Discussion

Angela 2 — Week 4, Day 5, Session 5 — 61 minutes

Summary: The group reflects on listening practice: speaking in the present, sitting side by side, and letting gesture carry as much as words. Russell urges gentle invitations rather than demands, names four kinds of listening, and describes a presencing relationship in which even pain has room, and the work is not only problems.

Reflecting on the listening

[Participant:] Record that?

[Russell:] Yeah.

So let's reflect for a moment. Let's drop down and get a fresh sense. And keep your eyes open this time.

We want to be able to connect to all our centers — our ground, our feeling, our thinking — and not have to go through a special something all the time. We can be in touch with the world and be dropping down.

We want to grow that, I want to suggest, as a bodily habit. We do it often enough that it's kind of spontaneous. You're either there, or you're noticing you're not there. In ordinary conversation, you're finding the difference between talking from up here, separate from this, or talking from here, separate from this, or having this whole.

Just reflect for a moment on your listening. Listening to yourself, listening to another this morning. It can include observing the listening we all did with him as he was listening to himself.

We're looking at learning that can be clarified and deepened by articulating it for yourself, and for each other. It can include questions, but it can also be observations of effective listening strategies for you, with you. Or what you observed another person do with themselves. Or what the listener offered to the one speaking that seemed important and helpful.

[Participant:] I noticed two times, during speaking, realizing that I wasn't talking in present language, and shifting back into that. The difference it made when I was talking about something as if it was you, or them, or out there, or whatever, and then shifting back in.

That really made a difference in how it felt in here, when I shifted back into talking about me. This is mine, from here.

[Russell:] Yes, yes, yes. Beautiful. Yes, that's really helpful.

And even your gesture. When I was out talking about it, and then when I went into present tense, your hands went there.

Yeah, please.

Where we sit, and what the hands do

[Participant:] I noticed something interesting in listening. My partner and I were sitting on a bench outside.

I know you would suggest different possible orientations. Often it's done sitting face to face. But it was really powerful to be sitting next to each other. I could still kind of take in gestures that were happening, but it really felt like both of us sitting with her inner life.

It wasn't zeroing in. We were sitting next to each other with what was emerging, space in front of us. It was profound.

[Russell:] Yeah. Very nice. Very nice.

Interesting to experiment with. I know some people will sit — if we were partners, she might sit like this.

No, let me not say that. This relationship is another interesting geography.

One student I'm thinking of right now, in Switzerland, who face to face cannot — it took her years to be able to be in touch with herself that close to another. She's very psychic, but leaves her body easily.

She alerted me years ago to how potent it was, how important for her, to be able to be with herself, was not to be sitting directly in front of another person. She didn't choose the same direction, but this direction is what worked for her for years. It's actually just recent that face to face works sometimes.

[Participant:] I was speaking, and I was stepping out more. I want to move my arm, and I would have a tendency not to. But when I was gesturing more, it was more effective. I was really getting this rich experience from that, and now I know that that's a big piece of it for me.

[Russell:] Good, good, good. Gesturing is good.

Even some people, moving, letting your whole body move — but at least letting the gestures come. I so often learn what I'm really saying when my arms surprise me.

[Participant:] As the listener, this is the first time there was a lot of gesturing with the speaker. Sometimes I go quiet to really listen, but I had to listen with my eyes open. I followed the gestures, because that seemed to be bigger, or as big as the words.

I found myself following the gestures, not experiencing those gestures as mine, to really be more close to her. And that was the first time.

So obviously the phone limits that.

[Russell:] The phone limits that, yeah.

[Participant:] I mean, I like the phone. But that's another benefit, individually, seeing each other.

[Russell:] Right. I do have some students who use Skype for that reason. They really like the Skype relationship, because they do get the gesture also.

Questions that stay gentle

[Participant:] Something I've found useful as a listener, when it's requested that I do some guiding intervention, more than simply reflecting.

