

Participation mode/Values
(submitted by Nina Joy Lawrence)

OUR COMMON GROUND

Our common Ground informs how we are together. From this we find how to carry forward together. Some pieces of our common ground are here, with instances of them at the organizational level.

1. Clearness comes when all aspects of the whole are heard.

Disturbances need to be heard. Example: In the British Focusing Association there was much conflict as individual Focusers worked to create an organization. People got very angry, felt hurt, yelled, left the room. Then they found the process of using colored cards to show their response to what was under discussion. Using the cards helped them listen and not leave out any minority. With any discomfort people could relax into knowing they would be heard, not overridden. The group is now moving forward well.

2. A stopped process is a step not yet found. The larger process carries the stopped process forward, implying ongoing attention. Example: In TFI there are stopped processes being carried forward by the living organization. When the transitional board accepted the job of shepherding TFI from leadership by the Gendlins to leadership by the Focusing Community, the group thought all they absolutely needed to do was rewrite the By-Laws and come up with a way to involve the community in choosing the next board. They found a large pile of stopped process in their lap, that took so much attention they had 3 hour meetings at least once a week for 6 months.

3. Acknowledging we are part of a greater whole means we ARE interaction. Example: The new non-profit, Focusing International and TFI do affect each other. A number of Focusing people have asked Focusing International to change their name because they feel the name creates confusion about The Focusing Institute and its place in the world. It has even been suggested that TFI be given the power to make Focusing International change their name. Consider how it would affect the whole Focusing world if TFI were invested with that kind of power over another independent Focusing organization. We are interaction.

4. The way we interact can create safety around discomfort so the discomfort can inform our process. Lack of safety can shut down our process. Example: Gene and Mary wanted to create The Focusing Institute as a new sort of organization, not following the standard, traditional structures. In the process TFI stretched further from the standard than will continue to work. Gene and Mary handed it off to the transitional board as representatives of the Focusing community, in order that it could go on living. TFI has to return to just enough structure, or the organization won't be safe enough to carry forward with its creative growing edge.