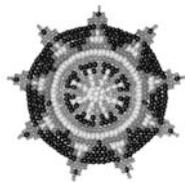


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FOCALIZING: AN INTRODUCTION



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FOCALIZING: AN INTRODUCTION



MICHAEL PICUCCI

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## Focalizing: The (Very) Basics

THERE are at least two distinct ways to read this booklet. The first, largely intellectual, is informed by the linear, cognitive way we were all taught to read. The other, more relaxed, is a curious, full-bodied exploration of how your *larger being* responds to the message. While both are informative, the latter promises a more fulfilling experience.

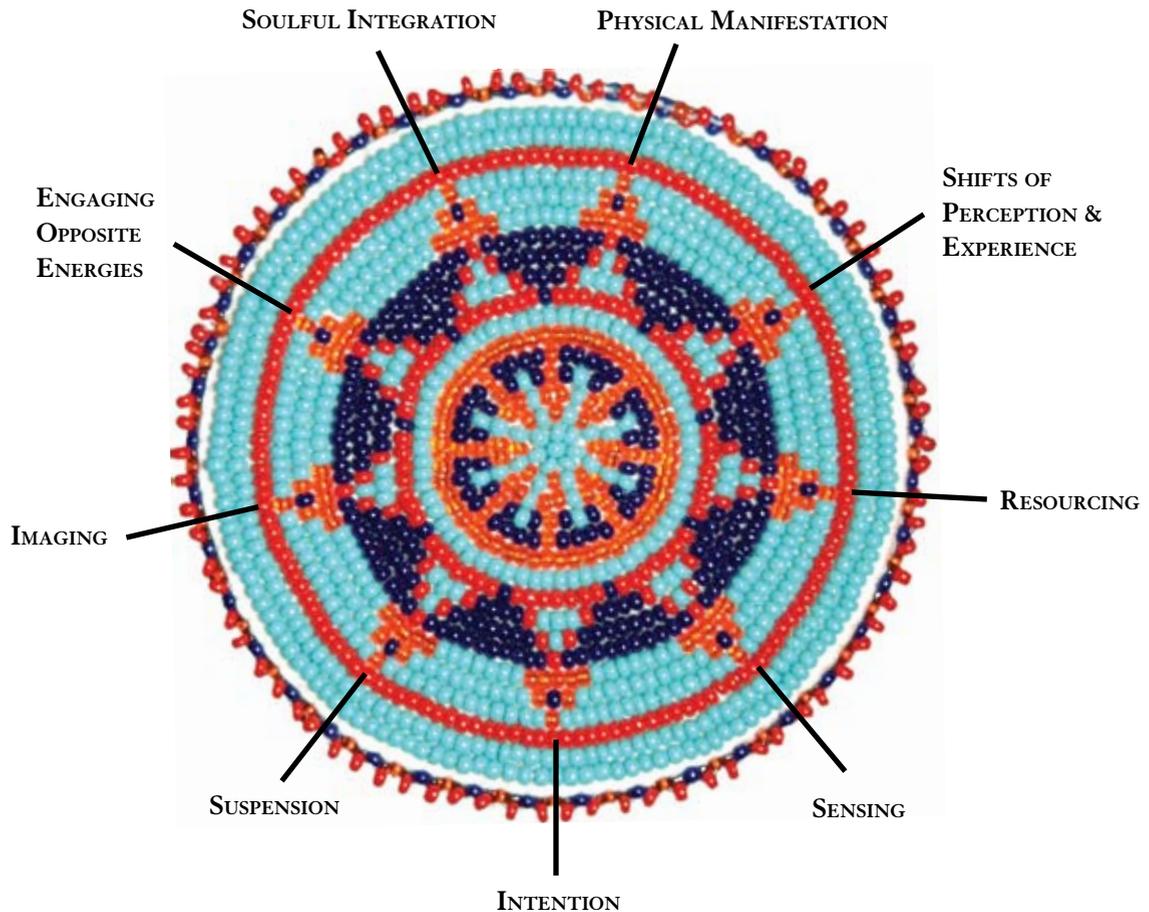
Focalizing is an experiential process that draws on bodily sensations to inform and direct life choices. It can benefit anyone who is in a crisis of consciousness, in a state of *feeling stuck*, or who feels trapped by circumstances that life presents. Consciousness is a fundamental quality of nature, and Focalizing is a unique way to tap into its innate capacities. By reconnecting us with a natural resource that conveys new perspectives, it often illuminates previously unseen possibilities for moving forward with grace. Focalizing is a dynamic and effective process that allows us to respectfully set aside familiar thoughts and feelings and instead access our *innate intelligence*. In learning how to transform overwhelming life situations we can suspend our everyday thinking mind to a *timeless source of change*. Focalizing allows us to develop a newly enlightened intelligence that becomes integrated into the very fabric of our being.

In Focalizing, the boundaries between past, present and future dissolve, leaving linear time behind while coaxing us to a realm of *timelessness*. Because it is so organic this shift to a more timeless field happens so gradually that at first it is hardly noticed. From this natural state, shifts and movements in the body's *felt senses*, coupled with possible imagery that may arise, healing, illumination and transformation are possible. The experience is often a sense of resilience, strength, and balance. One client referred to the results of a session as feeling, "a new integrity in her being;" bringing together the body, mind and nature in a way that reminds her of a "house well-built with everything perfectly fitting together."

Through a careful manipulation of energetic techniques, Focalizing facilitates a healing journey, and like all experiential processes (like riding a bike), there are challenges when we try to explain them. This booklet intends to give the reader a glimpse of what the Focalizing experience might be like for themselves, or someone they care about.

