

The Client's Client: The Edge of Awareness

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In the last decade we have learned much about the client's side of therapeutic process. We developed a very specific knowledge and practice, called focusing. In the last years there have been many new developments.

Theory and experiential specificity can seem far apart. Not so! The most basic theory and the most specific experiential detail thrive on each other.

I will present some new experiential specifics ([Section I](#)) and then I will use them in a brief theoretical statement ([Section II](#)).

Section I

What Is That, Exactly, From Which the Change-Steps Come?

The client's side of the change process has usually been discussed in relation to the question: Exactly to what, in the client, should the therapist respond? The usual answer was "the feeling," but that term can be confusing.

No, it is not exactly "the feeling", although responding to that is in the right direction. We want to respond to that in the client from which change steps come. Let me therefore ask instead: What is *that*, in the client, from which change-steps come? That is not exactly "feeling", certainly not the familiar and identifiable feelings. Changesteps come rather from an *unclear* "edge," a "sense" of more than one says and knows.

We now call such an unclear edge a "*felt sense*." Since it is felt, we need to be precise about how does it differs from the usual, clear and recognizable feelings.

Two Differences Between Feelings and Felt Sense: Felt Sense is Unclear and Less Intense.

For example, a client may feel angry and say why. In an effective therapy process that would "open up" and further steps would arise. But suppose the client says: "I'm angry, I told you why, and that's all. Nothing further comes." Let us say the therapist has responded to the anger and its reasons. What exactly is not happening?

When therapy works, certain *steps* of process would come here. Do they come from the feeling of anger, exactly? Many therapists think so. They lead their patients to feel such

an anger more and more intensely. They assume that process-steps come from feelings, so the anger must not have been felt sufficiently. But people often have the same feelings over and over, quite intensely, without change-steps coming.

For example, the change steps might be:

C: (silence)... (breath)... ,feels sort of heavy.... like it *wants* to stay angry...

T: something there *wants* to stay angry.

C: Mhm... (silence)... Oh (breath)... yah... if I stop being angry I won't do anything about it... yes... I'd love to just say it's OK and not have to cope with the situation. I've done that so often.

These steps did not come exactly from the feeling of anger. Rather, the "heavy" quality is what opens into these steps. That heavy quality is the felt sense. More intensity *of anger* would not bring it up. The heavy quality is not as strong as the anger.

The felt sense is less intense than the ordinary feelings. Without quiet concentration one may lose hold of it. *From* a felt sense very intense feelings can come, but the felt sense itself is less intense.

People change through feelings they have not consciously felt and expressed before. More intensity of familiar feelings does not bring change. People often feel and strongly express repetitious feelings, yet process-steps do not come.

The steps of change and process do not come directly from the recognizable feelings as such.

They come, rather, from an *unclear*, fuzzy, murky "something there", an odd sort of direct datum of awareness. But most often there is no such datum at first, when people turn their attention inward. Typically one finds the familiar feelings and no indefinable sense.

One person describes it this way: "For a long time I could not find that unclear 'sense.' I would pay attention to emotions but they seemed to be just what they were, clear and obvious, and felt in my body. The breakthrough about this came when I began to notice that the emotions had more to them. An analogy: If the emotion were a triangle with smooth edges and fixed angles, the felt sense appears when I look more closely and find that a cloudy shape sticks out from behind the triangle."

Once they have it, people say the unclear sense "was" there, all along, but not noticed. Before, however, it simply was not there. Its first coming is a striking event in its own right.

The Difference Between the Usual Body Sensations and a Felt Sense of Something in One's Life.

While people think of a problem, or have troublesome feelings, they are usually uncomfortable in their bodies. But, although the feelings may be physically experienced, they are not this bodily discomfort as such.

If during a strong feeling someone is asked to attend to the stomach and chest, to "see if you are comfortable there," the unease which comes there is quite different from the feeling.

This bodily unease turns out to be less intense and not as rough on the person as the strong feeling.

There is typically also an odd sort of gratitude which comes from this bodily discomfort, as if "it" were thankful for one's attention.

About half or a third of people have difficulty attending directly to the comfort/discomfort in the middle of their bodies. They do not sense the middle of the body from inside. That seems strange to those who have always done it. People have to discover this simple human capacity before they can find the felt sense. We have developed specific little steps for this difficulty, for example: "Put your attention in your right toe...now in your knee...can you find your knee without moving it?...now your groin...come up into your stomach, how is it in there? Warm and fuzzy, or how?"

Once people can sense the stomach and chest from inside, there is a further distinction, the really important one:

Ordinary bodily sensations are, for example, a belt that is too tight, or a pain, a stomach ache, sexual arousal, the heart pounding. These sensations are only bodily. The uneasy sense of a situation or problem is also there, in the middle of the body. (It may be positive: the opening-out sensation in the chest is the sense of some freeing event.)

The difference is that the ordinary bodily sensation does not contain an "of." The sense of your belt being too tight does not contain in itself the complexities and reasons why you tightened it. It is just the belt's pressure. However, a very similar bodily sensation of tightness may come in your stomach as your sense of a whole situation. That equally physical "tightness" is the felt sense of that situation. Implicit in it are more of the complexities of the situation, than you know or could think.

Most current body-work methods miss the felt sense because they work just with physical sensations, usually the peripheral muscles.

Emotions make bodily sensations, one's heart pounds and one coughs, spits, pants, yet *the physical sense of the implicit complexity* is not in those bodily sensations, nor in the emotion. The felt sense differs from both.

Another exact specification: in Gestalt therapy spontaneous images and emotions come from bodily attention without a felt sense. The person does not have a sense of the source, from which they come. That source does not itself come, as a datum. For example, imagery and words pop in while attending to tense shoulders. But there is no felt sense in the shoulders. Either before or after such spontaneous material comes, the person could, (but in Gestalt therapy usually does not) attend to the middle of the body, where a felt sense of the shoulder-tension and of the imagery could come.

The felt sense comes in the middle of the body: throat, chest, stomach, or abdomen.

The Difference Between "Denied Experience" and What Comes From a Felt Sense:

The body-sense of a situation (the felt sense) is always new, fresh, the way the body *now* has the problem. Some content from the past may come also, but the felt sense is always more, the new whole of the now.

This is very often misunderstood. Some therapists want the content to be about the present, the so-called "here-and-now". But past experience is always implicit in any present. Other therapists think nothing can come in a person except a re-living of some repressed past. But experience is always present. Reliving a past event is the present experiencing of it, fresh, now, and has the quality of the present interaction.

Therapeutic steps are not a re-emergence of denied experience. What matters most for change-steps is precisely the *new* implicit complexity of the bodily living. Of course the past is in it. But the felt sense of now is much more than the contents from the past, which may stand out.

Change steps can arise from the felt sense of reliving the past. They may not, if the past content alone is emphasized and the quality of the whole does not form as a datum.

