



Empathy in Practice

Allow yourself to enter this moment and attune to your “self as healer;” affirm and call forward your palette of sacred sensitivities; acknowledge the many gifts that you bring (both the technical aspects and the interpersonal aspects) to your healing practice. Acknowledge the many ways that you listen to and experience your client’s energies. Affirm your connection with Spirit. Acknowledge the safe container for your work, one that fosters deep personal connection through your heart-centered presence.

This opening affirmation introduces some of the complex and beautiful aspects of professional connection and energetic bonding that occur between client and practitioner.

Safe connection and strong bonding create the opportunities for practitioners to empathize with their clients. Multiple studies by the National Institutes of Health identify that empathy is an essential variable in therapeutic relationships and health outcomes improve when patients (or clients) perceive empathy from their healthcare practitioner.

“Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.”¹ This beautiful, classical definition illuminates the underlying, complex relational perspective that empathy requires us to cultivate. Our ability to empathize operates and fluctuates depending on the alchemy of our current state of

openness, connection to our higher sense perceptions and our willingness to connect deeply with another human’s life experiences.

The traditional teachings suggest that empathy is either thought-based or emotion-based or some combination of the two. Psychologist Mark Davis discusses three important “types” of empathy:

- Perspective-Taking: Seeing yourself in another person’s point-of-view.
- Personal Distress: Feeling another person’s emotions.
- Empathetic Concern: Recognizing another person’s emotional state and reacting with an appropriate amount of concern based on a perceived need.

Our brains are also wired for empathy in our “mirror neurons.” These special neurons identify and mirror the energy of another individual’s neurological state as they are remembering or experiencing an event. When mirroring, these neurons create hormonal shifts in our bodies that allow us to be able to tap into and feel, for example, the same type of sadness or hurt that another individual is expressing in that moment. The current research suggests that in addition to the chemical knowledge of experience, our ability to know and understand feelings of sadness or hurt is referenced by our past experience of these, as if our cultivation of empathy draws from a bank of historical life data.

I personally believe that because of some of the unique ways healers work with energy and the Divine, these traditional definitions of empathy can be expanded for healers.

As Energy Medicine professionals, we attune with our clients (intentionally blending the energy fields) so that energetic information can be passed between us. During our work, we connect to the spiritual world and Divine guidance; we operate with heightened sensitivities through our ability to listen and use the wisdom inherent in energy; and we acknowledge the need for boundaries to help us clarify messages. In addition to these, we also leverage the more traditional aspects of empathy—the innate biological wisdom of our mirror neurons, our own human experience and our human capacity for deep and meaningful connection.

As you read the following statements, I invite you to reflect on how these common practices among healers foster empathy for your clients.

I create an intentional, formal attunement with the Divine and my clients.



At the beginning of our sessions, we mindfully and intentionally create an attunement to the Great Spirit (or God). This fosters an increased potential for empathy with our clients because during the intentional blending and merging of our energy fields, we are open to the possibility that infinite information about our client's inner experience is available to us through Source.

I explore my specific heightened sensitivities, or my extra-sensory perceptions. I hear and receive messages of many types.

When we use the seven-chakra wisdom as a guide for receiving additional information about our client's experience, seven different subtle sensitivities are available for us to use as pathways for empathy in our therapeutic environments.

- First Chakra: Root energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' body through the use of my senses like smelling, tasting and feeling (as in physical feeling) to receive information about my clients' experiences.
- Second Chakra: Sacral energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' emotional feelings.
- Third Chakra: Solar plexus energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' thoughts and how they are processing their thoughts through their "gut" senses.
- Fourth Chakra: Heart energy—I can access the sensations of how my clients are connected with their heart's desires.
- Fifth Chakra: Throat energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' creative expression which sometimes arrive as spoken messages, written/guided messages and even as sounds and musical information.
- Sixth Chakra: Brow energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' inner sight, predictive visioning and even knowings about their self-image.
- Seventh Chakra: Crown energy—I can access the sensations of my clients' relationship to their higher thoughts, connection with Spirit and know information that has deep personal meaning.

I assert healthy boundaries when working with personal energetic information.

When we work with our palettes of higher sense perceptions, we acknowledge that we are able to receive tremendous amounts of information about our client's inner experience. One of the ways to work with boundaries in clinical practice is to ask that Spirit provide only the absolute perfect information that is in alignment with our client's Highest Good. Asking for filtered information in this way

allows us to trust the information that we receive, so that we may know and cultivate a stronger understanding of our clients' inner experience and thus increase our potential to empathize with our clients.

Empathy has been clinically studied and found to improve patient outcome in healing relationships. Acknowledging our sensitivities as Energy Medicine practitioners, I feel strongly that we have an increased capacity at seeing with another's eyes, listening with another's ears and feeling with another's heart. This is because the nature of energetic information that we receive in our clinical practice comes directly from our client's energy field and from Spirit; this information informs our ability to empathize with our clients in our practice. Once again, I find myself humbled as I acknowledge the many mysteries of our healing work in and through our connection with Spirit and the human energy system. €



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Her life's work is seeded by the desire to bring healing to all those who share this beautiful planet.

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Reference

1. Bellet, Paul S.; Michael J. Maloney (1991). The importance of empathy as an interviewing skill in medicine. The JAMA Network. Retrieved from <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/392335>.