## Focalizing's Nine-Point Regulating Star Image

SINCE Focalizing with an individual is the easiest to explain, I'll begin the process in the context of an individual's journey. I will later use this narrative as a foundation for explaining the Focalizing process with couples, groups, and organizations.



As you read through the description that follows, you may want to refer back to this diagram for a visual representation of the discussion.

## Beginning with Intention

WHILE an *intention* initiates and grounds every Focalizing session, as seen at the bottom of the star image, I first want to share the *introduction* to the session. I always invite first-timers to ask all the questions they want at any time and inform them that this is helpful. I tell them that as focalizer, it is my role to always empower, respect and honor each person's presence. With their permission and agreement, I direct a process of co-creation with them. I will never harm them or ask them to do anything that feels wrong to them.

This *primary assurance* is critical to the process during the introduction phase: I assure first-time participants that they will always have empowered choice and will not experience anything very uncomfortable. This process is not about pain, or who or what caused it. It *is* about helping the central nervous and energetic systems re-regulate themselves in creating a more natural and peaceful flow of our life force.

Once we establish a rapport from the orientation, I remind them that every Focalizing session begins with an intention. Intention is the force we use to direct energy toward a desired result. It is an internal, alive, energetic forward moving force. Sometimes clients come to a session with a well formed intention. For those who may be unclear about their intention for the session, I coach them in creating a well formed intention that is at the center of their restricted life force in this moment-in-time. For a Focalizing session, the intention mysteriously guides the process and outcome. I coach people to make their intentions clear, short, and forward moving.

For example, a client I'll call Sam came into a Focalizing session once with the intention to "come out of overwhelm." (It's important to note that no two Focalizing sessions are alike: each event is thoroughly unique.)

Sam was the founder of an organization and had come to realize that the day-to-day demands of the enterprise and all the people involved had grown beyond his capacity. His feelings of defeat and of being pulled in many directions had intensified over time. He continually felt crushed; a sense of everyday dread had a deadening effect on every area of his life. All his thoughtful efforts to resolve the situation failed, only adding to his frustration and sense of feeling trapped by his own creation.

Having brought his intention to me and my office, I told Sam that I shared his intention to be relieved of overwhelm and begin to glimpse new possibilities. I explain that a *shared intention* helps amplify the energy in the *field of possibility* that Focalizing creates. So, Sam and I settle into my office, a location that functions as a safe container to create an energetic field to support the manifestation of his intention.

Other people come to Focalizing with very different challenges. Some of these include:

- Feeling tortured by recent or ancient traumatic event(s)—from automobile accidents to sexual assaults and early life abuses or deprivations that stunt present aliveness—or any present-day overwhelming event that deadens the life force;
- Desiring the dissolution of internal *energetic barriers* (blocks) to enable connecting with what they most want or most want to be able to speak;
- Wanting to dissolve internal walls that prohibit sexual fulfillment or loving connection;
- Coming to terms with the sudden loss of a loved one that has left them adrift and confused;
- Facing a life-threatening illness or death; or
- Just feeling stuck, in whatever situation, with no way out.

It should be noted that couples and organizations bring complex challenges to the table. While we address those challenges with the same nine points of regulation, Focalizing for couples and organizations often requires opening a larger space with additional understandings, and intentions that are individual as well as a common one for all involved. We will cover those concepts a little later on in this discussion.

In the transition from *intention* to *suspension*, the client and focalizer often experience a gradual perception shift toward what I refer to as the *Curious Observer* perspective. (Often, it is in the transition between these regulation points indicated on the star where much of the inner-shifting and transformation occurs.) This perspective becomes a place of *noticing*, free of judgment or agenda. It exists in the moment—a timeless zone where we sense a pleasant yet emotionally flat state informed by an easy wisdom of just *being* in the “here and now” of

the space that we are cocreating. This point represents the beginning of seeing with fresh eyes, when even the intention that is driving our experience falls into the background of awareness. It drapes itself over the left behind voices of judgment, cynicisms and fears that the suspension point of the star will further resource and support.

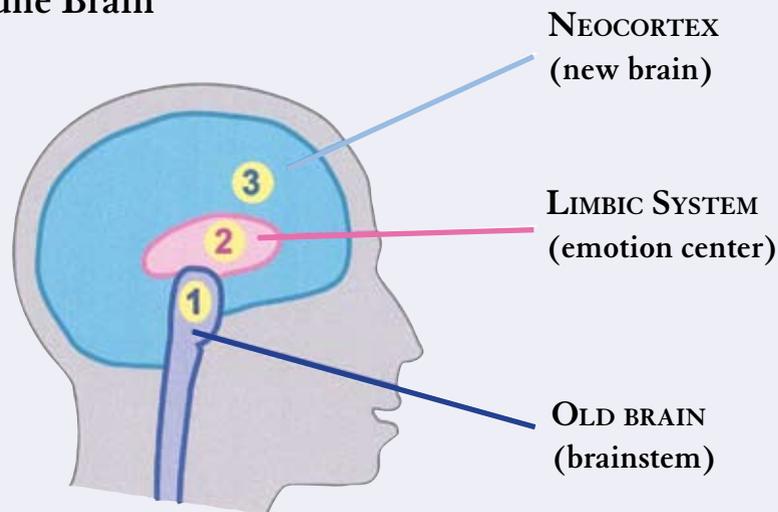
## Suspension

**B**ACK to Sam: I invite Sam to begin moving toward suspension. I explain that to be informed by a deeper intelligence and by a future that is seeking to emerge we must first suspend (even experimentally at first) the judging voices of our mind, our personal and cultural cynicisms, and our fears. I give reassurance through the way I speak, the words I use, and the energetic field that we both *feel* from the co-created presence.