Change-steps have amazing wisdom and creative novelty. They are nothing like mere emergences of the past. It may have seemed so, because past events are often dramatically part of a present therapy process. Also, in traditional theory all experience had to come from the outside. For example, imagination could only be some (perhaps scrambled) version of what was once seen or heard externally. Today we recognize the vast creativity of imagination, far beyond what could be made from external experiences. And the change-steps involve much more than imagination alone.

The change-steps on which therapy depends take account of more simultaneous requirements than one could ever think, let alone think simultaneously. The felt sense is that new whole from which such steps come.

Therefore we must emphasize the difference between denied past experiences, and the whole bodily sense of now. But *that* is often not there to be sensed. A person may have to be quiet and deliberately let that holistic sense come as a datum.

The Difference Between Feelings Inside a Problem and the Felt Sense of the whole:

Whether one attends to a whole situation or to some tiny aspect of it, the bodily felt sense of that will be a whole. This sounds contradictory, I know. But the bodily sensing of the smallest aspect of anything is an implicitly complex whole, not really smaller than the sensing of some large topic. It is always the whole bodily living of ...

This wholeness is a characteristic of the felt sense.

The usual feelings and emotions are only parts of a situation. With those feelings we feel *inside* a problem, surrounded by it, part of it. But if we become distant and "objective," we don't feel the problem at all. In ordinary experience there is no way to feel a problem as a whole we confront.

It may be only the left side of a nose, the when the body's living of that becomes a datum, it is sensed as "that whole thing."

Process steps are changes of that whole. The whole map changes. The step can not be located on the previous map.

The Difference Between Very Deep Relaxation and the Felt Sense:

Hypnosis and very deep relaxation have been found and discarded by Freud and many others since then. We must work with more than "consciousness" but not by narrowing or circumventing the conscious client.

The felt sense, which I also call "the edge of awareness" is the center of the personality. It comes between the usual conscious person and the deep, universal reaches of human nature, where we are no longer ourselves. It is open to what comes from those universals, but it feels like "really me." The felt sense and each small step comes already "integrated" and not as so-called "unconscious material."

The felt sense is always a freshly made unique living. Its inward *coming* is sensed as more truly "me" than the familiar feelings.

Against Vivisection:

The reader may now check how well I have communicated up to now. Can you follow this specification?:

The most common sort of unhelpful inward activity today is not mere intellectualization or rationalization, nor even the same feelings over and over. Today the most common ineffective attempt to help oneself inside is what we now call "vivisection." One is very active "upstairs" in one's mind, drawing maps and attempting to understand one's trouble, thinking this, and thinking that, but instead of merely intellectualizing, one feels in one's gut every move one makes upstairs! Just about all these moves *hurt*.

Attending to These Hurts and Gut Feelings Generated by One's Own Cutting is Not Focusing, and Is Not to be Recommended!!

In the days when people were largely out of contact with their feelings, the map-making upstairs was mere intellectualizing. Now it is worse! That is your gut you are now cutting up, this way or that, as directed *from* your head.

The inward process we are specifying involves keeping quiet, and sensing the unease in the body, directly, whole as it comes, without putting ones maps, cuts, and distinctions on that. If you let your attention go *directly* to the bodily unease, you feel a little bit better.

Then let *that* make the map, let *that* sort itself into whatever parts or pieces it falls into on its own. But begin always with "that whole business" and not with anything you cut out of your living inside.

However well you think you have defined a problem, consider it as also undefined. Use what you have been calling it merely as a pointer, and call it "all that", whatever it may be and whatever may go with it, without first cutting it up and feeling the effects of this cutting.

Teaching the Client Role:

We began "teaching" the client how to find such a felt sense, many years ago when repeated research studies had shown that those who did not approach therapy in this way became failure cases. Today what we call focusing can be shown to anyone.

Then and now we teach listening (the therapist role) as well as focusing to the public. I am going to use some examples from the beginnings of such teaching, in order to pursue our question: What is that, from which change- steps come?

For example a client, (or a person to whom we were listening) is asked to check an empathic response. "Please don't just agree out of politeness. Is what was said back to you quite right?" But the person in the client role might check only the words: "Yes, that's what I said."

What exactly is wrong with that, as a reaction to a listening response? When therapy is effective, the client does something more with a listening response than just checking the words. What more?

What do we assume the client will do with a listening response?

We hope and assume that clients will check the response, not with what they said or thought, but with some more inner being, place, datum... "the felt sense," we have no ordinary word for *that*.

An effect might then be felt, a bit of inward loosening, a resonance . What seemed to be there was expressed and heard. It need not be said again. For some moments there is an easing, inside. (In theoretical terms the interpersonal response has carried that forward.) Soon something further comes. What "was" there turns out to have more to it.

We hope the clients will "check" not only what we say, but also what they say with *that inward one*. Thereby a distinction comes to be within the person: the usual self is checked with the felt sense.

Those research clients who are later successful, differ from failure cases in exactly this respect. It can be heard on the tape. After saying something, they often stop to check. For example: "I feel helpless... uhm... is that right?..." After a silence they might then say: "No... that's not right. Uhm... I can sense it, right there, but I don't know what it is. (Silence)...Oh, (breath)... whew, yes, it's..." as a large shift occurs. Or they might say: "...oh ... one thing about it is..." as some new facet came.

It turns out that the deliberately speaking client to whom we relate is not. The one to whom our responses are chiefly addressed! Rather we hope the speaking one will take our responses down to consult that other one, the felt sense. We hope the client will let that one speak, will wait for what comes from that one, will work to find words that "resonate" with, rather than interrupting, lecturing, or interpreting that one.

Here we discover a fascinating analogy:

The Client's Client:

In specifying the client's side of therapy process we discover a distinction within the person. This distinction is a strong corroboration of client-centered therapy.

The felt sense is the client inside us. Our usual conscious self is the therapist, often a crudely directive one who gets in the way of our inward client all the time. That therapist frequently attacks in a hostile way, or at least wants to use all the old information, claims to be smarter than the client, talks all the time, interrupts, takes up time with distant inferences and interpretations, and hardly notices that "the client" is prevented from speaking. That "directive therapist" hardly knows the client is there. That "therapist" starts without the client, as the old joke had it, and goes on indefinitely without the client.

Research shows that those clients succeed, who are client-centered with their felt sense.

Of course this is not a person within a person, but a certain kind of self-response process.

But it would be imprecise to call it being client-centered "with oneself." Rather, one needs the distinction within the person between the usual self, and the felt sense. The latter is exactly that part to which client-centered responses are directed.

From Plato to Freud people have distinguished different parts of the psyche. Here now arises a distinction which is best delineated in client-centered terms.

The Felt Sense is the Client's Client:

The client's attitudes and responses toward the felt sense need to be those of a client-centered therapist! And that is focusing. I can therefore specify focusing further, if you will consider some client-centered principles in this new way.

Here are some client-centered maxims which acquire a new meaning when applied internally, within one person.

Usually the felt sense does not even form and come, unless the inner "therapist" first gives attention and silent waiting time. The client's inner "therapist" (his conscious self) must shelve a lot of knowledge and surmise, must refrain from many interesting interpretations, and prefer instead to wait, silently, while for some time nothing much comes.