It's useful for me to — what do I — something needs guiding here. What do I want? It's like gesture, emotion, sensation, and for me I'll say imagery, because it's so important for me. That includes stories and storytelling. To ask: what is the sensation of that emotion? If you have the sensation, what's the emotional quality of that sensation? What's the sensation of that emotion? What is the emotion of that gesture?

Toward what has been requested, that I can contribute. So that it's almost like looking at the other side of that.

Certainly it requires skill and discretion. There's a question of sometimes believing. And I think today I found that a little bit. It's like, okay, there's that very elaborate aesthetic sensation. What's the emotion associated?

[Russell:] Okay, okay. Yeah, I get you.

Let me say a few things about honing the questioning.

Again, I'm very influenced by Focusing, and I don't teach it in a traditional way, a weekly traditional way. My two main influences in that school of work have been Gene and Ann Cornell.

Ann makes a strong point. She really doesn't like questions. And Gene loves to ask questions. So I've been having both of those going at me.

What I really respect about Ann's bias is how, unless we're really conscious of how we're questioning, questioning can bring people to thinking. It can bring them out of their process. That's one thing.

The other is, if it's not brought with really a kind of gentle quality, it can come as a demand.

I tend toward less questioning, although I'm free to ask questions. But when a construction works linguistically — maybe notice the feeling quality of those sensations, or maybe sense into.

Less so, does it have a — for some people will go, maybe, maybe not. But notice if it has can be a kind of softer inroad.

I'll often couch a move like that with, maybe pause and notice the sensations that go with that feel. The maybe gives a lot of space. I'll often say it slow, so that it kind of gives a timing.

Maybe pause. Sense into.

And I'm also saying that in an intervention, you can give guidance often, and without the question, but with the direction.

[Participant:] Yeah. That's good.

[Russell:] And to merge those — again, I'll hopefully get to this tomorrow, when I want to look at this whole phenomenon of integration.

Experience is whole. To differentiate, and then to connect the pieces. To help differentiate the sensation and the feeling, and then to feel how they are actually part of one whole big thing, is really exquisite in one's inner life. So that impulse is great.

Other observations, discoveries.

It can also be that something might have come that wasn't about process, wasn't about what someone said, but you might have gotten a new insight about yourself that you feel comfortable sharing, that you think might be a helpful direction for others. In other words, this can be open to any kind of learning that you've had.

Yeah, please.

When they move too fast

[Participant:] As a listener, one thing I'd like some advice on — and maybe you spoke to it a little bit — is if I'm listening to someone and holding a space for them, and they say something like, yeah, there's tingling in my shoulder.

What can you do as a listener when they tend to jump around very quickly? I've even at times invited them to pause, and, what's the message there for you? There's a genuine curiosity, and a need that wants to know what's there.

But from my experience — and I don't want to categorize, or put my interpretation on their experience as to what it is. They may very well be having breakthroughs and insights. But for me, I feel like I want to slow them down a little.

[Russell:] Yeah, yeah. I know what you mean.

Your impulse there of maybe pause — and it's nice if you're in a space where your vibration is giving pausing energy. You know what I mean?

Your vibration. That it's in your body, that it's in your tone, that it's in the pace of your language, and also in your words. But it actually is much more —

If it would feel okay, maybe pause here.

I have a few things to say, then I'd be interested in hearing how other people work with this.

One thing. Very kinesthetically oriented people, body-oriented people — it happens a lot with Feldenkrais people, and others who are body-oriented. There can be a lot of moving in the kinesthetic and proprioceptive, kind of disconnected in a certain way from the feeling tone of that.

I personally don't find it helpful to be as direct as, what's the message in that? That, for me, is too direct.

Often, just helping people to take more time, not jump as quickly. And when it feels right, when they've had a little bit of time in there, just something a little more suggestive, like I was saying to a partner. Maybe sense if there's a feeling tone. Or, what is the feeling tone. So that you're inviting that as a possibility, without any sense of demand.

And then it's to really trust their process.

It's hard if you only have one time with somebody. But especially if you're going to have a listening partner, you don't have to get to anything. What you want to do is create safety, a sense that you're connected, and to trust their way of being with themselves in your presence.

So you don't have to have that demand on yourself also.

