

THE INTERACTIVE METHOD

*THE PATH OF HEALING
THROUGH EMPATHY AND COMPASSION*

COMBINED EDITION

VOLUME ONE: THE PROCESS

VOLUME TWO: APPLICATIONS

VOLUME THREE: OUT OF THE PRACTICE

JANET KLEIN, PSY.D.

THE CENTER FOR COMPASSIONATE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

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Interactive Focusing

What is Interactive Focusing?

Interactive Focusing is what I call the third stage in the developmental line of Focusing or bodysense-based practices.

Intrapersonal Focusing-

Gendlin (*Focusing*, Bantam, 1978) discovered what he called the direct referent which he named the bodily felt sense. This allowed an inner sensing, a knowing from inside the body that wasn't intellectual or head-based. Gendlin developed a six-step process he called Focusing. The first developmental stage of Focusing was following the six-step process inside of yourself, intrapersonally, to bring an unclear, bodily-sensed issue into focus.

Gendlin initially discovered this in his inquiry about healing in therapy and went on to utilize Focusing as a tool in the practice of psychotherapy. As a therapist, I find great potential for intrapersonal Focusing to address narcissistic trauma, trauma to the self, and the possibility of repairing those wounds we suffered growing up...and continue to suffer.

Transactional Focusing-

Gendlin soon paired the Focuser with a listener. This was the second developmental stage of Focusing, the Focusing exchange or the Focusing partnership. You now had a listener who used client-centered listening techniques, most notably reflective responses as the listening method. The intention was to have someone listen to you, but, as in client-centered psychotherapy, that someone was instructed to be non-intrusive. The listener was to make a space inside to listen to you while not letting any of her own material intrude. After being listened to, the Focuser and listener exchanged roles. The listener would now Focus while being listened to in the same non-intrusive manner with the same intention. It was a balanced model, and it was a transactional model where one transaction was independent of the other, the first transaction was completed before the second began and neither party's material intruded on the other's. Each transaction was kept separate.

Again, speaking as a therapist I feel that exchanging Focusing and listening time or transactional Focusing has promise to be helpful in terms of healing narcissistic wounds.

Interactive Focusing-

Interactive Focusing develops directly from intrapersonal and transactional Focusing. Interactive Focusing requires that the participants get in touch with an unclear issue that is carried in their bodysenses. It requires that there is a listener using reflective responding as their listening modality. But it further

requires that the full experience is one that is created jointly and dependent on a balanced and an interdigitating participation by both.

Because it is a mutual experience, certain safeguards must be in place. Interactive Focusing has developed into a practice of empathy and compassion in a safe environment, and Interactive Focusing has become the mode for developing empathy and compassion and a safe environment.

While I see intrapersonal and transpersonal Focusing as having the potential to help with narcissistic wounding, wounding to the self, I find Interactive Focusing not only addresses deep, inner wounds; but it also has the capacity to lead us to develop empathy and compassion and to construct and maintain a safe space in which to process.

What is the purpose or intention of Interactive Focusing?

Most simply said, the purpose or intention of Interactive Focusing is to allow you to *touch into your direct experience in the presence of another person and through your direct experience in the safe, empathic and compassionate environment which you create together to become aware of and to share your inner truths thereby building bonds of intimacy. It is synergistic producing a combined experience exceeding the simple addition of one experience to the other.*

Some conditions-

Because you have invited someone to join you, it becomes a mutual experience that you create together and an experience that depends on a balanced participation. Because it is co-created and interdependent, you and the person who joins you need to be *safe* people, you need to know how to keep this a safe practice and you need to know how to keep yourselves safe in the process. You need to pledge to be constructive and not destructive.

It is what might be called an intentional practice, intending to be *empathic and compassionate*, so those conditions need to be present and maintained in order to engender safety and trust.

It is a *bodysense-based practice* which means that you must at all times be speaking and listening from the bodysense. Both parties can monitor for this.

What are the outcomes of Interactive Focusing?

This is hard to say. Because it is experience-based, the outcomes are person-by-person, experience-by-experience, so you can imagine how large this potential pool of outcomes is. However, since we are five or six years into the practice of this particular model of Interactive Focusing, I can say, for myself only, what some of these outcomes are. And I can also say that these aren't the outcomes I would have predicted when I first developed the model.

