



Empathic Axis of Change and Transition

I practice an active listening form of therapeutic counselling and have extensive experience of listening in depth to traumatised individuals. I do so by cultivating a non-judgemental way of being to establish safe communication portals via unwavering empathy. For most clients creating boundaries around these thresholds represents the limits of their therapeutic requirements. For others, establishing these newly formed domains are launch pads into the realm of becoming. Either way, my relentless empathy, is always drawn from the spirit of high acceptance.

Empathic communication is the ultimate non-invasive mode of therapeutic engagement, a replenishing resource in demonstrating respect to clients, and a very effective means in reducing the darker dynamics underpinning their denial processes. The therapist enters the client's perceptual world 'as if' it is his or her own, but without ever losing the capacity to return to his or her own moorings (Rogers C, 2001). Maintaining a non-judgemental stance is fundamental to cultivating relentless empathic communication in a therapeutic relationship. Not only does the quality of relentless empathy flow from upholding this key therapeutic stance, but also its verbal aspects of dissolving client's perception distortions are wholly depended on it, ensuring the integrity of experience (Brooke R, 2000) is never violated. When these principles are upheld, the change and transition axis, on which the counselling process revolves, can rotate in greater safety. The important role of safety in our life is so intuitive and so relevant that it is surprising our institutions neglect it (Porges S, 2017). The workhorse that is relentless empathy and its prizing backbone would soon falter but for the stamina of visceral and emotional dexterity.

I see visceral and emotional presence as the centre of gravity, grounding interpersonal processes and empowerment outcomes. Demonstrating a willingness to work with the vortex of life-affirming forces is essential to upholding connection and promoting safe practice. It takes an active presence to surf safely with these intense waves of expression. Coaxing, nudging and shaping development from client's emerging undercurrents, especially those laced with distress, is therapeutic counselling in action. Being viscerally and emotionally received, advances healing intimately and endures the test of time. By contrast, empathic protocols formulated with a feeling bias, result in poverty of experience and growth. Empathy requires a growing from inside the self. A person who hopes to be empathetic must pursue an experience that awakens the sense of fellowship (Bazalgette P, 2017).

I find the interpersonal dynamics of relentless empathy to surpass all template-based procedures, techniques and such like. Non-invasive empathy is the golden highway to being alongside a client emotionally, while navigating beyond their swirl of unresolved suffering. Counselling, like life, cleansed of empathic vitality, soon grinds to a halt. An empathic engagement affirms the visceral and emotional forces within the counselling process, it's the organic oil to the wheels of change and transition.

There is no substitute to bringing about an emotional transformation without recourse to energised empathy. Empathy has also been conceptualized as one of the key constituents of emotional or social intelligence (Salovey & Gruel, 2005).

When therapy is anchored in the harbour of avoidance, it confirms, nay, fuels fear of visceral intimacy. Like those ancient mariners, who clung to the familiar landscape, we experience no vibrancy and discover very little. This is not what counselling was created for. Counselling was crafted to stand out to sea and brave life's emerging energy with prepared uncertainty. I believe we need to re-position counselling in its pro-active nature. In other words, an active psychotherapy is a therapeutic stance that values the emergence of life affirming forces

within a person and is interested in recognizing the latter and bringing them again into force (Bazzano M, 2019).

Empathic communication is a detox for the crushed spirit, yet evidence of empathy deficit in society is everywhere we turn. A bleak landscape indeed, however, empathic oases do exist. For example, empathic understanding of the kind that the person-centred therapist seeks to offer, is the result of the most intense concentration and requires a form of attentive listening which is remarkably rare. An empathic way of relating dissolves alienation, promotes the relationship therapeutically and guards against unintentional harm to client or therapist. To counsel in an active listening style requires continuous openness, deep acceptance and trust in intuitive wisdom.

Reflecting on and checking understanding of expressed, underlined and unformed feelings, supports clients to tune into, connect and befriend their organismic realm. Body awareness puts us in touch with our inner world, the landscape of our organism, the domain where I aim to co-erect all aspects of counselling.

I also make use of silence and metaphors to enhance a more natural experience of nervous system calibration within clients. For example, the wash of emotional tears is highly cleansing in its own right. Even if crying is a sigh of helplessness, it can relieve stress and depression, and bring about spontaneity in authentic engagements. There is drawing power in tears, and within the tear itself, powerful images that guide us. Tears not only represent feeling but also lenses through which we gain an alternative vision, another point of view (C.P. Estes, 2008).

Working with highly charged feelings and complex emotions can be challenging, rewarding and transformational for both client and counsellor. Counselling can be a vibrant experience carrying an intensity of relating which in itself is a major vehicle for therapeutic change (2008 Dryden W. and Reeves A, 2008). More to the point, effective counselling is often a highly intuitive activity (...) that intuition refers to sensitive judgements that have become internalised and appear in highly skilled and experienced hands effortless Dryden W. and Reeves A, 2008).

When the tension between known and unknown aspects of a journey through vulnerability are compromised, experience and the counselling process can be short-circuited, resulting in change failing to transition. So much energy gets siphoned off just to maintain a fragmented sense of self, yet no matter how sophisticated denial structures operate in suppressing painful memories, the nervous system will flash echoes anew into an already overloaded mind. Numbing these escaped shards, that make up hosts of symptoms, only confuses movement towards congruent living.

The vital interface to bringing about an actualization renaissance is to embrace the unfolding experience. Relentless empathy, in conjunction with client's emerging vitality of congruence, holds the key to re-evaluate safely, nah process beyond the intricate web of incongruence. Respecting experience ensures the journey through vulnerability is never compromised.

An empathic way of being affirms life in all its unfolding possibilities, struggles and splendour, even when the internal distance is laced with unresolved trauma. Acute complexity is no barrier to offering clarity and empathic communication. The significance of being emphatically and emotionally present is that it enables clients to acknowledge and incorporate feelings and emotions into their lives because this stabilises and supports the underbelly of self-agency.

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