

Empathic Communication



This text is a summary of Marshall Rosenberg's work from his books "Nonviolent Communication: A language of life", "Nonviolent Communication: Companion workbook", "Speak Peace in a world of conflict" y "2-day NVC Advanced Intensive with Marshall Rosenberg". For more info visit www.cnvc.org

What is empathic communication used for?

What is Empathic Communication?

Empathic communication is a way of communicating that helps us to understand and express our feelings and needs authentically in the moment, while developing an empathetic listening capacity to the feelings and needs of others.

What is the main purpose of Empathic Communication?

The purpose of empathic communication is to *maintain empathy throughout all the communication process.*

In other words, it is a type of communication that seeks to maintain a *quality of communication* that allows both parties to cover their needs and weaknesses and to benefit from it.

How does "empathy" feels like?

One feels empathy when one feels comfortable, when one feels that one is communicating honestly from the heart and that one is being understood.

An easy way to know if we are creating empathy is that the empathic connection makes us feel a natural desire to *contribute*, to *collaborate*. This desire to collaborate flows naturally and not in response to a feeling of obligation, or fear of punishment, or a desire to be rewarded, or a feeling of guilt or shame, but arises from a spontaneous and natural desire *to contribute and enjoy the process*.

Replacing an "automatic reaction" with a "conscious response"

When we learn to communicate empathically, instead of automatically reacting to what we hear or feel, our communication becomes a conscious response of what we *perceive, feel and want, expressed with complete honesty and clarity, while simultaneously paying respectful empathic attention to the needs of others*.

How do we attract empathy to the communication?

If we learn to understand and recognize the emotional needs present in ourselves and in others, we can make empathy be present in the environment.

In this way, with practice, during any empathic communication we establish, we will be able to understand and express our emotional needs and recognize the emotional needs present in others.

What breaks empathic communication?

Who's right about this?

Who's correct?

Our society and culture teaches us another type of "non-empathic" communication based on moral confrontation, where there is a winner and a loser.

Instead of understanding what others are needing and not getting, our attention is focused on *analyzing, classifying and determining "who is right and who is wrong"*, who is correct and who is incorrect.

It is a game based on moral judgments where on an emotional level everyone loses and sadly it is the predominant game in our society and in our lives.

Correction by penance

*"Certain actions deserve reward,
while others deserve to be punished."*

A long time ago the concept of behavioral correction through penance was introduced.

If someone behaves "incorrectly", we correct them by making them *feel bad about themselves for what they have done*. If we make them feel rejected and guilty, they will repent and change their ways.

Psychological manipulation

When punishment becomes the standard of correction in our culture, it allows us to create a language of communication capable of inducing and manipulating other beings through *fear of punishment, guilt, devaluation, shame, and obligation*.

The correctional system of penance has been so efficiently introduced into our society that manipulating through making others feel bad is the social norm that unconsciously permeates our society.

"It'll be a shame if you don't come." - Psychological manipulation.

How to change behavior with empathy?

The corrective process by penance is based on making people feel guilty and repent for what they have done. The idea is, if we succeed in making them feel bad, they will regret it and change the way they act.

With empathic communication, instead of attributing the cause of conflict to the wrong behavior of the other, we make an *effort to understand the emotional needs and lacks common to both of us that are not being met, and we look for other options that can meet their needs and ours at a lower social and emotional cost.*

Example of Correction by Penance

If someone drives in a way that doesn't seem "right" to me and I want to contribute to the change, I pull down the window and shout "Idiot!" Theoretically the driver is supposed to repent and correct his attitude. Does it work?

Correction by penance principle

"People who harm others deserve to be punished."

Empathic approach

"People who harm others may have the opportunity to learn about other ways to meet their needs at a lower social cost."

The joy for violence

Socially, we have come so far that in our society we are educated and encouraged from a very young age *to enjoy violence.*

During rush hour we see on TV how the "good guy" is justified in killing or brutally punishing the "bad guy". We go to the movies and pay to see various displays of violence and punishment and then buy war toys for our children.

