

**Focusing Facilitators: The New Educators and Leaders SLOW DOWN**  
**Lawrence Berger June 2, 2023**

Something magical happens when we practice Focusing, as a space opens in which we can get in touch with ourselves and our fellows, and where we can unlock creative potential. Given that our political institutions are in a state of dysfunction and our educational institutions are under attack, we believe Focusing can be applied in what is emerging as a renewed engagement in participatory democracy, as Rosa will discuss. We need this to begin overcome our differences and the misinformation that plagues us, in order to begin to deal with today's problems. As individuals who are skilled in these techniques, we believe it is our responsibility to lead people in these practices.

For this purpose it is necessary to promote a new paradigm where we educate by listening deeply and unlocking human potential, and where we lead by example and suggest directions for self- and communal-exploration. In this move toward a participatory democracy we aim to enable people to articulate visions of the common good when they feel seen and heard, and we can serve as leaders by listening, reflecting, and posing questions for exploration by the groups. We can lead public discussions of the most pressing issues that we face, delving into how people are affected by them and what should be done in response.

My role as a philosopher is to convince people of the potential of these practices. Part of that involves challenging the existing ways that we understand ourselves by showing that they cannot accommodate the phenomenon of attention and its disciplined application in practices such as Focusing. We must appeal to people intellectually because that is what many require.

Gene put a lot of effort into philosophy in part, I believe, for this reason. My approach is to conceive of attention as human presence.