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***On Being “Enough”: A Levinasian Understanding of Therapeutic Presence, Care, and Love***

Levinas says, on page 40 of *Totality and Infinity,* that“alterity is possible only starting from *me*,” (1961/1969). While his ethics emphasizes the primacy of the Other, his thinking implies a new conceptualization of therapeutic presence. In choosing to work in a helping profession, therapists communicate to the world that they wish to care for the Other. Levinas asserts the ethical responsibility of caring for another out of “desire” to exceed oneself rather than the “need” to fill oneself up. Caring from a place of desire rather than need requires the Levinasian practices of dwelling and recollecting. A therapist is endeavoring to become a house of gifts. One way to care for another is to give out those gifts until the house is empty and the therapist depleted. Instead, a helping professional must work to stabilize their house, filling it with gifts, so that they can move aside in hospitality to invite the Other in. This paper draws on personal experience and philosophical ideas to explore how a therapist can cultivate a more sustainable kind of loving presence and why developing that sustainability is an ethical obligation.