

Empathy

What is Empathy

- The respectful understanding of what someone is experiencing, whether that is self or another.
- "Emptying the mind and listening with our whole being."
- Fully receiving and understanding someone and communicating that understanding in some way
- Giving full focus and attention to the one expressing until they are complete.
 - It demands your full Presence!
 - "Don't just do something. Stand there!"
 - Listening and responding without preconceptions and judgements

Chinese Philosopher Chuang Tzu stated that true empathy requires listening with the whole being. Quoted from Marshall's Book: "The hearing that is only in the ears is one thing. The hearing of the understanding is another. But the hearing of the spirit is not limited to any one faculty, to the ear, or to the mind. Hence it demands the emptiness of all the faculties. And when the faculties are empty, then the whole being listens. There is then a direct grasp of what is right there before you that can never be heard with the ear or understood with the mind."

Why is Empathy Important?

1. Connection is #1 priority
2. It is the deep listening that creates the connection we desire
3. Until a person feels fully heard and understood and has explored their feelings and needs as much as possible, moving toward solutions will likely be ineffective
 - Solutions or strategies may be based on incomplete information and lack of understanding of feelings and needs and therefore won't meet the real needs.
 - People want and need to feel cared about and understood.
 - If we don't use empathy when it is needed, or we move through it too quickly, there is inadequate connection to create willingness for all needs to be met.
 - The person may think we don't care enough and that we can't wait to fix the problem and be free of them.
 - We don't convey our genuine interest in their feelings and needs.
4. Empathy opens the door of the heart of the giver and the receiver
5. It energizes and brings more aliveness
6. It brings people more fully into the present moment

In the aliveness and full presence that results, true compassion is accessed and we return to our natural state of giving and caring and wanting to make life more wonderful for each other.

Then..... solutions and strategies can be created and are joyfully effective in meeting all needs.



Empathy Reminders

Empathetic Listening

1. Hold the intention to connect
2. Empty your mind of preconceptions and judgements
3. Focus completely on the one expressing until they are complete
4. Listen for feelings and needs in particular
 - a. Observation is usually inherent in the conversation
 - b. Request is usually inherent for empathy
 - c. May help them define what they are requesting if at right timing
5. During pauses in their speaking, offer guesses about the feelings and needs
 - Use paraphrasing/summarizing to clarify what you have heard, focusing on feelings and needs
 - Always make it a question or guess that reveals your understanding and allows for the speaker to make corrections. Do not tell or assume.
 - Don't worry about correctness. You are opening the door for exploring and clarifying what is going on. It is the caring connection that is important. It's like peeling an onion.
 - Listen for responses that indicate completion like "Exactly!" or "Right!"
 - Check to make sure the person feels complete by asking them if have anything else they want you to understand or anything else they would like to express before going on.
 - Questions focus on:
 - A. **What others are observing:** "Are you reacting to how many times I was gone last week?"
 - B. **How others are feeling and the needs generating the feelings:** "Are you feeling hurt because you would have liked more appreciation for your efforts than you received?"
 - C. **What others are requesting:** "Are you wanting me to tell you my reasons for saying what I did?" "Are you wanting to ask him to call you if he will be late?"

- Format:
1. When happens
 2. Are you feeling.....(I imagine, I wonder if, It sounds like you're feeling...)
 3. Because you're needing.....(I'm curious whether... Are you needing...)
 4. (And are you wanting.....from themselves or another or me)



When Is Empathy Complete?

Take your time with really connecting with feelings and needs.

- Allow full expression of feelings
- Allow the space and presence for the person to fully experience the feelings and needs

You will know there is a shift toward next phase if person

- stops talking/responding to your empathic guesses
- starts moving into strategies

Check with them to make sure all has been expressed and experienced that really wants to be.

- Ask: “Is there anything more you want me to understand about this now?”

Moving into next phase will be moving toward requests or strategies.

You might ask: “Are you wanting them (or me, or yourself) to (fill in with a guess of what they might be wanting)?”

“Would you like something from me right now?”

“Would you like to strategize together?”