Some personal outcomes-

I have had the *experience* of *empathy*, for which, until I practiced this model, I only had the intellectual definition and that came with the dictum, "You must be empathic." I have had the *experience* of *compassion*, for which, again, until I practiced this model, I had only an intellectual definition and the dictum of *musts*. What has surprised me the most is my nascent ability to be both self-empathic and self-compassionate. This I attribute to my Interactive Focusing partners and other practitioners of the model who have shown me the way. Empathy and compassion have paved the way for more intimate experiences in relationship and a warmer and more caring relationship with myself.

I have developed a *humility* about the *equality of experience*, finding my own experience to be neither better nor worse, and it is no more or less profound than anyone else's.

My world and world-view has expanded as a result of empathy. I have discovered that, with each interaction, I have taken in the possibility of the other person's world.

I have become aware of the aliveness that comes with this practice, instilling in me a sense of life where once there was only soporific, musty shoulds.

As I have practiced, all of this has generalized. I see my new attitudes and ways creep into my everyday life. This makes me more palatable to some, less to others; and lets me choose more accurately those with whom I fit and with whom I care to spend time.

What is the form of Interactive focusing?

The form of Interactive Focusing is a skeleton on which to hang experience. While the form is specific, the experience is endless.

The Interactive Focusing model-

Before beginning, each of two participants checks to see what issue is sitting inside her in the moment, getting an actual bodysense of it. By mutual consent, one participant starts the interaction. If the session weren't scheduled around a joint concern, the second Focuser will have an opportunity of equal length to process the separate issue, after the first interaction is completed.

The pattern of Focusing and Listening that forms the skeleton of Interactive Focusing:

1. The Focuser (I'll call her Sue) tells a reasonable part of *her* story from her bodysense.

2. The Listener (I'll call him Cal) listens from his bodysense and selects *reflective responses* for the experience-bearing parts. He holds them up to Sue.
3. Sue *resonates* the reflections against the current bodysense for accuracy, to see if it shifted and to see if more comes. Sue can give Cal feedback and she can state the "more" that came.
4. Sue indicates her segment is complete and invites Cal to take the *double empathic moment* with her (or Cal may ask Sue if she's completed and if it's a right time to go to the double empathic moment). Before Cal gives his empathic response, both Cal and Sue will each go inside and take a moment to sense freshly how it is at this new point. Cal will try to empathically get the bodysense and essence of Sue's experience from her internal frame of reference. Sue will take this same time to compassionately and empathically get how her experience was for herself. This is called the *double empathic response*:
 - a. Cal expresses how Sue's (Focuser) material is experienced inside him, empathically. Cal is trying to get how it is for Sue, see it through her eyes...*as if he were Sue. Note: This is not intended to be a recap of Sue's story. It is usually brief and can have a very poetic feel to it which contrasts with the more prosaic though also empathic feel of reflections.*
 - b. Sue resonates Cal's response to be sure it is accurate, and she may give feedback. Typically Sue does not reflect Cal's material.
 - c. Sue will now share what came when she took the empathic moment with herself. Cal typically will reflect this back to Sue who will resonate it to see if Cal got it and to see if more comes or if it comes clearer.
 - d. The *empathic moment* is shared here with Cal and Sue each taking a moment to put a cushion of silence around this often *golden moment*.
5. With this step seems to come the *natural transition* where the roles shift and the listener becomes the Focuser. Sue now becomes the listener. Cal becomes the Focuser. Thus begins the *interactive response*:
 - a. (*5a. is optional and only used when it is appropriate.*) Cal first checks inside to see how he now is in relation to Sue in this moment...how he is feeling *about* or *for* Sue and the part

she just shared with him. [Note: this differs from how Cal gets it empathically for Sue in step 4a.]

b. Cal now checks inside to see what of his own material is touched by Sue's story.

6. The first interaction continues in rounds using steps 1-5 above until Cal and Sue can come to a sense of completion or a resting place.

7. *Interactive closing:* Each participant takes a quiet moment to go inside and sense how they *now* feel about each other and how they *now* feel about themselves, and when they are ready, either of them can begin to share and the other will reflect.

8. If the first interaction weren't a joint issue, the second interaction can start at this point. Cal now processes his issue using the above steps 1-7. More often, one interaction though enlivening can be exhausting so the second interaction might be delayed or marked and rescheduled for another time.

To summarize:

1. Story, 2. Reflection, 3. Resonation and feedback, 4. Double empathic moment, 5. Switching roles and the interactive response, 6. Repeating steps 1-5 until complete and 7. Interactive closing.

