

Take the 'What if YOU...?' Barrett Empathy Test ...

Just consider:

If you had spent every moment of your childhood and teenage years feeling as you were a weird freak in a terrifying or confusing world

and then you found somewhere that there were other people who felt exactly the same way AND people who understood who had ways to help you find your place and see your value...

**IF THAT PLACE DISAPPEARED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
WOULD IT AFFECT YOU?**

What if you and the others who needed that place – who had bad days and worse days but some not so bad and once or twice an actual good day – what if you heard that it was going to disappear but not quite yet ... or maybe not ... (please, not) ... and then **some of the people who helped you** to find some quiet sometimes, who liked you no matter what you were like, who seemed to really know you and understand you ... what if they began to disappear – first one, then another, then more ... and then someone really important who had brought you through to the other side of some really dark times.

What if they all went. Just gone.

And all the while people on the news who didn't know anything about the place were saying it was bad ... that maybe you were bad for being there.

And every day was like that. For weeks and months like that. More things disappearing out from under you. More people saying your first ever right place was terribly wrong.

More friends leaving. More comfortable faces with minds that really knew you just disappearing.

So you were on shaky ground all the time. So close to falling. All the time. All the time. And finally when there was almost nothing left around and under and above you but emptiness ... then they said you had to go as well.

WOULD THAT AFFECT YOU?

When you found yourself in a new place with new people who weren't awful but who didn't know you or understand you and what you needed to find a good kind of quiet ...

WOULD THAT CONTINUE TO AFFECT YOU AND THE WAY YOU FELT ABOUT THE WORLD?

WOULD THAT INFLUENCE WHAT YOU THOUGHT AND HOW YOU BEHAVED?

What if you weren't staying at that place at the time when that all happened?

But you were going back to visit when you felt a bit shaky or just to say hi and see the friendly faces of the people who really knew you and liked you for you – not just because it was their job while you'd been staying there. Or you'd drop in because it seemed to help you feel a tiny bit less low after you'd had an argument with your girlfriend or study was too hard or ...

**IF THAT PLACE DISAPPEARED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
WOULD IT AFFECT YOU?**

Would you wonder about all the others – little kids, older ones like you ... – and where *they* would go to find out *they* weren't weird freaks. Where would that girl you'd met in acute (who'd been on the waiting list) go? Where would your sister go if things got worse for her? Where would *you* go if ...

WOULD THIS BE THAT EXTRA THING THAT, ADDED TO YOUR OTHER STUFF MADE THINGS JUST TOO HARD? MADE YOU JUST TOO ALONE?

COULD IT NOT JUST BE A FACTOR BUT THE FACTOR?