

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOCUSING AND EMPATHIC LISTENING



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INTRODUCTION TO FOCUSING AND EMPATHIC LISTENING

Part I

Session 1 - What is Focusing?

Session 2 - Six Steps in Focusing

Session 3 - Clearing a Space

Session 4 - Felt Sense

Session 5 - Focusing Application (video)

Session 6 - Focusing Application (video)

Session 7 - Focusing Application (video)

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Part II

Session 9 - What is Empathic Listening?

Session 10 - Focusing and Empathic Listening Application (video)

Session 11 - Focusing and Empathic Listening Application (video)

Session 12 - Focusing and Empathic Listening Application (Video)

Part III

Focusing and Empathic Listening Group

* Dr. McGuire recommends teachers use her manuals, Focusing in Community or Focusing en Comunidad, to establish Empathy Focusing practice groups, at the end of each Session if it fits in the time, or at the end of the Sessions as the next step: <[See Manuals](#)>

A SHORT FOCUSING EXERCISE

PART I

SESSION 1 – WHAT IS FOCUSING?

Reflections on Intergenerational Trauma: Healing as a Critical Intervention

Ashley Quinn

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, School of Social Work, British Columbia, Canada

Research on Healing

The best available evidence for Aboriginal healing is derived from qualitative studies. Thomas and Bellefeuille (2006) conducted a formative qualitative study exploring a Canadian cross-cultural Aboriginal mental health program in Winnipeg, Canada. A recruitment notice was circulated among Aboriginal organizations inviting people, who had prior residential school experience, within the city to participate. Methods utilized were conversational-style interviews (non-scheduled format) and a focus circle/group. Traditional Aboriginal healing circles and *focusing* (a psychotherapy technique comprised of self-awareness and empowerment practices) were the interventions being evaluated. Traditional healing circles refer to the coming together of Aboriginal Peoples for the purpose of sharing their healing experiences and to further their healing journey (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000; Latimer & Cassey, 2004). Focusing refers to a body-based awareness technique that involves turning one's attention to the various sensations of the body. It allows people the opportunity to be safe observers of their bodily experiences of trauma and to experience this sensation at their own pace (Gendlin, 1996).

Results demonstrate that the traditional healing circle created a safe environment for the participants, emphasized the sacredness of each story shared, and gave the opportunity, to each of its members, to share without being interrupted. Storytelling, teaching, and sharing within healing circles promoted a spirit of equality in the counselling relationship, empowered the participants, and eliminated hierarchy. Focusing was found to be effective in helping people to overcome self-criticism, overcome feelings of being stuck in life, deal with unsure feelings, get what they are seeking from within themselves, better handle emotions, shift out of old routines, and deal with past traumatic events. It was suggested that focusing could be appropriate for Aboriginal Peoples, as it is a humanistic, person-centred approach to healing, which reflects the core values of respect and non-interference (Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006).

What is Focusing?

“Focusing” is to enter into a special kind of awareness, different from our every day awareness. It is open, turned inward, centered on the present and on your body’s inner sensations. When doing Focusing, you silently ask, “How am I now?”

Taken from The International Focusing Institute

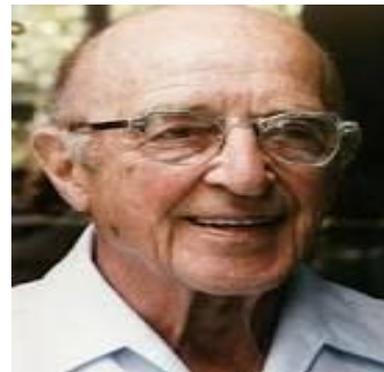
ORIGINS OF FOCUSING

Focusing originated from the research and insight of Dr. Eugene Gendlin, who, in collaboration with Carl Rogers at the University of Chicago, was interested in why some people benefit from psychotherapy and some do not.