As I guide and support Sam's acceptance of this invitation to suspend, I invite him to experiment with closing his eyes to help move into a more *tuned-in* sensory experience. While we further enter the suspension process, I coach clients with simple techniques to help them achieve a sense of feeling grounded and in tune with the *felt senses* of the body and any *imagery* that may come into presence. I might ask them to feel the floor with their feet and to notice the felt sense of that state. I may ask them to do the same with their body on the chair or sofa—I guide them in noticing the felt sense contact points. I may ask them if they can sense the subtle force of gravity, and if so, to consider just surrendering to the natural order of the universe.

Nature speaks to us through our Old Brain (the oldest, bottom-most, part of our evolved triune brain. The other two "layers" are the Limbic System and the Neocortex). For more information about brain structure and development, see illustration of the Triune Brain on the following page.

## The Triune Brain



*In the evolution of our species first there was the Old Brain. It consists of what now appears as the brain stem as it emerges from the spinal column containing the core and cords of our central nervous system. The purpose of this primitive (also called reptilian) brain is closely related to actual physical survival and maintenance of the body. Digestion, reproduction, circulation, breathing, and the execution of the “fight or flight” response in stress are all mediated in the brain stem. This Old Brain is primarily concerned with physical survival; its behaviors are automatic and have a ritualistic quality to them.*

*The second brain to evolve was the Limbic System; it houses the primary centers of emotion. Protective, loving feelings become increasingly complex as the Limbic System links up with our newest brain, the Neocortex. This large, highly developed component of the human triune brain makes language (as we generally know it) possible and renders logic and formal operational thinking possible. It also has a way of stacking our life experiences and learnings, sometimes to our benefit and perhaps as often, it seems, to our detriment. While all three brain layers are connected by an extensive two-way network of nerves, in Focalizing we (at least partially and temporarily) suspend the two upper layers to connect directly with the primal source.*

I educate clients that through this most primitive part of our brain, with the Limbic System and Neocortex layers at least partially suspended, an inner language is evoked, one that is distinct from our intellect and emotions. The language seems foreign at first but has a way of making sense as the process unfolds. It is not a language of words, yet it is sometimes more tangible than language itself. It speaks to us through the felt senses of our bodies, imagery, and sometimes a calm clear *inner-voice*. It is through the hearing and speaking of this sometimes subtle language that we resolve present and past dilemmas, meeting and learning from a future wanting to emerge through us.

Most individuals can achieve this *suspension* stage comfortably sitting on a chair or sofa. For others who feel more challenged with their ability to suspend their “conditioned thinking,” I may invite them to lie down and ask permission to coach the process in a few simple, very refined yogic breathing and safe-touch techniques. This rarely fails in assisting people like Sam in completely letting go of their every-day way of being and finding themselves in a *timeless* place of inner (and often outer) spaciousness and calm.

## Sensing

THIS transiting from *suspension* to *sensing* is also a time when I, as focalizer, also more completely drop into an inner experience that allows my felt senses to both contain and facilitate the process. From this moment on, I instinctually react to the client’s innate expressions as they are shared through body language, imagery, other sensory data, and the collective information that all this provides. My innate intelligence is guided by, resonates with, and communicates with theirs. There are moments where I actively guide and steer the process, while during other periods I retreat and let the client’s inner healer take its own course for awhile, only to intervene if a healing movement gets stuck.

When Sam finds himself in this place of calm, I ask him to describe it. For him, it is a sense of weightlessness; he feels as if he were floating. (Others may feel a sense of secure, dense weight or other sensations). This is *sensing*. I may then ask him to scan his body, from a *Curious Observer* perspective, and notice if he’s aware of any other sensations. He reports a tingling sensation in his hands, a signal to me that trapped frozen energy in the body is being released. I invite Sam to imagine giving lots of space to that tingling (like seeing an envelope around the tingling being opened really widely), and to trust that if that’s what is happening it is the perfect thing and an

expression of energy speaking through the body. I tell him to give the tingling all the space it seems to want, and continue to observe anything that may happen next. Others report pulsations, a heightened sense of warmth or chill, and/or quick *body shifts*. Regardless of the form that the sensation takes, all are indications of release and the establishment of fertile ground for new possibilities.

This *giving of space* in Focalizing has the same resonance as *interested acceptance*—a possible opening for new discovery. This is also true of the space the focalizer is providing to the client. It is in this space of interested acceptance that the client and the focalizer create an invisible energetic field together. From this point on almost every word, movement and gesture from the focalizer is in energetic unison with what the client is experiencing. We are both connected to a *deeper source*. As a focalizer it is always my intention to sense every opportunity to support the client's shifting from entanglement to freeing resolution, from contraction to expansion, and from weakness to strength. I do this by following my own inner felt senses, imagery, experience and innate intelligence as occurrences within the client ignite them.

## Imaging

I THEN ask Sam if he notices any *imagery*. He reports seeing a light in front of his face. I ask him if it has a color. He says “white, with maybe a little yellow.” I invite him to give that light lots of space, allowing it to do whatever it wants. He tells me it's becoming larger, beginning to mirror the shape of his body, and simultaneously merging with it. He tells me that the light is now residing in and through his body and he feels it. I ask Sam if the image and sensation of this light is pleasant. He says, “Very much so—I've never had this experience before.” I share with Sam that the pleasurable experience he's reporting is what I call an energetic *resource*. People may get very different images at spontaneous moments. Or, they may experience other auditory, olfactory, or kinesthetic sensations that hold a particular meaning or create a unique resonance with them—a favorite song, a sort of buzzing, a pleasurable scent, or another unique sensation or image. The responses are different for each individual. I encourage Sam to continue making space for whatever is happening; this resource imaging experience is transiting us to *resourcing*, the next regulating point.