Transcript of an Interactive Focusing session:

This transcript is intended to clarify and put flesh around the skeleton of the Interactive Focusing model described above.

Setting – Two colleagues (and friends) discussing their professional relationship. Sue has requested that Cal and she have an interaction. They each take some time to come inside, check that they are anchored in the *right* attitude and that they have slowed down so they can each speak from the bodysense. Since Sue requested the interaction, she starts.

Sue: I've been aware that there is something in me that is coming between us. I really don't think that it has to do with how you and I are together. I mean, I don't think it's anything you're doing. It's just that when I'm with you this thing comes up inside of me. Are you in a place to hear me?

Cal: (Takes a moment to check inside) Yes. I'm in a place to listen. I'd really like to hear what this is.

Sue: (Pauses and looks down) It is really hard for me to tell you this.....and I'm not really clear about it either. I'll just say the part I know. I catch myself trying so hard to please...no impress you. Sometimes I just feel like a pretzel inside, contorting myself around to fit what I think you want. I can get that sense right now...how uncomfortable it is, but I do it anyway. I want so much for you to think I'm, special. That's an old thing for me, I know

it...this *wanting to be the favorite child*. When it comes to you and me, I want you to think my work is...not just important...but, I don't know...that it's a major discovery...like the Salk vaccine or something. When I say that, I can feel myself getting flushed...hot and sticky inside...just wanting to crawl back under my rock. But there is that part that wants you to say, "Sue, that is brilliant!" No...*"You are brilliant!"* And what comes in right here is how needy that sounds. That's the hot, sticky part. I'm embarrassed. Ummm. What just came is the phrase, "When I pretzel around, I give my *self* away." I just want to cry for myself.

Cal: Can I just say that part back before I lose it, and so you can check it to see if I got it the way you said it?

Sue: This would be a good place to hear it back.

Cal: (*Reflective response*) You know that this is going to be hard to say to me. You want very much to impress me...even going so far as to pretzel yourself up to the point of losing your *self*. You just want to cry for yourself about that. You're feeling embarrassed about it, how needy it is...but what you really want to hear from me is, "Sue, you're brilliant!" (*Cal pauses and his eyebrows raise in a questioning look, unsure whether he got it all.*)

Sue: (*Sue resonates Cal's reflection and gives him feedback about a missed part*) Yes. And I need you to hear this is an old, familiar thing for me...the *wanting to be the favorite child*...even with you though we're colleagues...and the same age (*laughs*).

Cal: (*Reflection. Cal joins in her laughter*) This is from way back, the *wanting to be the favorite child*...and it's here with you right now even though we're colleagues and the same age.

Sue: (*Asks for the double empathic moment*) I feel complete about that part. I think right here I need to ask you to take an empathic moment with me. Could you go inside to see if you can get how it is for me to be with all of that. And I think I really need to do that for myself...take a compassionate, empathic moment inside of me, also, to see how I am with myself right now.

Cal: Yes. I'd like to just take a moment to check inside. I'd like to try to get how that is for you...how *you* are experiencing all of that. (*A long pause while each goes inside to capture empathically and compassionately how Sue is carrying her story*). If you're ready, I could go first?

Sue: That would be good.

Cal: (*Cal gives the first part of the empathic response*) What comes to me strongly is an image. It is a little girl holding back tears. She doesn't want anyone to know how...not neglected, umm...how overlooked she feels.

Sue: That is certainly there for me. You've caught the exact feel of it. Right now there is a little child feel in me. I wasn't neglected...just somehow overlooked or invisible. *(Note that she doesn't reflect back Cal's response. She does resonate it, however, and give Cal feedback, that she feels empathically heard. Sue now gives the second part of the empathic response.)* When I dropped down inside to freshly get how that all is for me, what came was a real happiness and maybe even a little pride because I said out something that is very hard for me to acknowledge. I had an image or an internal bodying of patting myself on the back...*(She casts her eyes downward)* inside, of course. That's a new place. I didn't expect that.

Cal: *(Cal does reflect the new piece that came for Sue.)* The overlooked is there. And for you, you are happy...and even proud that you told me this hard thing...and you are actually bodying patting yourself on the back...inside. *(Chuckles)*

Sue: Yes. *(Joins Cal in a laugh)*

Cal: *(Putting a pillow of time around the empathic response)* This feels very important to me...like I really got it...how you were with that. I'd like to take a moment to just be with that. Could we share that? Would you be okay with that?