Taken from The International Focusing Institute

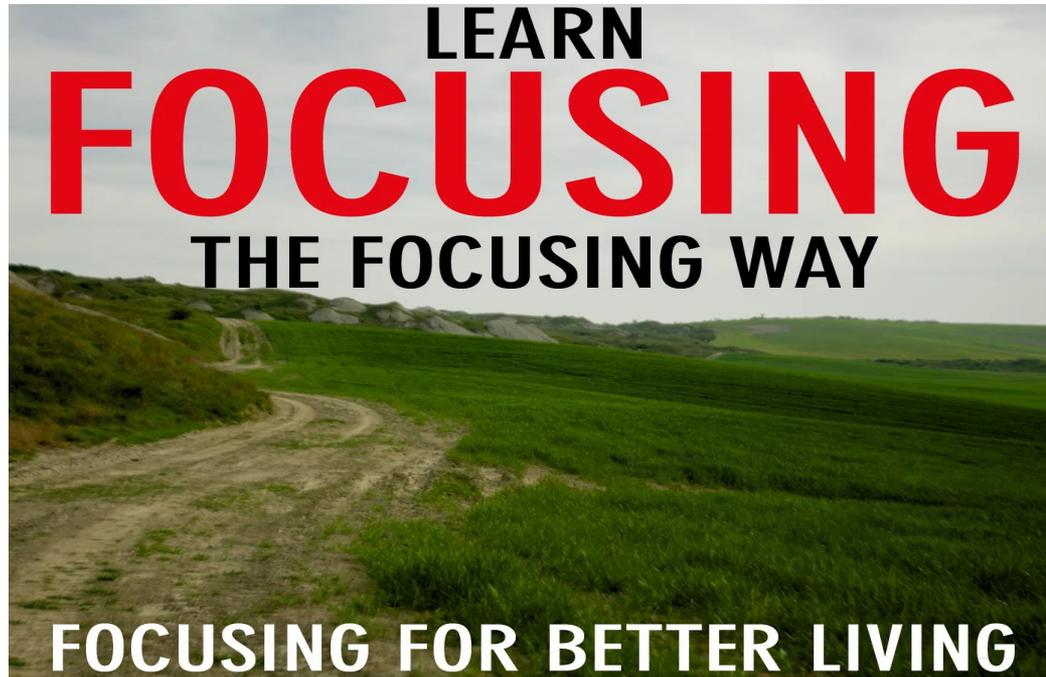


Eugene Gendlin



Carl Rogers

Focusing Top Ten by David Battistella
Podcast (9:15mins)



<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/learn-focusing-the-focusing-way/id1051025008?i=1000401369939>

Taken from Learn Focusing – The Focusing Way

OTHER LINKS TO PODCAST: here

OTHER BENEFITS OF FOCUSING

Focusing permits you to:

- understand what you are truly feeling and wanting
- [overcome] obstacles, make decisions and solve problems
- become more attentive and friendly to yourself and others
- integrate body, mind and spirit
- find relief from tension and chronic pain
- be independent from external belief systems
- deepen and make more effective the process of counseling and psychotherapy

Taken from The International Focusing Institute

Eugene Gendlin Introduces Focusing - Part 1 (8:26mins)



<https://youtu.be/j7PEC5Mh5FY>

Taken from The International Focusing Institute



Virginia Satir



FIGURE 1

The Personal Iceberg Metaphor

Virginia Satir Model

Focusing has been found in a broad range of field such as:

- Psychotherapy/[Counseling]
- healthcare
- education
- parenting
- decision-making
- conflict resolution
- and more

It is central to the methodology of Community Wellness, a compassionate, holistic and culturally-sensitive approach to providing social services and community-building in countries experiencing warfare, health crises, poverty, oppression and their aftermath. Training programs for indigenous social workers and counselors have been established in Afghanistan, Pakistan, El Salvador, Gaza, and West Africa.

Taken from The International Focusing Institute

Six Steps To Focusing

1. Clearing a Space
2. Felt Sense
3. Handle
4. Resonating
5. Asking
6. Receiving

Eugene Gendlin Introduces Focusing
- Part 2 (4.43mins)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmL4zjVi8Dk>