Denial of responsibility (actions)

We have grown up in a society that has become used for *denying responsibility for the actions we perpetrate*. Instead of assuming that we are each *responsible for our thoughts, feelings and actions*, we blame others, or circumstances for our actions and choices.

*"I had to... I had no choice."
"Higher orders... I had no alternative."
"I drink because I'm an alcoholic."
"I lied because my boss told me so."
"I started smoking because all my friends smoke."*

All are examples of denial of responsibility for our actions and choices.

The truth is that at all times *we choose to do what we do and we do nothing that is not our choice*. We may not like our choices, but it's our choice.

We always choose even if we don't like it

It's important that we consciously say, "I'm choosing to do this because I want to." This does not imply that we will *enjoy it, only that it is our conscious choice*. I may not enjoy my choice but it's my choice.

I can choose to get on the train that will take me to a concentration camp as an alternative to being killed on the spot. It's not a choice I like, but it's a choice.

Denial of responsibility (feelings)

Denial of responsibility for our feelings is a socially learned behavior that seeks psychological manipulation through guilt, attributing responsibility for our negative feelings to the behavior of others.

"You make me feel this way." or "I feel this because you..." are examples of this behavior.

Acknowledging responsibility

We are fully responsible for our thoughts, feelings and actions. What others say or do may be the stimulus but never the cause of our feelings.

Our feelings are the result of *how we decide to take* what others do or say in relation to our beliefs and needs at each specific moment.

By confusing the stimulus, the behavior of the other, with the cause, how we take the situation, we come to believe that it is the other who is responsible for our unhappiness. The basic mechanism of guilt motivation is based on *attributing responsibility for our feelings to others*.

The cause of our feelings

Negative feelings are the result of our *own unresolved needs*.

For example: If someone is late for an appointment and we need reassurance that that person cares about us, we may feel hurt, if instead our need is to spend time constructively, we may feel frustrated, and if our need is to have a quiet time alone, we may feel relieved by the delay.

Therefore, it is not the behavior of the other but our own need that causes our feelings.

"Anger" or "disgust" is an indication that we have moved our attention to our mind to analyze and judge the situation, rather than to focus our attention on *feeling the needs that are not being met by both sides*.

Refocusing our attention

Anger can be used positively in our understanding of empathic communication as a *wake-up call*, an alarm that indicates that we have moved our attention to our mind to analyze and judge the situation, rather than focusing our attention on *feeling the needs that are not being met by both parties*.

We can immediately consciously replace the phrase:

"I'm upset because you..." with

"I'm upset because I'm needing...."

Replacing evasive verbs

We can begin to consciously replace phrases we use that involve an avoidance of responsibility with phrases that explicitly recognize our responsibility. In this way, we consciously integrate responsibility and choice into our language.

Replace the verb "I must" with "I want".

"I must make my bed." with
"I want to make my bed."

Replace the verb "should" with "might".
"I should visit my dad."
"I might visit my dad."

Acting only from the heart

Any action we take that comes from feelings of guilt, obligation, shame or fear of rejection.... someone will pay for it. With low self-esteem, resentment, alienation, aggression.... your children, your wife, your family, someone will pay for this internal violence.

We can take the commitment to act only out of our natural desire to contribute in satisfying a need for worth, the desire to collaborate consciously from the heart, flowing without any pressure. We are designed to do things with pleasure and connected to our hearts.

It is better to say "NO" to something if it does not come from the heart.

The aggression of labeling people

Another unfortunate behavior learned within our society is the habit of labeling people in a disrespectful manner.

"You're a mess."
"You're a good-for-nothing."
"You're selfish."
"You're lazy."

When we label people negatively, or blame them for our bad feelings, or criticize them, or compare them, we don't get anything positive because as an immediate result we will receive *resistance and a defensive attitude* from others. As a result, the empathy immediately disappears.

Subconscious programming during childhood

From birth to age six, children are in a "delta" state of mind, their subconscious mind is absorbing all the information it processes without conscious restriction or evaluation, as in a hypnotic trance.

