

EMPATHY

Module 3:

Key Words:

Definition of Empathy, Types of Empathy, Strategies to Develop Empathy, Empathy vs Sympathy, Importance of Empathy

Duration:

4 Hours

Learning Outcomes:

- To better understand what is Empathy and its importance in people's lives
- To identify empathy types
- To be able to distinguish difference between empathy and sympathy
- To learn better strategies to be able to develop empathy
- To recognize benefits of empathy and its positives effects

1. Introduction and Definitions

Since man is a social being, it is not possible for him to live alone. For this reason, although the individual can meet the physical needs necessary for his life alone, he needs others to continue his life. Because the individual feels obliged to establish relations with others while continuing his social life. The positive outcome of the relationship that the individual establishes with his environment depends primarily on himself and then on his ability to understand and accept his environment. On the contrary, the inability of the individual to establish a strong and good relationship with his/her environment leads to interpersonal communication disorder and disconnection. Individuals who can communicate well with their environment can fully convey their feelings, thoughts and demands. Therefore, the ability of individuals to understand each other's feelings is related to the quality of their communication. Individuals who can communicate with each other in a healthy way can understand what they feel as well as convey their feelings and thoughts fully. This is explained by the concept of empathy.

Empathy is the ability to isolate oneself from one's feelings and thoughts, to be aware of and understand another's beliefs, desires, and especially feelings. The person understands the other person so well that he/she starts to feel like him/her. Empathy provides many conveniences in social relations. It allows the person to show that he understands the other person and that he cares about them. This makes communication easier. Misunderstandings are reduced, an atmosphere of sincerity and trust develops rapidly, problems are expressed more easily, and thus faster and easier solutions are produced. Closer, meaningful, and helpful friendships are made. Studies about the relationship between empathy and gender have revealed that women can empathize more and at a higher level than men. The relationship between empathy and age is directly proportional. As people get older, they can empathize better and understand the person better.

In order to empathize, first of all, it is necessary to know and accept that the other person is a human being like us and has different values and beliefs from us. Based on this acceptance, efforts should be made not to judge the person we interact with as right/unjust, good/bad, but only to understand his/her situation (Harrow, 1999). Many problems we experience in modern life are related to empathy. Empathy is extremely important in terms of values and solidarity that we forget in daily life. Again, among many worries and problems, it is extremely difficult for us to slip into the other person's place. Although the ability to empathize is an innate feature in humans, it can be lost rapidly under changing conditions. The reason for this is that people quickly forget these features because they do not use them often. The way to gain empathy skills later; trying to understand our own thoughts and behaviors, avoiding prejudice, and letting

things flow.

2. The Place of Empathy in Our Personal and Social Life

Empathy is much more than being nice to the other person. Empathy is to understand the other person by doing the best we can. In societies that give empathy to their children from a very young age, people will be more kind, self-sacrificing, understanding and civilized. The child who grew up with the phenomenon of empathy would communicate well and securely by approaching the feelings and thoughts of others through empathy in every environment, in every job, in every path he chose. The place of empathy in personal and social life is getting more and more important in life conditions that are getting harder day by day. Empathy motivates us to do better and better things together in our lives and to respect and understand each other. If people change, society changes, if society changes, the world changes. In societies with strong social communication, empathy skills have developed.



