Skill 3. Empathy - Part I

Listen with your head and your heart.

Empathy is sensing another's feelings and attitudes as if we had experienced them ourselves.

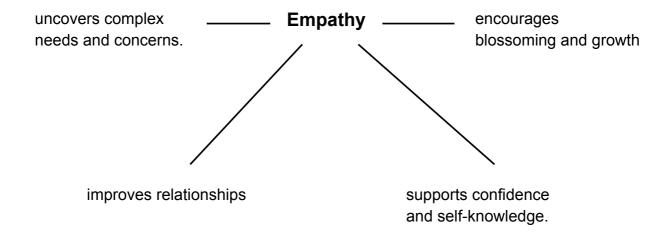
It is our willingness to enter another's world, and being able to communicate to that person our sensitivity to them.

It is not blind sentimentality; it always retains some objectivity and distance.

We do not lose our own identity, though we discover our common humanity.

Create empathy by:

- taking seriously others' needs and concerns
- valuing feelings and attitudes
- respecting others' privacy, experience and values
- listening actively
- encouraging further elaboration and clarification
- using open body language and a warm vocal tone
- reserving judgement and blame
- displaying interest in what others communicate
- withholding unsought advice
- supporting others' attempts to find a solution
- making affirming statements and gestures.



COMMUNICATION KILLERS

Which ones do you do? Tag them as a 'no-no'!

Examples Threatening: "If you are not able to get to work on **DOMINATION** time we'll have to review your job here?", "Do it or else." Ordering: "I'll see you immediately in my office.", "Don't ask me why, just do it because I said so." Criticising: "You don't work hard enough.", "You're always complaining." Name-calling: "Only an idiot would say that.", "You stupid fool." "You're neurotic." "Should"ing or "Ought"ing: "You ought to face the facts.", "You shouldn't be so angry." Withholding Relevant Information: "If you knew **MANIPULATION** more about this you would see it differently." Interrogating: "How many hours did this take you?" "How much did this cost?" Why are you so late?" "What are you doing now?" Praising to Manipulate: "You're so good at report writing, I'd like you to do this one." Diagnosing Motives: "You are very possessive." **DISEMPOWERMENT** "You've always had a problem with time management." Untimely Advice: "I don't seem to be managing." "If you'd just straighten up your desk you would not be in this panic." "Why didn't you do it this way?" "Just Ignore him." Changing the Topic: "I'm worried about my son's progress at school". "Yes it is a worry...Did I tell you that I'm applying for a new job?" Persuading with Logic: "There's nothing to be upset about. It's all quite reasonable – we just... then we...". Topping: "I smashed the car last week...... " "When I smashed my car..." Refusing to Address the Issue: "There's nothing to **DENIAL** discuss. I can't see any problems." Reassuring: "Don't be nervous.", "Don't worry, it will work out.", "You'll be fine."

Active Listening for Different Purposes

SKILLS	Non-verbal Skills	Following Skills	Reflecting Skills
PURPOSES			
To Gain Information to find out the details of what another is saying.	Use appropriate body language – nodding, noting, recording,	Ask many questions. Write notes.	Confirm your understanding by repeating key points.
to clarify instructions and to gain information.	watching. Focus your concentration, block out distractions.	Use memory joggers. Avoid interrogating and pre-judging.	
To Give Affirmation			
to show empathy and give acknowledgement.	Choose a non-distracting and comfortable environment. Is privacy needed?	Use minimal verbal encouragers – such as "mm" and "ah hah".	Reflect back both feelings and content.
to help the speaker hear and understand his or her own meaning.	Remove inappropriate physical barriers e.g. large desk Consider moving closer to	Ask only occasional questions. Allow attentive silences.	Use your own words to feed back your understanding of the speaker's meaning.
	the speaker.		Summarise the major concerns.
	Adopt an open, encouraging posture with welcoming gestures, and appropriate eye contact to show attention and involvement.		Use a tone of voice that shows warmth and interest.
To Respond to Inflammation			
to let the speaker know you've heard the complaint, the anger and/or the accusation.	Avoid defensive or aggressive posture and gestures.	Use obvious verbal indicators that you've understood – a clear "yes", a strong "OK".	As for listening to affirm (above). In reflecting back, stay
to defuse the strong emotions.	Consider extra distance to make you feel safe.	Ask questions to understand the basis of the attack.	emotionally present. Your tone of voice should not be flat.
	Use attentive eye contact and an assertive stance.		Once the dust has settled, a contributions conversation may help to rebuild empathy.

More active listening hints

- Put the focus of attention totally on the speaker. Avoid talking about yourself. Don't introduce well intentioned comments at that time.
- Repeat conversationally and tentatively, in your words, your understanding of the speaker's meaning.
- Feed back feelings, as well as content. Perhaps you will ask: "How do you feel about that?" or "How did that affect you?")
- Reflect back not only to show you understand, but also so the speaker can hear and understand his or her own meaning.
- Try again if your active listening statement is not well received.
- Allow silences in the conversation. Resist filling in every space with your talk. Respond to them by waiting. Then, perhaps ask: "How does it all seem to you now?"
- Allow the conversation topic to change once the speaker is ready to move on or leave it for a while.