That is, what the child receives from its parents is not evaluated consciously but is *discharged directly into the subconscious mind*.

When a phrase like, "You don't deserve it", "You can't do anything right", or "You're selfish", is addressed to the child before the age of six, it is downloaded directly to the subconscious mind and 95% of the time it will create a reality that coincides with the limiting programming we've unconsciously sown in the child, and will carry it through his adult life.

Labeling behaviors instead of labeling people

When we use labels it is better to place them on the behaviors, the action rather than on the person. In this way we do not break empathy because the person does not feel his or her *sense of identity being attacked*.

Instead of "You're a liar."
"What you said is not true."

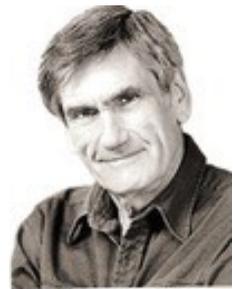
Instead of "You're selfish."
"That action wasn't very generous of you."

Instead of "You're a mess."
"Your room is a mess."

Let us remember that **we are not our actions**, so it is better to focus on *the action and the unmet need* rather than attack the person and break the present empathy.

"This specific action does not contribute to this need."

*"In NVC there is no verb to be, no one IS, there are only behaviors, and these behaviors are at the service of certain common needs."
- Marshall -Rosemberg -*



Avoiding comparisons

Comparisons are an aggression to people's unique sense of identity and a quick way to dispel empathy in any communication.

"Why can't you be like your brother?"
"See? He's doing great!"...Ouch!

Communicate our wishes as orders

Any demand or order threatens the listener with a sense of punishment if they do not comply with the order. If the person obeys, it is not out of a feeling of empathy but out of fear of the consequences.

"Come immediately!"

Unfortunately our education system is oriented towards training students to be docile and obedient to authority.

1 - Observe without evaluating

Observe without evaluating

The first step in the process of empathic communication is the "**Clear observation** (context and specific moment) **of the facts** (behavior of the other) **without mixing them with our personal opinion, evaluation or diagnosis of the situation**".

When we tell someone what they have done, we describe the person's behavior, *the specific facts* without mixing them with our opinion, diagnosis or evaluation of the situation.

Observation involves concrete behavior, *not an assessment or analysis of their "bad behavior"*. It is quite difficult to separate "the fact" from our "opinion".

Krishnamurti said that "Observing without evaluating is the highest form of human intelligence".

Don't confuse fact with opinion

*"Don't confuse what we see
with what we think of it."*

When we mix observation with our evaluation we reduce the chances that the other will hear our message empathetically. On the contrary, it is very likely that they will feel criticized and will develop resistance to listening to the message we are trying to deliver.

Instead of "You're late",
"You're 40 minutes past the time we agreed."

Instead of "You work too hard",
"This week you worked overtime every day."

Instead of "Julian is bad at math",
"Julian still can't subtract by carrying."

Instead of "You left a mess in the living room."
"You left your shoes and toys on the living room floor."

Is Empathic communication asking us to refrain from evaluating?...No, empathic communication is asking us to maintain a clear separation between the facts (our observation) and our evaluations (what we think).

Observation Vs. Evaluation

Instead of "John was upset yesterday for no reason."
"John hit the table with his fist."

Instead of "Javier is aggressive."
"Javier hit his sister when she changed the TV channel."

"He's a very bad football player."
"He hasn't scored a goal in the last 20 games."

"You lied to me about your grades."
"I heard you say you passed all your courses, but this report card shows two reds."

"The doctor refused to explain anything to me."
"The doctor didn't tell me anything about what might be causing the pain."

Clear observation (Context and specific time)

It is also important that the observation of the facts is clearly focused on a specific context and time frame. We must be very careful with words that express **absolute terms**: always, never, at all times, frequently, every time, everything, nothing.

Those words and can be interpreted as an exaggeration rather than a precise observation of what happened.

"You're always busy."
"She's never around when she's needed."
"When I see everything lying in the living room..."
"You're not helping in anything."

