

## Empathy

From Piero Ferrucci, *The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life*, pp 132-145.

*Bit by bit, empathy...develops and becomes the capacity to understand other people's feelings and points of view, to identify with them.*

*However varied and vast our inner world may be, it is still a closed system...our thoughts, worries desires: Is that all there is? To step out of out of our world and enter other ones - the passions, fears, hopes and suffering of other human beings - is akin to an interplanetary voyage.*

*Empathy has been necessary to our survival since prehistoric times. Human beings only thrive in community...Empathy is the prerequisite for communication, collaboration, and social cohesion. But empathy does not only solve problems, it makes us feel better.*

*Compassion is the final and noblest result of empathy. It is a spiritual quality because it brings us out of selfishness and greed. It includes everyone, even the least able, least pleasant, least intelligent. It opens and unites us to others. It fill our heart. Let us imagine a relationship, any relationship in its pure state. Let us imagine it is stripped of judgment, spite, comparison, and so on. Freed of this ballast, we feel lighter. We forget our hurry. We are free. Then empathy is possible. And so too is knowledge.*

*If you and I are open to each other, without barriers between us, then I feel your feelings and you feel mine. I feel understood by you and you by me. If you are suffering, I want your suffering to end and, if I am suffering, I know you will support me. If you are happy, I am too, and if things are going well for me, I know you are pleased.*

*And maybe nothing more is needed.*

<p>We are called upon in leadership to flex our empathy muscles. What has touched you the most about a situation, an occurrence, or a person? What empathetic response are you having or wish to have? What empathetic response are you wishing for from someone else?</p>
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