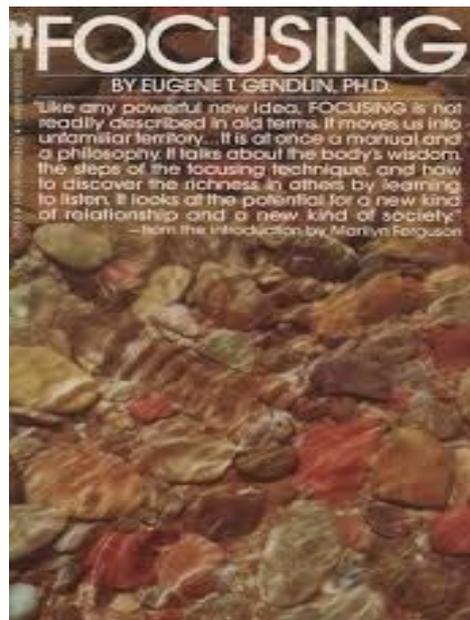
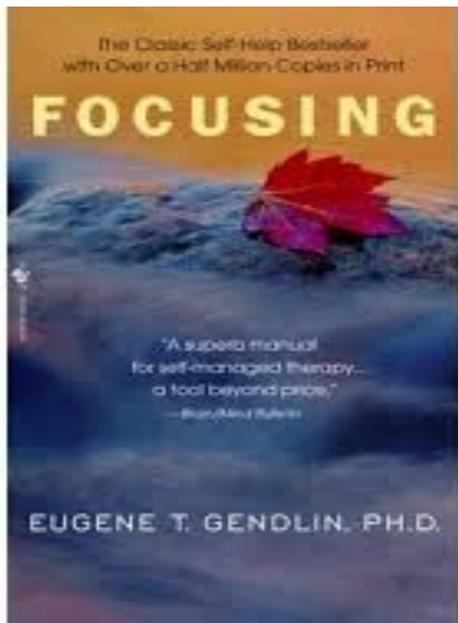


Most traditional methods of working on oneself are mostly pain centered. People get to repeat over and over their painful emotions without knowing how to use the body's own inherently positive direction and force.

— Eugene Gendlin —

AZ QUOTES

RESOURCES



RESOURCE

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PART I
SESSION 2 – SIX STEPS IN
FOCUSING

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

1. Clearing a Space
2. Felt Sense
3. Handle
4. Resonating
5. Asking
6. Receiving

Six Step Focusing Process (31:17mins)



https://youtu.be/Dswp0_WpMuA

With verbal permission to use from Dr. Kathy McGuire

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

1. Clearing a Space

How are you? What's between you and feeling fine?
Don't answer; let what comes in your body do the
answering.

Don't go into anything.

Greet each concern that comes. Put each aside for a while,
next to you.

Except for that, are you fine?

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

2. Felt Sense

Pick one problem to focus on.

Don't go into the problem.

What do you sense in your body when you sense the whole of that problem?

Sense all of that, the sense of the whole thing, the murky discomfort or the unclear body-sense of it.

"Let's be gentle with that."

-EUGENE GENDLIN



Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

3. Get a handle

What is the quality of the felt sense?

What one word, phrase, or image comes out of this felt sense?

What quality-word would fit it best?

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

4. Resonate

Go back and forth between word (or image) and the felt sense.

Is that right?

If they match, have the sensation of matching several times.

If the felt sense changes, follow it with your attention.

When you get a perfect match, the words (images) being just right for this feeling, let yourself feel that for a minute.

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

5. Ask

What is it, about the whole problem, that makes me so _____?

When stuck, ask questions:

What is the worst of this feeling?

What's really so bad about this?

What does it need?

What should happen?

Don't answer; wait for the feeling to stir and give you an answer.

What would it feel like if it was all OK?

Let the body answer

What is in the way of that?

Six Steps To Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

6. Receive

Welcome what came. Be glad it spoke.

It is only one step on this problem, not the last.

Now that you know where it is, you can leave it and come back to it later.

Protect it from critical voices that interrupt.

Does your body want another round of focusing, or is this a good stopping place?

PART I
SESSION 3 – CLEARING A SPACE

Gendlin's Focusing: Clearing A Space Exercise (26:30mins)



<https://youtu.be/bDE-4RB5qAM>

With verbal permission to use from Dr. Kathy McGuire

Finding A Space with Eugene Gendlin
Exercise (1:13mins)



<https://youtu.be/UdjX9Xu-9vs>

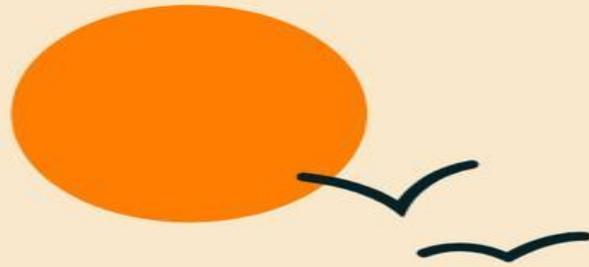
PART I

SESSION 4 – FELT SENSE

Felt Sense Eugene Gendlin,
Peter Campbell (6:24mins)



<https://youtu.be/iu5pKz6UIZ0>



“When your felt sense of
a situation changes, you
change—and, therefore,
so does your life.”

