

## **Seven Spaces: Concepts for the 15th International Focusing Conference 2003 in Pforzheim, Forum Hohenwart /Germany**

We would like to provide those of you who are interested with the background information necessary to understand a bit deeper what our plan is, how it is developed and which part you could play in this process:

In March 2002 our organizing committee took one day to initiate a process of AI - Appreciative Inquiry - a method which is pretty close to the client-centered and focusing-oriented approach and now widely used in business work.

The key questions were:

- Which was the best conference you ever experienced?
- What made this conference the best one for you?
- Learning from this experience: which qualities/conditions should be created at the next Focusing Conference?

After interviewing in dyads, communicating, documenting the individual experiences on pin boards and putting things together in the whole group, we found the following main qualities of “best conference”

Here are the results:

1. Options for **participants** to switch between different kinds of activities and qualities along with the changing needs during the Conference. This brought up the idea of **creating parallel spaces** - not only as different content, but also different qualities of being with oneself and others. The challenge for the conference management will be, to create and hold these different spaces at the same time and to manage the transparency of these offers, so that informed choices can be made.
2. Presenting proudly one's own approaches, developments - and finding new impulses for one's own way of doing and applying Focusing. This will be met by the “**classical**” **program of presentations**, workshops, round tables. Two aspects should be stressed: (a) the co-ordinators are explicitly invited to present their work as the ones who are designated to bring Focusing further and to show our competence in a variety of life issues to the public (b) there are issues of special interest, which should be brought further - especially Focusing - oriented Psychotherapy. To attract psychotherapists, it would help to have one space of presentations etc. thru the whole conference, where psychotherapists can meet, present, discuss. Other issues could be organized the same way as own content- “spaces” to make the conference attractive for specialized people.
3. Sharing focusing with people who want to know more about Focusing: very often, our partners, colleagues, friends.... know that we are doing Focusing, but never had a real chance to get deeper and understand what we doing. This led to a **space for beginners or interested people** - so participants can come together and find also a Focusing-place for beginners, which will be provided for thru the whole conference. This program will also be offered to a broader public, so that people who had heard about Focusing can join us and experience

the quality of Focusing within the international community - this could be very attractive. The Program for Beginners could be composed of (at least) two components: (a) basic introduction and (b) different applications - both in a safe, experiential group work. I ask especially you as co-ordinators to be ready to show beginners relevant sketches of your work, if this is fitting somehow for beginners (in addition to the workshop you are planning for advanced colleagues)

4. **Space and time for personal growth and problem solving** - and exchanging special skills in Focusing work. In our view, this part has made the International Conferences unique in their history - that there is something like a healing place within the Conference, a place to stay back from everyday stress and look for the overlooked part in oneself - accompanied by others who are respectful, empathic and congruent. The Focusing Partnerships and other ways to relate to oneself are a very precious space we are caring for. One idea is, to broaden this space to more specific ways of working with one another, so that not only "classical" Focusing, but also special focusing- oriented applications like dream work, making space, decision making, art therapy, interactive Focusing.... can become part of mutual focusing work.
5. **"Intercultural" / "international" diversity** - a very deep quality in our relationships, which is hardly acknowledged before now. To many of us it is a big attraction to meet people from all over the world, who are connected by Focusing. At the same time, very often we get to know one another in his/her cultural identity only on the surface. The richness of cultural diversity could become fascinating: not to exclude our differences as an issue, but to acknowledge them, getting aware of our differences and the ways we are reacting to them and then getting to a deeper understanding, taking time for our cultural richness and reflecting how we can make an appropriate space for it in the future. This will be a one-day Process for the whole Conference (Open Space, Appreciative Inquiry...) which we prepare with Klaus Meyersen. We look at this issue to be a very important one just in these times of inter-racial, inter-religious, inter-national conflicts; we feel our responsibility as Focusing people to contribute and work on good ways to live together all over the world.  
Intercultural diversity is also understood this way: presenters are welcome to present in their mother language - many people are kept off from presenting by being opposed to present in a foreign language - or attending presentations in a foreign language. Along with this "language space" we encourage people to bring people of their own language to the conference and creating an own program space for their language (e.g. French, Spanish...). I will try to find ways how to manage this. If you are interested in this option, please contact me by Email ([fzk@focusing.de](mailto:fzk@focusing.de))
6. **Creativity: space for expressing one's inner processes, feelings....** Painting, making poems, improvising, playing instruments, acting... alone, together with others.... This option will be organized in the "Creative Space" - we will provide for room and basic materials. If

participants want to provide for their favourite ways of being creative, they should bring their requisites (instruments etc.) with them.

7. **Getting in contact with the culture and nature of the place:**  
travelling from far away to the Black Forest often implies a wish to take the opportunity to experience the environment - getting a smell of the place, getting aware "where I am at the very moment". We will organize walks and rides to special places in the Black Forest, guided by experienced people. Focusers, who know how to cross "experiencing nature" with Focusing are invited to offer their approach to the conference people.

These are the seven spaces/qualities we want to create for the 15<sup>th</sup> International Focusing Conference.....

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