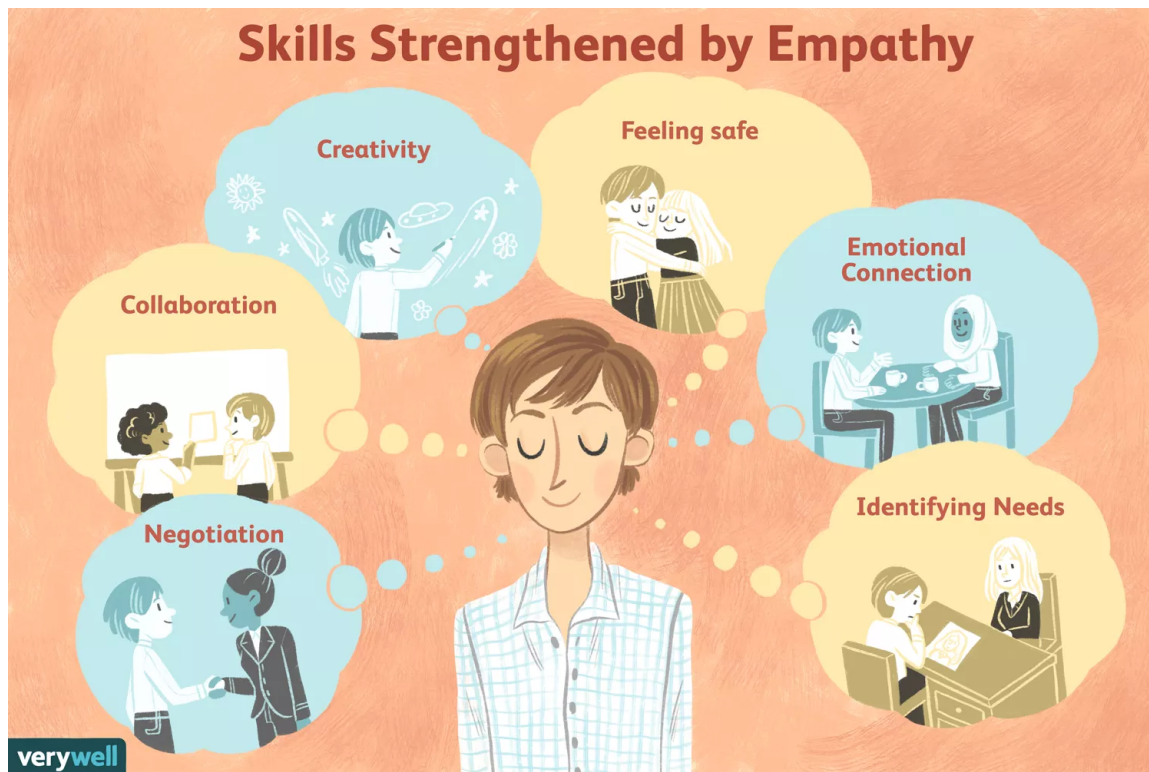
3. Why should empathy be developed?

Children should be able to understand the feelings of others and be sensitive to the feelings of others. The development of empathy can be seen as a factor that increases social intelligence. Due to the relationship between empathy and social intelligence, it is also possible to contribute

to the development of social intelligence with empathy training. According to the observations; Children with empathy become happy and responsible individuals in the future.

As the level of empathy increases in boys, aggression decreases. It enables the individual to see the good and positive in the people around him. Empathy facilitates being strong and making the right choices without being affected by the environment. Rogers (1975) found a positive relationship between teachers' empathic level and students' academic achievement levels.

4. Why Empathy Matters



Empathy helps connect people, moving them toward each other in a helping and/or healing capacity. As acclaimed author and leadership expert Stephen Covey stated, "When you show deep empathy toward others, their defense energy goes down and positive energy replaces it. That's when you can get more creative in solving problems."

As we live our lives at work and at home, we are continually interacting and balancing relationship dynamics. When we lack empathy, we are unable to develop and nurture those

interpersonal connections, leading to strained relationships, broken trust, loss of relationships, and isolation. It becomes more difficult to repair conflicts, work collaboratively, or solve problems when we don't practice empathy.

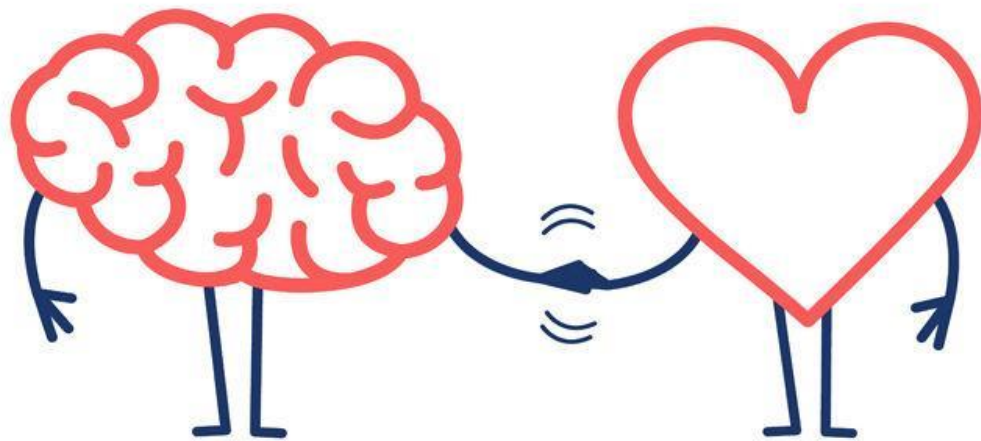
Our society relies on empathy to facilitate connections and forward movement. When the empathy piece is missing, we become more disconnected and less effective in our productivity and innovation of new ideas. Practicing empathy is important in a variety of relationship dynamics, such as those among:

- Business partners
- Colleagues
- Community groups
- Coworkers
- Dating Relationships
- Families
- Friends
- Marriages
- Siblings

5.Types of Empathy

5.1 Instinctive Empathy

Instinctive Empathy is a form of empathy that we bring with us as we come into the world, with ourselves. It is a type of empathy that allows us to experience emotions such as sadness, joy and happiness experienced by others, just like them. The involuntary tears you shed while watching an emotional movie is an example of this type.



5.2. Relational Empathy

The type of empathy that is established in response to the feelings of the people we are in a relationship with. The degree of closeness of the relationship also affects our empathy. The closer we are, the greater our ability to empathize.



5.3. Experiential Empathy

It is a type that we learn through our own personal experiences.



6. Is Empathy Genetic?

Research has found that the ability to practice empathy is influenced by genetics. In fact, it is consistently shown that women are more likely to pick up on emotional cues and more accurately discern emotions than men.

In a research study conducted with the genetic testing and analysis company 23andMe, there was a specific genetic variant identified as related to our capacity to empathize, near the gene *LRRN1* on chromosome 3, "which is a highly active part of the brain called the striatum."

It is suggested that activity in this part of the brain is connected with our ability to feel empathy. Although there is more research to be done, these findings are helping scientists discover more about the connections between genetic influence on the development and ability to feel empathy.



6.1 Nature vs. Nurture

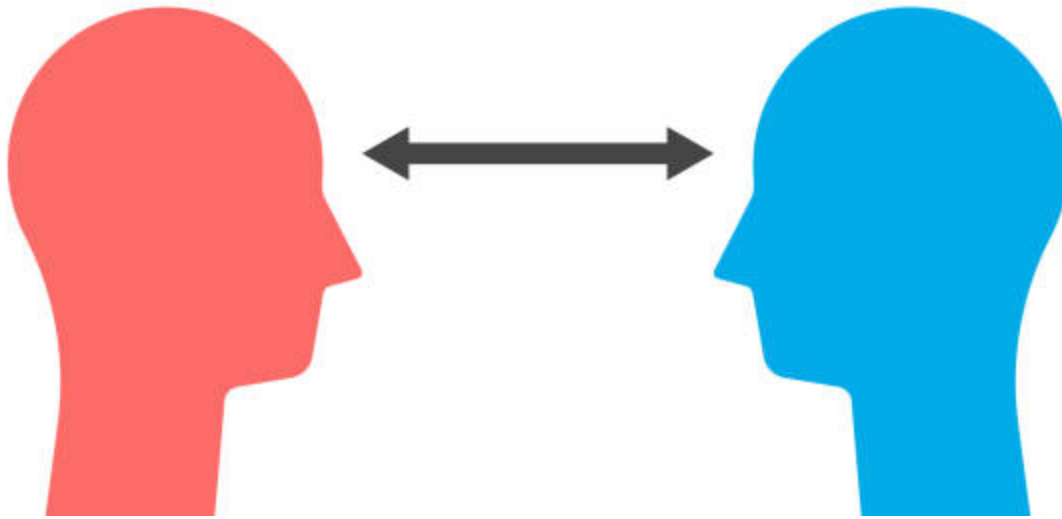
Even though genetics have been found to influence our capacity for feeling empathy, there is much to say about our social learning experiences as well. You may have already heard the phrase "nature versus nurture." This phrase references a long-standing debate among researchers, arguing what they believe to have a greater influence on our behaviors, traits, and conditions.

