

Empathy – Not Empathy

EMPATHY

- **Empathy is giving your full attention** to another by either silently or verbally guessing their feelings and needs.
- **Empathy requires a willingness to set yourself aside** for the moment and completely enter the other's world with acceptance and respect. It also requires a willingness to be with someone who is in pain of difficulty without trying to get them out of it.

NOT EMPATHY (These are responses that you might offer in response to someone's expression of pain or celebration. Usually when someone is expressing difficulty, empathy is the need they want met first.)

- **SYMPATHY:** Bring attention back to yourself. *"Oh, I am so sorry, I feel terrible for you."*
- **ADVICE:** You assume the person needs information. *"Well, what you could do is. . ."*
- **EXPLAIN / ANALYZE:** You believe that if you tell someone why they feel the way they do, they will feel better. *"You just feel bad because . . ."*
- **CORRECT:** You try to point out someone's mistake in interpreting. *"He didn't do that to hurt you, he was just in a hurry."*
- **CONSOLE:** *"It will be okay. You're okay, everything will work out."*
- **TELL A STORY:** *"The same thing happened to me. This one time . . ."*
- **PUSH AWAY FEELINGS:** You might be uncomfortable so you tell others not to feel what they feel. *"Come on smile, don't be sad." "Just calm down and take a deep breath"*
- **INVESTIGATE / INTEROGATE:** *"Why did you do that? What made you feel that way?"*
- **EVALUATE:** You decide if another's emotional response is appropriate or not. *"You are over reacting. This is no big deal."*
- **EDUCATE:** *"What I see about the situation is . . . The reason you feel like that is. . ."*
- **ONE-UP:** *"That's awful, but something even worse happened to me and I was devastated."*
- **DIAGNOSE:** *"Sounds like you had a panic attack. I know some good herbs for anxiety."*
- **DEMAND:** *"If you don't get control of your emotions, I'm leaving!"*
- **DENIAL OF CHOICE:** *"It's a hard thing, but we all have to do it."*
- **NOD & SMILE** You feel uncomfortable and just want to get out of the situation.
- **COLLUSION:** You join the jackal talk. *"You're right he really is a jerk!"*

Adapted from a handout by Marshall Rosenberg
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