Sue: Yes. I feel you really heard me...and I want to take in how that is to feel heard. *(There is another long pause here while they both take in what just happened.)*

Cal: Good.

Sue: *(Reddens and looks down again)* Well. *(Sue asks for optional "part a" of the interactive response – how Cal now feels about or toward her.)* I'd like to know how all of that is for you, what I've just said. If you are okay with telling me how you feel about me now that I've told you all of that. *(Sue then asks for "part b" of the Interactive Response – how what she shared touches of Cal's own material.)* And I'd also like to hear what of your own material my story touches.

Cal: *(Pauses. Closes his eyes and waits. He starts with "part a," how he feels about Sue after hearing her story.)* First there is a little sadness or melancholy in me. "Why is Sue embarrassed when she says that to me? She's my friend!" *(Pause. Cal follows this with "part b," what it touches of his own inside of him.)* Then...a big voice in me says, "But I've told her how wonderful her work is, goddammit! Wasn't she listening to me." That touches a really old place in me, the not being listened to...not being heard. I've worked on that before. I'm going to mark it because I don't need to go into all of that right now. But there's some anger here. A little boy voice in me

wants to say to the little girl in you, "I'm angry with you. You don't listen to me."

Sue: (*Reflection*) Let me make sure I get that. The "big" voice in you wants to tell me you've told me how wonderful my work is...and the little boy in you is angry with me. I don't listen to you.

Cal: (*Resonates and gives feedback*) Yes, godammit! And the little boy in me wants to say that to the little girl in you.

Sue: (*Sue adjusts her reflection to acknowledge the feedback.*) Yes, godammit! And the little boy in you wants my little girl to hear that.

Cal: (*Resonates*) That's it exactly. My little boy wants your little girl to hear that I'm angry with you. You don't listen to me.

Sue: Your little boy wants my little girl to hear that you are angry with me. I don't listen to you. Did I get that? (*Sue smiles*)

Cal: You got it! (*Cal also smiles*)

Sue: Could you check to see if there is more here...or is that a piece for you?

Cal: Yes, it is good place to stop. Just to add...the anger isn't so big now that I've said it out.

Sue: The anger got smaller as you named it.

Cal: Yes.

Sue: (*Requests the double empathic moment*) I'd like to take a moment here to empathically get how all of that is for you, and perhaps you want to go inside, also, to take a compassionate and empathic moment with yourself.

(*Long pause*) If you're ready, would it be okay if I go first?

Cal: I'd like to know.

Sue: (*First part of the empathic response*) This may be my own stuff...so I'd like you to check it. My sister and I had these great big boxing gloves when we were little. We were just awful at it. We would end up laughing so hard we fell on the ground. But the image that came was you and me with boxing gloves on, big, red ones. I can't say much more. It isn't exactly funny...it isn't exactly serious...but somehow it does feel safe.

Cal: That isn't what came for me...but it does fit...more than you can imagine. I guess we did need to confront one another...and I do feel safe with you...even if I was a bit frustrated and angry. What came for me is, "Wow! She heard me...even though I said I was angry...and she didn't fight back...oh, there's the boxer image...or run away!"

They pause to take in the empathic moment. Cal senses how it is to be heard. Sue senses how it is to hear. Sue also realizes how her story is being experienced by Cal, and she can see a larger picture, not just how she is experiencing her world.

The interaction continued for several more rounds; however, I will skip to the end where they share *the interactive closing*:

Cal: I feel complete here and wonder if you want to check to see if this is a good place to stop for you, also.

Sue: Yes. It is a very good place to stop. Could we both take a moment of quiet to go inside and sense *how we feel about each other now* and I would like to check how I *now* feel about myself, also? (After about a minute of silence Sue begins) If you are ready, would it be okay for me to start? Something quite big came for me.

Cal: I'm ready. Please start.

Sue: I just realize how special you are to me, and a real gushy, teariness wells up inside of me. What a miracle to have someone who listens to me so well and is so honest with me. How safe I feel with you.

Cal: (First reflects) I am special to you. I listen to you, and I am honest with you.

Sue: (Resonates Cal's reflection and gives him feedback) I also wanted you to get what a miracle it feels like...and that I even feel safe enough to sense the tears this causes me.

Cal: (Adjusts the reflection) It feels like a miracle to you, and you feel safe enough with me to let tears come. Did I get that?

