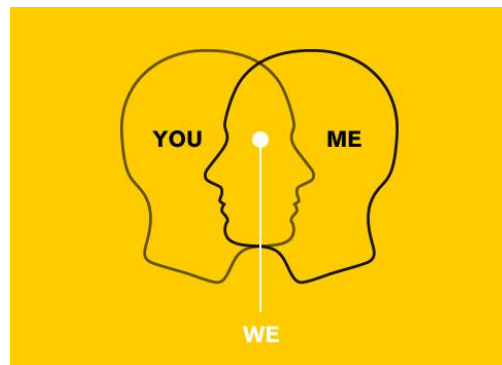


Empathy: Living in their shoes
Shyam . S. Salim and Reeya Fernandez
 Principal Scientist, SEET Division, CMFRI
 Email:shyam.icar@gmail.com

Empathy is the awareness of the feelings and emotions of other people. It is a key element of Emotional Intelligence, the link between self and others, because it is how we as individuals understand what others are experiencing *as if we were feeling it ourselves*.

Empathy is the power of entering into another's personality and imaginatively experiencing his experiences. It is the awareness of others feelings, needs and concerns.



Elements of empathy

1. Understanding others

This is sensing others feelings and perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns. These are people who:

- Listen well and pay attention to non-verbal communication, picking up subtle cues almost subconsciously.
- Show sensitivity and understand others perspectives.
- Are able to help other people based on their understanding of those people's needs and feelings.

2. Developing others

Developing others means acting on their needs and concerns and helping them to develop to their full potential. These people are who:

- Reward and praise people for their strengths and accomplishments and provide feedback designed to focus on how to improve.
- Provide mentoring and coaching to help others to develop to their full potential.
- Provide stretching assignments that will help their teams to develop.

3. Having a service Orientation

Primarily aimed at work situations having a service orientation means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty. These are people who:

- Go the extra mile for customers
- They will genuinely understand customers' needs and go out of their way to help meet them.

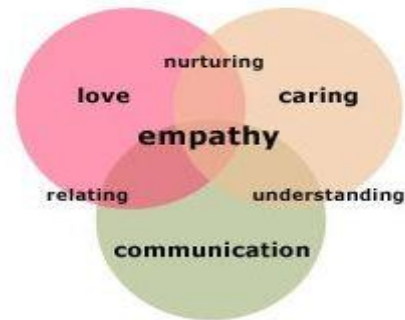


- They become trusted advisor to customers. Developing long term relationship between customer and organization.

4. Leveraging Diversity

This means being able to create and develop opportunities through different kinds of people, recognizing and celebrating that brings something different. People with this skill

- Respect and relate well to everyone regardless of their background.
- They see diversity as an opportunity, understanding that diverse teams work much better than teams.
- They challenge intolerance, bias and stereotyping when they see it.
- They create an atmosphere that is respectful towards everyone.



5. Political Awareness

This means sensing and responding to a group's emotional undercurrents and power relationships.

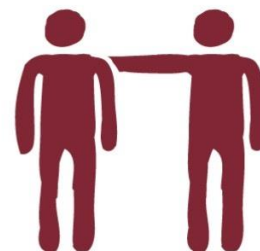
- Can help individuals to navigate organizational relationships effectively allowing them to achieve where others may previously have failed.

Types of Empathy

- **Cognitive Empathy**- Understanding someone's thoughts and emotions in a very rational rather than emotional sense.
- **Emotional Empathy**- This is catching someone else's feelings so that you literally feel them too.
- **Compassionate Empathy**- Understanding someone's feelings and taking appropriate action to help.

Why Practice Empathy?

- Will be more likely to treat the people you care about the way they wish you would treat them.
- Will better understand the needs of people around you.
- Will more clearly understand the perception you create in others with your words and actions.
- Will understand the unspoken parts of your communication with others.
- Will better understand the needs of your customers at work.
- Will have less trouble dealing with interpersonal conflict both at home and at work.
- Will be able to more accurately predict the

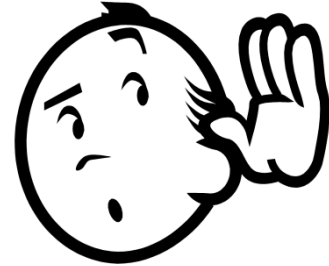


- actions and reactions of people you interact with.
- Will learn how to motivate the people around you.
 - Will more effectively convince others of your point of view.
 - Will experience the world in higher resolution as you perceive through not only your perspective but the perspectives of those around you.
 - Will find it easier to deal with the negativity of others if you can better understand their motivations and fears.

How to Practice

Listen

Listen intently when people speak to you. Conversations, especially regarding heated topics, often form a rhythm of back and forth speaking, with each party starting a point just before the conversation partner has ended his or her point. Before whoever is speaking has finished, you have already formulated your response, and you can't wait to spit it out. Force yourself to listen to the words you're hearing. Consider the speaker's motivation behind saying what he or she is saying.



Watch and Wonder

Look at the people around you and imagine who they might be, what they might be thinking and feeling, and where they are trying to go right now. Are they frustrated? Happy? Singing? Looking at their phones? Try to actually wonder and care.

Know Your Enemies

Imagine the entire situation from that person's point of view. How does this person feel about how you respond to them when you disagree? What fears cause the other person to be tense and hard to reason with? How do you exacerbate those fears rather than calm them? What *valid* arguments could this person make against your views and your handling of the situation. Just going through this exercise (maybe a couple of times with the same subject) can greatly reduce your frustration and anxiety over some of the most stressful interpersonal situations.

Choose the Other Side

It requires a forced third person perspective, which takes a lot of discipline when you're thinking about your own stress and emotions.

