists, writers, dancers “check in” with their “intuitive feel” for a project at many steps throughout the creative process. Learning Intuitive Focusing as a specific Skill will enhance this natural process, as well as giving you a reliable tool for those times when you are “stumped” or “blocked” about what comes next.

The Blurry, Vague, “Feel of the Whole Thing” Holds The Next Steps

Intuitive Focusing is one-half of the two Core Skills of Creative Edge Focusing™. Focusing can be used any time to find out what is bothering you. Focusing specializes in sitting with the vague, wordless intuitive sense that there is something....**something you can’t quite put your finger on or put into words**, but something definitely determining your behavior or how you feel or the inkling of an idea or solution.....

Intuitive Focusing can be used not just for personal problem-solving but for sitting with The Creative Edge of anything: a piece of creative art or writing, an exciting professional problem to solve, a good feeling that has a spiritual edge...

The Crux of Change

In the 1960’s research showed that the single most important variable in predicting success in psychotherapy was, not what the therapist was doing, but the client’s own ability to speak from present, felt experiencing rather than intellectualization. Eugene Gendlin decided we’d better learn how to teach that skill to people. He called it Focusing and broke it down into six steps for teaching it in a self-help way. His book, *Focusing* (Bantam, 1981), has been translated into over 15 languages and is used throughout the world. Focusing-Oriented Therapy incorporates Focusing into the psychotherapy process.

Description of Gendlin’s Six Step Focusing Process

First, I will describe Gendlin’s process, then I will walk you through some actual instructions specific to using Intuitive Focusing with Creativity below.

Here are **Gendlin’s six steps** for use of this inner, meditation-like problem-solving process in a self-help way (Gendlin coined the term Felt Sense for the vague, bodily, “felt meaning,” which Dr. McGuire also calls The Creative Edge and the “intuitive feel”. He coined the term “felt shift” to describe a new step. Dr. McGuire calls it a Paradigm Shift):

- (1) **Clearing a Space:** setting aside the jumble of thoughts, opinions, and analysis we all carry in our minds, and making a clear, quiet space inside where something new can come.
- (2) **Getting a Felt Sense:** asking an open-ended question like “What is the feel of this whole thing (issue, situation, problem)?” and, instead of answering with one’s already-known analysis, waiting silently as long as a minute for the subtle, intuitive, “bodily feel” of “the whole thing” to form.
- (3) **Finding a Handle:** carefully looking for some words or an image that begin to capture the “feel of the whole thing,” the Felt Sense, The Creative Edge: “It’s ‘jumpy;’” “It’s scared;” “It’s like the dew of a Spring morning;” “It’s like macaroni and cheese – comforting,” “It’s like jet propulsion! Something new that needs to spring forth!”
- (4) **Resonating and Checking:** taking the Handle words or image and holding them against the Felt Sense, the “intuitive feel,” asking “Is this right? Is it ‘jumpy’?”, etc. Finding new words or images if needed until there is a sense of “fit” – “Yes, that’s it. Jumpy.”
- (5) **Asking: asking open-ended questions** (questions that don’t have a “Yes” or “No” or otherwise fixed or “closed” answer) like “And what is so hard about that?” or “And why does that have me stuck?” or “What was so beautiful about that moment?” or “And how does this apply to everything else?” and, again, instead of answering with already-known analysis, waiting silently for the “intuitive feel,” the Felt Sense, to arise.

At each Asking, the Focuser also **goes back to steps (2), (3) and (4)** as necessary, waiting for the Felt Sense to form, finding Handle words, Resonating and Checking until there is a sense of “fit”: “Yes, that’s it.” This often physically-felt experience of tension release and easing in the body, this sense of having found the right words, is called a **Felt Shift** by Gendlin. Dr. McGuire calls it a **Paradigm Shift**. It can be a small step of “Yes, that’s it,” to be followed by many similar small steps of change, or it can be a larger unfolding, a huge insight, with many pieces of the puzzle suddenly falling into place, with a flow of new words and images and possible action steps. Sometimes there is also a flood of tears of acknowledgment and relief or the release of other pent-up emotions.

- (6) **Receiving:** at each new step, each Felt Shift, taking a moment to sit with the new “intuitive feel,” simply acknowledging and appreciating your own inner knowing for this new insight. Then, **you can start again at step (5)**, Asking another open-ended question, (“And what is so important about this?”; “And why did that have me stuck?”; “And where does my mother come into all of this?, etc.). And, again, step (2), waiting for the Felt Sense to form, step (3) finding a Handle, step (4) Resonating and Checking until there is a Felt Shift, a sense of “That’s it.”

You can always use Clearing A Space (see Instant “Ahah!”⁷ above) as a first step of **Intuitive Focusing**, especially if you have a difficult time relaxing, being able to feel your body from the inside. Clearing a Space is particularly handy if you walk around with your body like cement a lot of the time!! However, a formal Clearing a Space takes a good twenty minutes, just in itself.