[Participant:] Yeah. I just wanted to have them focus in. The session belongs to the person to focus in. And I would find that very intrusive, any kind of suggestion like, what is the meaning of that, or anything.

It's so important to go with the person who's focusing, and trust that they know what they're doing, whether they're going fast or they're going slow. They're learning their own process, and you're listening.

[Russell:] Yeah. Thank you. Yes.

So good to remember what it is to walk along with them.

[Participant:] I was just going to say something similar to what was just said. For me, just the thought of somebody asking me a question when I was in my process would totally blow me out of the water.

With my partner, I just told him I really need you to be present. I really felt him being in his body, tracking, holding this very safe space, and he totally supported me to do what I needed to do. We did a little reflecting of words at the end. I'm sure different people need different things, but I think I would really want to err on the side of just holding the space.

[Russell:] Exactly. Exactly.

I totally underline that. That's why, in the beginning, we only were present with each other, really trying to say, never underestimate the potency of presence.

[Participant:] On the last break, between January and June, unlike previous times, I haven't done a lot of partnering with these people. I've done a lot of solo focusing with myself.

So I found, when my partner and I were first sitting, there was a little bit of just feeling into, now how do I do this listening role again? How do I want to be?

I found myself at first kind of leaning in, really listening. And something came of a phrase I'm sure you've used in the past, being like the space of the sky and the warmth of the sun. Wasn't that a beginning instruction for us, to just be the space with the warmth?

There was something of this, like turning the light around. I just appreciated — this could be there, but it's almost like I was holding space for both of us, instead of just being in and with.

Even how I was sitting. And then I would find myself again really getting in there, like, yeah, yeah, beautiful, beautiful.

[Participant:] Let me put in a word, when people are requesting questions.

So, personally. It's my time. That knowing you are there means the world to me. Being in the experience.

But for instance, I have a phone focusing partner, and sometimes I've said, feel free to speak. And I've been like, I can't settle down. I'm here, I'm there, from feelings to image to sensation to emotion. And they've said occasionally, maybe pick one. Maybe pick one.

And it just immediately makes me slow down. Then I do trust that the most important one will be the one that I settle on, and then it changes the session.

So perhaps that's, as you were describing, somebody all over the place.

[Russell:] We're not talking about formulas.

[Participant:] One thing I really like is, is there something there that wants your attention? And it can be yes or no. It's not so much a question. It's a way to invite a pause, and then see if whatever it is needs more attention or not.

[Russell:] Right. Nice.

The subtle shift I do with that is, maybe notice what would like your attention now. Same idea.

[Participant:] Because if you're not posing that question — I mean, if you're not schooled in it, how are you going to work with somebody who's never done this before?

[Russell:] Most people at first really benefit from some suggestions, some guidance. Some people are really naturals, and they need very little. But this whole —

Okay, so let me take a step back and answer this from a wider place.

A relationship, not a procedure

[Russell:] As I've said to some of you, I'm much less interested in you having steps in a Focusing process than I am in the cultivation of a relationship. A presencing relationship with whatever is living in you.

And that that begins to become so familiar that during your everyday life — it's not that you're sitting down to do this. That's great to do once in a while. But that often you're either spontaneously noticing a voice inside, or you're taking five minutes to connect with, oh, what is that? What is it that needs some attention right now?

There's a gripping in my belly. Let me just give it — okay, hello in there.

That sense of hello. That sense that there's a lot in here that I don't call all of those I. That I'm the presence for all that. And that there's a warm-hearted welcoming. And that that is on the fly. That that becomes inner language.

So when someone is new to Focusing, and they can have something in that direction — if they've given me permission, even in a first session, I might say something. I'll give them a little introduction. Sense. We want to get a bodily sense for whatever is going on with you.

Or with certain people. My daughter is a really natural focuser. Never taught her anything. But, Dad, I'm really upset. Can you feel that upset, anyway, in your body at all?

And she's one of those people who just go, yeah, my stomach's like this.

Just be with that upset place.

In that language, be with that upset place, without explaining anything, I've created an I who's with an upset place.