Some researchers suggest that genetics are the primary influence, while others believe that our environment and social interactions can help us develop things like empathy

7.Seven Keys of E.M.P.A.T.H.Y

Studies of scientists show that while non-verbal factors are 90% in our communication, only 10% of them are what we speak. When we are content with only words, we establish a communication that is more open to misunderstandings. In interpersonal interactions, the most effective power to connect and help is empathy. It is worth mentioning the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y method developed in this context. This method is used in business life, banking, education and both physical and mental health areas.

E – Eye Contact



Children who do not make eye contact until early childhood experience low self-confidence, difficulty in trusting others and problems with emotion regulation due to "insecure attachment".

Neurological research shows that eye contact is the first element that activates empathy. Yes, eye contact is important, but it is recommended not to look at a person you meet for the first time without looking away. Exaggerating eye contact can make the other person uncomfortable. Regarding the subject, it would be appropriate to keep in mind the cultural and individual differences.

M – Muscles for Facial Expression

Our brain is programmed to determine our facial expressions according to the people in front of us. When someone smiles at us, we smile too. This reaction is quite unconscious and we are not even aware of it, but it is at the beginning of the functioning elements of our empathic capacity. According to clinical psychologist Paul Ekman, while the mimics of most emotions are universal, few differ according to cultural background. And not every facial expression always means the same thing.



P – Posture

A person's posture, apart from facial expression, gives strong information about his emotions. For example, slumped shoulders express sadness or depression, and sitting upright and confident express confidence or happiness. Body movement and posture are just as important as facial expressions. It allows us to understand the meaning and neurobiology of emotional behavior.

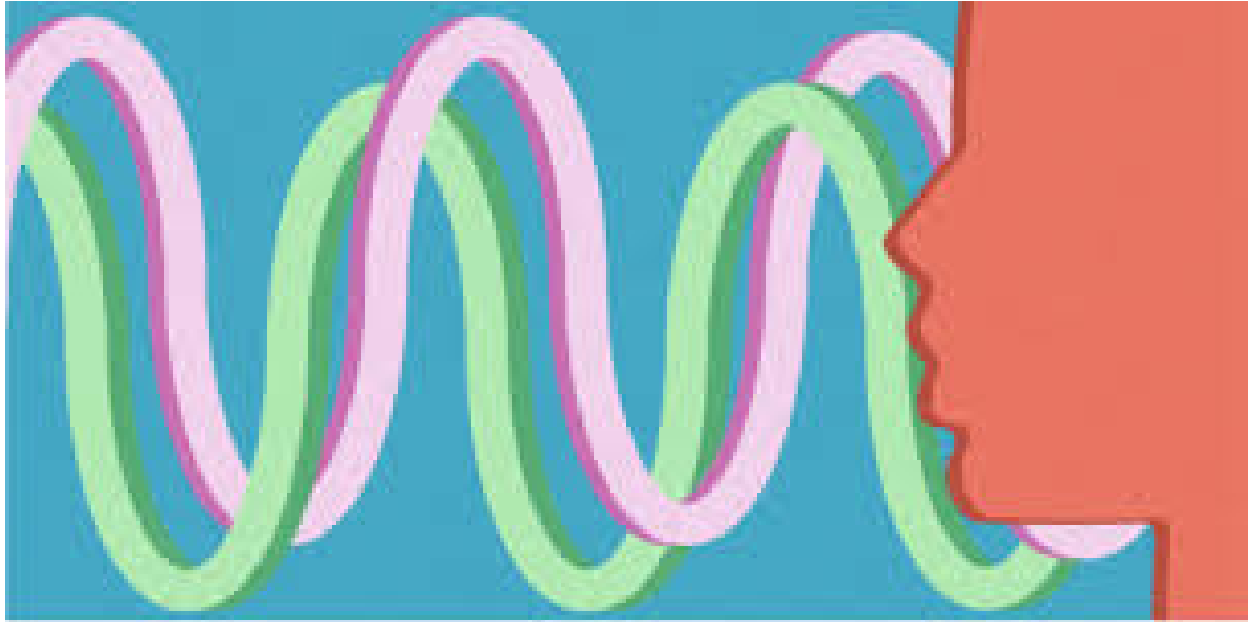
A – Affect

We can explain the word affect as the scientific term for emotions. It is of great importance as literally “naming the emotions”. Emotions are at the core of all compelling conversations. If we do not name the emotions, we cannot be fully aware of what we are talking about. We form sentences randomly and unconsciously.

