

Empathic Listening

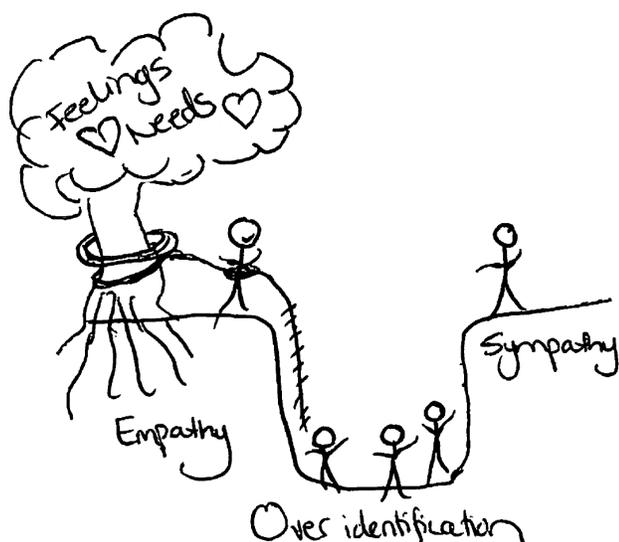
Empathy is based in the intention to connect with the feelings and needs of another. It involves giving the gift of our presence: without judgment, analysis, suggestions, stories or any motivation to fix the other person.

“Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. Instead of offering others empathy, we often have a strong urge to give advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling. Empathy, however, calls upon us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being.”

– Marshall Rosenberg

Empathy Involves:

- Respecting that each person is the authority on how he/she is ... so just guess: It doesn't have to be “right”
- Focusing attention on life-giving information: feelings and needs
- Staying present with another's timing by restraining your desire to fix it for them before they are ready for solutions
- Aiming to understand rather than “get it right”



Non-Empathic Responses:

Advise: “If you spoke more politely you would get what you needed.”

Commiserate: “That is terrible – they have no right to do that to you!”

Console: “It wasn’t your fault, you did the best you could!”

Correct: “You are misunderstanding me – I never said that.”

Educate: “I am sure you will learn important lessons from this.”

Explain: “I did mean to pick you up on time but all the lights were red.”

Evaluate: “If you were paying attention then ...”

Fix: “What will help you is if you ...”

Interrogate: “What stopped you? Why? Didn’t you understand?”

One-up: “You should hear what happened to me...”

Shut down: “Never mind, it doesn’t matter”

Sympathize: “You poor thing”

Story tell: “That reminds me of the time when ..”

Presence

When trauma hits and heartbreak rips,
We need support and love, not solemn bits,
And shortened hugs.

But that's all there seems to be.

I'm so sorry's and awkward pats on the knee.
And actually that doesn't feel that great,

When your mom's gone, and you can't seal that ache
Caused by your emotions being real, awake.

And you just want presence.

Someone to sit there and listen and empathize back,
And swallow their wisdom.

And I don't wanna wallow in criticism,
Or follow what's missing.
And so missing this vision,
The jist of what's living in me.

The connection I felt when I could just be.

I mean, just be there for someone and listen to loved ones,
And let them know you hear 'em, and its not just by custom.
But you're someone that's here, that they can fully put trust in.

And this isn't just in, but it seems like no one knows
How to empathize and not fix it, and just sit with the woe,
And let it be shown, with no judgments attached,
Or bunches of facts, or some misperceived duty to trudge through the acts,
Of consoling when you're actually holding yourself aloof,
'Cause you're also basking in mourning.

And there's no have-to's in support.

Sometimes it's worse, if you can't sit with the person, cause you haven't
Worked on you first, in sadness, it hurts, I know.

That's why I'm speaking.

Cause I found presence such a powerful teaching.
An hour of reaching relief by piecing back peace from relieving such deep
Support that I'm eager to weep and escort others to relieve their grief,
Not abort.

So I put this out, a request:
As something to invest in.
If someone's in pain and you're willing to, a suggestion:
Center your brain on the present of presence and in there remain as a blessing.

Spoken word by Julian Allen, from the Connected Parenting CD, sold by BAYNVC.