I use her as an example because that happened very recently, but this has happened with numbers of people. Just that little language. Oh, would it feel — and I'll often ask permission. If they say, I'm really sad. Would it feel equally true — you've heard me do this — would it feel equally true to say there's a lot of sadness in there?

And if it feels equally true, they already have the I and an it. They already have that basic relationship starting to form.

When that's true, immediately language is helping space be created in their experience. The difference between I — you know, I had it.

Just recently with somebody — I'm going to edit that, because it's personal in the room. I want a different example. I don't want to impose in the public space.

The point I'm trying to get across is, when people feel completely full up with any feeling, the moment they can notice that there is something bigger than the feeling.

You take a shelf full of books, right? And it looks like there's no space in the shelf. But as soon as you don't focus on the books, but you have the space that the books are in, the space is always larger than the content. Always.

That move from being narrowed into — the way it feels sometimes, let's say physical pain, the way it can feel so like it takes up the whole space. And as soon as there can be, I am sensing a whole lot of pain in there. There's something bigger than the pain. The I am sensing a whole lot of pain in there is bigger than the pain.

When we can have that, we don't need to minimize anything, or discount how horrible it can be. But whether it's physical or emotional or relational, we want to keep developing the sense that there's more to me than just that.

Sometimes we need to really give language to the that, that makes it feel real. There's a whole lot of pain in there, and I'm really with it.

We're not going to use language to minimize, and make it discounted, make it feel like it hasn't been really seen. But it's totally different to say — some people will say to me, all I feel is pain. I hurt all over.

And then I might go, do your lips hurt?

Well, no, my lips don't hurt.

So a lot of you is hurting, right?

Yeah, a lot of me.

Are there any other places? Well, my foot doesn't.

So there's a whole lot of hurt in there, right? And you can notice all of that. There's at least a hair between all that pain and the noticing. And that hair makes all the difference in the world

for workability of a situation. For the organism to find workability. Room to move within the claustrophobia of that much pain.

And once there's a little bit of room, you're on the way. You're on the way in any stuck moment.

Even if somebody has no — I don't need to teach them that, but I can help them find a language that positions them relative to their feeling state, usually.

Now, if the person says, I am angry. And if I say, does it feel equally true to say there's a whole lot of anger in there?

No. I am angry.

Fine. You're angry. Got it. I'm not arguing. Sometimes that just feels right, damn it. And I'm not going to try to talk somebody. So let them do theirs, and then at some point it's going to feel like, okay, yeah, I can see the anger now. And then it begins to create space around it.

You don't have to try to convince anybody. You give the invitation to have a relationship to it.

And do you see how our sitting practice is the ground for holding space? Holding space, turning the light on, turning the light around, having all that, being able to sense it and see it.

We start — it's not that we're distancing from experiencing. It's just we're not getting consumed in one element of it. Actually widening, and often deepening.

Other observations, discoveries. Helpful comments. Did you have something there?

[Participant:] Yes.

[Russell:] Excuse me?

I'm wondering if it's an observation, or a question that's helpful for process. If it's something else, that's okay. If it didn't just come today, if it feels like an important one to bring forward — but especially the ones that came out of this interaction.

[Participant:] Yes. One very, very strong moment for me was recognizing how important it was for me to be able to be quiet, and have somebody be with me in there. It was just huge.

[Russell:] Yeah. Thank you for saying that.

Sometimes that's a great thing to say to people. I want you to know I'm really comfortable with quiet.

When you're a listener, or if you're a speaker — sometimes I just need to be quiet, and I need to know that it's okay for me just to be quiet. To open that space is really a gift.

When somebody's new to being with me, I often will say, I just want you to know I'm really comfortable with long silences, so please really take your time to get in touch with what's in there.

Because so many people are used to being with others from the point of view that they have to do something, or they have to produce something, or they have to be something. To just say that — I've had people feel such relief.

The word can, and not remembering

[Participant:] I'm speaking in English. The word can seems really important to me.