Sue: Yes (smiles). That's how I feel about you right now. Something came to me when I checked to see how I feel about myself that surprises me. I always felt so needy...too needy to ask for anything for myself. I liked asking for what I needed. I actually liked myself better when I asked for what I needed from you than when I needed it but hid it from you. I feel like a much more honest person. I feel clean. That's how I feel about myself...I am much more honest and want to continue to be honest...especially asking for something I need which has always been my most difficult way of being honest...I mean I would feel it but never, never say it.

Cal: You feel clean. You feel more honest when you asked me for what you needed...and you want to do more of that.

Sue: Yes. Would it be a right time for you to share with me how you feel about me now and then maybe how you are with yourself?

Cal: (Jokingly says) I thought you'd never ask. Two things came for me. One is how much I value you...mostly for who you are...but also for what you do. The other thing is how much I value what you have done...and that we can use this process to share our lives. And about myself, I don't feel embarrassed and ashamed having been so honest with you. And I, too, like myself...although it is a little embarrassing to say that I like myself (laughs).

Sue reflected Cal's sharing. The session ended with each giving the other a genuine hug and commenting on how close and connected they felt...and that they looked forward to the next interaction. They marked where they were now in their relationship. Both sensed that the relationship would be different because of this interaction. They had moved an already good relationship forward. And they were aware that when they processed again, they would start at a new place.

Some things that came from the process-

Sue was able to get a step. She'd always felt so helpless around stating her needs, being too embarrassed to say anything about what she wanted or needed, craving something and not getting it. This time she was able to do something about it...her little girl was her healthier part here. The little girl could take action where her adult part was stuck under years of not "doing."

Cal also had a moment of healing. His little boy had been effective in communicating with Sue's little girl. The "old part" of which he'd caught the edge during the interaction was, ironically, about a very early event where he'd actually said something to a little girl in his youth, and he'd been socked in the face. He carried the helplessness and shame of it for many years. This interaction let his little boy feel empowered. The young places in each were conversing in this interaction.

Cal and Sue realized something else. It was because this was an interaction that these particular steps were made – both of their young places could take new steps. Cal's wounded youth was heard, and that young place had a powerful impact this time. Sue's healthy child could do for her what her "stuck" adult couldn't. Both had child places that were touched, but it was processed as how they were carrying all of that in this new moment and as adults.

It isn't unusual in an interaction that there is a serendipitous synchronicity and synergy – it is more than both of their stories added together. Not only the timing but the content has an uncanny fit. The moment of empathic connection allows shifts to come. There is often the quality of a small epiphany in that moment of being heard and of being able to hear.

Other rich veins were tapped during this session. Both Cal and Sue realized that these needed to be left to process later, either in another interaction or in a transaction (where each would be heard separately). These offshoots were marked for another time.

While this transcript includes inner child work which seems ancient, it was apparent that these experiences were being held in the body in the moment so new steps could be made.

The empathic moment is difficult because-

Something that needs to be recognized about the empathic moment is that it will be difficult. Each of us have entered into the practice of Interactive Focusing with the intention and hope of developing empathy and compassion for others and empathy and compassion for ourselves. The model is constructed to help us do just that. When we get to the empathic moment and sense into our empathic, compassionate response – as the listener for the storyteller and as the storyteller for ourselves – this is just the human development we are inviting.

We acknowledge that there is something here we still need to learn or need to learn better. We are wanting to develop our empathy and compassion, and we have, at this crucial point, the chance of doing just that. We go inside ourselves to see if we can bodysense empathy and compassion. As the listener we rely on our storyteller to help us come into as close empathic, compassionate alignment as possible – through feedback. While we are getting feedback from the storyteller right along (following the storyteller-as-teacher model), at the point of the empathic moment it intensifies. I contend that this part of the model is difficult because we need practice, and through our practice, our empathy and compassion will develop.

I have seen much development in myself as a listener in my empathy and compassion toward another person. I still wait with excitement and anticipation, after I have given my part of the empathic response, for the feedback that lets me know how empathically I have understood the storyteller. This feedback is absolutely critical to my development. This means that I must be open to receiving the feedback and responding to it.

When I am the storyteller, I am developing self-empathy and self-compassion. It has been difficult for me. I didn't think I was entitled to do this for myself. I didn't even know how. How sad.