T – Tone of Voice

It is vital for empathy, as it makes up 38% of non-verbal expressions of emotion. Our tone of voice is often more important than the words we use to express ourselves. And we can understand whether the bond created is empathetic or not, thanks to the tone of his voice.

A soft and slow tone of voice makes the other person feel that we truly understand them. Conversely, if someone tells a sad story, we are less likely to "understand" and "feel" it.



H – Hearing The Whole Person

At this point, it would be appropriate to talk about the concept of empathetic listening. Empathetic listening; giving a person our full attention, understanding their feelings, and responding with compassion without judgment. This way of listening allows us to connect with the other person both emotionally and cognitively. When we listen with an empathetic ear, we have all the keys to empathy.

Y – Your Response

Our feelings towards others carry important information for the other person to understand what we say and do. Intense emotions definitely find a place for themselves in individuals who listen to us. In this context, our “reactions” are not what we say but how we feel.

. 8 Strategies to Develop Empathy

Our ability to be empathetic to others is not fixed; it can be developed. Making changes, often small ones, in our daily lives can significantly impact our ability to empathize with individuals

and groups (Miller, 2019).

8.1. Cultivate curiosity

Develop an insatiable curiosity about the particulars of those you meet (Eyal, Steffel, & Epley, 2018; Krznaric, 2012):

- Spend time with people you know less well, and ask them about themselves, how they are, and what their life is like.
- Follow people from many different backgrounds – religious, ethnic, political – on social media and listen to what they have to say.
- Be present with people when you talk to them. Recognize the subjects that make them passionate, happy, or sad.
- Visit new places, meet local people while immersing yourself in their way of life.

8.2. Step out of your comfort zone

Learn something new or travel, and see how it feels to be out of your comfort zone:

Experience what it is like to be unable to do something or not know how to interact with where you are.

- Reach out for support.
- Accept how helpless you may feel at times, and let it humble you.

Humility can be a useful path to empathy.

8.3. Receive feedback

Ask for feedback from friends, family, and colleagues regarding your active listening and relationships skills:

- How could you improve?
- What opportunities did you miss?

8.4. Examine your biases

We all have biases, and they impact our capacity for empathy. Often without knowing, we judge others on the way they look and how they live (Miller, 2019):

- Find opportunities to mix with people from other backgrounds.
- Talk to people about the important things in their lives.
- While recognizing the similarities we share, be interested, without judgment, in the differences.
- Donate to charities that provide support to other communities.

8.5. Walk in the shoes of others

- Understand what it is like for people in other situations. How do they live, work, and

share?

- Spend time with others, and understand their worries. What gives them happiness? What are their dreams?
- Build relationships with people you see but don't usually connect with.

8.6. Difficult, respectful conversations

While it can be hard to challenge or be challenged by alternative points of view, a few simple lessons can help (Miller, 2019):

- Listen and don't interrupt.
- Be open to new and different ideas.
- Apologize if you have hurt someone's feelings by what you have said.
- Research the issue. Understand where a point of view has come from and how it affects the people involved.

8.7. Join a shared cause

Research has shown that working together on community projects can help heal differences and divisions and remove biases (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004):

- Find a community project, locally or in another country.
- Join others who have been through similar life experiences.
- Join a group from different backgrounds and help out at school, political, or church events.