## Resourcing

WHILE Sam is already in a place of *resource*, others may take additional time. I would ask them to *allow to surface* an image of one of the most meaningful moments of their lives; someone, alive or dead, from whom they felt unconditional love; or just a special moment-in-time from the recent or ancient past. As the body further connects with the image, very “alive” sensory attachments associated with the image come to life in the body and being. This is often a very pleasant experience for the client; many often are surprised that such multidimensional memories live within them and are particularly struck by the vivid energetic resonance the images elicit. We all have many more reservoirs of *resource* within us than we initially realize.

Without expectation, I coach clients to notice the felt sensations that present themselves as resource, or what may be blocking resource. Perhaps they are subtle at first, and that is good. If they give the experience time and note if anything happens, it will. One may experience sensations of calm or warmth or connectedness, and they may have discovered their first resource. Resource is any memory, person, place, or action that creates a calming and soothing sensation in our body.

In the transit from *imaging* to *resourcing* the focalizer coaches and assists the process. The purpose is always to support the body and the central nervous system in having experiences such as calm, ease, strength, empowerment, love, or being loved. At this point the earlier stated intention of our process and the resource energies begin to co-mingle, often without any conscious awareness. It is here where nonlinear movements from our star metaphor begin occurring. I honor this. Even when this spontaneous reordering of Focalizing’s regulatory points happens, I just follow.

Because resource is universal and unlimited, and because the *Curious Observer* is wiser than our own linear and binary thinking brain, the outcome of a Focalizing session may actually be far greater than the intention one started with.

## Engaging Opposite Energies

As Sam enjoys his resourced state of being, I ask if I can shift our focus, knowing at every moment that we can return to the experience of resource, or just organically draw upon it, as needed. When Sam says yes, I remind him of his intention to come out of overwhelm. I then ask him to imagine a moment when he was feeling the full burden of overwhelm and to see himself in that image. Once he acknowledges that he has the image, I invite him to allow his body to connect with it and curiously observe if anything begins to change in his felt senses. Sam reports a queasy feeling in his stomach and a tightening in his chest, as I notice his breathing becoming shallower.

As this point, I encourage him to just make lots of space for what's happening (as long as it's not too uncomfortable). If the sensations were more than Sam was comfortably able to tolerate, I might coach him back to the earlier resource of floating. This would be right there waiting for him, much to his surprise. At the right moment, I would then guide him back to the edge of the overwhelming experience just as much as he is able to easily tolerate. This is the beginning of *engaging opposite energies*: transformation always occurs during the merging and melding of such energetic polarities. By learning to bring these energies together, inviting one to organically fuse with the other, a *third possibility* emerges. It is different than either one of the first two experiences, it feels more whole, and as we integrate this experience we are transformed. The results of such transformations are greater clarity about ourselves, greater resilience in everyday life, and greater *presence* (to be present and sensing) in every given moment.

When floating in a timeless zone, much of the communication occurs through resonance, with minimal speaking. Dayashakti, one of my mentors, taught how our innate intelligence communicates: “Each thing that floats up into awareness in any given moment does so under the direction of your deep innate intelligence. And each experience is brought to us for a very specific reason, to evolve our consciousness in a very specific way.”

So, moment by moment, things begin to float up. They may be thoughts, memories, physical sensations, or emotional feelings—or possibly just energy or a sound we hear. Whatever it is, it is there for a very important reason. And, if we can be there with that one little thing that comes into awareness, it will move through us in the most perfect way.

It will move through the body in a completely intelligent path. What comes up won't be too much, it won't be too little; it won't be the wrong thing; it will be exactly the right thing—the thing we are meant to experience in that moment, and it takes us to the next step in our evolution. This work is deep because we are in direct contact with the source—nature itself.”

I continue to encourage Sam to keep watching and keep telling me what is happening. I also tell him to remain silent if an inner movement is happening that feels right and good to him and he does not want to interrupt it. We begin to notice how one experience sort of tumbles out from another.

Sam reports an image of himself as a little boy who had little to no support or guidance. He remembers developing a capacity and determination to know how to survive from one minute to the next, one year to another. I invite him to make lots of space for this memory, noticing what it felt like. As he continues this I concurrently direct him also to notice the opposite energy of resource by feeling his feet on the floor, the seat underneath him and even a sense of gravity holding him in place. I notice a silent tear slowly moving down Sam's jaw, another signal to me that subtle, meaningful release is happening.

I notice Sam's breathing is becoming less shallow and I ask him if he is still feeling a constriction in his chest. He reports that it has changed; it is now just a mild sense of tightness over his heart. I encourage him to give that tightness all the room it wants and to make lots of space for it. He now reports that it has changed; he's feeling a lot of tingling in both hands and some in his feet. I encourage him to let them tingle as much as they want; this is again trapped frozen energy in the body being released.

All of a sudden I notice Sam taking a very full breath and I see a shift in his body; the kind that is often followed by a sort of invisible balloon floating up with a new message. I ask him what's happening. Sam says that “it's gone—the sensation in my chest and those feelings in my stomach are gone.” I ask him to notice if anything replaced them. He reports: “I see the light again, and feel some of that wave sensation, but it's different this time. I also feel very grounded at the same time. I feel taller and almost as if I can do anything; a wonderful feeling of empowerment. I feel freer and stronger than ever before.”

I suggest to Sam that this might be a good time to bring this formal part of the session to a landing. However, I suggest that he take a last minute or two before gently opening his eyes to

notice if there's anything else that wants to present itself as we near completion. I tell him that if he notices anything he should wait until his eyes are open to share it with me. When Sam slowly opens his eyes and looks at me, he says: "I heard a voice from deep inside me. It said: *you don't have to know.*" I ask him what that meant to him and he replies: "Most of the sense of overwhelm that has consumed me came from a feeling that I had to know. Just like that little boy trying to survive and know what step to take next. I thought it was my job to know the right answers for everyone's needs and dilemmas in the organization." I ask how hearing that voice affects him. He says, "I feel like an enormous weight has been lifted from my shoulders and my being. I don't feel the least bit overwhelmed."

