

Eugene Gendlin's Focusing

A somatic method for inner wisdom and emotional clarity

Focusing was developed by psychologist Eugene Gendlin. It's the practice of finding the 'felt sense' — a bodily knowing that exists before words. It often reveals what other methods miss.

WHAT IS A FELT SENSE?

A felt sense is a vague, whole-body sense of a situation or problem — something you feel before you can articulate it. It's different from a named emotion and different from a thought. It's softer, more diffuse — a tightness in the chest, a heaviness in the belly, a constriction in the throat — with more to it than you can immediately describe.

Focusing is the practice of staying with that felt sense long enough for it to speak.

THE SIX STEPS

Set aside 20–30 minutes. Sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

Step 1 — Clearing a Space

Ask: 'What is between me and feeling fine right now?' Acknowledge each thing that arises, set it gently to one side, and return to your inner space.

Step 2 — Finding the Felt Sense

Choose one issue. Without going into it, hold it lightly and feel your whole-body sense of it. Where does it show up? What does it feel like as a whole?

Step 3 — Finding a Handle

What is the quality of this felt sense? Find one word, image, or gesture that captures it — 'stuck', 'heavy', 'tight', 'hollow', 'sharp'. This is your handle.

Step 4 — Resonating

Check the handle against the felt sense. Does it fit? If yes, stay with it. If not, try another. Keep checking until they resonate — you'll feel a slight settling when they do.

Step 5 — Asking

Ask the felt sense: 'What makes this the way it is?' or 'What does this need?' Then wait. Don't think. Let the answer come from the felt sense itself.

Step 6 — Receiving



Do no harm. Take no shit.

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Whatever comes, receive it with kindness. Don't evaluate. Just acknowledge. The felt sense may shift or open — welcome any movement, however small.

— A NOTE ON PATIENCE

Focusing is counterintuitive — we're trained to think through problems. The felt sense asks you to feel instead. The first few times may feel like 'nothing is happening'. Stay with the practice.

Use Focusing on any stuck feeling or recurring pattern. It works particularly well for things you can't quite articulate but know are there.