8.8. Read widely

Reading fiction, nonfiction, newspapers, journals, and online content that captures people's lives from different backgrounds increases our emotional intelligence and our capacity to empathize (Kidd & Castano, 2013):

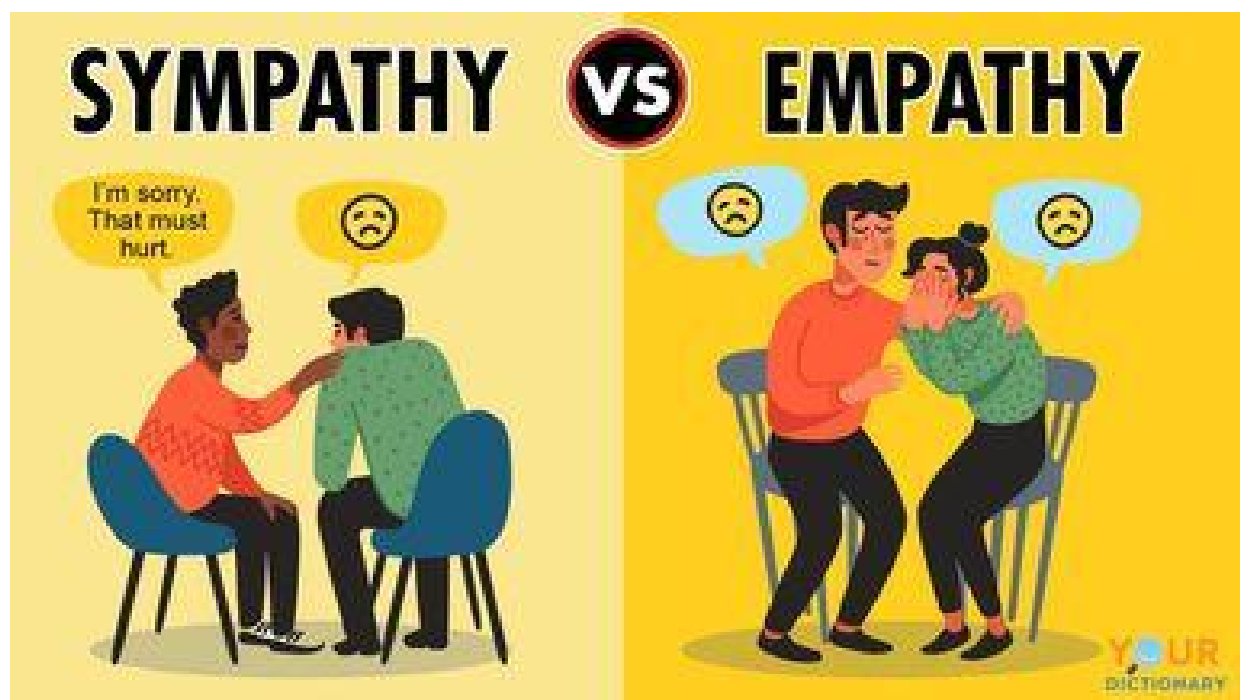
- Find writers with unique stories to tell.
- Enter the lives of their characters, their feelings, and thoughts.

9. Benefits of Empathy

- People who empathize don't do things that they feel bad
- By empathizing, you help people more and you become a more helpful person
- You gain the ability to cope with problems more easily, and you find easier solutions.
- Empathy makes you a good person and makes you a loved and respected person in society. You become a more positive thinker
- People who can empathize are more patient. They are solution oriented people
- Good listeners are usually people who can empathize

10. The Difference Between Empathy and Sympathy

Empathy and sympathy are the most important concepts of communication. Although the difference between them is huge, nowadays these two concepts are very confused with each other. Empathy is putting ourselves in the other person's shoes and listening without judging or discriminating. It is trying to understand by looking at things from his point of view. Sympathy is to feel the feelings of that person, to cry when he cries, and to be happy when he is happy. That is, seeing the event not with your own eyes, but with his eyes.



11. Empathy in Children

Studies say that in order for children to be able to understand the feelings and thoughts of others, they must first be fully aware of the fact that they are a separate individual, and this is gained around the age of 2 years. However, the acquisition of cognitive competence related to the skill that we define as "putting yourself in the shoes of others" takes 6-7 years of age. Therefore, it is very important to support the interactions between the ages of 2 and 6-7, the child's awareness of "me" and "the other", "the process of understanding the result of his behavior and the feelings of the other as well as his own emotions". Eisenberg (1982) also argues that the first empathy begins to emerge from the child-parent relations in early

childhood.