—Eugene Gendlin, *Focusing*
(1978)

www.centralpurposetherapy.com

Focusing and Felt Sense

(Gendlin 1962, 1981, 1996)

- **Eugene Gendlin's** style of psychotherapy involved directing clients' attention to their present experience and this then influenced their physiological responses and meaning creation.
- Gendlin proclaimed that the body holds a particular kind of knowledge that could be accessed by paying attention to bodily felt sensations.
- He described this special kind of internal sensation that was a vague, hard-to-describe body awareness as *felt-sense*

Powerpoint slide by Dr. Melissa Harte's presentation on Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) & Trauma taken from internet

Felt-Sense

(Eugene Gendlin, 1978)

- An internal bodily sensed feeling
- Pre-verbal, complex, holistic
- Experienced but often unable to capture into words
- Symbolic expression of internal world
- An implicit higher-level meaning via symbolic expression
- Includes thoughts, feelings, perceptions, internal actions and context
- Accessed by internal attending and experiential processing

Powerpoint slide by Dr. Melissa Harte's presentation on Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) & Trauma taken from internet

Gendlin's Focusing: Felt Sense of Situations (12:45mins)

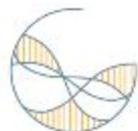


<https://youtu.be/CJUPdqVtPj4>

With verbal permission to use from Dr. Kathy McGuire

Felt Sense Vocabulary

Achy	Dull	Knotted	Sharp
Bloated	Electric	Light	Smooth
Breathless	Energized	Nauseous	Sore
Brittle	Flaccid	Numb	Spacious
Bruised	Flushed	Open	Spinning
Bubbly	Free	Pounding	Sweaty
Burning	Frozen	Pressure	Tender
Buzzy	Full	Prickly	Tense
Calm	Fuzzy	Puffy	Throbbing
Clenched	Heavy	Pulsing	Tight
Cold	Hollow	Queasy	Tingling
Cool	Hot	Quivery	Trembling
Damp	Icy	Radiating	Twitchy
Dense	Itchy	Raw	Warm
Dizzy	Jittery	Releasing	Wobbly
Dry	Jumpy	Shaky	



InnerFlowCounselling.com

PART II
SESSION 5 – FOCUSING
TECHNIQUE APPLICATION

Ripped Out (16:19mins)



<https://youtu.be/F5fb8Pf5gBs>

Gendlin's Focusing: Inner Child Empathy, Grieving, "Felt shift" (16:46mins)



<https://youtu.be/y25C5qp2dAs>

PART II
SESSION 6 – FOCUSING
TECHNIQUE
APPLICATION

"Between Holding On And Letting Go"
Demonstration With Gene Gendlin
(15:31mins)



https://youtu.be/2Jl0xlltw_A

Focusing Demonstration (15:02mins)



<https://youtu.be/2oiyDOoV4cc>

PART II
SESSION 7 – FOCUSING
TECHNIQUE APPLICATION

Gendlin's Focusing: Complete Session –
How am I today? (27:11mins)



<https://youtu.be/QGBkoivf8Sk>

With verbal permission to use from Dr. Kathy McGuire

Focusing Process called “Getting
a Felt Sense” (14:59mins)



<https://youtu.be/yTl2atf8F3o>

PART II
SESSION 8 – FOCUSING
TECHNIQUE APPLICATION

coming Home Through Focusing
Listening with Eugene Gendlin Ph.D.
(33:02mins)



<https://youtu.be/RZkxstpDszg>

PART II
SESSION 9 – WHAT IS EMPATHIC
LISTENING?

