

What is focusing?

- Named by Eugene Gendlin, a philosopher who worked closely with Carl Rogers at Chicago University in the 50-60's. He discovered that successful therapy was not based on a technique or something the therapist did – rather some skills that the person themselves were accessing while the therapist listened to them.
- Focusing is an experience, a way of using our body/brain that invites trust, resilience, empowerment and abilities to adjust to our situation/environment

Where did it come from?

- Natural skills that we've become rusty on as our culture does not encourage us to use them, we all do some of them some of the time – essentially, in our better relational moments. Music, arts, sports and relationships are some ways we naturally have set up to practice these. Much of our typical home, school or work environments, where we function from patterns of what we already know, are not likely to create moments to naturally build these skills.

How different than meditation and intuition?

- Focusing differs because we check back that we are understanding ourselves correctly.
- For meditation, you might say we get into relationship. It's not enough to observe a judgement – we let that within us which is judging know we hear it. If we are sad or grieving, we might bring a hand to our heart, really let that grieving place know it is not alone.
- For intuition, checking back is valuable for developing a sense of trust within ourselves. Intuition comes from a body knowing. Are we understanding this knowing correctly? With practice, we learn to resonate our inner truth.

What benefits do I get from it personally and for business?

- If we begin to look at how much of our day is relational, either with self, others or our environment, these ALL are potential times we could use these skills. For our self, we are developing resilience and self-empowerment skills as we practice being bigger than something bothering us.
- A very valuable self-relationship to develop is with our inner critic. These types are actually wanting to be our greatest cheerleaders. The critical technique is something it learned from our environment. Instead it can be like a powerful self-coach, with team motivational skills.
- They like to say the world around us is a reflection of our inner world. If you are unhappy with someone out there, you can find your answer or resolution within. When we feel discomfort, we turn with wonder within.

- Personally, Focusing has helped me resolve a pattern of long-standing headaches. Following my body, it taught me that in any moment of overwhelm or potentially feeling challenged or unsafe, my body responds with tightness somewhere in my head/sinuses. In Focusing, I might get into relationship to this by saying to myself “something in my sinuses feels pressured to get this right (and then checking back to resonate a ‘yes’ response from my body). Thing is there is always at least one more character. This is an attitude my mind has toward my body of being annoyed that it is creating ‘stress’. My mind or for a lot of us, we might say the LH of our brain, cannot act in the world, only within us. For me, it was responding to the initial headache sensations by cutting off breath into my head. Let’s pause and imagine this. I have a red alert situation and my mind responds with ‘we’re not only not sending support, we’re cutting off oxygen, deal with it.’ The result is a worsening of the initial inflammation because now the stress chemicals are accumulating. Once enough accumulate, it takes hours for my body to clear them out. Focusing taught me to pause in the moment of the initial body stress, acknowledge, breath intentionally into my head to set a new pattern and over time practicing this, it only rarely happens now. It still happens when I encounter new types of stresses – this is my body’s way of checking – is this too something we don’t need to stress about?
- Professionally, Focusing has increased my productivity and efficiency. Rather than waste time spinning wheels, I step back from a situation – and I mean literally step back, by moving my body, walking away for a few minutes. As I do this physical movement, I create space, now from here I have a larger perspective. From here, new insights will come or at the least, when I come back to the problem, I have a fresh attitude that is more likely to bring a swifter resolution.

As a dentist, will it help me with my team and patients? How so?

- Developing social emotional resilience to navigate life with more trust and ease.
- Overtime, we come to trust that when a problem arises, a solution is also here, waiting for us to discover it.
- I personally have used Focusing to improve my self-care so that I am now an ideal patient. It’s been a process of slowly integrating new habits over time. I start my morning with a coconut oil rinse as I take my morning walk. Throughout the day, I listen and pause at times to brush, floss, rinse or drink water, etc.
- I also use my Focusing skills to avoid using any kind of pain method for dental work. This happens to be something I’ve done since a child other than the time I had my wisdom teeth extracted. A few years ago, I had all of my cavities (~12) redone to remove mercury. Essentially, I focus on being bigger – holding space for my pain, something in me that does not like pain, the concerns of my dentist that I may hit a pain threshold and go all weird on him, etc. – ALL that is going on for me now.
- Invite them to acknowledge something in their current experience – see if they can feel the distance, sense of spaciousness.

How can I learn focusing?

- Many ways – there are a variety of books to start with – commonly either Gendlin’s ‘Focusing’ or Ann Weiser Cornell’s ‘The Power of Focusing’.
- The primary international website is <https://focusing.org/>. A good place for introductory workshops is <https://coronaplaza.life/>.
- Kathy McGuire has a lot of free videos to begin exploring these concepts. <https://www.cefocusing.com/about/index.php> This website features Kathy’s videos and might feel more up accessible: <https://www.experiential-psychotherapies.com/focusing/>
- If you really want to practice and improve your own Focusing skills, partnership classes are the most effective use of your time. Solo Focusing, until you are more skilled, can give you limited results. Remember, we are talking about an experience here. It is not something you can be clear about with just words.

What courses do you offer? How do they work? What is the time commitment?

There are many ways to learn Focusing, each teacher is encouraged to develop their own way. I teach Inner Relationship Focusing with Neuroscience woven in. I’ve been a neuroscience geek since I began that non-profit in 2006. IRF was developed by Ann Weiser Cornell and Barbara McGavin. The neuroscience I weave in is adapted from another Focusing Trainer, Peter Afford and very much linked with my own exploration of Iain McGilchrist’s work.

All of my classes are on zoom. I used to teach in person and rarely do now. You start with a 1:1 Guided Focusing session – I have a longer first time session specifically designed to help someone feel ready to get into a class. This is 75min.

From here, you could enroll in the Part 1 beginner class. This meets 6 times for 2 hours, every other week. There is an additional hour or 1.5 hours which will be either reading prep or repeating the exercise we did in class with a partner.

Part 2 has the very same format. It usually starts up after a 4-6 week break. I create schedules that work for particular groups that form. This is not linear learning, you’ll be moving through at your own pace, maybe repeating a class.

The emphasis for these two classes is to gain a sense of Empowered Focuser, Relaxed Companion. We unlearn traditional ways of relating to ourselves and others and relearn how to listen in a way that creates space for change – both within ourselves and for others.

Parts 3-4 are considered more advanced. There is more reading and the format changes somewhat. Here we learn to both be in a process and aware of where we are in a process. Any process of change has a shape, we learn that and what tends to be helpful at the various stages to help a process move forward.

These 4 classes together are considered basic skills training. My goals are for students to bring these skills into their daily moments as well as maintain a partnership practice

where you sit down with a partner for an hour or so every week or a few times a month to listen more deeply to anything that might be needing your attention.

Beyond this I also offer a 2-3 yr program which I call Learning Community for Mastery in Guiding Change. This program is the frame for how to work with others and can also be used as a path to certification with the International Focusing Institute.

Where can I get more information?

My website:

<https://sandyjahmi.com/>

About Focusing:

<https://sandyjahmi.com/about-2/about-focusing/>

We start with a 1:1 Guided Focusing Session, this helps us get clear on what experience of 'being' we are practicing here.

<https://sandyjahmi.com/guided-focusing-sessions/>

When you decide you want to actively practice and improve your Focusing skills, a partnership class is the most effective way to move yourself forward.

<https://sandyjahmi.com/creating-space-for-lasting-change-part-1-focusing/>