We find it hard to put aside all we know about ourselves and about the specific problem, so that we might hear what comes from the felt sense.

At first, our "directive therapist" often interrupts. Interpretations and inferences continue in our heads. We must "shelve" these again and again, so that we can listen to the felt sense.

What comes from a felt sense may at first seem less sophisticated than what we can think. If we receive and resonate that, soon what comes is more intricate and more correct than what we could think.

We learn that what comes from the felt sense has its own logic and its own good reasons, even if these are not immediately apparent.

We do not impose our values to give direction to the ensuing steps. On the contrary, we often learn through experiencing with the client, that some ways of living and feeling can be good, although our values seemed opposed. Now they don't conflict, and yet we didn't discard our values. The initial values play a role and are also altered in such steps.

We try to receive whatever comes from a felt sense. We let it be, at least for a while. We try not to edit it, change it, or immediately push it further.

Neither do we agree with what first comes from a felt sense. We know there will be further steps. We develop an attitude of welcoming whatever comes, even if it seems

negative or unrealistic. We know that further steps can change it. Such steps can come only if we first receive and welcome what is now here.

Sometimes we have an idea, but we don't decide if it is right. We keep it tentative and consult the felt sense. If there is an easing, a resonance in response to what we propose, we attend to that till more comes from that.

New Specificity:

Here I do not want to repeat the focusing instructions and the trouble-shooting specifics which were presented in a very detailed way in *Focusing* (Gendlin 1981). I would like to present the most recent work. Therefore what I can say here is not sufficient to enable people to find focusing for themselves.

We divided the focusing instructions into six "movements". We now find it essential to teach these parts *separately*, giving time and *individual attention* to each person with each part.

I will summarize these six and offer one or two new specifics on each.

1. Just as we would not tell clients at the start of an hour what to work on, so also we don't let the internal directive therapist quickly set the topic. The client might spend a minute or two, scanning inwardly, sensing the various things that are there, only then choosing what to work on.

The first focusing movement, "making a space" was once a simple preliminary. Before actually focusing one took a kind of inventory of what was just now in the way of feeling good in the middle of one's body. To do this, one attends there and senses what, just now, is in the way of feeling good there.

For example one might find: "Oh... sure, my sadness about my breaking up with____, yes, of course, that's there... (breath) and...oh, I have to call the dentist,...and...gee, I'm tired! Three or four, usually of very unequal importance, might happen to be what one finds. Each of these is greeted kindly, and "placed" somewhere in a space in front of oneself, one by one. In the center of one's body one feels some physical relief with each placing, even though these problems have not been focused on, only shelved. In this freed space one begins to focus on one of these, or on something else.

From this humble preliminary movement has developed, among other things a method of working psychotherapeutically with cancer patients. (*Focusing Folio*, Vol 2, #4, 1982, and Vol-1, #-, 1983.) It began because cancer patients were

reputed to be characteristically poor at sensing their bodies from inside. It seemed a good clear research prediction that they would be unable to do the first movement of focusing. Instead, they could all make a space, and find the good bodily energy that comes then.

A new, more elaborate version of the first movement opens a vast space that has more kinds of significance than I can discuss here.

2. In a very directive therapy the patients are often inwardly silenced. What would come in them, step by step, cannot arise, because these therapists do not intend what they say to be inwardly checked and corrected by the patient. Describing their therapy hour, such patients usually report "what my therapist says..."

Client-centered therapists (perhaps all effective therapists) intend what they say to be corrected by the client. Often what is *not* right in a response lets what *is* right suddenly arise more sharply in the client.

Inside ourselves, too, something can come distinctly to correct what we try to tell ourselves. For example, some little thing went wrong today. We tell ourselves "It's all right ...It doesn't matter ...soon I will have forgotten it... mature people don't get all upset about such trivia.... it's OK.... it's OK.... look at it this way...." and so on. Each of these things is contradicted by the discomfort which "talks back" and vividly corrects our attempts to think it away.

When a discomfort is already there, one can turn and attend to it. But often there are only the familiar feelings.

To let the felt sense come is the most difficult part of focusing. One specific way among others is based on the effect I just described. There is an irony in making use of this effect. Although knowing that there is a problem which is not "OK", one deliberately says, inwardly, "It's OK, the whole thing is all right. I'm quite comfortable about all that." Putting one's attention in the middle of the body, one usually senses, suddenly and vividly, *the body talking back*, giving one a much more distinct body-sense of that particular problem or situation. What an interesting effect this is!

A bodily sensation can come and talk back so as to correct wrong statements. The body can understand the words and knows the situation too. It can disagree with our words. In the theory section we will reformulate this in better terms.

A medium level of relaxation is needed for this bodily talking back. Most people spend the day with their bodies at maximum tension so they sense few variations in it. On the other hand, much relaxation prevents this bodily talking-back. In hypnosis, for example, the body actually gets comfortable when you tell it to do so. No felt sense will come to correct the words.

3. Therapists can paraphrase most of what a client says, but are wise to keep crucially charged words the same. We might paraphrase a long story as merely "what they did". But if the client uses the word "apprehensive," we would not change it to "scared" or "worried" because then the client might lose hold of what that word right now brings. Such a word can be a "handle" helps to hold on to a whole suitcase.

In focusing, when a felt sense comes, one concentrates on its *quality*, and tries to find a *handle-word* for that quality. Just trying for a word helps one to stay with felt sense as a bodily sensation, rather than going into the familiar feelings and thoughts of the problem. Is it "jumpy" or more like "heavy"? Is it "flat" or perhaps "crowded" or "pushed back" or how? Might an image fit that quality? The most important function of doing this is to help stay with the felt sense. If nothing fits, call it "*that quality*."

4. When a quality-word seems right, we "*resonate*" it, as in a client-centered response. We ask: Does this word (or image) really fit? The felt sense must answer.

The body's knowledge of words is surprisingly fine and demanding. A given quality-word resonates. Other words that seem equivalent are rejected by the body. If the felt sense stays static, if the word doesn't do anything, the word does not resonate. Try another. When a word or phrase or image fits, a slight but grateful physical effect comes *each time* you think the word (or freshly re-picture the image.)

With this physical effect the whole problem is loosened in the body. Now we advise doing it several times, not just once.

5. How often as therapists are we happy we resisted making an interpretation that seemed so very right?.. A few moments later the client's directly sensed unclarity opens, and totally alters what the problem seemed to be. Often our interpretation was not even on the right topic.

That phenomenon happens also inside. One knows a lot about oneself, after all. And yet this holistic unclear felt sense "knows" more. When a step comes from it, one's whole map of some trouble changes.

Of course the felt sense cannot answer if it is not there, just now. Remembering it from a few moments ago is not good enough. Now, "Is the felt sense still there? Ah, there it is again." (If it does not come, try saying the problem is all solved...)

I have written about the felt shift as a flood of physical relief. But even a slight bit of "give" subtly changes the whole. That feels good when a problem has been stuck for a long time. When normally tense and mobilized, one might miss it. Monitor for bits of slight relief in the felt sense.

