

## **EMPATHY: A DESIRABLE VALUE**

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### **Introduction**

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It's the ability to understand another person's thoughts and feelings in a situation from their point of view, rather than our own. It differs from sympathy, where one is moved by the thoughts and feelings of another but maintains an emotional distance.

Empathy is shown in how much compassion and understanding we can give to another. Sympathy is more of a feeling of pity for another. For example, you likely smile and take the trouble to remember people's names: that's empathy in action. Empathy, the ability to share another's emotional state, is a hallmark of social cognition.

Empathy looks like — connecting with the other person's pain and trying to understand how he or she might be feeling. On the opposite side of empathy, there is callousness, heartlessness, or cold-heartedness.

Empathy is one of the Soft Skills. These skills might include communication, active listening, mediation, negotiation. This helps to detect other's emotions and understand their perspective. When we feel accepted and validated, it builds trust, heals, and leads to greater happiness. Empathy isn't reserved exclusively for our personal lives, either.

Key words: Share, Thoughts, Feelings, Sympathy, Emotional Distance, Smile, Hall Mark, Social cognition, Callousness, Heartlessness, Cold-heartedness, Soft Skills.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It's the ability to understand another person's thoughts and feelings in a situation from their point of view, rather than our own. There is a difference of this word from sympathy, where one is moved by the thoughts and feelings of another but maintains an emotional distance. Empathy is shown in how much compassion and understanding we can give to another. Sympathy is more of a feeling of pity for another. To say in another words Empathy talks of our ability to understand the feelings of others. Whereas sympathy is about feeling relieved that we are not the victim of the same problems.

While speaking of a person who can be called as an Empath, he is the one who is precise in recognizing the emotions just by the look of that person. They also have the capacity to recognize the intensity beforehand. To show a good example for 'empathy' a person tries to smile and attempts to remember people's names, giving full attention in meetings, being curious

about their lives and interests and giving helpful feedback, these can be called as empathy in action.

Empathy becomes a symbol of social perception. Before understanding the concept clearly, one has to accept that every person has a negative as well as positive emotion or empathy and they effect face perception. In general there are 3 types namely:

- Cognitive Empathy: the ability to understand another's perspective. ...
- Emotional Empathy: the ability to physically feel what another person feels. ...
- Empathic Concern: the ability to sense what another needs from you.

For example Sympathy says, 'I'm sorry,' whereas empathy says, 'I'm hurting with you.' ” Here's a deeper failure of the two.

To show empathy one has to recognize that it looks like connecting with the other person's pain and trying to understand how he or she might be feeling. Speaking about empathy we have words like goodness, heartfulness, friendly, caring etc. On the opposite side of we have callousness, heartlessness, or cold-heartedness. If a person is not empathetic he can be mediocre. The behavioural pattern for being empathetic is compassionate, sensitive, sympathetic, empathic, and feeling for others. Empathy cannot equalize love but love has some level of empathy in it. The reason why empathy is so important is that it helps us better understand how others are feeling, and even feel it in ourselves. It helps us maintain relationships and plays a role in dictating our success in both personal and professional relationships.

We define positive empathy as understanding and vicariously sharing others' positive emotions. Imagining, recalling, observing, or learning of others' positive outcomes can trigger positive empathy. The power of empathy is at the core of emotional intelligence (EQ) and relationship mastery. It faithfully delivers the ability to connect with people we love and care about—and even handle those difficult people in our lives gracefully.

Expressing empathy in words are like....

1. “I'm here for you.”
2. “What do you need right now?”
3. “I'm happy to listen any time.”
4. “I'm sorry you are going through this.”
5. “That sounds really challenging.”
6. “I can see how that would be difficult.”

A person may think if empathy is logical or emotional, he is empathetic and may think he can read someone else's feelings, but may not always be right. And according to a paper published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, empathy might rely more on logic and less on instinct than previously believed.

If you say empathy is a form of emotional intelligence, it checks on the ability to understand or feel what another person is experiencing within their frame of reference. In the general scope of emotional intelligence, empathy is in self-awareness, social awareness, self-actualization, and transcendence. Empathy is a skill that can be learned and developed over time. The power of empathy is at the core of emotional intelligence (EQ) and relationship mastery. It faithfully delivers the ability to connect with people we love and care about—and even handle those difficult people in our lives gracefully.

To speak about four attributes of empathy as marked by a nursing scholar Theresa Wiseman, they are:

- Perspective taking.
- Stay out of judgment.
- Recognize emotions.
- Communication.

**And to recognise the signs of Empathy one has to check if**

1. A person is good at really listening to what others have to say.
2. People often tell about their problems.
3. One is good at picking up on how other people are feeling.
4. One often thinks about how other people feel.
5. Other people come for advice.
6. One often feels overwhelmed by tragic events.