I know a time that you've said something like, can you — not in a sentence similar to this — and it was like, no. I can't. And that was the movement. My ability to say no. A loud enough movement for me to go, yeah. That was really important.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] My question is, I have some anxiety as a listener, to remember everything that's being said, but not wanting to take my attention away.

[Russell:] The last thing said is most important.

Now, if somebody's saying something and a word really stands out, you can make a mental note of that. But don't try to hold on to each thing that they say.

If there's a big something, have that. But what's living at the moment that you're coming back to them, if they've said ten things, are the most recent. Unless there was something that just had much more power to it.

It's too much to try to remember all that. So really free yourself. Really free yourself.

[Participant:] Slightly interventionist stuff, I've found, is useful at the beginning sometimes, but it's no longer needed, possibly.

As people have asked me to show them Focusing, we've looked at the book and we've gone through stuff, and that's just been kind of like the first session, and then, you know. I've been focusing with, I guess, three people fairly regularly, and they're all completely different.

For me, it just seems to relate very much to who you're with, and what they want, and how they want to do it. And that can vary too.

I've noticed with one of those people that they change the goalposts quite readily, and it's very fresh, and it always blows. Just the way they are. So it's very interesting.

And there was another, where it's been a little bit rote. So I'll find myself just doing something slightly different, and that kind of gets us going.

It's really interesting, the opportunity to be with the same people over a period, because there's a life in it, and huge learning.

[Russell:] Beautiful, yeah.

Four kinds of listening

[Participant:] Listening to this conversation can really create performance anxiety for a listener.

It seems like if — a couple of times, not here, but if I did it with someone like that, after the first time you have a sense of style, and you can correct. But here, a lot of it — you can get somebody who really knows how to focus, or you can get somebody who doesn't.

It seems to me it's really important, particularly if somebody is an experienced focuser, that they're really clear about what they want, and not leave it to me to try and figure out. And if it's somebody who's relatively new at Focusing, you can have a little dialogue.

What I don't want to do, because I'm not a really experienced listener, is tread on an experienced focuser's space, and then feel their lack of appreciation.

[Russell:] Let me say something to that. Whether it's an experienced person or not, I would encourage erring on the side of less. Encouraging more presencing as the ground. A real heart connection.

That's the gift of true listening. And listening is what it's about. Listening to ourselves, listening to another. That deep listening that you want with your daughter, that you want with others.

That's part of why I step away from the word Focusing. I don't want it to seem like a process that I need to do this way. But I'm trying to give some guidelines.

One of the things that's really helpful is, at the beginning of any of the conversations, you determine which kind of listening you'd like. That's the first thing.

Everybody remember the four main kinds of listening, the way I break that down? Should I say them again?

Okay. So there's presencing. Just presencing.

There's presencing with reflecting. So it's their words coming back to them. You're not adding anything new.

Then there's presencing with reflecting with reminding. Reminding are things like, maybe sense how that is in your body right now. It's reminding, because it's what they would do if they were remembering. Do you get what I mean? It's reminding them.

Simple things. Maybe sense that in your body right now. Maybe pause. Take a moment. Maybe slow down. Those are the two main reminders.

It might be, as you're with that sensation, if they've been with it for a while, just notice if there's a feeling quality to it.

These are things the person is going back to.

So there's just presencing. There's presencing with reflecting. There's presencing, reflecting, reminding. And then there's presencing, reflecting, reminding, and guiding.

Guiding — I was doing some guiding earlier, where I was coming up with something he didn't say. I can't remember the specific examples right now, but we didn't clarify this, and I was assuming, because of our relationship, permission to give guidance.

So I was taking his attention and inviting it to go to other places, respectfully and gently. But that's what guiding is about. Saying, I am taking you to another place than you're already going. That's a big responsibility.

If the person has given me permission to do that, one of the things I want to say, and encourage you to say at the beginning of each time, is: if they tell you you can guide, your response, I suggest, be — and I want you to feel completely free to tell me no, or tell me quiet, tell me I'm doing too much.

Your intention as the companion is to be in complete service, and as much as possible to put your ego at the door. You can pick that up later, as needed. But that you're really asking them — I want to be of service to you.