Pursue any thought, image, or anything that brings such a bit of relief.

6. We do not argue with what comes in the client; call it unrealistic, selfish, or bad. We *receive* anything the client offers. We give it time. We don't instantly ask "And why is that?" or "What's the next step?"

he steps of change can only come from this. so we must let it be here for a little while.

Recently we alert people to notice how the inner "directive therapist" can rebut and obliterate what comes with a felt shift. This can happen so swiftly one might not notice. No sooner does something come with that characteristic shift or "give" inside than it is gone again!! What happened? Someone inside quickly said: "That's unrealistic, foolish, I can't afford it, that would be quitting, that can't be right."

This sixth movement, "receiving," needs separate teaching. With practice one learns to move old voices aside before they crowd out the physical sense of the shift. Instead, one can *repeat whatever words came with the shift, sensing if they make that shift again*. In this way the shift is there for a stretch of time. Let the old voices stand aside and wait. This is only a little step. I am making no decisions yet. This little step came only just now. Let me keep it for a little bit, and see more what it is.

In a minute there can be another round of focusing. But right now, let me see if I can sense this shift, over and over.

About Instructions:

The scheme of these six is very helpful, but we do not rigidify it. Humans are vastly more complex and surprising than any scheme, let alone a simple one of six parts.

We give "*split-level*" instructions: "Try to apply our instructions as exactly as you can, but the moment they seem to do some violence in you, stop, don't run away, instead: see directly, what you have there." On one level, "please follow", and on another level, "please don't follow" the instructions.

After all, we are specifying and teaching the individual's own *inwardly arising* process. The split-level instruction is to find your process with our diagram, or where the diagram fails.

Very early in learning focusing most people come to a point where they *laugh* and say: "Oh, that was the trouble I was trying to 'do it right' and that got in my way." After this laugh, they know.

For example, a felt shift comes on our diagram at the fifth movement. In fact it can come any time. Of course you would receive what came.

Many therapists have found it very effective to teach focusing directly to their clients. Such didactics need to be clearly marked off from the regular therapy interaction.

Focusing During Therapy:

All these instructions can be used during psychotherapy, but in a certain way. This brings me to a wider principle.

There are many theories and many other useful avenues of therapy. All of them can be used on a client-centered baseline. By this I mean:

Whatever I say or do in therapy is instantly checked against the client's inward response. It means I rarely say or do two things consecutively without a client expression between. Then I respond in a listening way to whatever the client expresses, and again to what further comes. I always give *priority to the client's own step*. Whatever else I can do must wait.

That transforms the character of interpretations, instructions, and any other useful avenue of therapy.

I must *swiftly discard* whatever I tried if it did not help, so that it does not get in the way of the client's own process.

At first clients think they must explain why what I said was wrong. I often interrupt: "Oh, I can see I was wrong. Sense again how it is for you." Clients who work with me soon recognize that what I say is no statement about them but an invitation to them to sense inwardly. I often verbalize this at first: "But is that right...or how should that be said?"

Once people know that this is my intent, what I say wrongly is much less disturbing and swiftly discarded.

Even when helpful, other things must not replace listening too often. (That certainly includes focusing instructions.) Too many helpful interruptions block the client's own inwardly arising process, or worse, it will never arise. *There need to be long periods when I purely listen and reflect.*

How Focusing Transforms Talking:

Most people live in their talking as they talk. Especially in client-centered therapy clients are accustomed to "lay out" their problems and concerns. The attention is on what is being said. Focusing changes this. Whatever the client wants to do is still welcomed, including this kind of talking. But now the expectation is not that the laying out of the

issue will do the job. Rather, the change-steps will come through inwardly sensing the edge. When *that* opens, the process moves.

This requires that client-centered responses point more precisely. Not enough is gained if the response is more or less right. A good response points and makes contact with *that*, from which the client spoke, rather than restating what was said.

When the client did not express an unclear edge, we can point to that. To do so leads to a number of specific response modes:

- a. Just saying a deeply felt spot over a few times, quietly and slowly, can help a person discover the broader bodily sense from which steps come.
- b. At times the therapist can say, "Let's be quiet for a moment, so you can sense all that." Or, if true, the therapist can say "Wait...I'm still feeling what you just said...uh..." These are ways of slowing the talking down so more can happen.

If the client then goes right on talking, we would respond as usual and not stick to some suggestion of ours.

- c. We can sometimes add to the content something like: "...and *that* is not yet clear" or "...and you don't know yet what *that* is" or "...and there is this sense there, that it could become different, but it's not clear yet how." People are socially accustomed to stop talking when they come to an unresolved edge. It often helps to refer to that edge as such.
- d. Even when no edge seems there, the client might find one if the therapist refers to one as if it were there, a concretely sensed version of what was said.

For example: the client says: "I must not want to do this (get a job, meet new people, write an assignment) since when the time comes, I don't do it." A regular client-centered response might be: "you think you must not want to, since somehow you don't do it." A focusing-inviting response might be: "*Something in you* doesn't want to..", or "There's some *sense of* not wanting to...", or "When the time comes, *something* stops you.

Another example: Client: "I really think that's why I stay with him, it's because I need the security." A focusing type of response might be: "You're pretty sure it's for security, *that sense there, of holding on to him*."

Almost anything can be reflected with an implicit invitation to sense "it" as *that*, right there. If you tell me that you like this chapter I could reflect that you have a *liking* of my chapter there. You might then more directly find that datum, that sense, that place in you where you like it, that spot, *that*.

What I described here may seem only a grammatical form, and an awkward one at that. Better grammar can probably be devised. But there is a great *difference between talking about, and pointing*. Many clients talk about. Some of them can turn inward and attend directly, as soon as a therapist points.

- e. Focusing can be taught with occasional small-scale instructions.

Explicit didactic focusing-teaching is much swifter but it ought to happen in a time set aside for it, not in midst of an ongoing therapy process. But as single bits all the instruction can fit into, and aid the client's ongoing process.

All the instructions and specifics I have offered here lend themselves to being used, singly, at points where the client might use them. All focusing instructions and specifics can be used this way.

The client can ignore such single instructions. They do not disrupt one's regular way of responding. Whatever the client does or says can be responded to acceptingly.

We can explicitly invite the client to see if it is possible to find such a sense inwardly. One would add "Can you sense that now?" or "Can you feel that not-wanting, now?"

Or, "If you stay quiet inside for a minute, can you sense this not-wanting you think must be there?"

Here are more examples: "If you thought right now of going to the newspaper to look for a job opening...what kind of feeling-quality would come in your body?"

Or, even: "Stop for a minute. I'd like to ask you something. Can you put your attention in the middle of your body? How is it in there right now? (The client says it is fine in there.) Now think of this whole thing about looking for this job... what comes in there? ...(facial expression)...OK, stay with that for a minute, gently."

It is often important to help people discover the bodily aspect of the unclear edge. Many people have never attended inwardly in the body in that way, and need a little while to discover it.

Another example:

C: "I'm just so angry."