For example, instead of apologizing, one can use phrases like **“I'd love to add,” “I think that,” or “Here's a different perspective.”** These phrases help the person to contribute without sounding scared to do so.

Developing the skills of empathy is always has a good design of involvement namely,

1. Cultivate curiosity. ...
2. Step out of your comfort zone. ...
3. Receive feedback. ...
4. Examine your biases. ...
5. Walk in the shoes of others. ...
6. Difficult, respectful conversations. ...
7. Join a shared cause. ...
8. Read widely.

Empathy in leadership is in fact a strength, not a weakness, and will be an essential skill for leaders to embody moving forward. Empathy reflects a state where in which you interact with others at a higher level of consciousness. It's heart-felt, resulting from asking ourselves whether our unconscious, subconscious, or conscious "stories" about others are honest and authentic or are really defense mechanisms designed to protect our "ego" selves. Empathy is learned behavior even though the capacity for it is inborn. The best way to think about empathy is an innate capacity that needs to be developed, and to see it as a detail in a larger picture. Some people lack empathy. Parents, teachers, peers, society, and culture affect how people feel about kindness, empathy, compassion, and helping behaviors. Some conditions may play a role in a lack of empathy such as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), antisocial personality disorder, and borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Empathy increases happiness. When we display empathy, people feel more satisfied with the conversation, and we become more socially attractive. Since we are social creatures, being able to navigate social situations successfully contributes to our overall sense of happiness and well-being.

The highest level of empathy is Directional empathy which is the highest level of empathy that allows you to move through the world and know what's coming toward you energetically and emotionally. A person's IQ affects empathy. Highly intelligent children are more likely to develop higher levels of empathic skills because they are more sensitive to other people's emotional cues, and are better able to understand other people's thoughts and feelings. Empathy is both verbal and non-verbal. It is communicated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors though the power of nonverbal communication of empathy may be

underestimated, as nonverbal behavior can communicate emotional states subtly and automatically.

When it comes to being a successful leader, empathy is key. Leaders need to be able to put themselves in their employees' shoes and understand their feelings and motivations to effectively lead them. When leaders lack empathy, they can make bad decisions that negatively impact their team. The ways to develop empathy in one's relationships is by,

1. Make Listening a Priority.
2. Share Their Feelings.
3. Make Yourself Vulnerable.
4. Take Action and Offer Help.
5. Empathy-Building Strategies.

The most important part of empathy is the Perceptive engagement. It can be considered the pinnacle of empathic skill, because it combines your capacity to sense and accurately identify the emotions of others, regulate your own emotions, take the perspective of others, focus on them with care and concern, and then do something skillful based upon your perceptions.

The 3 C's of empathy as per the psychologists are: Cognitive, Emotional, and Compassionate. As according to Alfred Adler, "Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another." Further John Steinbeck has defined it as "You can only understand people if you feel them in yourself." And Mother Teresa has opined on empathy as "If you judge people, you have no time to love them."

A good example of empathy is, you likely smile and take the trouble to remember people's names: that's empathy in action. Giving people your full attention in meetings, being curious about their lives and interests, and offering constructive feedback are all empathic behaviors, too.

One has to understand the differences between empathy and sympathy. It is found in how we relate to the other person. Empathy is shown in how much compassion and understanding we can give to another. Sympathy is more of a feeling of pity for another. That's how empathy looks like — connecting with the other person's pain and trying to understand how he or she might be feeling.

1. How to Show Empathy. ...
2. Acknowledge their pain. ...
3. Share how you feel. ...
4. Show gratitude that the person opened up. ...
5. Show interest. ...
6. Be encouraging. ...
7. Be supportive. ...
8. There is No Script for Empathy.

The golden rule of empathy is that it will motivate us to be good to others as we can imagine what it would be like to be in their position and think about how we would wish to be treated. Here, then, lies the origin of The Golden Rule. The Golden Rule can be expressed positively: 'Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. The best form of empathy is being compassionate: "With this kind of empathy we not only understand a person's predicament and feel with them, but are spontaneously moved to help, if needed." It has a core value as it plays a critical interpersonal and societal role, enabling sharing of experiences, needs, and desires between individuals and providing an emotional bridge that promotes prosocial behavior.

Research shows that empathy is a skill that can be learned and developed over time. Good signs of empathy are:

1. You are good at really listening to what others have to say.
2. People often tell you about their problems.
3. You are good at picking up on how other people are feeling.
4. You often think about how other people feel.
5. Other people come to you for advice.
6. You often feel overwhelmed by tragic events.

Therefore, empathy improves our capacity to communicate well with others, not just individually but as part of a team. It will help a person to effectively lead and inspire others, and develop more compassionate relationships. Empathy can be considered as a soft skill as it includes communication, active listening, mediation and negotiation. Sometimes it works as a key strength for some as it helps them to detect other's emotions and understand their perspective. When we feel accepted and validated, it builds trust, heals, and leads to greater happiness.

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