While Sam's voice was one of resolution and illumination, sometimes there are voices that are obstructive to the process. If the word *supposed* appeared in the voice I would be alerted that a voice of judgment has entered our process—and probably is coming from the "thinking" mind rather than from the innate intelligence.

Once we clarify the origin of the "thinking mind" voice and determine that is not from the client's innate intelligence—I would reinforce the positive ability to make such distinctions. Then I would clarify for the client that it is NOT his or her voice—*it has nothing to do with who he or she is.* We must distinguish between voices that strengthen and empower and those that weaken. Weakening voices never represent communication from our innate intelligence; an eager teacher of what makes us feel whole, strong and good. As we free ourselves from them, a space opens in which we find more of our true selves, our own truths. We begin to hear our own inner voices more and trust them.

As Sam begins to feel more oriented to completing the session, I suggest to him that for the next fifteen minutes or so he should try not to jolt his body or system so that the organic work that has been done can further take hold and continue completing its healing and manifestation process. A quick jarring to the system could stunt or stop the process. I also encourage him to take the meaningful images and sensations from the session and *hold* them in a private place inside. Talking about and analyzing the experience too much tends to weaken the possibilities of manifestation. I ask Sam how he feels before he leaves. He responds that he feels much lighter and, more importantly, looks forward to engaging with his colleagues and organization with a shifted perspective. He can *not know*, and it's okay.

As Sam completes his session I encourage him to periodically revisit his senses and messages of these last moments of the session that he holds privately within. This is a way that we nurture our new discoveries as they grow toward their unique physical manifestation.

## Shifts of Perception & Experience

WHEN energy is allowed to move in the way it's trying to move, we realize many benefits. For one, we learn to feel safe with energy moving in our bodies. We are no longer afraid of it, which is to say we're no longer afraid of a fundamental part of ourselves. That's a huge shift and benefit for most of us.

So, between the heightened awareness of the body's felt senses and the inner movement of energy, we no longer need to hold it back—and that leads to a lot of creativity and a lot of aliveness. We begin to sense how much unhappiness and disease can be caused by blocked energy not being able to move through the body as it's trying to move and as it's meant to move. For Sam, his sense of weightlessness, images of the light that became his being, imagery from childhood, and the sense of empowerment all were good demonstrations of his own shifts in experience and perceptions. He said he felt “freer and stronger than ever before.” This, for Sam, was a major shift!

Then there are the individual client's *shifts of perception and experience* regarding their own lives and the intentions they bring to Focalizing sessions. These shifts can be quite profound. For another example (of many), a client may receive a visit and assistance from a loved one who is deceased. Clients report sensations and reactions to such occurrences that make them feel as tangible and real as the physical world we inhabit. Because of my experience working with the underlying, hidden order of love in family constellations, I'm quite comfortable supporting the restoration of energy flow between the living and the dead. When it occurs, I honor it as a powerful resource and have additionally witnessed profound intergenerational healing that defies description. Of course, communicating with dead people is a big shift in perception and experience for most of us, particularly when it is so instinctively *felt*.

When intangible forces, images, or concepts introduce themselves into a session, the power that comes with it can no longer be considered unreal. It now has a face, a name, a warm body, and eyes that we can look into. Both the client and the focalizer experience an essence of form

that alchemically emerges from the formless and now has thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. There is no unknowing any more—the intangible has turned into concrete experience and become encoded in our bodies. It is like integrating new information into our DNA.

While Sam did not report any deceased relatives, he did go back to an abstract image of childhood that greatly informed his process. He also saw the light in front of him and latter within, and he *felt* it. In each example an abstraction became Sam's own concrete experience.

There are many other *shifts in perception and experience* that can occur. One is the realization that *there is* an inner force we can rely upon and that there is a future wanting to emerge through us. We gradually shift our *energetic field of attention* to our inner felt senses, images, and voices for moving forward with our lives rather than merely looking to the physical world around us for direction. We increasingly learn to till this fertile underground of our nature to guide our creative evolution.

## Soulful Integration

I CALL this quiet inner process soulful, because no other word will do. When I use the word “soul,” I think of it in terms of an acronym to which I have been introduced: S.O.U.L.—Systemic Organization of Universal Love. Even without saying those words in a session, I often witness its collective presence and participate with it consciously in many sessions. When this tangible, yet invisible, force is present, we move forward with continually new insights.

We start a session in a particular homeostasis and we end in homeostasis—but we are in a completely different homeostasis. We become a different person. The change is at a fundamental level, at a cellular level, in the DNA. In Sam's experience, this well-dressed, apparently successful man wise enough to seek help was in a particular homeostasis (balance) when he entered my office. When he left he was in a completely different state of balance, one that both he and I could feel and observe. It was very real! While no scientific evidence exists (yet) to prove this theory, I innately know that this change does occur, based on my observations and those of my clients.

## Physical Manifestation

Now we find ourselves at the pinnacle of Focalizing's nine point star. It begins in the session and then gradually expands into *physical manifestation* thereafter. The most holistic experiences of the session guide us and serendipitous occurrences come to meet us. It is in this heart-center and *force* that we are invited to bring our will—our personal power—forth and nurture our subtle *shift-experiences*. They in turn support the integration and illumination from our session, helping us to realize the physical manifestation of our intentions.

