



Empathy: Theory and Application in Psychotherapy

By Renuka Sharma

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Empathy is a term much used in popular culture and professional circles. Yet it remains one of the most misunderstood tropes. Most people confuse or conflate empathy with sympathy; though related, these involve somewhat radically different affective or psychological registers. Empathy is founded on the art of understanding a living being's particular mental state or inner condition, in respect of his/her predicament, pain, suffering, anguish, fear, grief, sorrow, frustration, and anger in certain trying circumstances. There can even be comportment with another's joy and exhilaration. Its proper use makes possible a much deeper understanding of human communication, relation, intentionality, and action. As such its cognate in the Eastern or contemplative practice of compassion (karuna, metta, kripa) toward another, and also to surge or "care" in phenomenological hermeneutics. Thus, there are cognitive, affective and ethical components in the practice of empathy. The importance of empathy whether in everyday life or as a clinical tool in therapeutic and palliative settings cannot be more emphasized. The book demonstrates the way in which using empathy as a means of diagnosis leads to different, more successful results...



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