Some strategies to help with the empathic moment-

Sometimes it is difficult for the listener and/or the storyteller to take the empathic moment. Inner child imagery may help here. For example if the listener were having a difficult time being empathic a coach might ask the listener something like, ““What would you feel for a child...or how would you be with a child who just told you that story?”” If the storyteller was having a hard time being self-empathic the coach might say, “Imagine a child had just told that story to you. How would you want to be with her? (for the storyteller, herself).”

Obviously, this won't work for everyone or be appropriate for all occasions, but it does introduce a very important concept. It helps flesh out

compassionate empathy – not just the empathy of trying to *understand* or *sense into* how the other person is experiencing her world, but, also, how can we truly *understand* with the *gentle caring* we would have expected from a “good enough” mother...someone who truly cares about us.

The great benefit of inner child work is that we are able to use our own adult self to reconstruct a “good enough” mother for ourselves. This in no way means that our own natural mothers were inadequate. Certainly, they did the best job they could. It does mean that many things go wrong in life. And from our own inner stirrings, we are the ones who truly know what we really needed...but we didn't know how to ask for it as children.

Introducing the concept of inner child work when you are teaching the Interactive Model is very helpful...and may be especially helpful in allowing the storyteller and listener to get in touch with the caring part of *compassionate empathy*. I think that the empathy part is easier to get at, especially if we are clear about the definition of empathy as “trying to understand how it is for the other person to be experiencing that story *as if* it were your own story. Can you get how it is for the other person to be carrying all that?” I think that using the storyteller-as-teacher model where the storyteller actually helps the listener “get it” has been extremely useful.

Being caring toward the person who just revealed the story can be easier if we bring that natural parenting impulse each of us have. We all know how to be caring toward a little child...if not our own, then someone else's. If our natural parenting impulse has been covered over or is undeveloped, sometimes the imagery of a favorite pet, cat or dog or horse...helps. Again, even when we can't be self-compassionate, each of us can identify how caring we can feel toward our child or pet...and we can eventually transfer that feeling directly to ourselves as the storyteller. As the listener, if we are struggling with *compassionate empathy*, much the same strategy can work

Some people are averse to labeling this as inner child work. You might have success here by simply helping the person struggling with empathy to create some distance. By this I mean, helping to establish an “I-and-you” relationship. Help the person by suggesting how they might be with another person who just told them that story.

To conclude-

I have tried to show what Interactive Focusing is and how it is an extension of but different from intrapersonal Focusing and transactional Focusing. That is a difficult thing to do in a single paper. I believe the transcript between Sue and Cal assists me in this project, but a series of transcripts would be helpful

to show the stages of development, growth and healing within the individual as well as the development of the relationship over a period of time. I refer you to two of my articles that address empathy and compassion more thoroughly. *Teaching Focusing the Way We Can Best Learn It* has a lengthy portion about empathy. *To Compassion through the Experience of Pain, Suffering and Struggle* explores compassion.

Developing empathy and compassion is no small thing. It needs, almost perforce, to be accomplished in an interpersonal environment. I found that I needed to surround myself with empathy and compassion in order for that to develop within myself. I needed it outside of myself to feel it coming toward me from the other person. I needed to be able to try to return that empathy and compassion and, at the same time, to be informed by the recipient if I were on the mark...or how I might re-adjust to be experienced as empathic and compassionate. I needed to get it externally before I could take it in and make it my own...and develop self-empathy and self-compassion. It was through self-empathy and self-compassion that I realized the power of those two states of grace.

Finally, outcomes in the real world-

If we had developed this very precise model for interaction in relationship and it stopped with the one or two formal interactions we might have in a week or in a month, the seeds would have been very narrow-cast. With relief, I have noticed, as a generalized pattern, that I am in the real world in a different way. I actually use the steps of the model, one by one, in my everyday living. I listen experientially, I take empathic moments, I offer feedback, I respond with an interactive response actually checking inside of myself to see what comes in this new moment, and I share how I now feel about the storyteller and what the storyteller's material touched in me.

I can do this in a very conversational way. It doesn't come across as a technique, but as a deeper and more connected sharing. I find that I actually can't stop myself from doing this as this is my more congruent and genuine way of being in the world, and being less than this not only feels inauthentic, but it is un-alive and boring...both for me and my friends. An unexpected reward is that my friends accept the unannounced invitation and respond at a very different level of participation in our relationship. I am now broadcasting Interactive Focusing out into my real world.