

Achieving Real Empathy is not Easy

- What is said
- What is implied
- Facial impression
- Tone of voice
- Body language
- Social context

These things all give a clue to what is going on in the client, but none is the thing itself.

Real empathy means that I myself am moved in a way which resonates with the client.

Real Empathy is a Moment of Recognition.

Knowing what a person has suffered does not in itself mean that I know that person because different people react to the same misfortune in quite different ways.

To know the person I need a living sense of what he/she is doing inside. When I get that I recognise the person.

Empathy means getting an experience of what is going on inside the person not just an intellectual understanding.

Empathy has many different descriptions but they all come down to the same thing: developing the ability to see the world from another's point of view without judgement. Being empathic is a bit like being an anthropologist; when an anthropologist goes to study a different people or tribe, there's no judgement or criticism, just an acceptance and description of their way of life, their way of seeing things. This is what you need to do with clients. Develop the ability to get inside their shoes, to see the world as they see it, without judgement or criticism or over identification and agreement.