T: "your anger is right there."

C: "Oh, it's always there. I'm sick of that anger."

T: "Let's try something. Take that *whole* situation, all of it, more than you know, everything that goes with it, and kind of step back from it as if you were going to look at *all* of it, like a big picture that takes up a whole wall in a large building... What comes in your body when you do that?"

In this way the therapist can insert all the focusing instructions and specifics occasionally at points where a client who knows focusing probably would let an unclear felt sense come.

But whereas the pointing reflections can be made frequently, instructions, must remain occasional, if they are not to disrupt the client's ownership and inner impetus of the process. The therapist must not constantly make good things happen with instructions. There must be stuck and empty space and time for the client's inwardly impelled process to arise.

If the interaction becomes troubled, or if the client has feelings in relation to being instructed, this must instantly take precedence. Focusing- teaching can be tried again later.

T: Can you get that painful sense now, if you put your attention in your body and, very gently, just stay next to it?

C: I don't like it when you tell me what to do inside myself.

T: You don't like me directing inside you, and you want me out of there. Of course. I'll stop doing it.

C: But... uhm... I do want what you know about.

T: Oh, sure, I'll show you that method some time soon... You want me out of your space, but you don't want me to go away,... right?"

The Client's Client Theory: What is the Source of Process-Steps?

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The following is a very brief theoretical statement. More is presented in a long work, (Gendlin, E.T., [*A Process Model*](#)) and in my [philosophical works](#).

Section II

The Question:

Our question is the same as in Section I., but now we ask it as a theoretical question. I will continually refer back to the specifics we have discussed.

We observe that process-steps have an intricacy and a power to change us, far superior to our concepts. What comes in process-steps surprises us. A much more sophisticated "territory" shows itself than we are capable of formulating or inventing. And a step is not only itself but leads to further steps.

What is this superior knowing? Are such steps just unrelated to concepts? How do they differ from the more usual cognition? What is the source of this intricacy and its steps?

We have to rethink our basic concepts about the body, feeling, action, language, and cognition to answer this question.

Implicit Concepts:

We have seen that process-steps move beyond the explicit concepts we deliberately apply. But many more concepts are always already *implicit* in any human experience.

The many concepts and structures which are implicit in this wider order do not function as explicit concepts would. A welter of old theories, mutually exclusive patterns and systems are always implicit in our experience, far more of them than we can think. Explicitly the many contradictory concepts would cancel out. Implicitly not only do they function together, but they are always only a small part of the implicit order.

Concepts (the kind that seem separable from particular contexts) are a late and immensely important human product, enabling people to build the world further and further. And because humans have already done that a lot, old concepts are always implicit in any situation and experience.

But nature is vastly more organized than just by this late and important development. Even the purest logical thinking involves this greater order to support it. There is always a whole implicit context of intricately ordered understandings without which the explicit concepts do not work. These understandings don't consist only of concepts.

But is there another way to theorize other than by conceptual forms? Even if there were not, it is wrong to equate order with concepts. Of course, if there were no other way to theorize, we would have to stop with this mere denial. We could not think further.

The problems of theorizing in another way have been treated in my [philosophical writings](#).

Any concept can always be used as its conceptual form, or as the wider implicit order which we instance just then in using that concept. The wider order cannot be said or conceptualized. But from a concept we can always move either logically, or in process-steps from this wider order.

Language:

Language is a larger system different in kind from abstractable concepts. Some decades ago the Linguistic Analysts showed that words are not used in accord with the abstractable patterns we call concepts. They tried to explicate rules for how words are used in various contexts to have certain effects in situations. But even this attempt failed. The same word is used in an odd assortment of situations in which it works differently. The meaning of a word is neither a concept, nor can its use-contexts be stated.

If you speak more than one language you know that. There is often no single translation for a word. In the foreign language a word's cluster of contexts is not that which comes with anyone word of ours. From the contexts we get a "feel for" how that one word works.

Language-in-use is very finely "ordered," well beyond the abstractable conceptual type of order. Abstract concepts are certainly always implicit in the use of words, but even the whole mutually contradictory welter of them does not come close to the kind of order that governs the use of words.

Theoretical Proposition 1: The *use* of words (and also the *use* of concepts is implicitly ordered. This order is different and greater than the kind of order concepts make. A welter of old concepts is always implicit in any human situation but cannot determine what we say or do next.

The Linguistic Analysts concluded that a native speaker knows the language as one "knows" how to ride a bicycle without being able to say how. The misuse of a word gives one a "sour feeling", as one of them said. They did not ask how knowledge more intricate than one can define, can be in a feeling. But we want to ask this question.

Feelings and Interpersonal Situations:

Feelings are usually thought of as internal things, entities, little objects. Indeed they are a sort of "datum" inwardly "there," but how do such thing-like data and inner space come about?

The traditional notion of "affects" assumes them as already thing-like. Other little things are memories, desires, values, needs, perceptions, information, and so on. To assume these skips how they form.

Of course when we use these words they do work, but *that* with which they work is far from being such cut entities. If we think from *that* in the case of the word "feelings" we soon discover that they are not just affect-things but have a wealth of complexity in them. How can we think about why that is?

An emotion is part of events, or as I want to put it: emotions come in stories. They occur in a certain spot structured by the story.

Traditional living was usually a repeatable story, with the recognizable emotions in the right places. There seemed to be a fixed "keyboard" of them.

In modern urban society the stock routines are failing. We can manage few situations just as one is supposed to do. Our stories are more varied and complicated. Therefore the major pure emotions come in us more rarely.

Feelings (if you follow my use of these words) often have no name. We have to tell the situational story-detail to convey the feeling. From this we see that an emotion or a feeling *is* our living in that story.

Theoretical Proposition 2: Feelings and interpersonal situations are one system. The situational complexity is lived in the feelings; felt and lived complexity constitutes situations and is not something added to them.

We do not separately experience a situation as if it were merely external, and then "react" to it with one of a set of feelings, as the usual theory says. Situations are not external so that feelings would be internal additions to them. On the contrary, so-called external facts are always made with implicit assumptions and livings.

Affects are not additions to facts. Facts are and mean what was and will be lived and felt by someone.

The single mesh of feelings-situations is always already inherent in any "external" fact. That mesh is more highly ordered than abstractable concepts, although it always includes an implicit welter of those. Nor can feelings-and-situations *be* said, although the system is partly patterned by language. A nexus of words is always implicit in feelings-and-situations. But living is not determined in advance to remain within extant language forms. The reverse: When we live and speak oddly we also change that implicit nexus of language. New uses of words are then implicit.

The Body

Feelings and emotions must *come* or we don't have them. We can remember them and believe they ought to be there. But to have them they must *come*. And this is always a bodily coming.

The coming of feelings in the body is also the coming of the situational detail, some of which is always linguistically patterned. Our interpersonal actions are, or include, speech-acts. Therefore words too have this character:

Words, too, must *come*. If they don't, we are stuck. There is no inner dictionary in which to find them. We are quite dependent on their coming.