If you're asking me to guide you, do you like a lot of guidance or a little guidance?

Oh, feel free.

Okay. Well, if you're telling me to be free, I want you to feel free to tell me I'm saying too much, or tell me you want more. I really want to be responsive to you.

[Participant:] One area that I currently experience, more as a listener but also as a receiver. People tell me — let's say my issue is anxiety. I'm in touch with that anxiety, but as a listener I feel that it just seems like there's more.

I can remember distinct pictures I had months ago with a partner. He said, let's go back there. Because last time we had already talked, and he said, let's go back. I think there might be more there. And it was very helpful, because I kind of didn't really go there. He could tell I skimmed the surface.

[Russell:] And your relationship gave permission for that.

We wouldn't assume that, because that's a big step to take. For most people, because you're opening it all up, if you were going to say, let's go back there, it would have to be an open, invitational language. Or be very open.

[Participant:] If I were working, let's say, with my anxiety, and I were led to look at it — my anxiety — at some point the anxiety becomes a you. Meaning I have to begin to ask it, how can I be with you? Can you be with me now?

And the shift from seeing it as a need.

[Russell:] Sure, sure. Absolutely.

Just what you're describing. Couldn't do it better.

How it might like you to be with it

[Russell:] It's that invitation to yourself, if you're guiding yourself, or it can come from another.

And this is subtle, and it's so precious. When we give this to ourselves, or another gives it to us — maybe just sense how it might like you to be with it.

I'm using it language, but it's giving it preciousness. It lets it be itself. And what happens when the process is going, it has a place in the organism. It has a place. It is a part of you.

And I would suggest, from my experience, every one of those places — even the ones that are the most alien, and most seemingly pain-inducing — when they are met in this kind way, become allies.

We have the experience that there are no enemies in there. There are some confused places, but no enemies. And that's a huge thing when that turns.

When somebody gets that moment, I feel like something has really opened that often lives in them forever. A real transformed inner relationship.

So, just what you said. How can I be with you?

Now let me take this as a chance to go to your questions from before, about the best of it and the worst of it. From that sheet?

The worst of it, and the best of it

[Russell:] What I mean by the worst of it — it's not the best language, I must say — is when you're with a difficult place, and somebody's spent time, and they've gotten to know it, and it's not ready to be completely incorporated into the organism, the way we were just describing.

It needs more time. It needs another visit. It can often be helpful, when somebody's with something that's painful like that — what's the hardest part of being with that? What makes it so hard to have that anxiety right now?

Often in that moment, it just feels like it's never going to end. And getting to that next insight, what makes it so hard, again, they're not ready to complete. But it takes it often significantly further, for them to get what is making this so hard to be with right now.

Why do I include what's the best of it? Because I am absolutely committed — and I will stand on a mountain and be the only one if needed — to commit to this: that this work does not get co-opted by problems.

I want to encourage you to spend as much time with this inner attitude toward the wonderful things, and help them get even more. Help them grow.

So when somebody's in touch with something that happened with a friend, I don't want them to just sort for what's wrong. I want them, yeah, well, be with that. See if there's more in there that would like to be known about what made that so special for you.

And they go in, and they're lighting up, and their cells are getting brighter. I can see the life-givingness of spending some minutes in presence with this incredible moment that they had. And ordinary good becomes extraordinary good.

And then if they're just kind of with that, sometimes I'll go, and what makes that so special, to be with that friend like that?

And then they'll often get something like, oh, I just feel so whole. Or, I just feel like we know each other. And they get this kind of epiphany with that invitation.

So that's where that invitation is coming from.

[Participant:] That's really helpful.

When we started, and you had us cultivate a resource, somebody went to — if you were going to start working with a friend who does have some problems. Oh, one of those friends.

Knowing what you just said, it made me think of how we started here, and maybe that's a good way to start. To grow that connection to a loving-kindness, or to a resource for warmheartedness.

Would you recommend that, as an exercise? Lay it out, this is what I'd like you to do? Or not?