There are less time-consuming ways to get ready to start Focusing. You can “clear a space” through relaxation or imagery work. We’ll give one of those a try below. The audio CD which comes as part of Creative Edge Focusing™’s Self-Help Package gives two additional protocols for Complete Focusing Instructions, as well as several Pre-Focusing exercises for Relaxation and Finding A Felt Sense audiotape (www.cefocusing.com)

Focusing On A Creative Problem or Project

(You can read these to yourself now, download them for continuous use, read them into a tape recorder for playback -- or purchase the Self –Help Package with audio CD . Leave at least one minute of silence between each instruction)

(One minute)

Okay...first, just get yourself comfortable...feel the weight of your body on the chair...loosen any clothing that is too tight....

(One minute)

Spend a moment just noticing your breathing....don’t try to change it....just notice the breath going in....and out.....

(One minute...)

Now, notice where you have tension in your body (pause).....

(One minute...)

Now, imagine the tension as a stream of water, draining out of your body through your fingertips and feet (Pause)....

(One minute...)

Let yourself travel inside of your body to a place of peace.....

(One minute...)

Now, bring to mind a creative problem or project that needs attention (pause)...

(One minute or more...)

Think about it or get a mental image of it.....

(One minute...)

Now, try to set aside all of your thoughts about possible solutions, and, as you carry a mental image of the problem or project in your mind, just wait and see what comes in the center of your body, around your heart/chest area, in response (pause)....not words, but the intuitive feel of the whole situation, The Creative Edge.....

(One minute...)

Now, carefully try to find words or an image for that Edge...Go carefully back and forth between any words and the intuitive feel of the whole thing until you find words or an image that are just right for it.....

(One minute...)

Now, gently ask yourself, “Is that it? Would that work here?”, and wait, at least a minute, to see what comes in your wordless intuition, your whole-body sense, The Creative Edge....

(One minute...)

Again, carefully find words or an image that exactly fit that Edge.....

(One minute...)

Now, try that possible solution out in the creative situation, either in your imagination or by actually writing, painting, tinkering with a model.....

(One minute...)

Now, ask yourself, “Does that work?” and, again, don’t answer from your head, what you already know, but wait, as long as a minute, for an answer to come in the center of your body, your wordless intuition, The Creative Edge.....

(One minute...)

Again, carefully find words or an image for that, “Does that solution work?”.....

(One minute...)

If the answer is “Yes,” a release of bodily tension, a sense of coming unstuck...then return to the creative project and work again until there is another place of not-knowing, where you can begin the whole Focusing process again....

If the answer is “No,” your body remains tense and your energy still blocked, flat, then, set aside everything you have already thought and tried and ask your “subconscious,” the “intuitive feel” at The Creative Edge, again: “What does this situation need?”, and, again, wait, as long as a minute or more, to see what comes in the center of your chest, an intuitive “feel” for the whole thing...

(One minute)

Take a moment, again, to carefully find words or an image for whatever has come.....

(One minute)

Keep at this as long as you are comfortable, asking an open-ended question, waiting for an “intuitive feel” of “the whole thing” to emerge, looking for words or an image or even a gesture or action step that fits the intuitive feel “exactly.”

(One minute or more...)

But, if no clear next step arises, just remind yourself that, by spending Focusing time sitting with The Creative Edge, you have added energy and started a new living-forward, and, especially if you continue to hold “the feel of it all” on the back-burner of your mind, later something new will likely pop up....

(One minute)

Appreciate yourself and your “subconscious,” the “intuitive feel,” for taking time with this, trusting that taking time is the important thing -- solutions can then arise later.

Remember, it is often easier to learn Intuitive Focusing with the company of a Focusing Listener. Go to www.cefocusing.com to find many resources, including self-help groups, and Creative Edge Focusing Consultants for individual Coaching or Classes and Workshops.

INSTANT “AHAH!” 10 SPIRITUALITY: *BEING TOUCHED AND BEING MOVED*

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Experiencing The Sacred

Like ideas and personal problems or interpersonal conflicts, spiritual experiences also have an “intuitive feel,” a Creative Edge that can be expanded upon and deepened by using the Intuitive Focusing process. If you have just an “inkling” or a “flash” of experience that feels Sacred, you can go back to that experience during a specific Focusing Process, recover the spiritual feeling, and find ways to carry it with you. First, I will describe Gendlin’s six-step Focusing process; then, below that, I will walk you through an actual session of Focusing upon an Experience of the Sacred which you have had, understanding it more deeply, and finding a way to bring it back consciously.