Instead of "All the time you keep forgetting to flush the toilet."
"Twice this week you left the toilet unflushed."

What is the result of interpreting reality?

- It will be difficult for us to see reality objectively, we will only see our interpretations.
- By mixing objective facts with our negative assessment, the tragic result is that it increases resistance to being heard and achieving the desired objective.

Criticism destroys empathy.

When we judge others we move away from the empathic connection and they only have two options, to defend themselves or to be submissive.

Evaluating with the heart

In empathic communication we evaluate whether or not the behavior contributes to *meeting our needs and shortfalls*. We focus on what they are *needing and not getting*.

Let's remember that the common goal is for people to change their behavior not to avoid punishment but because they see *the benefit of following other options that cover their needs at a lower cost*.

2 - How we feel about what we observed

How we feel about what we've observed

The second step in the process of empathic communication is to *feel and express what feelings have arisen within us in relation to what we observe without evaluating.*

It is important to develop a **vocabulary of feelings** that clearly express what we are feeling. It is also important to distinguish feelings from words that describe what we *think, believe and interpret.*

Vocabulary of Feelings (negative)

Scared, afraid, nervous.

Distrustful, incredulous.

Anxious, eager, impatient.

Worried, restless, uneasy, alarmed.

Upset, irritated, angry, furious.

Unsatisfied, disgusted, dissatisfied, uncomfortable.

Aversion, repulsion, hostility, antipathy.

Confused, disoriented, lost, disconcerted.

Doubtful, insecure.

Apathetic, indifferent, disinterested, distant.

Embarrassed.

Tired, fatigued, drained, exhausted.

In pain, devastated, miserable.

Sad, embarrassed.

Depressed, down, demoralized, discouraged.

Frustrated, disillusioned, disappointed.

Tense, irritable, stressed, agitated.

Helpless, fragile, vulnerable, insecure.

Envious, jealous.

Vocabulary of Feelings (positive)

Optimistic, excited, energetic, eager.

Hopeful, confident, positive.

Encouraged, inspired, stimulated.

Interested, intrigued, curious.

Amazed, surprised, delighted.

Calm, comfortable, cool, relaxed.

Easy, carefree.

Satisfied, content, relieved.

Happy, cheerful, radiant.

Touched, moved.

Grateful, satisfied, happy.

Tender, sensitive, warm.

Confusing opinions with feelings

"I feel it's wrong what you did..."

"it's wrong" is not a feeling but an opinion.

"I feel it's unnecessary." —> opinion, could be replaced by

"I think it's unnecessary."

"I feel manipulated."

"Manipulated" is an opinion about the behavior of another, as well as criticized, intimidated, used, rejected, ignored, etc.

When we express feelings, it is important not to confuse them with words that express opinions.

Examples of well expressed feelings...

"I feel upset."

"I feel frustrated."

"I feel fear."

"I'm sad."

"I feel worried."

Taking responsibility for the cause of our feelings

It is important that when we express how we feel, we make it clear that the cause of our feelings comes from some unmet personal need.

"I feel... because I..."

"You make me feel upset." —> It's a complete denial of responsibility for our feelings.

"I feel upset because I am needing..." —> is a healthy approach that points the cause to an unmet personal need.

"It hurts me when you say that..." —> It's a violent act because it's a violent act to attribute our feelings to someone. So, the basic rule for expressing our feelings (irritation) is:

"I feel irritated because I need..."

3 - Identifying the unmet need

Which unfulfilled need is the cause of our feelings

We understand and express our *unfulfilled need as the central cause* of how we feel about reality.

When others understand our unmet needs, they do not listen to criticism or demand, but instead generate empathy by *recognizing the same needs in themselves*.

"When I see you doing this, I feel this way because I need this..."

The other person clearly sees that we are not criticizing them or holding them responsible for how we feel. Instead we are being sincere and vulnerable in expressing our unmet needs. This generates empathy in the other and the desire to collaborate with us.

When we express our needs rather than criticize the other, we increase the possibility of finding ways to find solutions that satisfy both parties.

