

Empathy



lesson three
Heart-to-Heart

Empathy can be thought of ...

... as being compassionately present to another person and doing one's best to understand them.

In this approach to Empathy three elements would combine:

- Presence,
- Caring, and
- Understanding.

Two Directions for Empathy

- Empathy... can be offered to another person.
- Empathy... can be offered to oneself – bringing one's own presence and caring to oneself; and, doing one's best to understand what's going on inside us. This can be called Self-Empathy.

Silent Empathy

Empathy may not need words. It may be a simple offering of our presence and care.

This may be enough for a person to experience support and find themselves more able to be present to themselves.

Listening to the Music of the Heart

Empathy can be thought of as listening to the Heart.

This brings one's attention to the feelings and heart's longings that are that are most alive in the moment.

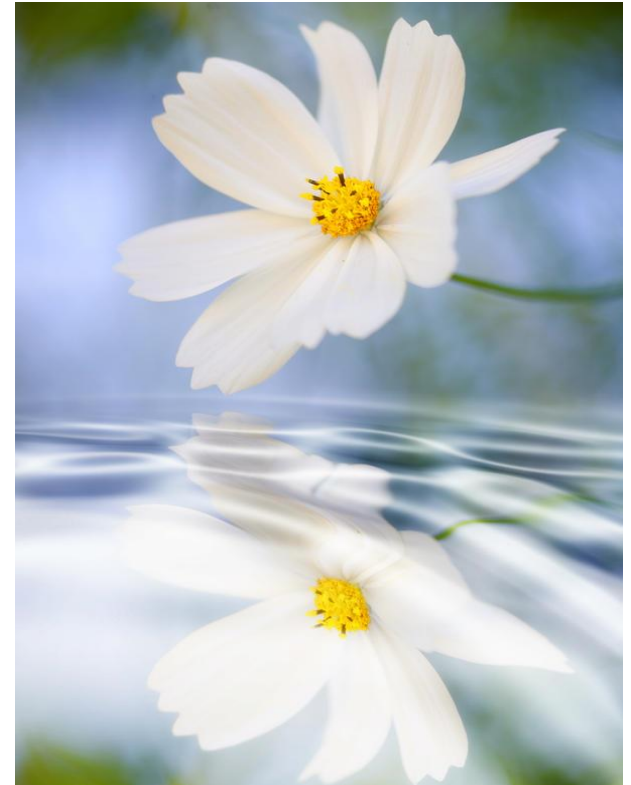


The Power of Empathy

- The power of empathy is that it can help a person connect with themselves. It can help someone connect more deeply with the reality of their own experience.
- This is particularly helpful when that reality includes pain and when the habitual behavior involves avoiding pain.

Reflecting Back

- Sometimes what is most supportive involves “reflecting back” to another person the heart of what we are hearing.
- A powerful way to “reflect back” may be to name the Feelings and the Longings you hear.



Potentially Powerful Empathic Questions Are:

- “Are you feeling _____ because you need _____?”
- “Are you feeling _____ because _____ is important to you?”
- “Are you feeling _____ because you are longing for _____?”

This approach can be helpful because...

- We don't know what's going on inside another person. Asking, rather than telling, may reflect more accurately the reality that we don't know. In this way, we can be "dumb" - not knowing what's going on inside another.
- Also, the question, "What do you need?" can engage thinking and a 'head' response, rather than connection to the heart.

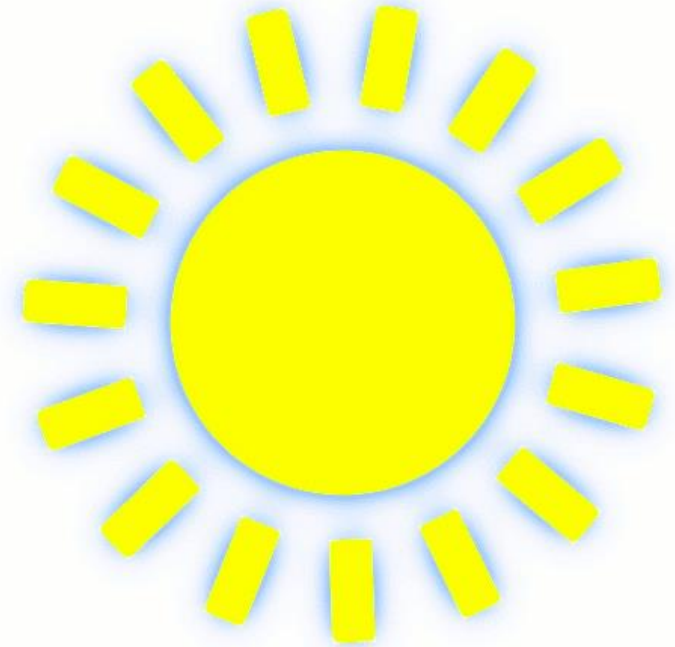
Being “Dumb” and Guessing



- Offering empathy is guessing at what is alive in another’s heart. We don’t have to get it right.
- Being “dumb,” can help us approach another as mystery. It reflects an acknowledgement that we don’t know what’s going on inside others. This can work to support people in approaching themselves as mystery.
- The process of guessing can help a person check their own heart and find for themselves words and understanding that get them closer to their own experience.

Self-Empathy...

... is approaching oneself as mystery - bringing compassion to oneself and being curious about one's own heart.



We might explore:

“What am I feeling now?”

“And what am I desiring in this particular situation?”

For more information, contact

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