The Blurry, Vague, “Feel of the Whole Thing” Holds The Next Steps

Intuitive Focusing is one-half of the two Core Skills you are learning here. Focusing can be used any time to find out what is bothering you. Focusing specializes in sitting with the vague, wordless intuitive sense that there is something....**something you can’t quite put your finger on or put into words**, but something definitely determining your behavior or how you feel or the inkling of an idea or solution.....

Focusing can be used not just for personal problem-solving but for sitting with **The Creative Edge** of anything: a piece of creative art or writing, an exciting professional problem to solve, a good feeling that has a spiritual edge...

The Crux of Change

In the 1960’s research showed that the single most important variable in predicting success in psychotherapy was, not what the therapist was doing, but the client’s own ability to speak from present, felt experiencing rather than intellectualization. Eugene Gendlin decided we’d better learn how to teach that skill to people. He called it Focusing and broke it down into six steps for teaching it in a self-help way. His book, *Focusing* (Bantam, 1981), has been translated into over 15 languages and is used throughout the world. Focusing-Oriented Therapy incorporates Focusing into the psychotherapy process.

Description of Gendlin’s Six Step Focusing Process

First, I will describe Gendlin’s process, then I will walk you through some actual instructions specific to using Intuitive Focusing with Creativity below.

Here are **Gendlin's six steps** for use of this inner, meditation-like problem-solving process in a self-help way (Gendlin coined the term Felt Sense for the vague, bodily, "felt meaning," which Dr. McGuire also calls The Creative Edge and the "intuitive feel". He coined the term "felt shift" to describe a new step. Dr. McGuire calls this a Paradigm Shift:

- (1) **Clearing a Space:** setting aside the jumble of thoughts, opinions, and analysis we all carry in our minds, and making a clear, quiet space inside where something new can come.
- (2) **Getting a Felt Sense:** asking an open-ended question like "What is the feel of this whole thing (issue, situation, problem)?" and, **instead of answering with one's already-known analysis, waiting silently** as long as a minute for the subtle, intuitive, "bodily feel" of "the whole thing" to form.
- (3) **Finding a Handle:** carefully looking for some words or an image that begin to **capture the "feel of the whole thing,"** the Felt Sense, The Creative Edge: "It's 'jumpy;'" "It's scared;" "It's like the dew of a Spring morning;" "It's like macaroni and cheese – comforting," "It's like jet propulsion! Something new that needs to spring forth!"
- (4) **Resonating and Checking:** taking the Handle words or image and **holding them against the Felt Sense, the "intuitive feel,"** asking "Is this right? Is it 'jumpy'?", etc. Finding new words or images if needed **until there is a sense of "fit"** – "Yes, that's it. Jumpy."
- (5) **Asking: asking open-ended questions** (questions that don't have a "Yes" or "No" or otherwise fixed or "closed" answer) like "And what is so hard about that?" or "And why does that have me stuck?" or "What was so beautiful about that moment?" or "And how does this apply to everything else?" and, again, instead of answering with already-known analysis, **waiting silently for the "intuitive feel," the Felt Sense, to arise.**

At each Asking, the Focuser also **goes back to steps (2), (3) and (4)** as necessary, waiting for the Felt Sense to form, finding Handle words, Resonating and Checking until there is a sense of "fit": "Yes, that's it." This often physically-felt experience of tension release and easing in the body, this sense of having found the right words, is called a **Felt Shift** by Gendlin. Dr. McGuire calls it a **Paradigm Shift**. It can be a small step of "Yes, that's it," to be followed by many similar small steps of change, or it can be a larger unfolding, a huge insight, with many pieces of the puzzle suddenly falling into place, with a flow of new words and images and possible action steps. Sometimes there is also a flood of tears of acknowledgment and relief or the release of other pent-up emotions.

- (6) **Receiving:** at each new step, each Felt Shift, **taking a moment** to sit with the new "intuitive feel," simply acknowledging and appreciating your own inner

knowing for this new insight. Then, **you can start again at step (5)**, Asking another open-ended question, (“And what is so important about this?”; “And why did that have me stuck?”; “And where does my mother come into all of this?, etc.). **And, again, step (2), waiting for the Felt Sense to form, step (3) finding a Handle, step (4) Resonating and Checking until there is a Felt Shift, a sense of “That’s it.”**

You can always use Clearing A Space (see Instant “Ahah!” 7) as a first step of **Intuitive Focusing**, especially if you have a difficult time relaxing, being able to feel your body from the inside. Clearing a Space is particularly handy if you walk around with your body like cement a lot of the time!! However, a formal Clearing a Space takes a good twenty minutes, just in itself.

There are less time-consuming ways to get ready to start Focusing. You can “clear a space” through relaxation or imagery work. We’ll give one of those a try below. The audio CD that comes with Creative Edge Focusing™ ‘s Self-Help Package (www.cefocusing.com) contains two additional sets of Complete Focusing Instructions, plus several Pre-Focusing Exercises for Relaxation and Getting a Felt Sense.