Children's interest in the emotions of other individuals changes with age. A seven-year-old child is more capable of understanding other people's emotions and dealing with sadness than a preschooler. Older children are more successful in comforting or helping the person who is upset. Children's empathic skills are at a higher level when they move from concrete operations to abstract operations, which is one of Piaget's cognitive developmental periods (aged 12 and above). Empathy and conflict resolution behaviors are like a chain link in communication. The development of these two important skills gains importance in primary education, a period in which the individual begins to socialize and the existence of others is noticed.



12. How does a child who can emphasize feel? How will he/she become an adult in the future?

- She is aware of her own feelings and can associate them with common feelings.
- He can distinguish his own emotions from those of others, while considering how others might feel in a given situation. Children with these feelings, on the other hand, when they become adults, will be individuals who understand that "his own happiness is not superior to

the happiness of others" or "being happy despite someone else's unhappiness is really happiness.

13.What determines how empathetic someone will be?

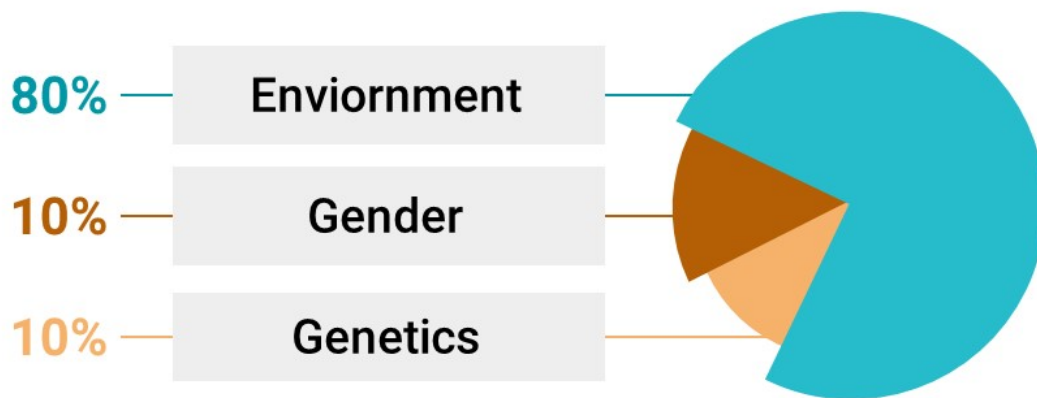
Three words: socialization during childhood. In order to acquire empathy, it is crucial for children to be able to understand and express their emotions. This is probably why women tend to be much more empathetic than men. At a very young age girls are allowed to be in touch with their emotions, whereas boys are taught to “toughen up”. This is problematic for a simple reason: by suppressing their feelings, boys are unable to appreciate their emotions and learn from them. As a consequence, it makes them unable to understand feelings at all; not in themselves, and much less in others.

There’s also another (slighter) reason why women tend to be more empathetic. Research conducted by British psychologist Baron-Cohen indicates that there is a negative correlation between testosterone and empathy. Since there’s a lot more testosterone in men than in women, it can be easily concluded that women are usually much more empathetic than men.

Genetics can also play another role in people being empathetic or not. This study found that 10 percent of differences in humans’ ability to empathize can be attributed to genetic variations. Some research advocates on genetics as the main factor, while others state that our environment and social interactions have a heavier weight on the scale.

More research is needed to understand the exact percentages of what determines empathy, but considering what has been researched so far, we could probably conclude something like this:

WHAT DETERMINES EMPATHY?



14. Can someone with no empathy love?

People that do not experience healthy levels of empathy are perfectly capable of feeling and manifesting strong affection, sexual attraction, devotion and at times, unselfish benevolent concern. This means that people that lack empathy can love to some extent. They can feel and express certain manifestations of love, but probably won't be able to connect with others at a deeper level. And perhaps, there are moments when a person with low levels of empathy won't be able to make others feel respected or validated because the best manifestation of love is channeled through empathy and compassion.



15.Quiz

1.Multiple Choice and True/False. Choose the correct answer.

