

EMPATHY

We'd like to make an argument in favor of a more empathetic world. We believe if we understood the value of showing others empathy as our first response, the world would be much more loving for all. By understanding what empathy really is, what it isn't, and how it is beneficial to you and those around you, the world will be kinder. And if everyone was more empathetic, humanity would see a much more loving connection.

What is Empathy?

Empathy differs from sympathy in that sympathy is a feeling of similarity for a person, whereas empathy is putting yourself in that person's spirit, and trying to understand their perspective. Empathy is the idea of "putting yourself in someone else's being" and it comes with many benefits.

What Empathy Isn't

Empathy is not weakness. It is a neutral act of seeking to understand another. When paired with self-respect and assertiveness, it becomes the most powerful tool of loving speech. Just because you can empathize with someone, does not give them the right to keep hurting you. It is showing them that you understand their world – their thoughts and feelings – and with self-respect and assertiveness it is an ability to help them make the right choice in the future.

Benefits

Relationship Building

All too often we are in conflict, which often results in many of us only thinking of our own needs. Our first thought is often a righting reflex. By outing yourself in someone else's being we show others that we care and want to see the world from their perspective, thoughts and feelings. Empathy builds trust, understanding, and strengthens our relationships. When you experience someone trying to see your perspective we are sure they gain respect and appreciation for them. We can be assured others feel the same way.

Self-Regulation

When we look at the world from someone else's point of view, we are also looking at our actions and how they impact people. You would be surprised by how many people can't do this! Thinking about how our actions and words impact others is a form of empathy, but it is also self-regulation. It stops us from reacting – from our perspective of the world. This is a skill that is difficult to master, but will create a much healthier you; physically, mentally and spiritually.

Reciprocity

If we want people's respect, practice empathy. If we want to reduce the shame in our partners, friends and family, practice empathy. If we want to change the community conditions that promote suffering, practice empathy. From this we will be surprised by how people will go out of their way to help and be present for you. Be sure to seek to understand. Empathy is not angry, nor does it expect anything in return, and it gives back.