[Russell:] That's a beautiful invitation. It depends on your relationship with them. It depends on what they're like.

But if you say, I'd love to share with you a gift that I got — and then usually the way I would do it is guide them to have a memory of a moment like that, or a situation like that, and let them. When I do that, say in seminars, almost everybody gets a potent something.

[Participant:] Because it strikes me, as you say, you don't want the work to be co-opted by problems. If there are people who will —

[Russell:] Right. Of course.

Yeah. It's very important. And it's wonderful to bring that gift for people.

The sensory awareness kind of process. That's, again, for people who are leading seminars, or even with private people, to get them to be able to just sense what I distinguished in our first week as the physical body from the feeling body.

They're both physical, but they're different levels. That sense of, I can sense my left knee on the floor, is a different sense of body than, I can feel this lightness in my chest, lifting up, of joyfulness.

They're both body, but they're different. So I call one physical body, one feeling body, even though that's not perfect language.

[Participant:] The last time we were together, when we were talking about how to connect more between times, there was some talk of working with a book. I would so love to work with the Radical Acceptance of Everything book, on this topic. That chapter, Questioning Questions, blew my mind.

I would love to, even if we did it a chapter at a time, because they're so rich, each little essay. Just wanted to put that out there.

[Russell:] Nice. Yeah, that would be beautiful.

[Participant:] You have already been there. During a history of 5A, over five weeks, it's just mind-blowing.

I did the last move, and the last one he did around the process model, and it was so exciting. And he did the guiding that Russell just talked about, in Australia, and it's beautiful. We had to have access to him before time runs out.

It's not madly expensive. They do it via a conference system, and it's very organized. Maestro, I think, conference call. And you can now actually put it into Skype, which means it's a free call, which was very helpful when I'm in Australia.

It gets really juicy, and the most remarkable people are on the call. People who've worked with him for years, so they're very advanced, and there's just this fabulous dialogue.

You can buy all of the recordings. He's done a lot of work with that. If you participate in the course, and you miss one, you can always listen to it. You can go back, and they leave them on the site for ages.

They encourage you to have a Focusing partner. It goes for a couple of hours. You get a really good lot of time. At the end you can just remain online, and they'll designate you to a discussion group. When I've had time to do that, that's just fabulous, because the people who hang about to talk about what they've just heard are really experienced and very generous. And no one gives a damn what stage you're at. There isn't this kind of, oh, I'm too inexperienced.

[Russell:] Yeah. It's beautiful to get some contact with Gene, for sure.

Okay. I want one more, and then I want to move on.

The voice that wants to fix

[Participant:] There's a problem, not yet resolved. One of them. Where I read this, and then in our session you wrote down, listen for the place that wants to fix it. And then also the line, any actual steps that might be helpful?

Quickly, what I'm saying is that even in our session, a kind of spontaneous solution came up. Like, this is not it. I better not buy that. Something like that. A feeling of relief, and the problem solved. Session ended.

I'm trying to be brief. I could say something longer. I'm just saying that for both a focuser and a listener, at any given time, or on a consistent, chronic basis, there might be a sense like, we're here to solve problems.

And I just sense that this is something else.

[Russell:] Okay. Let me give you a koan.

The inner voice that wants to fix things will never be satisfied.

Let me finish. That's half the koan.

From insight, taking action in the world is essential. How do we take action that isn't fixing?

[Participant:] Yeah. Next time.

The last sentence? How do we take action that isn't fixing?

[Russell:] How do we take action that isn't fixing?

We might get to some investigation of the fixer tomorrow. We'll see if we can get there. That would be fun.

The fixer is an inner character we need to know well. We really need to know it well.

In fact — well, I am not sure. Okay.

What's going to happen now, my friend, is we're going to take a brief pause, then you're going to get together with your partners. You're going to have a session. And I really want to get to the next part of the series that we're doing.

So take a brief pause. Start your session at the latest, twenty-five after. The latest. If you can do a shorter pause, do that. Have your session, and be ready to go in here at five o'clock.

Yeah. Mats down at five o'clock.