Abstract concepts also come and when the body is tense they might not!

Theoretical Proposition 3: We live our situations with our bodies. Feelings-and-actions, the use of words and also thinking are bodily processes. Actions, words, and thoughts are implicit in the body.

We can now understand how the body knows and responds so precisely to words, as I described in Section I. Of course, language is situational structure. Feelings-situations come in the body. It follows that the body knows language. But now we need to change the usual concepts of the body, to think clearly how concepts, language, and situations are *implicit* in it.

Especially two puzzles need clarification:

A present bodily event implies *further steps* of action and words.

An internal bodily event implies *external* objects and situations.

Time, Change, and Datum:

Process-steps give us a new time-and-space model, called "carrying forward" (Gendlin, 1964, elaborated since then.) Our steps of change are not in a linear time continuity. In therapy we change not into something else, but into more truly ourselves. Therapeutic change is into what that person really "was" all along. But this sentence makes sense only if the word "was" does not refer to the usual time positions behind us. Rather, it is a second past, read back retroactively from now. It is a new "was" made from now. Let us use this new time-concept instead of reimposing the old one.

What comes in a small process-step has this new "was." For example:

"Oh...now I can feel the anger which that bored feeling really was..."

The anger *now* seems to have been there before. But it is a step of carrying forward. We have two pasts now: the anger that "was;" but we also recall the fuzzy boredom, which *was* actually on the linear time line behind us.

Only retroactively can we get to this "was". Only from now "was" it there before. Time seems retroactive when we examine the process-step relation in linear time. Actually the new time relation is more complex. Linear time can be defined as a simpler model within it.

It is not just false to say that this now is what "was." We cannot express that relation in the old concepts. *That* change and time-relation is made in process-steps.

There are many different variants of this "was"-relation in therapy, thinking, poetry, action and other processes. The varieties of this "was" are also the various senses of "implicit" and "carrying forward."

Situations, too, have this carrying forward pattern. We don't speak of a situation unless it is difficult to meet. Otherwise we have already acted and events flow on. But when there is a situation to be met, we don't immediately know "the right" action. That action is in one way indicated by the situation (the action must fit and meet it) and in another way not indicated since we are puzzled. The situation may be new and unusual, yet it implies the action needed to meet it. Later events reveal what the situation "was." Therefore, with hindsight we see what the right action "was."

This "was" characterizes the carrying forward relation.

The situation does not contain the right action as a problem in geometry contains its answer, logically following from the givens (though even in geometry one must often draw an additional line and create further, to find that sort of implicit answer). The way a situation implies an action to meet it is very finely ordered and demanding, yet the action will also change the situation, and not merely follow from how the situation is already formed.

We can say that *an action IS a change-in-a-situation*. But it is not just any change. The *implicit* action is that one which will change the situation as the situation demands to be met. *And a situation IS the demand for some action*. The two are reciprocal: The situation is the implying of a change-in-situation. A situation IS an implying of a change in itself.

Now we can formulate the carrying forward relation forward and not only backward (as a new "was"). A situation *is* the implying of its own change. Put more generally:

Theoretical Proposition 4: Any event IS the implying of next events. An event implies its own change. Next events carry forward, if they change this event into what it "was" the implying of.

The implied next event is *not* already formed and determined, only the present event is. Other changes, not only carrying forward often happen. The implied next event might not occur at all. It does not exist as formed if it does not occur.

"Carrying forward" leads us to conceptualize an event (anything) in a radically different way than the usual. An event not only is in some way now, but any event also is the implying of its change.

One need not insist that anything is like that or that this new model is always superior. But the process-steps in therapy and focusing are better thought about in this way. Many other aspects of human behavior become more clearly thinkable with this model (at least as one of several we might use.)

The "Was" of Carrying Forward as a Characteristic of Body Life:

Hunger, for example, *is* more truly an eating that hasn't come yet, than a state that eventually leads to death, (which of course it also is.) Which way would you define

"hunger?" Would you bring eating into the definition, or would you only say how hunger is while it is still hunger?

Physiology studies the body very successfully with a conceptual model of atoms positioned at linear space and time points, but we will never grasp the unity of body and psyche in that model. The psychological cannot be related to such a body. But this is not because what is physical and biological differs from the behavioral and psychological, but because of the conceptual model currently used in biology and physics. But even physics needs the model of process-steps. Our model alters just those assumptions that currently make the major anomalies in physics. (Gendlin and Lemke, 1983.)

In our new model, biological events "are" in two ways: they are now just so, *and also* they are the implying of further events. Let us not separate some vitalistic entity, drive, need, push, motivation, desire, as an unseen motor by which each cut event is connected to the next. Instead, let us not assume cut events that are only present, only at some one time-"point." Such cut events require an external "observer" to connect them, as physics now assumes. But we are and study such observers! We live our own progression, and the formal continuity of points is only one oversimplified derivative.

Any bit of process is the implying of a next step. From that step, backwards, the implicit seems to have been what now forms. Actually the implicit IS for any further event that would have one of these retroactive relations.

The Environment is Part of What is Implied Next:

If the further body process is implicit, so are the external circumstances which are involved in it.

The hungry body implies not only feeding, but of course also food.

Any living process is always both environment and organism. The body is itself a piece of environment. We think of a living body as separate from everything around it, but the body is also made out of that. It is also itself an "internal environment." For example the bloodstream is the environment of the cells. Each internal tissue has its environment. The body *is* both environment and living process. Every cell is both, and again every part of a cell. Body and environment are one system, one thing, one event, one process.

Just as feeding *and* food are implicit in a body-process, so also the next action *and* the people and things which would be involved in the action.

In this way we understand more clearly how a body event (feelings too) is implicitly an external complexity in the environment.

We bodily feel the actions which our situations implicitly are.

Many of these actions are or involve words, of course, and we feel those also in the body. Especially when the implicit actions can *not* happen do we sense actually in the body that they are implicit now.

The implied action, for instance eating, might not happen because there is no food. An implied action can not happen if the people and things it involves are missing.

What is an "Object"? What is an Inner "Datum" and its Inner Space?

Earlier I said that we cannot start by assuming already split apart inner entities or objects like feelings, memories, perceptions, and so on. We need to ask how such inward "data" come about. Before we do so, let us ask about ordinary outer entities or objects. Are they just given? I said no, external facts too are made with our feeling and living. We can now understand this more clearly.

In the traditional view the outer "objects" are simply given and we react. For example, when hungry, eating is "the reaction to" food. In that way of thinking food is an object just by itself. Eating is a *reaction* to it. I want to turn that around. Let us say instead that eating isn't just a *reaction* to food. Rather, that becomes "an object" only with the organism's digestive process. This runs through stages of hunger, food-search, feeding, satiation, defecating, and after a while, hunger again. At the feeding part of this cycle.

The Body Implies

food and cannot go on without it. At the defecation part of the cycle *the body implies* the ground in which feces can be buried.

To put it this way allows me to say: food is not first an object and then reacted to with feeding. Food is an object *because* it carries the digestive process forward.