Carl Rogers: Client-Centered Therapy

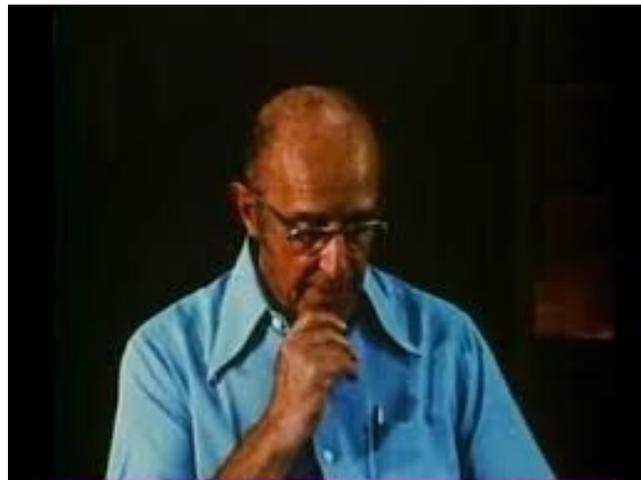
Carl Rogers (1902-1987) rather than *patient*.

- was a humanistic American psychologist who focused on the therapeutic relationship and developed a new method of **client-centered therapy**.
- Was one of the first to use the term **client**



Taken from Theories Culture and Politics website

01-Carl Rogers on Empathy Part I (14:22mins & 9:26 mins)



<https://youtu.be/iMi7uY83z-U>

https://youtu.be/idgjD5tir_w

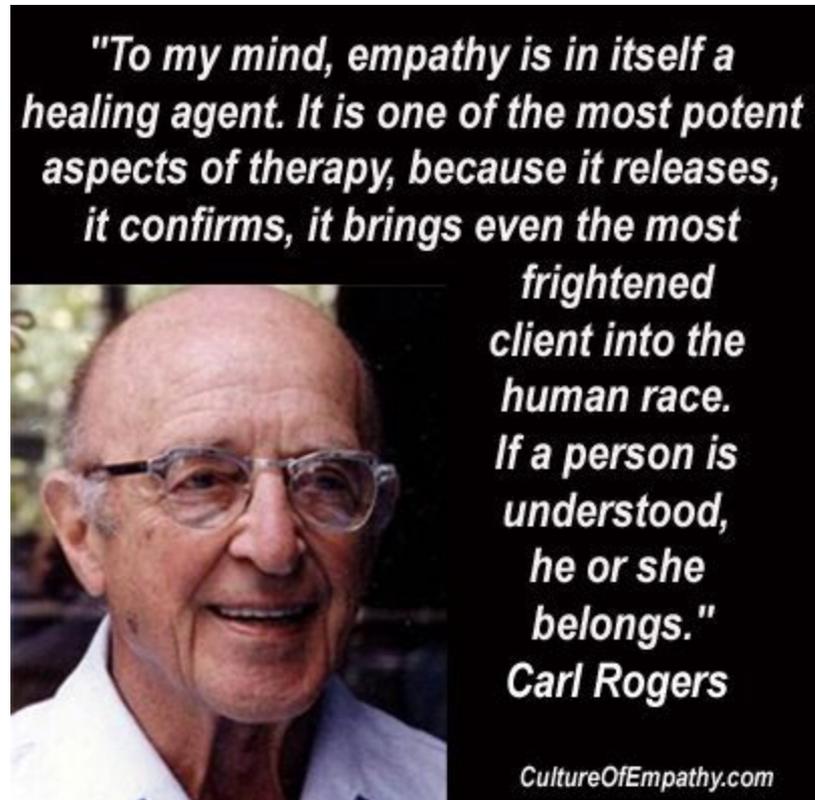


"When the other person is hurting, confused, troubled, anxious, alienated, terrified; or when he or she is doubtful of self-worth, uncertain as to identity, then understanding is called for.

The gentle and sensitive companionship of an empathic stance... provides illumination and healing. In such situations deep understanding is, I believe, the most precious gift one can give to another". Carl Rogers

CultureOfEmpathy.com

Taken from the website of Centre for Building
Culture of Empathy



Taken from the website of Centre for
Building Culture of Empathy

Empathy Says:
***"I'm trying to be a companion to you
in your search and your exploration.
I want to know, am I with you?
Is this the way it seems to you?
Is this the thing you're trying to express?
Is this the meaning it has for you?"***

