

International Leadership Council: Meeting with Evelyn Fendler-Lee by Annie Mahon

My call with Evelyn started out a little rough - high winds took down my internet just as we began our video chat. We persevered using the old-fashioned cell phone, and I'm glad we did. Evelyn, I discovered, is a brilliant and fascinating woman who is a huge asset to the International Leadership Council.

Evelyn surprised me by jumping right into pregnancy talk. She describes *Thinking at the Edge* (TAE), Gendlin's philosophical method, as the feeling of being pregnant with something you don't yet have the words for. It's the process of expressing something brand new – creating new concepts, structures, or theories. So, Evelyn's work is to help her students and clients give birth to their gifts.

Evelyn's focus is bringing TAE into the professional arena. She works with scientists, writers, teachers, anyone who wants to break out of language constructs and connect to their deeper knowing, in order to create something unique to their life experience. According to Evelyn, "TAE is an attitude, like Focusing is an attitude." She works directly with clients and also teaches her method to others, online and at in-person workshops.

Evelyn has her PhD in material studies as well as a master's in organizational psychology, and she also completed a person-centered counselor training. One of her teachers in that program studied TAE directly with Gendlin, so Evelyn and another student worked with him on a project bringing TAE into industrial research. The project didn't work out, but Evelyn really learned TAE and was hooked.

Evelyn's newest project is more playful. It's a game-like inquiry tool based on TAE, and involves an adventure journey story and multiple dwellings, each with questions that Evelyn wrote herself. Next step for her is finding support for marketing the game.

Evelyn reads a lot! She is currently re-reading all of Gendlin's books and articles, to understand them more deeply. For fun she is reading a book by Frege on the history of mathematics. She did eventually admit to reading some fiction – on her bedside table she has Tom Hanks' new book, *Uncommon Type: Some Stories*.

Here's something about Evelyn that surprised me: She moved only eight months ago to Chapel Hill, NC. Before that she had lived only in her home country of Germany. She met her future husband, Focusing teacher Robert Lee, in 2010, and they were married in 2016. It took her some time to jump through the immigration hoops in order to get a visa to live in the U.S., but she is happy to be here. She especially enjoys the habit Americans have of complimenting and appreciating each other. Germans apparently don't do this as readily.

If all that isn't impressive enough, Evelyn is also an excellent athlete. She has run several marathons and triathlons. Though she says those days are over, she still enjoys running, walking,

and morning yoga. Her newest hobby is playing the guitar, which she practices every day, in the hopes of being able to sing along with some of the Beatles' music.

Evelyn brings her expertise to the ILC because she cares so much about Gendlin's work and aims to bring his work beyond psychology. She wants to see people Thinking at the Edge in politics, communities, science, marketing, and really everywhere and anywhere. For Evelyn, Gendlin's teaching is about HOW we think. As the world gets more complex, she hopes we can use TAE to solve these challenging tasks with cutting edge thinking, rather than resorting to recycled facile solutions.

Evelyn wants to see the Focusing community recognize Gendlin's work as more than a self-help tool. She wants everyone to know it is about more than just ourselves. Gendlin's work is applicable to everything we do. Evelyn's work brings people together to solve complex and difficult modern issues in unique ways, even where there is conflict.

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