# Beyond ‘isms & ‘ologies: Being a Researcher, Being Human

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The topics researched today, from international peace to climate change and consciousness, are about real people in the real world. They have to be: only be engaging in such concerns of humanity can funding be obtained. What is being researched is nothing less than ‘what it means to be human’, in all the depth, varieties and complexity that that phrase embraces. Whilst traditional, objective, evidence gathering and analysis still has a part of play, such research methods are unable to capture the essence of ‘Being human in the world’ (as Martin Heidegger phrased it).

To address such deep issues we as researchers can no longer isolate ourselves from reality: besides being researchers we are also human beings. Only by asking ourselves the question ‘what does it mean to be human?’ can we hope to understand the depths and essence, the dynamic and features of that which we research.

Through ‘experiential learning’ (Kolb 1984), Participatory Research (Reason 1994) and Action Research (Whitehead and McNiff) has emerged the need to fully engage with our subject in order to more fully understand it. Likewise a commitment to work with stake-holders to make worthwhile change in the practices being researched. This may mean that we too have to change, to move out of our comfort zones and face ourselves as thinking, feeling, human beings. What can research training programmes do to enable this? Some suggestions are included.