In this way we theoretically derive the concept of an ordinary "object" from the concept of "carrying forward." Now the two concepts imply each other.

Theoretical Proposition 5: Body process always involves the environment. By implying the next bits of process the body implies its next environment. Carrying forward happens when all of the next implied environment occurs. The part of the implied environment which might or might not occur is called an "object." An object is what carries a process forward.

Food changes hunger into satiation. An object (an environment that carries the implied forward) changes that implying. Hunger implies its own change, which occurs if food does.

Food and all its characteristics are implicit in hunger. But hunger could also be carried forward by something new. The implicit is never only formed. Intravenous feeding can

carry digestion forward and so can odd foods. Implying has both the fine detail of the familiar object and is also the implying of anything that would carry forward.

The organism's process with the object takes time. I prefer to say the process *makes* time. The process makes time by carrying forward. From its time one can derive the simple linear time in which simple things seem just to be.

The Different Avenues of Therapy are Different Objects that Carry Forward:

There are different kinds of "objects" and kinds of carrying forward. As food carries body-process forward, so also do our physical motions, interpersonal actions, words, conceptual steps, dreams and our work with them, as well as other people's words and their actions toward us. These carry the same single system forward, but in different ways. They can not replace each other.

The different avenues of therapy can be recognized in these kinds of carrying forward. Everyone can learn to focus, but everyone also dreams, feels, thinks, speaks, acts, interacts, moves bodily, imagines, and sometimes spontaneously acts out. None of these avenues of therapy should be strange to us. Why make exclusive "methods" of therapy each using only one of these, when every client has them all? It happens because we find it hard to learn how to respond along all of them.

Methods using different avenues of carrying forward can all be used on a client-centered baseline, and to seek process-steps. This changes them. Their conflicting rationales and styles drop away and they fit together, because as avenues of human process they were never separate.

For example, interpersonal responses are one important kind of carrying forward. An empathic response might add nothing to the content, but it is an interpersonal "object" that carries the body forward in an utterly different way than the same content would, if felt or said alone.

We find focusing very powerful when done alone, but easier to do deeply when another person silently keeps one company (and receives anything one does say). Here is a pure instance of interpersonal carrying forward! In silence only the receptive attention of another person is added. That alone is an irreplaceable kind of carrying forward.

An "Inner Object" or Datum is Also a Carrying Forward:

We have seen how the outer objects are derivative from process. The "inner objects" (and their time) are also made by the organismic process which they carry forward.

In ordinary action we see and feel the objects in the situation. When "the feeling" becomes an object, we say it *"was"* there, all along. Actually this datum-object is a new carrying forward made from the previous.

"Unfelt feeling" is not a good concept. There was feeling-in-action. Then symbolic carrying forward made *a feeling-datum*. That was not there before.

We can now clarify the fact that we change by feeling a feeling that was there but not felt. "Unfelt feeling" is contradictory, and "feeling ones feeling" is redundant. But these expressions do refer to common events we can now clarify: Why would a person change merely by becoming aware?

Feelings are not things like stones that can be buried, and still exist in the same shape. The coming of a feeling-datum is a carrying forward, a further and different living. People say, "Now that I know I feel this way, what can I do about it?" Usually they don't know. Neither does the therapist. It is very fortunate that the whole system is already changed in the new carrying forward which makes *a feeling* an object.

Theoretical Proposition 6: The seeming "thing" we call an internal datum is a carrying forward process. Its coming changes the body and its implicit further actions.

Food is not simply a given. It is made into that "object" by the continuous body process it carries forward. So also, the seeming thingness of a feeling is its lasting through the process it carries forward.

After a new feeling, new actions may be implicit. A feeling is a change in what is further implied, which will make more change.

Sometimes what a feeling implies cannot occur. The implying is not carried forward and does not change further. Then the feeling is remade freshly, over and over, whenever the person lives in that situation physically or symbolically.

Then it seems no longer true that "feeling the feeling" is a change. Actually it is, but the feeling is an implying of further change which does not happen. The feeling is therefore formed again and again.

Feeling vs. Felt Sense:

Feelings and emotions are *parts in* a situation. For example, anger comes in a certain slot in a story and carries it forward in a partial way. We are taught to count to 10 when angry because the anger is *not* a sense of *the whole* situation. If we do what the anger implies we may later be sorry. That is because the anger does not carry forward the whole situation. Therefore the further actions the anger implies do not meet it all. Ordinary feelings and the actions they further imply carry forward only part of the situational whole.

We see that easily in new situations. None of the usual feelings and their implied actions quite fit. New actions are needed.

Such novel actions do not come from the recognizable emotions and feelings, since these "objects" are made in carrying the usual story forward in a familiar way.

Is there a way to have a *datum* of the *whole* implicit complexity? The felt sense (previously described) is that datum.

We can see the difference when people move from a feeling to the felt sense. The feeling is made from (and understandable from) the known, formed story detail. But in the felt sense the implicit situation is a much larger whole.

The implicit situation as a felt sense is a single mesh from which endless detail can be differentiated: what happened to us, what someone did, why that troubled us or made us glad, what was just then also going on and made this especially good or bad, what we now need to do about it, and with whom, why that is difficult, what usually happened in the past with others, how we feel about that, and how we feel about feeling that way about it, what we sense others thinking, why it's wrong and why it's right, on and on.

Yet the felt sense from which all this can come is single, sensed as *that* bodily quality, there.

The bodily felt sense is a new type of object or datum. The whole implying itself becomes a datum, a sensed "that." The whole is changed by being carried forward by this new type of "object."

To let the body-sense of the whole implied context become a datum is a new type of carrying forward. Some people in all ages could do this, but it is new to most people.

Novel Steps are Also Implicit:

Because we have often observed certain body processes like digestion we know the implicit next step. When we have often seen certain traditions and cultural routines, we know in advance what action a situation implies. Later we say it "was" implicit.

But something new could also carry forward and be what "was" implicit. With current concepts one cannot think clearly about novelty in body-life and physics, but obviously the universe and evolutionary forms could not have developed if novelty had been impossible. The difficulty in thinking about novelty lies not in nature but in *the type of concept* which reduces everything to fixed units which can only be rearranged or reorganized to explain anything new. Genuine novelty is a puzzle for that kind of concept. The difficulty belongs to the kind of concept not to physics or bodies.

Especially in modern urban society we often live ourselves into a new and odd situation. Such a situation *is* implicit actions, which have never as yet been formed by anyone.

We know when routine actions will not suffice. How do we sense and appreciate the subtle oddity of a new situation? We could not, if we could only feel and think the

familiar. Not so. When we feel "stuck," this stuckness is a sense of more, which correct our attempts to say or do something usual. The stuckness *is* our sense of the puzzling situation, the implicit words and actions we have been unable to devise. The stuckness is a finely organized sense of why usual ways won't do, and of what would. The stuckness is an implying of... new next steps never as yet formed.

If the situation is new and odd, the implicit action has never existed. Yet it is implicit!