In my own experience, I personally believe I've survived my addictions, very deadly cancers, HIV disease, and heart disease because I've trusted my innate intelligence to guide me and help me clarify choices along the way. Through all those challenges I had an intention to live. I feel I fulfilled my potential that felt discontented with my first near-death encounter in 1983. I brought the opposite more abstract energies of love, calm, and creativity to the energetic contractions, unrest, and confusion of my physical diseases. While the pendulating back and forth between the contractions and resources was less than graceful at times, the *physical manifestation* is that I am alive and sharing this with you today. It feels very soulful. In Sam's case, he reported back to me months later that his organization transformed out of his *not knowing*. It helped him find a new, much more comfortable place in the order of things and how they flow.

My experience is—and many clients report—that Focalizing gives them a sense that they are not alone in life's challenges. In a process of co-creation with nature, the Focalizing gives greater meaning to their sense of place and purpose.

## Where Focalizing Began

**A**LTHOUGH my first introduction to what we now call Energy Psychology occurred in 1975 when I was observing my experience of the EST training, about twelve years later a more profound message awoke within me. It dramatically shifted my life and my work ever since.

I was on a massage table in 1987 having my first experience with Polarity Massage. As the practitioner gently manipulated my body she asked what I was experiencing. Through the subtlety of her touch, images from my life began to appear, each one carrying its own feelings and sensory attachments. One of the first images that surfaced was one of me seven years earlier sitting alone on the floor in my new house on the afternoon of the closing. I could feel the vacant house, and could smell the cedar wood scent that made the dwelling so special. I also could feel my loneliness in this new home adventure.

Once that image passed, a series of others swept through me. There was the cancer and chemotherapy treatment that this home sheltered me through, followed by images of the first love of my life who carried me through the treatments. Quiet tears rolled down my cheeks as I reflected on him. Shortly after I became well, he was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS and became very ill. For the next two years I care-partnered him in that cedar residence that he had helped decorate until his tragic death at thirty two years old. On that massage table, I was grieving and healing at the same time and I could *feel* it. I felt appreciative and more alive than I had felt in a long time—perhaps ever. This feeling of wholeness and the core strength that accompanied it have never left me.

After that experience I could no longer counsel people as a therapist without discovering more about the “new source of information” that had spoken through my body. It felt more genuine than talking about problems and challenges. Not wanting to short-change my clients or myself, I became an enthusiastic investigator of body therapies (what we now call somatic therapies) and ones that related to energy. My research included the Focusing process developed in the 1970’s at the University of Chicago by Eugene Gendlin, who first coined the terms “felt sense” and “body shift” to describe new ways to converse with our inners and beyond. I also studied Bio-Energetics, Core Energetics, Polarity Therapy, Rubenfeld Synergy, Vispassana (insight) Meditation, Barbara Brennan’s Healing Science, Holotropic Breathwork, Healing Imagery

from ancient Egypt, Yoga *and* The Wave Work process that grew out of it, Shamanic Healing, Somatic Experiencing®, Bert Hellinger’s approach for systemic solutions with families and organizations, and finally, the “Theory U” for systemic change from C. Otto Scharmer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This double-decade course of learning, along with the writing of my last book, *Ritual as Resource: Energy for Vibrant Living*, a text that fills the gap between ourselves and the divine intelligence in the universe (in the context of our time), birthed the process of Focalizing.

I first heard the word “focalizer” in 2001 while attending the International Conference on Sex and Spirit at the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland. The conference organizers referred to the workshop facilitators as focalizers. The word grabbed me immediately; as I participated in the workshops I detected an energy in those leaders that was greater than facilitation as I had known it.

After the conference, I began to create my own distinct definition of the word. For me, *focalizer* has come to mean a person who empowers him or her self and whom others empower to bring focus to the matters at hand. A focalizer elevates everyone’s energy to the highest level and directs it toward the common good. A focalizer earns the title by demonstrating willingness in gatherings of two or more people to bring a respectful cognitive, emotional, and energetic focus to what concerns us. Focalizing becomes the process in which this occurs.

This process of energy psychology, uniquely branded as Focalizing, has also been greatly influenced by and carries important findings from several pioneering researchers from whom I’ve had the opportunity to learn. Most notable among them are: Peter A. Levine, the originator of Somatic Experiencing®; Eugene Gendlin’s contribution of Focusing; C. Otto Scharmer, the originator of the *Theory U* and *Presencing*; Peter Russell, author of *From Science to God* and a major contributor to the field; Bert Hellinger and his systemic solutions to change; and my deceased friend, yogi, and colleague Dayashakti (Sandra Scherer), who originated The Wave Work at Kripalu Health & Yoga Center. While Focalizing does not contain the full breadth and depth of any of the above approaches, it weaves together the elements of each that most powerfully resonate with me at the moment. Their creations, careening off my own experience, research and client needs, have synergized the organic evolution of Focalizing.

## Focalizing for Couples

As mentioned earlier, Focalizing for couples requires opening a larger space with additional understandings. To do so, I often hold an informative preparation session with a couple before more formally Focalizing with them, especially if they are in crisis.

Couples present unique circumstances in the context of a Focalizing event. As none of us received a manual on how long-term relationships work, we must begin to close the gap on the serious learning deficits and bring the couple into the *field* before dropping into the fertile ground of illumination.

If we are suffering or feeling blocked in our relationship, we can take that feeling and ride it back to childhood; undoubtedly, images of the origin of the dilemma will reveal themselves to us. We almost always, unconsciously, select partners who will elicit such struggles once the couple takes root together. At first, researchers like me thought this might be a dirty trick of nature, but we soon learned otherwise. It became clear that this is nature's way of returning us to the frozen energy of our earliest intimacy wounds for healing both the past and present. We must dissolve these frozen blocks to have a free-flowing multidimensional experience of intimate love with our partner.

