

Discovery, Community and Growth

The 1st Open National Focusing Conference in Seville

Spain, 12-15 October 2017

Discovery, community, and growth. Those are the words that my body chooses to symbolize the whole experience of the First Open National Focusing Conference. Organized by the Spanish Focusing Institute and coordinated by the Sevillian team of Espacio Vivencial, the Conference took place from the 12th to 15th of October 2017 in the charming Andalusian city of Seville, in the south of Spain.

A couple of years ago the Spanish Focusing Institute decided to launch an event to promote and disseminate what is being done in the Spanish-speaking Focusing community. Through hard work and many deep processes, the Conference has been a success at many levels.

We have experienced discovery in several domains – at least, I have, and I have the strong impression that many others too. The discovery of new uses and approaches of Focusing and the Philosophy of the Implicit provided the structure for the event. We had a plenary presentation each day to frame our work. Tomeu Barceló (Certifying Coordinator, philosopher, and author) presented Gene Gendlin's Philosophy of the Implicit as the guidelines to develop our Focusing practice – a Process Model with a social dimension. Alberto S. Segre (Coordinator of the Iberoamerican Association for the Person-Centered Approach) explained the way Focusing belongs with the Person-Centered Approaches: Focusing and Experiential Psychotherapy is one family among many others inside the Humanistic extended family, and it can be applied in several domains – psychotherapy, counseling, education, social change... – as many other Humanistic approaches do. Catherine Torpey (Executive Director of The International Focusing Institute) explained the international dimension of TIFI and how we can benefit from it – this is especially interesting here in Spain, as we must be a member of TIFI in order to belong to the Spanish Focusing Institute.

And there have been other discoveries: each of the workshops has shown new developments, lined thematically: TAE, Philosophy of the Implicit, and theoretical aspects of Focusing as a first theme; Focusing-Oriented Therapy as the second; and Focusing and other bodily disciplines (movement, Chi Kung...) as the third line. Although we had to choose only one among several simultaneous workshops, we were able to connect with presenters of other themes over the meals and in the free time.

There was also free time to explore the city of Seville, with different plans according to the preferences of the participants. While some had a relaxing dinner in a park, others went to visit the night life in Seville, strolling through its monumental center with wonderfully warm weather in the nights and others chose other possibilities.

The community has been another point of discovery. We were around sixty people, so it was possible to speak at one moment or another to everybody. For me, it has been a pleasure sharing some time with people I had not seen in a long time, and also meeting new people. The Spanish Focusing community has become so big, with so many people in training or already certified, that I always get to know some interesting new members. We also missed many members that could not attend due to various reasons – we held them in our memories and in our conversations, even in phone calls... And I was very happy to see participants from all over Spain and from several other countries, who found their way

to participate: Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Ukraine, and the United States.

All this brings me to the third sensation: one of growth. Growth as individual Focusers, with lots of inspiration boosted by the presentations and by conversations. Growth as colleagues – and even friends – in the world of Focusing, as we get to know each other, as new synergies develop, e-mails and phone numbers are exchanged, new projects are discussed. Growth as the Spanish Focusing Institute, as we reflected on the next steps of our association in the General Assembly we held on Sunday. And growth as a community: diverse, with many interests, approaches, and flavors, and at the same time a core interest in Focusing as a way to *carry life and thought forward*.

Discovery. Community. Growth. And gratitude to all the people who have made it possible: the Board of the Spanish Focusing Institute, the coordination of the team of Espacio Vivencial, the staff of the hotel and, most of all, all the participants – with all its imperfections, it has been a *“model process”!*

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