

Empathy

“The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change.”

Carol Rogers

“The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination.”

Carl Rogers

Levels of listening:

- 1) Pretending
- 2) Intellectual understanding
- 3) Sympathy
- 4) Empathy

Empathy

The practice of being fully present with yourself or another without trying to change the situation in any way **being with**, fully accepting what is. Focusing on the person’s feeling and needs. Can you hear the feelings and needs of the speaker without believing or disbelieving the story.

Empathy is being present; it is NOT agreement.

When empathizing we speak only in order to –

A. support the speaker in connecting with their feelings and needs

B. support ourselves in staying present

Speak in the form of a question: “Are you feeling ____ because you value ____?”

Use as few words as possible; the more words you use, the more likely you are bringing the attention to yourself.

Once you’ve made a guess, be quiet and listen to their response.

Just guessing helps the person self-connect.

Follow the person’s lead.

Once the person is fully heard and understood, help them formulate a request.

Things that **Block Empathy** for myself or others

Advising/educating: “I think you should _____” “This could turn into a very positive experience for you if you just...”

One-upping: “That’s nothing- wait till you hear what’s happened to me.”

Consoling/Reassuring: “It wasn’t your fault: you did the best you could.” “It’ll be OK.”

Story-telling: “That reminds me of the time

Sympathizing: “Oh you poor thing”

Shutting down: “Cheer up. Don’t feel so bad.” “Come on let’s go _____”

Interrogating: “When did this begin?”

Explaining: “I would have called, but

Correcting: "That's not how it happened."
Denial of Feelings: "Don't worry. It's silly to worry."
Minimizing: "This isn't so important."
Diagnosing: "Your problem is you're a compulsive worrier."
Analyzing: "I think you worry because you think you'll get love if you cover all the bases."
Spiritualizing: "When one door closes, another always opens", "It's probably karma"

Based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg, PhD (www.cnvc.org)

Recommended readings:

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, Marshall Rosenberg, Puddle Dancer Press

The Surprising Purpose of Anger, Marshall Rosenberg, Puddle Dancer Press

Life-Enriching Education, Marshall Rosenberg, Puddle Dancer Press

The HeartMath Solution, Doc Childre and Howard Martin

Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, Berrett-Koehler Pub.

The No-Fault Classroom: Tools to Resolve Conflict & Foster Relationship Intelligence, Sura Hart & Victoria Hodson

Peaceful Parent, Happy kids by Dr. Laura Markham, published by the Penguin Group.
website: ahaparenting.com

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Article on Empathy by presenter:

www.mainenvcnetwork.org/newsletter1.html

"The greatest revolution in our generation is that of human beings, who by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives."

Marilyn Ferguson