Common needs of all

Need for Autonomy

Choose our own plans to cover our dreams, values and objectives. Freedom, independence, space, spontaneity, freedom of choice.

Need for Integrity

Authenticity, honesty, presence.

Need for Meaning

Contribution, meaning, purpose, creativity, feeling effective, valued, expressed and developed, participation.

Need of Connection

Acceptance, affection, appreciation, belonging, cooperation, communication, closeness, community, companionship, consideration, consistency, empathy, inclusion, intimacy, love, respect, security, support, recognition, understanding, trust.

Need for Physical Well-being

Air, food, movement, exercise, rest, sleep, sexual expression, security, shelter, roof, water, contact.

Need for Peace / Recreation

Joy, humor, beauty, tranquility, fairness, harmony, inspiration, order, communion.

What is the cause of our discontent?

What others *do* is never the cause of how we feel. The cause of our discontent is localized in *our thinking*.

Discontent and anger are the result of thoughts that drive us away and disconnect us from our needs. It indicates that we have moved to the forefront of analyzing and judging rather than focusing on recognizing what needs we are not meeting.

The essence of our choices

Choose to act only out of a desire to contribute to life rather than out of fear of rejection, guilt, shame or obligation. Whatever you give or do that is not for reasons that fill up your heart, the other person will pay for it.

Never do things for others, just do things that *meet your own authentic needs*.

We will appreciate what we do if we are motivated purely by the human desire to contribute to enriching life. With each choice you make, be conscious of the needs you are serving.

Empathic listening

Empathic listening is the ability we develop of perceiving the lacks and needs not satisfied in others, regardless of the way they are expressing it.

In the second part of this course we will focus on empathic communication techniques related to "empathic listening". For now it is important to understand that both communication techniques (how we express ourselves and how we understand others) are applied simultaneously during empathic communication.

What is a commitment?

A commitment is only *our intention at the time of commitment*. Everything changes. The point is that the other person will pay every time we do something with a sense of obligation.

4 - Clear and positive action request

Positive action request (not negative)

It is important that our request is positive because if we express what we do not want we do not make clear what we do want. If we ask the student, "Don't hit the pencil on your notebook," he will start hitting it on the folder.

Moreover, a request for positive action will always be more empathetic than a negative request.

Instead of "Don't shout in the room."
"Please speak quietly inside the room."

Instead of "Don't leave your shoes in the living room",
"Please take your shoes to your room."

Request for clear (specific) action

It is important that our request for action is clear, specific; not a vague, abstract or ambiguous request that does not make clear what we want and provokes a defensive attitude.

"I want you to understand me" is not very clear.
Better, " Could you please repeat to me what you've heard me say."

Instead of "Could you show more respect for my privacy?" say
"I'd like you to agree to knock on the door before you come into my room."

Instead of "Would you be willing to be more respectful of your sister?" say
"Would you be willing not to push your sister when you disagree with what she says?"

Verifying that it is not a demand

It is important that we make it clear that this is not a demand. Remember that every time someone hears a demand they tend to have two choices: *to rebel or to submit.*

It is good to ask yourself "What reasons do we want them to have for doing what we are asking them to do?" and "What happens if they are not willing to do what we are asking?"

Instead of "I want you to set the table."

"Would you please set the table?"

Ask for a reflection on the message and acknowledge the act

A last, but not less important, step is to ask that they *reflect (repeat) what they have heard us say, and to thank them for the act.*

"Could you please tell me what you heard me say?"

"It would help me if you could reflect (repeat) what you heard me say. It's a great confirmation to hear that you understand me."

"How do you feel now that I've asked you to do this?"

Or just... "Are we okay? Do we agree on that?"

Acknowledge the act of reflection

It is important to recognize the act of reflection *even if they did not connect with the message.*

"Thank you for telling me what you heard."

It doesn't matter if we think that's not what we said, they did what we asked, they repeated what they thought we said and that's what we recognized.

We don't say, "I can see you don't understand me."

Instead we tell them. "I'm grateful you told me what you heard. I can see I wasn't as clear as I would have liked, let me try again."

