



Empathy: Theory and Application in Psychotherapy

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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 *sorge* 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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