

Partnership Practice Etiquette

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As you begin to feel more comfortable in your Focusing partnership exchanges, please keep in mind the importance of safety and empowerment. This is perhaps stated best in Ann Weiser Cornell's statement: *Empowered Focuser, relaxed Companion*.

The Focuser is empowered to ask for what they want before the session and anytime during the session. It is their session. Knowing they can ask for what they want or need helps the Focuser feel safe and in control of their process. So, Focusers: tell your Companion how you would like to be listened to freshly each time you begin a session. You can also make a request during a session. You may ask they speak up, slow down, say less or even put your hand up to stop them when silence is preferred.

Companions, your job is to simply be present. There is already an interaction happening even in the silence. You can convey so much with little murmurs of support. To be a relaxed Companion is to be present and open to the expression of the other. Notice their body, face, gestures and of course words. Take them all in and reflect the essence of what is being conveyed. Most often you will be using Presence Language and their words without changing much. This is listening.

Both of you should feel empowered to pause the interaction for clarification. The Focuser might want to clarify how they would like to be listen to or ask for help in some way. The Companion may not have heard something and is welcome to ask, "Did I get that right?" or "Could you repeat that last part?" There is a rhythm and flow to a session when it goes well. It becomes a back and forth kind of dance.

Let the Focuser dwell in the sacred space of their emerging experience. We don't get to have that kind of experience very often. As the Companion, enjoy the Focuser's journey without adding something or expecting something. You truly don't know what it is for them although you can be curious about what is emerging for you as you accompany them.

Once the session is over refrain from discussing the session. It is okay to ask, "How was that for you?" but we don't want to inquire about the content of their session. We can learn by reflecting on (the process) what was or wasn't helpful in for the Focuser. Even to express our opinion on how wonderful it was or how much you enjoyed their rich imagery may be unwanted.

Sticking to this general frame will serve you well with any Focuser. As you learn more you will develop additional tools for giving invitations and you will learn the difference been listening and guiding a session. Safety and empowerment are established by the agreement (boundaries) set at the beginning of the session and sticking to them. At some point you may have an ongoing Focusing partnership and the two of you can sense into and develop your own empowered and relaxed way of being together that works just right for the partnership.