Examples of Empathic Communication

Examples of empathic communication using the four steps:

Instead of "Your dog made a mess in my yard."

"When I see your dog's poop in my yard, I feel irritated. We have children who play here and I want the garden to be a clean and safe place for them. Would you be willing to remove the dog's debris?"

Instead of "saying obscenities won't give you what you want."

"When I hear you calling me a fool, I feel irritated because I need cooperation and a peaceful resolution of our differences. Would you be willing to tell me how you feel and what needs you have instead of telling me what you think I am?"

Instead of saying, "Hey, guys, flashlights aren't toys. Don't waste the batteries. They cost money."

"When I see you guys playing with the flashlights under the sheets, I feel restless. I want those flashlights available in case we have an emergency. Would you be willing to turn them off?"

Instead of saying, "Aitana, you're a mess, I've had enough of you, what are your dirty socks doing in the living room!"

"Aitana, when I see your socks under the table in the living room I feel irritated because I am needing more order in the area we share in common. Could you please put your socks in your room or in the laundry basket?"

Instead of saying "You're late!"

"Thomas, when you arrive 40 minutes after the time we agreed to meet I feel irritated because I would like to be efficient with my time. Would you please take that into consideration for our next meeting?"

Empathically listening

*"Pedro, what can I do for you?
Miss, I don't want you to do anything;
I just want you to listen to me."*

It's amazing how everything has a solution when someone listens, when we feel understood. Empathy allows us to transcend everything.

The key ingredient of empathic listening

The empathic connection implies connecting with *what is happening* in the other *at this moment*. It is a respectful understanding of what is alive within the other. It implies our **presence**. The key ingredient of empathy is *presence*.

It is listening *fully present* and giving them the time and space they need to express themselves fully and feel *understood*.

Reflecting feelings and needs

To give someone empathy we just need to be fully present by maintaining an empathic silence and reflecting what we understand by *revealing their feelings and needs in the form of a question*.

"Sounds like you're dissatisfied because you need to feel appreciated for the effort you put in."

"Do you feel... because you're needing...?"

"Are you upset and would you like to...?"

"Sounds like you're feeling desperate and would rather... Am I hearing you right?"

What to do if we don't get the reflection right

If we don't get the reflection right or lose the connection, we take a deep breath and turn our attention back to what the other person is feeling and the need hidden behind their feelings.

Or we could ask,

"Help me understand how you came to feel that?"

"I'm confused. Could you please help me identify what you're feeling and needing? I'd like to understand so I can feel connected with you and what you need."

Do not assume feelings

We always make it clear that we inquire about their feelings and needs. The tone of voice is an efficient way to make our intension to inquire be felt, but we must be careful *not to assume their feelings*.

Do not say, "I can see that you're feeling this way when..."
Always ask, "Do you feel that way because...?"

Do not listen to personal criticism

"Never listen to what the other person thinks about you."

We don't listen to criticism, especially about what the other person is thinking about us. Behind these words is an individual feeling *conflicted with a lack, trying to contribute to their well-being*, within their current possibilities. *We don't take it personally.*

When someone criticizes us, what they are saying is, "I am upset because I have a need that I cannot meet or identify."

We can look through their words as a window to identify gaps and unmet needs. Any expression in the form of criticism reflects someone who is *desperately in need of empathy.*

Taking care of the tone and the form of reflection

The tone of your voice is very important. When people hear themselves reflected, they become sensitive to the slightest hint of criticism or sarcasm.

Nor should you imitate the way they express themselves as it could be mistaken for mocking or sarcastic behavior.

Constantly check your harmony level

Remember that the goal of empathic listening is to *connect empathetically* rather than to pretend to correct the other, so before we talk, check your harmony level first and make sure that your intention is that the other person meets their needs as much as we do ours.

What to do if we lose harmony?

First calm down and be honest....

"It would help me a lot if you could refrain on giving me advice before I finish telling you what I want to express."

"I'm upset and it would help if you could listen to what I have to say and then reflect on what you've heard me say."

