



SUZANNE WYNN

CARL ROGERS

“An empathic way of being with another person has several facets. It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever he or she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in the other’s life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments; it means sensing meanings of which he or she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover totally unconscious feelings, since this would be too threatening. It includes communicating your sensings of the person’s world as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes at elements of which he or she is fearful. It means frequently checking with the person as to the accuracy of your sensings, and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion to the person in his or her inner world. By pointing to the possible meanings

in the flow of another person’s experiencing, you help the other to focus on this useful type of referent, to experience the meanings more fully, and to move forward in the experiencing.

To be with another in this way means that for the time being, you lay aside your own views and values in order to enter another’s world without prejudice. In some sense it means that you lay aside your self; this can only be done by persons who are secure enough in themselves that they know they will not get lost in what may turn out to be the strange or bizarre world of the other, and that they can comfortably return to their own world when they wish. ”



CARL ROGERS (1902–1987) was an influential psychologist and outstanding contributor to the fields of education, counseling, psychotherapy, peace, and conflict resolution. A founder of humanistic psychology, he profoundly influenced the world through his empathic presence, rigorous research, and authorship of sixteen books and more than 200 professional articles. This quote is excerpted from the book *A Way of Being* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1980), and reprinted by permission of the publisher.