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Focusing-alpha: The original observation of Focusing and how it comes alive

(Sprache: English)

In this masterclass, we will first re-discover the original articulation of Focusing, which is “the four phases of continuous focusing” (Gendlin, 1964). The four phases are: ‘direct referent’, ‘unfolding’, ‘global application’ and ‘referent movement’ or ‘content mutation’. In this original articulation, Focusing is not described as a method or skill. It is a description of how we experience, more specifically, how felt meaning interacts with symbols. Ikemi (2025) has called this Focusing-alpha (α) as opposed to the skill of Focusing developed later, which he calls Focusing-beta (β). Gendlin (1997) also applies aspects of Dilthey’s hermeneutic circle to elaborate experiencing. It is the circle of ‘experience’, ‘expression’ and ‘understanding’. We can observe Focusing-alpha occurring within the circle of experience-expression-understanding.

Focusing- α and Focusing- β feel very different for the person who is engaging in them. In Focusing- α , the person is not aware of doing any particular skill. For instance, a person may be writing a poem, or a person may be wondering whether words are adequately conveying meaning while speaking. In contrast, in Focusing- β , a person is trying to execute a certain ‘step’ in the skill of Focusing. In this masterclass, some ways with which Focusing- α comes alive will be introduced. Ikemi has recently named these methods iFocusing. In particular, the class will explore the following in pairs: Crossing with Animals and Asian Focusing Methods (AFM): Basic. By using animal metaphors, one explores their existence in Crossing with Animals. In AFM: Basic, the pair sits in mindfulness, observing and occasionally focusing on thoughts that arise. ‘No-ego/mind’ 無我 and ‘No-doing’ 無為 which are fundamental perspectives of AFM will also be explained.