

## ☞ **Empathy's Awakening**

Baruch Urieli defines empathy as “interest in and compassion for our fellow human being; it enables us to extend our inner being into that of the other person and directly experience something of his essential nature.” Surprisingly, the word *empathy* has only recently entered our language. Originally coined in 1912 as a translation for the German word *Einfühlung*—“to feel into”— Carl Rogers introduced the expression into the wider culture in the 1950s when he used *empathy* to describe a capacity he saw emerging in the younger generation.

If we can track the evolution of consciousness through the emergence of new words in a language—as Owen Barfield suggests in History in English Words—the arrival of the word *empathy* in our everyday language marked the arrival of a new reality in our midst. This new reality—empathy—is now opening up within our human community a new threshold in how we can meet, interact and inter-recognize each other. As a result, we can take this nascent capacity in hand and develop it into a social craft, becoming craftsmen of the heart. This is the threshold before us.

*Compassion is the radicalism of our age.*

Dalai Lama

## ☞ **The Pioneer**

Marshall Rosenberg's life work, laid out for us in his basic book, Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, has pioneered the means to language this threshold. He uncovered the secret that enables us to accelerate the development of empathy. He did this by realizing that, at the heart of every packet of communication, there lies a universal human need. He then modeled for us how, by gaining fluency in the vocabulary of needs, we can change our way of seeing and co-create a participatory reality in becoming. We can see human becoming in its arising.

In empathy lies the seed for a new imagination of how we can meet in our shared humanity. Rumi spoke of the “land beyond right and wrong”. Compassionate Communication offers us the languaging to meet and live in that land as we forge empathy, the art of leaping beyond oneself.

*...man is beginning in our time to cross the threshold of the spiritual world in the natural course of his development. This means that our present-day consciousness, which is limited in its perception to the physical world alone, is gradually supplemented by a capacity to perceive the etheric world, the world of living process.*

Baruch Urieli, Learning to Experience the Etheric World