1. The person understands the other person so well. We call this feeling _____
 - Sympathy
 - Love
 - **Empathy**
 - Compassion
2. This Empathy is a form of empathy that we bring with us as we come into the world, with ourselves.
 - Cognitive Empathy
 - Relational Empathy
 - Experiential Empathy
 - **Instinctive Empathy**
3. People who feel empathy don't do things that they feel bad
 - **True**
 - False
4. According to researchers who feels more empathy

- Men
 - Women
5. What determines 80% of Empathy?
- Gender
 - Genetics
 - Age
 - Environment
6. The people that lack empathy will be able to create strong bond with people around them
- True
 - False
7. Children's empathic skills are at a higher level when they move from concrete operations to abstract operations, which is one of Piaget's cognitive developmental periods. What age is this?
- 12 and above
 - 7 and above
 - 6
 - 3
8. This feeling is to feel the feelings of that person, to cry when he cries, and to be happy when he is happy
- Compassion
 - Love
 - Sympathy
 - Empathy
9. There are some skills strengthened by empathy. Which of these is not one of them ?
- Collaboration
 - Negotiation
 - Creativity
 - Time management
10. When you show deep empathy toward others, their defense energy goes down and positive energy replaces it.
- True
 - False
11. A high tone of voice makes the other person feel that we truly understand them
- True
 - False
12. "Walk in the shoes of others" is one of 8 strategies to develop empathy. What does this mean?
- To understand somebody's feelings

- To recognize
- To be judgemental
- To feel happy

13. Children with empathy become happy and responsible in the future

- True
- False

2. Ordering. Put the empathy methods in the sequential order

E.-_____ (Eye Contact)

M.-_____ (Muscles for Facial Expression)

P.-_____ (Posture)

A.-_____ (Affect)


T.-_____ (Tone of Voice)

H.-_____ (Hearing the whole person)

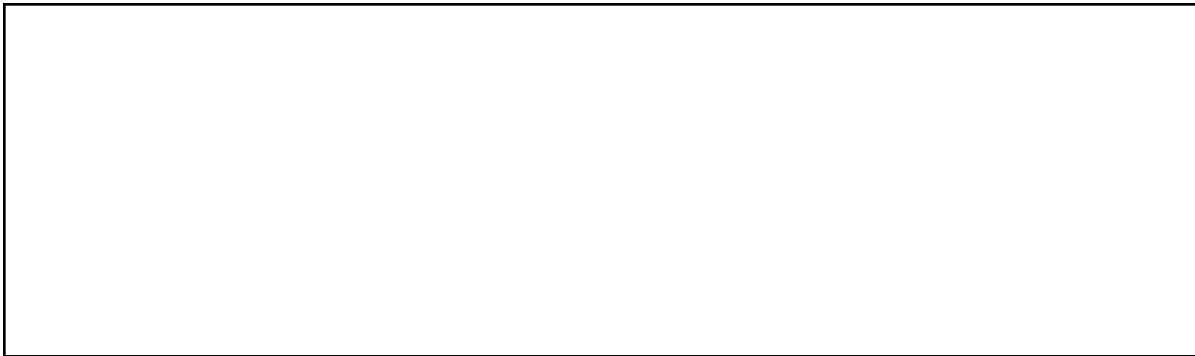
Y.-_____ (Your Response)

3. Open Response (Answers may differ from person to person)


1.What does it mean to you when you hear the word “Empathy”? (At Least 150 words)



2. Give an example of an Experiential Empathy from your own life? (At least 150 words)



3. What can somebody do in order to acquire empathy? Give some suggestions based on your experiences.



4. What does it mean to you when you hear the phrase “Step out of your comfort zone”?

What is the place of it in Empathy?

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4. Matching. Match the concept with the correct definition.

E.M.P.H.A.T.H.Y	It refers to the ability to take part in someone else’s feelings, mostly by feeling sorrowful about their misfortune.
Sympathy	The type of empathy that is established in response to the feelings of the people we are in a relationship with.
Relational Empathy	It is apart from facial expression, gives strong information about his emotions. For example, slumped shoulders express sadness or depression, and sitting upright and confident express confidence or happiness.
Empathy	This method is used in business life, banking, education and both physical and mental health areas.
Posture	It is a term we use for the ability to understand other people’s feelings as if we were having them ourselves.

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