

Ten Preliminary Principles for Developing as a Person Centred Experiential Therapist (v1.8, 25.01.18).

1. Increasing tenderness is essential for developing your ability to emotionally and empathically resonate with the emotional distress of another sentient being. This valuing process involves becoming highly accepting of one's own vulnerable nature as a human being.
2. Developing a highly attuned, empathic awareness of the other is a foundational position to establish. Attunement is whole body-mind responsiveness. Empathy is an accurate holistic awareness of the embodied meanings and feelings of the other. This highly attuned, empathic awareness should be a constant focus of critically reflexive practice.
3. Critical reflexivity is vital for developing accurate empathic understanding. Being critical requires you to question the implicitly and explicitly socialised values and assumptions within all of your responses; both verbal and non-verbal. Being critically reflexive requires you to adapt the way you relate to both yourself and others.
4. Exploring what 'being authentic' means is a continuous struggle that you should be willing to engage with and is vital part of the change process of becoming more deliberately critically reflexive.
5. Taking time to notice the implicit and explicit, socially approved values in language is essential: particularly around issues of power, autonomy, gender, love, kindness and intimacy.
6. Being aware of one's own whole body experiencing is key; learning to articulate your own bodily-felt responses, and understanding what they mean to you, is an essential part of being present and emotionally available. Being present is a vital aspect of being authentic.
7. Paying soft and careful attention to the other's meta-communication is essential in developing your ability to provide psychological holding for the other.
8. Letting go of habitual ways of responding, both verbally and non-verbally, and becoming aware of where these habits have come from, will allow you to experience yourself (and other people) as more authentic, fluid and empathically compassionate.
9. Committing to a courageous way of relating that is primarily 'compassionate and caring' is a good starting point for developing a more congruent way of being present within relationships.
10. Being aware of when you are becoming defended and defensive in your way of relating, and trying to articulate why this is happening, will help you engage more directly with your own learning process. Active commitments to these principles as a continual intention is a necessary requirement for optimal learning.