Focusing on Spirituality: Experiencing The Sacred

(You can read these to yourself now, download them for repeated use, read them into a tape recorder for playback; leave at least one minute of silence between each instruction)

You will choose an experience to spend Intuitive Focusing time on that had spiritual meaning for you, a moment when you might have said that you were experiencing God or The Sacred or Something Profound – often, this can be something that touched you or moved you, perhaps bringing a sheen of tears to your eyes. It might be a piece of music, a prayer or passage from the Bible, a poem, a sunset, the smile of a child, the touch of a friend.

By spending time with “the intuitive feel of it all,” you are going to make more words and meanings for what is Sacred, to you. Please find a comfortable chair in a quiet place, and give yourself at least 30 minutes for **Intuitive Focusing**:

Okay...first, just get yourself comfortable...feel the weight of your body on the chair...loosen any clothing that is too tight....

(One minute)

Spend a moment just noticing your breathing....don’t try to change it....just notice the breath going in....and out.....

(One minute...)

Now, notice where you have tension in your body (pause).....

(One minute...)

Now, imagine the tension as a stream of water, draining out of your body through your fingertips and feet (Pause)....

(One minute...)

Let yourself travel inside of your body to a place of peace.....

(One minute...)

Now, bring to mind an event or piece of music or art or religious symbol that felt Sacred, or had a spiritual significance for you (pause)... Take your time to find a powerful, meaningful symbol or event....

(One minute or more...)

Think about it or get a mental image of it.....take your time to choose something that matters to you....

(One minute...)

Now, try to set aside all of your thoughts about this experience, and, as you carry a mental image of the event or symbol in your mind, just wait and see what comes in the center of your body, around your heart/chest area, in response (pause)...not words, but the intuitive feel of that whole thing

(One minute or more...)

Now, carefully try to find words or an image for that intuitive feel...Go carefully back and forth between any words and the intuitive feel of the whole thing until you find words or an image that are just right for it.....

(One minute...)

Now, gently ask yourself, “What was so important for me about that?” or, “What about that touched me or filled me with awe?”, and wait, at least a minute, to see what comes in the center of your body, the place where you feel things.....

(One minute or more...)

Again, carefully find words or an image that exactly fit that felt experiencing.....

(One minute or more...)

Now, ask yourself, “And what was so Sacred to me about that, what do I mean by ‘Sacred’?” and, again, wait quietly, for at least a minute, to see what comes in the center of your body, without words, just the “feel” of “the whole thing” about “Sacred.”

(One minute or more...)

And find some words or an image to capture that “whole thing,” The Sacred...

(One minute or more...)

Now, ask yourself, “Does that capture what I mean by ‘spiritual’?”, and, again, don’t answer from your head, what you already know, but wait, as long as a minute, for an answer to come in the center of your body, your wordless intuition, The Creative Edge.....

(One minute or more...)

Again, carefully find words or an image for that, and check, “Is that it?”.....

(One minute...)

If the answer is “Yes,” a release of bodily tension, a sense of “rightness,” then turn your attention to noticing any “spiritual” experiences that are present around the edges of this experience, right now...feelings of Sacredness, of floating in Oneness, of Awe or Gratitude, of being moved or touched with tears.....stay with these immediate spiritual feelings as long as you like....

(One minute or more...)

Try to find an image or other symbol or gesture that might serve as a “handle” for this particular spiritual feeling, something that would remind you of how to find your way to

this place again, at any time during the day when you want to revisit the Experience of the Sacred....

(One minute or more)

And, when you are finished, come back into the room.

If the answer is “No,” your body remains tense, then, set aside everything you have already thought and tried and ask your body, The Creative Edge, again: “What is Spirituality for me, and where might I find it?”, and, again, wait, as long as a minute or more, to see what comes in the center of your chest, an intuitive “feel” for the whole thing...

(One minute or more....)

Take a moment, again, to carefully find words or an image for whatever has come.....

(One minute or more...)

Keep at this as long as you are comfortable, asking an open-ended question, waiting for an intuitive sense of “the whole thing” to emerge, looking for words or an image or even a gesture or action step that fits the intuitive feel “exactly.”

(One minute or more....)

But, if no clear “felt” experiencing of Spirituality arises, just remind yourself that, by spending Focusing time sitting with The Creative Edge, you have added energy and started a new living-forward, and, especially if you continue to hold “the feel of it all” on the back-burner of your mind, later something new will likely pop up....

(One minute)

Appreciate yourself and your body for taking time with this, trusting that taking time is the important thing – new experiences can then arise later.

(One minute or more....)

Remember, Intuitive Focusing is often learned more easily in the company of a Focused Listener. Go to Creative Edge Focusing™ at www.cefocusing.com to find many resources, from self-help groups to Creative Edge Focusing Consultants for individual Coaching or Classes and Workshops.