Another basic learning deficit involves the cultural and personal split between our spiritual (loving) selves and our sexual nature. Often, in early stages of a relationship this fracture gets temporarily transcended in the powerful experience of falling in love. The split begins to make itself apparent after bonding occurs, when spontaneity leaves the bedroom, along with organic fulfillment of the desires of the moment. We begin to withhold our expression of desire for fear of "rocking the boat" or of being rejected. Often both partners, for slightly different or opposite reasons, begin to feel a lack of fulfillment, and often unexpressed resentment.

Suffice to say at this point, these circumstances and other such learning deficits for couples (some unique to the dynamics of the individual partnership) are very important to begin a process of freeing up entanglements. Once they are brought into the light (or *field*) in the spirit of resolution, yielding good results from a Focalizing session becomes a rich possibility.

As in individual Focalizing sessions, *intention* drives the process. For couples it is important that each partner has an individual intention (that can be supported by the other partner) and that there is a shared intention for the sacred union that both bring to the field we are creating.

From this point on, similar to the individual session, we transit through the regulatory points of Focalizing's star image. Only now there are two people, the focalizer and the union in the field. Some of my coaching addresses at different times one partner or the other and often the union itself, which is seen and respected as a separate living organism.

The *Power of Two*, a very rich physical manifestation that occurs with couples, evolves out of Focalizing's respect for the *third entity* in the union, the energetic vortex (representing both together and all their contradictions) created by the partners coming together in love and caring. It takes all three entities to create the seemingly magic alchemy of *The Power of Two*. This permutation of powerful partnering and unique individuality is often the end result of a Focalizing session with couples.

## Focalizing for Groups and Organizations

**F**OCALIZING for groups requires opening a larger space with additional understandings. Focalizing, like *Presencing*, invites groups of people and organizations to access that fertile, invisible underground, for new innovative possibilities to test and adapt in alignment with a future that is already emerging.

Different from working with individuals and couples, the process of focalizing with an organization absolutely requires that the focalizer is in alignment with the group's leadership, and that the leader(s) are willing to demonstrate not knowing to access other levels of thought and inspiration for solving problems. (Einstein developed this concept—problems cannot be solved at the same level of thought that created them). This is a vulnerable position for many in leadership, but it begins a process of the entire group being willing to begin suspending voices of judgment, cynicisms, and fears and redirecting their focus and beginning to see with new eyes.

Similar to Focalizing with couples, the *intentions* that drive the process are both individual (for each participant) and a larger intention for the whole group with which all can align.

Having successfully focalized numerous times with groups and organizations that were already existing entities, in January 2007 I experimented with forty diverse interested people in New York City who were *not* already associated. A few knew me and my work for many years, while others I was meeting for a first time. They included mental health professionals and just every day folk from as far away as Mexico. The experience demonstrated, in a two-day experiential seminar, that the process works even when folks never knew each other before and do not necessarily have a joint intention. To give a just *sense* of the process, let me use this recent experience (in a condensed form) as an example.

The process started with a simple introduction to the first five regulating points on the nine-point star; *intention, suspension, sensing, imaging, and resourcing*. I invited them to bring an intention of something they would like to have happen from our coming together. I shared with them that *my intention* was that each of *their intentions* would be realized. I suggested that we create a *group intention* around which we all could feel aligned. This was general enough that all could easily align themselves with it and create the larger energetic context (or vortex) for all that followed.

Now, with intention in place and driving the process, I demonstrated sensing (including *felt sense*) and imaging to the group with a simple imagination exercise. I asked everyone to close their eyes for a minute and to imagine that a really annoying person was invading their personal space. I then asked them to imagine using their arms and hands to push this person away, all the while noticing what this felt like in their bodies. After a few shared their experiences, I then asked them to replay the scene, but this time to push the imaginary person away as slowly as possible, moving molecule by molecule, and to notice if there was a difference in the felt senses of their bodies. Many reported remarkably different experiences: "I felt a completely different experience the second time. It felt more freeing and liberating and I *felt* it throughout my body."

I then introduced suspending and resourcing by asking everyone to close their eyes again and take a minute to get a sense of their feet touching the floor and their bodies making contact with the chair. I invited them to settle into their bodies while suspending everyday voices of judgment, cynicisms, and fears from their minds. With eyes closed I then invited them to allow to surface a time when they genuinely felt loved or cared for, or when they were loving and caring for another. I encouraged them to take whatever image came to them, to let it

develop, and to allow their bodies gradually to connect with this image. I encouraged them to observe (curiously) any shifts or changes in their bodies' felt senses. After this experience, most reported something along the lines of "a feeling of calm and warmth" or "a reconnection to someone that felt touching and alive" and various other resource statements of a similar nature. They had now been introduced to the concept and experience of resource energy as it lived in their bodies.

I then proceeded with a *healing imagery* exercise to demonstrate *engaging opposite energies*. I asked the participants to again close their eyes and to follow my instructions: breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth three times. As they completed the third breath, I invited them to image what it would be like to have their stated intention realized. What might that look and feel like? I encouraged them to take what came and let it develop, and to notice any feeling or body sensations that were connected to the image. I then asked them to imagine gently moving and condensing the image, leaving an empty space next to it. In this newly formed empty space, I invited them to imagine any obstacles that were preventing their intention from manifesting itself; I continually encouraged them to allow whatever came to develop, and to notice what it felt like.

I then asked them to hold both images in front of them, almost like a split-screen TV, and to imagine as if a coolish, warm breeze was washing over their backs. I invited them to notice if yet a third image was emerging from the energy of the two images coming together. I encouraged them to keep noticing if they could discern the qualities, feelings and felt senses that went with that third, emerging image. At the conclusion of this phase, I invited them to slowly open their eyes and adjust to the light in the room. The experiences that people reported all shared common themes—a sense of wholeness, a full-bodied perspective of what was possible with their intention, a new and positive sense of energy awareness.

