

Ice Breaker

- Seven words about your best friend.

Having Empathy

Chi Ku

Empathy

Definition of *empathy*

1
: the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively **explicit** manner

also : the capacity for this

2
: the imaginative **projection** of a subjective state into an object so that the object appears to be infused with it

Empathy v.s. Sympathy

Sympathy and *empathy* are closely related words, bound by shared origins and the similar circumstances in which each is applicable, yet they are not synonymous. For one thing, *sympathy* is considerably older than *empathy*, having existed in our language for several hundred years before its cousin was introduced, and its greater age is reflected in a wider breadth of meaning. *Sympathy* may refer to "feelings of loyalty" or "unity or harmony in action or effect," meanings not shared by *empathy*. In the contexts where the two words do overlap, *sympathy* implies sharing (or having the capacity to share) the feelings of another, while *empathy* tends to be used to mean imagining, or having the capacity to imagine, feelings that one does not actually have.

How empathy helps me

- Empathy helps me understand others' feelings.
- Empathy helps me appreciate others' needs.
- Empathy helps me see others' view points.
- Empathy helps me build better relationships.
- Empathy helps me adjust to new environments faster.
- Empathy helps me feel more confident about myself.

Bible Verses: be considerate

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Titus 3:2 To speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

1 Corinthians 10:24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Bible Verses: share each other's burdens

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
2. Hebrews 10:24-25 **And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; **but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**
3. 1 Peter 4:10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.
4. Romans 12:15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.
5. Galatians 6:2-3 **Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.** If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

Bible Verses: Love

10. Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

11. Galatians 5:14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

12. 1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.

13. Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Bible Verses: body of Christ

14. 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 This makes for harmony among the members, **so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.**

15. Romans 12:5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Bible Verses: Imitator of the Lord

16. Hebrews 4:13-16 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

17. Psalm 103:13–14 As a father has compassion on his children, **so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;** for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

18. Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

My experiences

- When I was in the elementary school, my classmates often made fun of me and I felt angry often.
- When I was young, every time I had a quarrel with my sister, my Dad would blame me.
- When I was in the middle school, the academic training was very rigorous. I would be punished for mistakes in the exam. So, I hated my teachers.

I later learned

- My classmates made fun of me because I was shy. It is natural for kids to bully kids that seem weak. There was nothing wrong with me.
- Because my sister was pretty and her personality resembles my Dad, it was natural for my father to protect her.
- Because my teachers were evaluated against students' test scores, they were motivated to give pressure on us to perform.

My Experiences

- When I was in the high school, there was tough competition among students trying to get into a few slots in the top universities. So, some of us did not get along well.
- I played duplicate bridge in college. My team mate would scold me for losing a trick without analyzing the hand. So, I feel frustrated.
- In my work, I try hard to understand my boss' goals and strive to achieve them. But, I sometimes still get blamed when things go wrong.

I later learned

- When similar situations happened in college and at work, I realized that it was not my peers disliked me. It was simply because the environment was tough.
- When later tried to partner with less experienced bridge players, I realized that how frustrated it could be when your partner makes a mistake.
- When I became an architect, I realized how much pressure was on a leader to reduce problems in a project.

How I felt

- I thought I was doing the right thing.
- I thought I was following what my parents and teachers taught me.
- But, I did not get the expected reactions from others.
- Moreover, my interaction with others sometimes caused frustration for all parties.

What went wrong

- I did not understand how others think and feel.
- I did not grasp how the environment worked.
- I got frustrated because I did not know what I did wrong.
- I did not have the faith that, in the world God created, everything has a reason.
- Parents and teachers can not teach everything. We need to rely on God's words to help me have more empathy.

How to nurture empathy

- Study God's words.
- Let the Spirit guide us.
- Have humility.
- Believe that God has a purpose for everything.
- Learn from my own and others' experiences.

How to apply to the ideal world

- When in unexpected negative situation, try to calm my emotions down. I sometime seek help from pastors, my family, counselors and friends etc. It also helps a lot if you have contingency plans for black swan situations.
- Communicate with people involved in the situation and study the environment.
- With a belief that God has a reason for everything, try to think from others' view point.
- Formulate a plan of action according to my perception of God's will and how others feel. A few principles include: achieve a win-win solution, be fair to all parties and abide by God's words.

Real life difficulties

- Under several situations, I got emotional. Fear and anger dominated my thinking.
- In a few cases, my family and friends did not support me.
- Under many situations, I could not access the information I needed. So, there was a lot of uncertainties.
- Under a few situations, I was not able to find a win-win solution, I was not able to communicate my position effectively or I did not recognize what God wants.

Nurturing Empathy

- To nurture empathy, I need to learn from past experiences. Try to piece together the context and rationalize the events according to God's purpose. This will strengthen by faith so that I won't be as emotional next time.
- To nurture empathy, I need to build better relationships and have risk control measures in place. This will help mitigate uncertainties. For example, my plan would take the worst outcome I can accept into consideration.
- To nurture empathy, I need to communicate with God often in order to understand my purpose so that I could devise a win-win plan relative to my purpose.

Conclusion

- Empathy is based on our faith in God.
- Empathy helps avoid frustration.
- Empathy helps my relationships.
- Empathy is gradually learned.
- We also need to train ourselves to apply empathy in the real world.

Application

- Seven words about the person that you dislike the most.