

A Felt Sense Exercise for Beginners

A felt sense is the bodily-held sense of the whole of a situation, relationship or issue

The felt sense is Dr Eugene Gendlin's term for a holistic sense, experienced via the body, which encompasses and describes the wholeness or "more" of an issue, or of how you are in general. Focusing, the process he developed, is a way of listening deeply to this experiential sense of who we are and how we are.

Because the felt sense is an experience, it can be hard to describe - and harder still to grasp what it is from reading *about* it.

Here's a brief exercise you can try to get more of a "feel" for what the felt sense is.

You may find it's something you immediately recognise - "oh yes, I am often in touch with this kind of feeling". In which case you'll probably find it easy to [learn Focusing](#) and to develop your connection to your inner wisdom.

You may find you don't get anything much at first. The felt sense can be very subtle. Perhaps come back and try another time, or consider [a guided focusing session](#) to be supported in finding it

You can take as much or as little time as you like for this felt sense exercise. I suggest maybe allowing a few minutes - 2-3 minutes maybe for each part. Or longer... see what feels right.

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Try this brief exercise in felt-sensing:

Felt Sense Exercise Part 1

1. Sit somewhere quietly, and see if you can set aside day to day worries and concerns for a few moments. Pause for a while (try a slow count up to 10) noticing that you are present here and now. (It can help to notice how you are being supported, and the contact between your body and the chair and/or floor.)

2. If it feels ok to do so, close your eyes. Bring to mind someone you know and love - a friend, family member, even a pet. Imagine that person is with you now, in the room with you.
3. Notice - what is that like? You may become aware of thoughts, memories, emotions, and/or sensations like a warm glow, or an expansive feeling in your heart, or something else. (Usually, a felt sense is strongest in the middle of the body - the throat, chest, stomach, and belly.)
4. Don't try to grasp at any aspect in particular, or make anything in particular happen. Just notice what you notice as you invite a sense of "all about this person". *Take your time.*

You'll probably notice you can get a holistic sense of this person, and your relationship with them, that somehow captures "more than" the details of it. This is a "felt sense".

NB what you notice might be strong and obvious, or it might be very subtle.

Felt Sense Exercise Part 2

1. Now open your eyes and give yourself a shake to reset your body. Then repeat step 1 from Part 1.
2. This time you're going to bring to mind someone that you don't get on with, or find awkward or difficult to deal with. Again imagine that this person is with you now, in the room with you.
3. Notice - what is that like? You may become aware of thoughts, memories, emotions, and/or sensations like a tightness, or an closed down feeling in your stomach, or something else.
4. Again, don't try to grasp at any aspect in particular, or make anything in particular happen. Just notice what you notice as you invite a sense of "all about this person". *Take your time.*

Notice the holistic sense of this person, and your relationship with them, that somehow captures "more than" the details of it. Notice how this "felt sense" is different from the felt sense of the person in Part 1.

Felt Sense Exercise Part 3

If it feels ok, you might try going back and forth from the person in part 1 to the person in part 2 a few times. Notice how your body has a clear and definite sense of each person and how they are different.

Take a moment to thank your body for showing you what it knows about these two people.

Want to learn more?

Check out: [“What is Focusing aka Felt-Sensing” here...](#)

Have [a guided Focusing session - more info here...](#)

I hope you enjoyed this felt sense exercise. There's a further Focusing process called “Clearing a Space” described on my website, [in this article, entitled “Embodied Ways to Help Your Stressed Brain to Focus”](#). There’s also a guided audio for Clearing a Space at the end of the article.

About the Author

Helen Dillon is your Conscious Career Coach helping women over 45 find themselves and career fulfilment, especially when at a career crossroads: I help you discover who you are, why you're here, and what you want next at work, through the wisdom of your inner compass and the power of your sovereign self.

I'm a qualified coach and Experiential Focusing Practitioner, with a background in both person-centred counselling, and working in large organisations. And I have been successfully coaching professional women for 15+ years.

Although I've been coached and had therapy, and done much allied training over the years, Focusing/felt sensing is THE process that's made the most difference to me and my life and work.

Focusing has been instrumental in resolving long-standing issues like imposter syndrome and helping me feel more confident and purposeful. And also key for everyday decision making, stress management, and responding to the curve balls that life so often throws at us. I want to make this essential, yet little-known, process more available to other women so they too can discover how to let their true selves live.