At this point in the event, the *shifts of perceptions and experience* were already organically occurring. It was time to go deeper and consciously closer to the *source*, or our innate intelligence. With this group I chose to do this by incorporating the World Café process (now in use by many innovative global government and business organizations) to move further into *co-sensing, co-presencing, and co-creating*. Since 1995, tens of thousands of people on six continents have participated in such café sharing processes that operate on the assumption that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges.

To do this we formed small circles of about six people each and created imaginary café settings to ponder deeply meaningful questions, while curiously noticing (and writing down) what responses and felt senses emerge from within us. Some of the meaningful questions were as simple as “who am I” and “why am I here.” The small groups were given an opportunity to share with each other whatever emerged in response to the questions. This dialogue filled the room with high energy; a cross pollination of energy and ideas was apparent and invigorating. There was a sense of *magic in the air*.

This weekend group Focalizing event progressed with a continued interweaving of processes, movement, and several World Café settings until everyone felt a sense that their individual intentions now had the potential of being realized or transformed, as did the larger group intention.

At the closing all participants were reporting experiencing new possibilities that had not occurred to them previously—a state of *soulful integration*. For several people with whom I spoke after the weekend, these possibilities and intentions have begun to *manifest* themselves in real-time. While this seminar is but one example of the group/organization Focalizing process, I hope it portrays a sense of the possibilities. Personally, I always feel immense gratitude to be part of this new energetic field that is enveloping us on a group and organizational level.

## Focalizing and the Information Age

GET very excited about the possibilities that processes like Focalizing can demonstrate for us in our present time. Many refer to the time we are living in as the Information Age; to me, this means that information becomes another dominant *currency* that regulates our ways of being.

With Focalizing and other energy and somatic psychologies, we can tap into a wider bandwidth of energy and information (like dial-up to broadband) without a computer. We find these things in our own bodies and in the nature from which we emerge, very much like the information that surfaced when I was on the massage table in 1987. We no longer fully accept as reality the particular rational and intellectual ways that our human minds see and interpret the physical world. We gain this wider, multidimensional scope of reality as we feel it inside us.

Our conditioned thinking does not normally allow us to tune into the voice of nature. To reach this wider bandwidth of information, we must find ways and places to suspend (at least temporarily) our everyday ways of seeing and judging our lives and our world. We learn to trust the life force within us as it connects us to our source, the earth, and by respecting our place in the evolutionary process we let that connection inform us in addressing the matters at hand.

I have experimented in this writing with having my written words (and some that I respectfully borrow) create an energy vibration that illuminates our invisible dimensions of the times we are living in. To do so, I have targeted my words to the most instinctual part of our human brain (the “Old Brain”). This awakens the autonomic nervous system which, when “tuned into,” brings us to the nature of our being. This “nature” is the fertile underground from which all real innovation materializes.

Focalizing and its nine-point regulating star image exist to access this fertile landscape, or energetic field, that manifests healing and innovation—like ripples in a stream, shifting consciousness holistically manifesting in physical reality.

## Conclusion: “Our Final Evolutionary Exam”

FOR me, it all goes back to that massage table so many years ago and the illumination of that “new source of information” that changed my life and so many of those with whom I’ve had the opportunity to work. I am amazed when I look back and see where the journey has taken me and others. The research and development of the nine-point regulating image for Focalizing has been a labor of love that has connected me with others who are demonstrating the true brilliance of the times we are living in.

In my last book, I quoted philosopher Buckminster Fuller in his suggesting that we “are in our final evolutionary exam ... and all humanity now has the option to become enduringly successful.” I agree with Fuller and fully recognize that if *matter* is energy, as Einstein and those in the Quantum field assert, then there must be a place where physical images and felt senses are one and the same, and can affect one another. Through Focalizing, and similar processes, we can open the door of the subconscious mind and find this place. Once we find the source of healthy vibrant energy inside of us, we can heal and transform whatever needs our attention; the physical images around us, the diseases of the body, our healthcare systems, corporate paralysis, the ravages of pollution, the affects of global warming, all of it!

After a Focalizing event, my marketing consultant Alan Wiener emailed me to share that: “It reminds me of an incident we had in the Aran Islands a few years ago. We spent a week there with David Whyte, an incredible Irish poet and a man who has greatly affected my life. He had us all ‘belly up’ to the edge of a 200 foot ledge so we would just get our heads over the edge and feel the winds and the sea spray from the turbulent ocean below. It was literally stepping to the edge and looking out. Focalizing to me is stepping to an edge and looking inward.”

Now is the time! Can we pass Fuller’s exam? I believe we can. As Deepak Chopra so eloquently states, “Miracles are nothing new; in fact, they aren’t miracles, but manifestations of a greater law of loving intention that has been present since the beginning of time and realized by many enlightened ones.” I believe we can shift and enliven our consciousness at any time! I am keenly aware of this as I observe my clients and myself. It’s a lot like learning a new language, learning to read, or playing a new game. We just have to want it badly enough to learn and integrate powerful new concepts like Focalizing. I invite you to do so and I wish you all the best in your efforts both for your own good and that of the next seven generations!

Thank you for exploring the world and potential of Focalizing with me.

## *About the Author*

Dr. Michael Picucci attributes three primary factors to his evolution of Focalizing—his own considerable life challenges; those of his clients; and his personal awakening some years ago of a “new source of information” that lives within each of us. He experiences this natural path of healing and *moving forward with grace* as organic (reminiscent of the way it emerged from the writing of his last three books).

Michael has received public recognition for his contributions from national, state and private agencies. For almost three decades he has conducted a private consulting and psychotherapy practice while leading workshops nationwide.

For further information visit web site: [www.focalizing.com](http://www.focalizing.com)

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