Time Off

If we are losing the ability to connect empathetically, asking for *time off* can be a great help.

"Time! You're not gonna like anything I can say right now. I need a little empathy with myself before we can continue."

Focus on the present moment

In empathic communication we talk very little about what happened in the past. Healing occurs by evoking what is happening and *alive in the present*. We do not deny that the past is affecting the present, but we do not dwell in the past.

"How do you *feel now* as a result of what happened?"

If the person keeps talking about the past, *we don't go there with them, we bring them to what is alive in the present*, the present feelings and needs, hidden behind what they are expressing. We want to know what the person is feeling and needing right now.

Don't mix yourself with their needs

When we listen to the other, we reflect their feelings and needs without getting mixed up in them. When we blend in with their needs, it's like getting into the jaws of the jackal.

"What's the use of talking to you? You never listen," is a suicidal act.

"Are you unhappy with me?" is to get right into the jaws of the jackal.

Instead of "Are you unhappy because you feel I don't understand you?"

"Are you unhappy because you need to feel heard?"

Give them all the time they need

It is advisable to maintain the empathic connection until the person has received *ALL the empathy they need*. We identify feelings and needs, and reflect them back. We repeat this until you feel an *empathic silence*, like a refreshing one.

Many times touching one unrecognized need takes them to another on a deeper level.

The important thing is to *maintain the empathic connection*, the connection at the heart level. If we listen and reflect what they need, without expressing criticism or demands, and they do the same, the solution will easily find us.

Be slow in finding solutions

Instead of empathy, we tend to give advice and explain our position or feelings. The intellectual understanding of a problem blocks the kind of presence that is required in empathy. Our goal is not to fix the problem. Our goal is to *create an empathic connection, not to try to solve it*.

Classic non-empathic behaviors

Tip - "I think you should go and...."

One more - "That's nothing, it was worse for me...."

Educating - "That can become a positive experience for you, if only..."

Comforting - "It wasn't your fault, you did everything in your power..."

Storyteller - "That reminds me of the time I was..."

Correction - "That's not how things happened...."

Empathy is being present, not trying to fix anything

Empathy is being present, not trying to fix anything.

"I'm as ugly as a pig" - daughter in front of the mirror in need of empathy.

"You're the most beautiful creature God ever put on the face of the earth" - father trying to help not empathically.

"Are you disappointed in your appearance today?" - empathic reflection.

*With empathy we are present,
we are not trying to fix the situation.*

FAQ

How to say NO with empathy?

We express the needs we have for which we refrain from saying yes.

Instead of saying, "I don't want to go."
we say, "I would rather prefer to stay and rest for a while."

How to say I'M SORRY with empathy?

We focused on the *unmet need that we were unable to identify at the time*.

"I feel sorry because I haven't been meeting my need to maintain respectful language."

We must remember that there is nothing *incorrect or wrong*. Our actions are simply an harmonic or non-harmonic response to our needs at the moment.

How to say THANK YOU with empathy?

We have a tendency to give thanks through positive praise, such as "You are brilliant", "You are the best", etc. These positive words of recognition can be double-edged weapons, for on the one hand, they reaffirm the beauty of what they did, but they also invite people to *confuse their sense of identity with the compliments*. Especially if you use the term "you are".

The best way to thank is to pay attention to what they *have done* rather than to what they *are*. ("you were", not "you are").

"You've read very well."
"Your performance was beautiful."

We express what we *feel now* about what we have obtained.
"I'm glad to see you grow up and learn."
"I'm happy to see that your efforts yielded beautiful results."

How does unconditional love manifest itself?

Unconditional love is manifested only if it is free from any conditioning. That is, when I show the same respect for a "no" as for a

“yes”. The person receives the same empathic quality from us, whether or not we agree with what they express.

"I love you no matter what you do or think. I love you because I am grateful for the opportunity to live the experience of being in your presence."

*"If we change,
the world changes and
the reality we perceive.
And our change begins
changing our language
and the way we communicate."*

- Arun Gandhi -