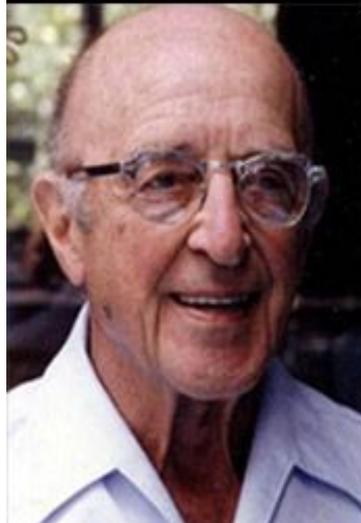


***So in a sense I'm saying,
I'm walking with you step by step,
and I want to make sure
I am with you. Am I with you?
So that's a little bit of my
understanding about empathy."***
Carl Rogers

CultureOfEmpathy.com

Taken from the website of Centre for
Building Culture of Empathy

"a listening, empathic approach leads to improved communication, to greater acceptance of others and by others, and to attitudes which are more positive and more problem-solving in nature.



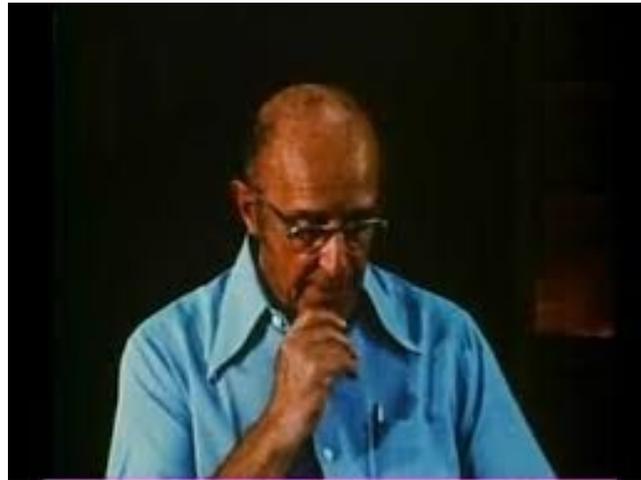
There is a decrease in defensiveness, in exaggerated statements, in evaluative and critical behavior."
Carl Rogers

CultureOfEmpathy.com

Taken from the website of Centre for Building Culture of Empathy

PART II
SESSION 10 – FOCUSING AND
EMPATHIC LISTENING APPLICATION

01-Carl Rogers on Empathy Part II (14:07 mins & 10:58 mins)



<https://youtu.be/3g2iRmjQsPI>

https://youtu.be/qw_O2Vxzmok

Benefit Of Empathy #1

When someone really hears you
without passing judgment on you,



without trying
to take
responsibility
for you,
without trying
to mold you,
it feels

damn good!
Carl Rogers

Join Empathic Listening Movement
CultureOfEmpathy.com

Taken from an article called Empathy published online by
Charter of Compassion

Benefit of Empathy #2

"In the first place, it dissolves alienation... I make sense to another human being. So I am in touch with, even in relationship with others.



