

Another area is that of self-help, and the focusing community practises both peer-level partnership arrangements and focusing alone as a meditative and 'instant-therapy' technique. If you can learn to go to your felt sense and stay with it, you can guide your own process (having a listener generally makes it easier); because of the subtlety and intricacy of individual experience, such self-guided inner process is sometimes more effective than putting yourself in the hands of even the best of therapists - and always cheaper! Of course, not everyone is ready for this, but many people are. Focusing on your own or with a friend is flexible, friendly, helpful and delightful. Finally, people find that knowing about the felt sense is helpful in life in a general sense - to accept rather than try to change our experience, to be friendly rather than critical towards ourselves and each other, and to listen more deeply to all our differing and complex inner worlds. The territory that it opens seems so immense and so little explored, even in the psychotherapeutic and personal growth world, that I'm quite sure I for one will be rummaging around in it for the rest of my life.

From: HOW TO FEEL REBORN (1985)

by Nicholas Albery

with commentaries by Stan Grof, Janov, R.D. Laing and Leonard Orr

In supervision, I have found subsequent remarks by R.D. Laing about another client illuminating concerning Gerry and clients like him:

"It is useful", Laing said, "to think of some clients in terms of an embryology of the soul or of the mind. The main thing in such therapy is that the therapist is in a sense the client's womb, carrying him whilst he goes through it. The therapist has this maternal function. It's not a matter of the therapist doing anything about this, although if he is too frightened to participate with the client, that can abort the process, as can catastrophic anxiety on the part of the client. All the therapist has to do is to follow it and be there, and to be aware of the evolution.

One can regard it as a psychological pregnancy. The therapist is mother and womb, the client is in the womb, and it's important to avoid confusion in going through it again, not to get caught up in the catastrophe that happened with his own mother.

The dangers he ran into before will hurt him again, come at him, attack him. It is not a regression, in a sense of repeating. Words that I've tentatively employed are 'neo-genesis' or 'regeneration'.

Therapy can proceed in perhaps two or three rounds, each like the nine months of pregnancy, with the end of each lap taking the client into either an emergence or a birth".