Theoretical Proposition 7: An event that has never occurred before can be implicit. This often happens in creative thinking, in art, and in the process-steps of psychotherapy and focusing. The steps are new and nevertheless they "were" implicit in the physically experienced felt sense of the situation or problem.

The whole complexity of situation-feeling is implicit in body process. This includes whatever makes the situation difficult, and has made easy routine actions inappropriate. The body's implying (and if a datum forms, how the situation "feels" in a bodily way) includes more organized complexity than we can as yet think, say, or act upon. There is no certainty that a process-step will come. But if one does, it will have a greater intricacy than we could have thought, said or done before that step.

Theoretical Proposition 8: The datum or object we call a felt sense exceeds in intricacy what we could previously think, say, or act upon. The old forms are implicit, but more organization is already involved which makes them inappropriate in very exact ways. The very coming of a felt sense as a datum is a carrying forward of this greater order. From the felt sense (in further steps) one can form new and more finely tuned explicit words and actions, which could not have been devised before.

"Directions"

Let me show how what I said leads "further." Living tissue is some way now, but it also is implicitly its further events. We define and name it from knowing its usual further events, as we define hunger by feeding. But actually the implicit is some event that carries forward. Any bodily process could be carried forward in a different way than happened before. The implicit is never only already formed. Like a situation that must be met, the implied action is not a fixed form.

Countless situational aspects and their linguistic and conceptual differentiations are implicit in the body. The familiar routines are a carrying forward of a vast complexity. They are further developments' from earlier routines, which are even now still implicit in our bodies along with the later ones.

When we live oddly, the routinely formed actions and words are implicit, but now they do not carry the whole implicit bodily complexity forward. Our "stuck" body-sense is usually thought of as a feeling without words, or as "pre-verbal," but that is not correct. The felt sense does contain the language and the situational contexts of words. It is not

pre-verbal! And it implies the new next steps of speech and action, which has never as yet formed. The coming of the felt sense has already elaborated and further developed the implicit linguistic and situational system.

Now we understand theoretically how the body-sense can be so finicky about words used in focusing. We understand how new action and speech is more intricately implied by the body, than we can define.

In therapy people without great verbal resources become raw poets, refashioning words to speak from process-steps. What comes freshly is often more intricate than ready phrases.

Theoretical Proposition 9: A felt sense is not preverbal. Its forming and coming as a datum is a new living forward of the implicit complexity of situation and language. When we live oddly, the implicit acts and speech are silently altered.

Language is always part of situational structure. The body "knows" (the felt sense is) the implicit complexity with its language. When we live, act or speak oddly, further poetically novelty is already implicit.

Therefore a missing next step is not indeterminate, or unorganized, as so many people want to say. An implicit, missing next step is *more* finely organized than the routines, and that is why we cannot easily find or devise words or actions. Please note: In such a case the routines are still implicit, and can be done and said. But whatever was the implicit next step is still the implicit next step, even after we do or imagine the routines. That is how we know that they have not carried this implying forward.

An odd situation's implying is *more* organized than the usual routines and contains them. The novel implicit is not unrelated to familiar concepts, phrases, and actions. It includes these and exactly why they will not suffice.

We arrive here at a new concept: Traditional thinking has only fixed form or open possibility: if a next step is implied, it is thought of as already formed. Or, if the next step is open, this is thought to be *indeterminate*, and *less* ordered. We find instead that novel living is *more ordered* and includes old forms in a more demanding organization which makes them insufficient.

A new concept arises if we keep these two together, as we find them together: a more orderly, demanding implying *and* novelty. Indeed it is the greater orderliness of this implying which requires the novelty.

The body's implying of a next step is very familiar to everyone: Inhaling implies exhaling, hunger implies feeding, cramped sitting implies stretching. Notice how the word "implies" is used in these phrases. >From them you can also follow what the word does, if I say: in odd situations the body implies phrases and actions that have never been formed. Then words can work as they never did before.

When this greater organization is carried forward, its further implying is also changed. New further steps are implied and ensue. The process of steps is not determined within old forms. The process *directs itself*.

I will use the word "*direction*" in quotations to say this. Any body process has "direction": what will carry forward is very finely organized *and* just this organization is an implying of new steps. In many situations only new steps can carry the body forward.

Theoretical Proposition 10: Bodily implying of concepts, words, feelings and actions has its own "direction": The next steps are not as yet formed; hence the "direction" is not definable. Nevertheless it is a more demanding organization inclusive of more order than familiar steps can carry forward. The coming of a felt sense is itself this wider carrying forward and the further steps show that.

A person's inner "client" is not a formed content but a process of self-responding. We cannot aid the development of this process by making impacts on the person which circumvent this self-responding and its steps.

A living event *is* not only what appears, "it" also *is* an implicit carrying forward.

"It" is like an unfinished poem that very finely and exactly requires its next line, which has never as yet existed. One can feel the next line implied from reading the lines up to this point. What is written already requires its further steps. But the written part will also change somewhat when that next line come. The poem written so far implies its own change. There might be more than one way but finding even one is not easy.

I cannot know what I did or said *to this person* if I don't see the person's inward reception of it, *and the further steps that might come from that*. Conversely, when I speak for myself to others I need them to wait and come with me the steps that further emerge. I need them to listen and follow my steps, and not to react to the first thing I said. They cannot know from one static bit what I mean, nor can I know without the process of steps. If I move in self-responding alone, the steps will not be those that can come with this person.

The listening and focusing process is of crucial *political* significance.

Once people are accustomed to being listened to, and know the inward checking of focusing, they are quite "spoiled" for the usual type of authority. They often express shock at the unhappy fact that most teachers, gurus, and leaders cannot listen. "How could _____ have told me this about me without asking me?!...He didn't even stop to find out what I was speaking from "

What authorities say cannot get inside them in the old way, because "inside them" is a self-responding process of the sort I describe. Rather, the attempt at the old kind of authority is experienced as stupid. But also inside the individual, the representatives of external authority and merely imposed cognitive form must wait, listen, and dialogue

with what comes in these more intricate steps. The inner authoritarian is no mere analogy but an actual representative of the form-imposing ways of social "reality."

People who are accustomed to listening *can* be cowed by power, and do *not* necessarily develop political insights even about what is happening to them. There are many other dimensions to the political problem today. But listening and focusing are one vital dimension. A kind of human organization is coming, which would not again be the imposition of power by some over others.

Thomas Gordon's PET network has taught listening to half a million people and continues. Our network teaches focusing and listening to the general public. When these processes are regularly taught in the schools and are part of the social fabric, much can change which at present cannot. People will be able to be together in ways they now don't know of. Politics is human organization and not mere ideas or forms.

It is hard not to overstate or understate the importance of focusing. It makes process-steps very frequent and lets them be sought at any point. Without it therapy brings change haphazardly and rather rarely. Focusing makes specific what every mode of therapy intends but does not specify. The source of steps, the edge of awareness becomes *itself* a datum. The very coming of that datum is a crucial carrying forward. From that datum come entirely new and subtler steps of speech, thought, feeling, and action. It is a new development of the human individual.

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