

## BIOSPIRITUAL FOCUSING—MYSTICISM FOR THE MILLIONS

### *Can We Be Part of a Twenty First Century Renaissance?*

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Some of you are probably wondering if these two old geezers are up to some wild and woolly woo, woo mystical stuff that is really not your cup of tea. (Sounds like a kind of “Yeah, it’s crossed my mind response?”)

So, let me begin this evening with my part of our joint talk by very briefly giving you some feel for what we mean by this rather unusual title: ***“Bio-Spiritual Focusing—Mysticism for the Millions.”*** And the subtitle: ***“Can We as Focusers be Part of a Twenty First Century Renaissance?”***

Let me take the first part of BioSpiritual, BIO: which, of course, refers to body, **our body** not as something **apart from spiritual. Not at war with the spiritual. Not a dualism between its bones, flesh and blood and the spiritual.** But, as the great German theologian, Karl Rahner, once wrote: **“... by its very nature, matter (and that includes our material body) essentially develops toward spirit.”** A far cry from many Christian philosophers who, not too long ago, were sure that the body could not be conscious and who could not even imagine what Gene has helped us to experience as “felt-senses,” a vital ingredient in our whole body’s conscious knowing potential.

As Gene has been showing us for decades, **meaning is not only thought in your mind, it is felt in your body as well. So, for us, the body is that**

sacred, conscious bridge or connection we all have within which we can experience being an integral, living cell within some Larger Body, some Gifting Presence that gratuitously connects symbols which shift felt-senses physically as their meaning reveals itself when we actually are present to them inside ourselves. That process, we believe, **IS spiritual**. It is what mysticism has always been about for thousands of years. That is, **living in such a way that you open your own body's potential for experiencing this continuing, gifting connection from inside**. You **know** you are **not alone, but alive WITHIN some Larger Body** with a **past** and a **future**, with an **energy**, a source of **wisdom** beyond what we are capable of thinking and manipulating—**a life-creative force** that makes your sacrifices, even your suffering—**meaning-filled**. This is the bridge, I believe, that a violent, confused world is calling Focusers to be **leaders** in building, because Focusing can open the door of this experience, this mysticism for the millions.

Finally, let me share a short, personal, “felt-sense” story taken from my book, *Beyond the Myth of Dominance*, so you will better understand why the phrase, “*A Twenty-First Century Renaissance*” is in our subtitle.

For decades, I carried around a “felt-sense” about the historical period after the Dark Ages we call, *The Renaissance*. It pulled me into exploring everything I came across about that period of history. I was always puzzled by this strange attraction because it was so full of personal contradictions. I found the art not something that expressed my taste. **Yet, I would return to it again and again**. The architecture **was too overwhelming**, but I **could spend hours in the body-feel of it**, especially in Italy. I was

again drawn to so many remarkable people during this period who blossomed, as though waking from a long winter's sleep. Thousands developed talents that previously lay dormant, enduring even today, not only in the wonders of engineering, masonry and sculpture but in the literature and sciences then being born. It always felt inside me like there was a personal story in all these incredible achievements of the human spirit, a story waiting to speak directly within me—maybe a clue to better experiencing what BioSpirituality is about. But it never revealed itself until one beautiful Spring morning when sitting on the porch of a farmhouse near Cortona, Italy.

Pete and I had rented the former stables on the bottom floor in this picturesque 16th Century stone building overlooking the Chianti Valley. I was reading about Leonardo da Vinci's spectacular engineering feat in draining the valley below me, which previously had been a malaria infested swamp—and that draining system is still working there today. Then, on a memorable page of this part history book, part guidebook the author wrote something to the effect that the Renaissance came into being **because a wide enough threshold of awareness had evolved in so many people that a level of consciousness surfaced, sufficient for a movement to be born.** And that breakthrough—that level of consciousness?— the author wrote that so many people during the Renaissance rediscovered the divine within their own humanity! They felt connected to a Larger Body, a Greater Presence.

Suddenly, he wrote, a massive explosion of self-esteem and human potential “in God” was let loose. I recall the author saying that people again

took pride in being “part of God.” Dust covered dreams and the human body’s spirit connected within this experience of being living cells within this Larger Body and its felt-presence within them. Then the impossibles felt possible.

For me, the felt-shift, the **connection** finally had come. That vague, fuzzy feeling of “Something More” moved into excitement and an easing in my body. I stood up, amazed at what had happened as I walked thoughtfully down the dirt road toward the ancient walls of Cortona and the fresh food I needed to get from the local farmers in the town square. My eye caught the magnificent dome of an abandoned church below me, now in an olive orchard, but still greater than most contemporary cathedrals. My mind wandered back to my favorite Gendlin quote in which he describes how Focusing could build this bridge that once fueled the Renaissance. He wrote: “Your physically felt body is, in fact, part of a gigantic system of here and other places, now and other times, you and other people, in fact the whole universe. **This sense of being bodily alive in a vast system is the body as it is felt from inside.**” How I might be able to live that, and then pass that on to others is what I have explored for years. And may the workbook help you find this experience, because hope lies not in your mind’s ability to understand, nor in the certitude that everything is going to turn out the way you want. Rather, it lies in the **deep-down-body-feel that what is happening to you now** has meaning and is gift. For that to occur, your body **needs to feel connected** within some LARGER BODY with a history and story that includes, but extends far beyond your few years here on this earth. Then, your life **in this moment**, as part of this

organically-felt presence and history, **feels really precious—no matter how scary or painful it is—and you find yourself no longer alone.**

So, as Focusers, I believe this historic time of enormous change calls us to take responsibility for the leadership we can provide in making this Twenty-First Century Renaissance possible.