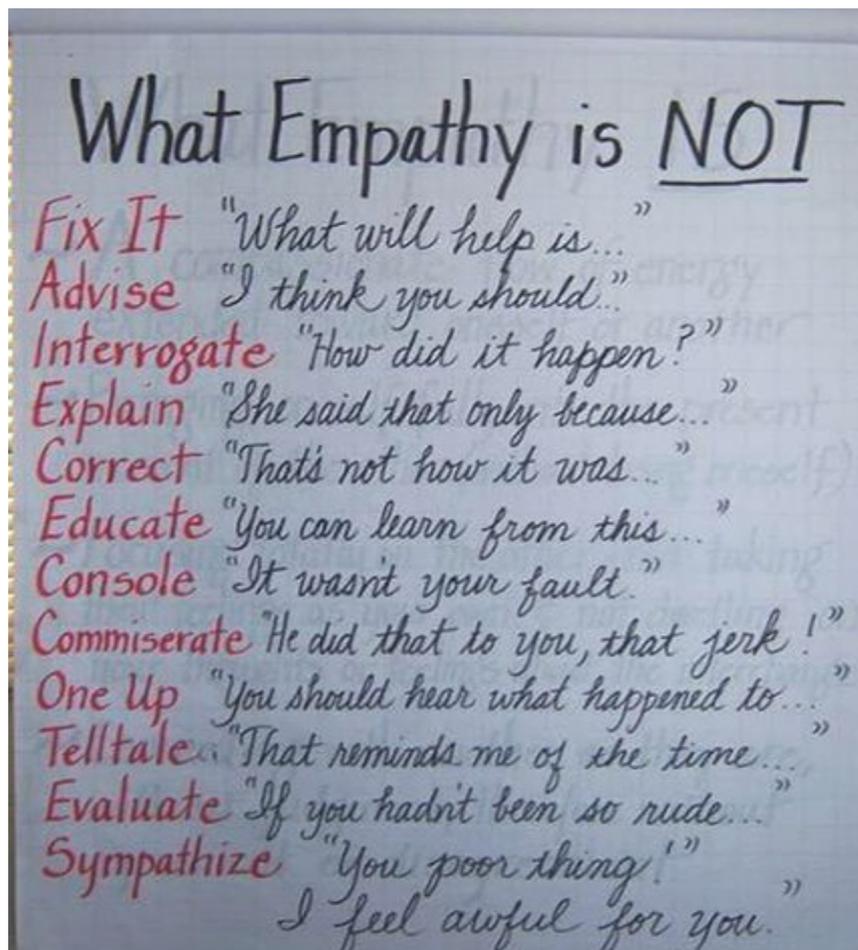
I am no longer an isolate."
Carl Rogers

Building the Empathy Movement

CultureOfEmpathy.com

Taken from an article called Empathy published online by Charter of Compassion

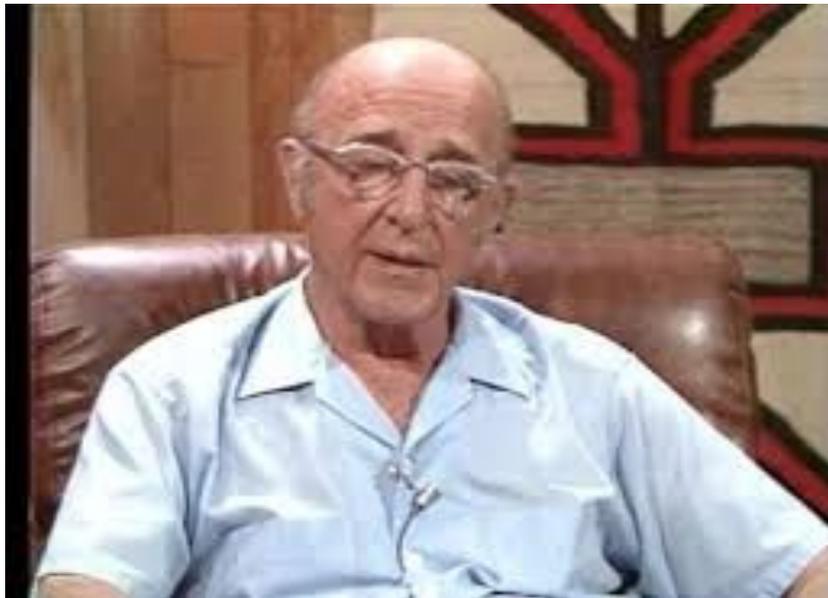
What are empathic blockers?



Taken from an article called
Empathy published online by
Charter of Compassion

PART II
SESSION 11 – FOCUSING AND
EMPATHIC LISTENING APPLICATION

Three Approaches to Psychotherapy II (1977) Carl
Rogers (45:03mins)



<https://youtu.be/UOXQgevUjyk>

PART II
SESSION 12 – FOCUSING AND
EMPATHIC LISTENING APPLICATION

The Power of Empathy and Focusing (52:02mins)



<https://youtu.be/JrPm9IKulh8>

PART III
FOCUSING AND EMPATHIC
LISTENING PRACTICE GROUP

FOCUSING AND EMPATHIC LISTENING PRACTICE GROUP

Part 3

- A – Relaxation Practice
- B – Finding a “Felt Sense” Practice
- C – Complete Focusing Practice

Note: Using Dr. Kathy McGuire’s Complete Focusing Instructions Guide

* Dr. McGuire recommends teachers use her manuals, Focusing in Community or Focusing en Comunidad, to establish Empathy Focusing practice groups, at the end of each Session if it fits in the time, or at the end of the Sessions as the next step: [<See Manuals>](#)

PART IV
FOCUSING AND EMPATHIC
LISTENING DYAD PRACTICE GROUP