

# TOUCHING THE SOURCE

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- *Around any symbol or emotion, you can feel a kind of resonance, an aura. This subtle aura is not merely associated feeling, but is itself the meaning of the symbol.*
- *Here's another image. A symbol is a mere surface. For example, an emotion – a feeling in the ordinary sense. It simply isn't enough, when we know only the thin surface, the symbol itself. We need to dip our hands down into a thickness beneath, into hidden and uncertain depths.*
- *Or again. It is as if we are letting a vessel down into a cool, deep well. Drawing up good water. Here, at this spring, dreams, images and music find their interpretation, and ideas their origin. Here the spirit of healing dwells.*
- *Every word or image or feeling is pregnant – full of possibility. We may sit with a symbol, gently touching or tapping it, sensing around, behind and beneath.*
- *What is this like? Perhaps like being in an ancient wood of oak, pine or cryptomeria, with grey and mossy rocks, at a water's edge – I may feel wretched, but the source is constant. I have only to stay here at the edge – only to be present. The source is like some place of rebirth. It seems to be inexhaustible.*

*Listening to ourselves with compassion*

**Deciding** – We make the turn to the source when the forward movement is blocked.

Something in your life is stuck, troubled, haunted or puzzling. Or perhaps it is joyful, playful, longing or fertile. It may even be hurtling forward or frenzied. Go slowly! You are deciding where to begin.

**Inviting** – This blocked or uncertain place has a unique overall quality, mood or tone. It has a story to tell, since it is connected to your life. Typically, the feel of

it is both subtle and distinct. The feel is physical. It comes right here in the middle of your body. Sometimes the feeling is barely there – a vagueness, a nothingness, an absence. There may be a two-way conflict. Or several strands. Often there is a feeling about the feeling. Now you are looking for a word or a phrase, which will give you a little bit of purchase on this slippery feeling. Or perhaps there may be an image, sound or gesture – which may say more than words.

**Befriending** – You are not the feeling – you yourself are not any content. You sit down quietly next to the feeling. You become profoundly feeling-centred. You are here to listen with interest and great kindness to an emerging story – here to be fearless and sincere with yourself, about how things are going (or not going) in your life right now. You are preparing a friendly welcome, since the feeling may be about to open.

Or maybe not. Sometimes it seems as if nothing will ever change. Still, you can be with the way it is. We can be gentle, accepting, patient and enduring. Nothing has to happen. We can always be kind.

**Actively un-knowing** – We can't know what may come. We may be carried far beyond our limitations. Something shadowy and unformed is beginning to stir in the silence of the heart. You are dwelling here for a little while – waiting, asking and holding. It is essential to be uncertain – open, curious, unintrusive, and deeply receptive.

**Casting** – Infinitely patient, intent and still, you are a poet and an artist. You

place your attention delicately and precisely, returning to the feeling over and over, biding your time. Little by little, tentatively, words or images, sounds or gestures form.

When something comes which resonates, you will feel a distinct moment of movement, a moment when it appears that change actually occurs. You welcome this small felt opening or easing with thankfulness, taking time to savour it.

*Listening to one another with compassion*

**Contact** – Contact is the key to any friendship. Until we are in contact, the good which may happen is severely limited, and the evil lowering.

When there is a real sense of meeting or encounter, an awareness of a living contact actively sustained moment after moment after moment, a profound mutual sense of accepting and being accepted by one another may creep up on us. A quality of trust and safety flowers, and a sense of rapport or mutual resonance may grow naturally.

Being in contact is a miracle, both in itself, and in its creative and healing power.

**Humanity** – Everything we have learned or can imagine is with us. Our feelings, memories, dreams and reflections inform our meeting, and yet nothing must come between us, nor disturb what is unfolding. Our sensitivity to the human condition is a vast and subtle background, which profoundly illuminates what is happening here.

Humanity is imagination, out of which empathy is possible.

There is a clear duty to be vividly alive – to be in the body – to bring to our listening our whole experience of ourselves, of persons, and of the world – in so far as we can.

The person we are listening to has a right to expect that, because otherwise what we are offering is inescapably – in the present moment – an experience of conditionality, isolation, ambiguity, abandonment and betrayal.

Humanity is about standing in the open – about having the courage to be defenceless – about fully engaging with one another with the whole of our being.

Humanity is about being aware of our own feelings.

**Reflecting-and-Refusing** – As the person says each little piece, you say back the whole felt essence of it.

The person tends to pause, asking : is that right? – Listening is easy, when the person refuses to be misunderstood!

Both people are taking great care that what is being said is heard in just the way that it is meant, that nothing gets twisted or heard in a merely conventional sense. In this way we

know that what is meant is what is heard, and so you and your companion stay close together. Even so, some of what comes may be private, just for the person.

A listener is not a guide. Your work as a listener is to enter the other person's world, as if it is your own, but always without losing the as-if. Always following – never losing sight of the person, the one who is carrying this weight of experiencing, living it, going through both the pain and the joy of it.

Our being together is gentle, vivid, friendly, supple, easy and respectful. There is a natural sway here, to-and-fro, flowing

forward. Sensing-and-saying may tend to slow down, gradually becoming clear, deep, wide, and strongly forward-moving.


Listening is very peaceful.

Listening is easy. You can do it.

From ancient times, listening – to ourselves and to others – has brought gifts of imagination, vision, blessing and healing.

What happens may be surprising.

What comes may be fresh and new – forceful and active – or tender and heart-warming.



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