



## Empathy

Empathy is a cornerstone of effective relationships as it builds trust. It often is viewed as a sort of nicety or luxury in business, assuming that logic will prevail. However, in a complex world and business setting, receiving the necessary feedback and appropriate expression of challenge is dependent on building trust in relationships.



**Empathy is the ability to perceive and seek-out the emotions, issues, and concerns of others and take appropriate action and approach considering those insights.** In that backdrop, empathy builds trust in a practical way in the workplace, or any relationship.

Empathy is:

- A demonstration of genuine care and concern for others.
- A noticeable effort to perceive what is alive and important in another person.
- Anticipating the efforts needed for success in *relationships*.
- Identifying and adjusting the appropriate energy and pace needed for situation.
- Anticipating how to act and be with people to solicit the best from them.
- Awareness of one's own emotions, emotional agendas, and self-talk and how it impacts our perception of others.
- Supporting others to own feelings and perceptions, and, at the same time, you do not become distressed or necessarily embrace the viewpoint.
- Leading from a place of curiosity in conversation to understand others as *humans* rather than as tasks, objects, or obstacles.

When a trusting relationship is forged, trust asks each person to speak the truth. Truth is spoken readily with two conditions: First, do I believe that you hold my care and concern? Second, do I believe that my truth will be spoken without retribution, ridicule, or punishment? If so, then truth is more readily spoken between colleagues.

There is a certain presence and outlook to empathy, one that is open and present to others and an outlook that is grounded in curiosity. Leaders do not need to mix-up empathy with sympathy; the two are different in terms of how far we get into the other person's issues with them. Empathy can be expressed in any domain, while sympathy tends to be more personal. When in doubt, just encourage yourself to be more human.

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