

## **INNER KNOWING**

**By Pierre Zimmerman**

We discover ourselves through connection with others, and when it is absent, we become a stranger to ourselves. The experience of emotional resonance is familiar to almost everyone, because mirror neurons allow us to know in a visceral, first-hand way to feel others and empathize with them.

We are able to sense the internal state of our body; this is called interoception. We can also feel what others are feeling with a high degree of accuracy and discern someone else's emotional experience within our own body. This suggests that the strict demarcation between self and others is deeply delusional and that separate individuality is mistaken. The boundaries of 'you' and 'me' become permeable and the notion of a wholly separate self dissolves.

There are deep levels of mutual attunement, intimacy, resonance and inter-connectedness when a feeling of coherence emerges. It happens when we are in touch with our inner knowing, a sense of values, an ethical stance, efficacy, purpose and self-worth coming together and lining up inside. It evokes a feeling of wholeness that arises from the body and mind before they are split apart.

Often this felt sense of wholeness involves the area of the heart and belly and allows us to use our intuition. What thought divides, the heart unites, and when attention hones in upon the heart area, there is the experience of coming home. Once the mind knows its limits, it can rest in the fullness of the heart.

When we practice meditation or contemplative training, it sharpens and sustains our attention, enhances wellbeing, and leads to more empathic emotional responses to the suffering of others. It is linked with pro-social emotional behavior and important physiological markers of health. From the belly and felt sense we move to the heart with loving kindness and from there to the mind's clarity and wisdom, all aligned in the ground of being.

PZ/13/9/20