Empathy: A Keystone Habit

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A keystone species is an organism that helps define an entire ecosystem. Without its keystone species, the ecosystem would be dramatically different or cease to exist altogether.

National Geographic Society
Empathy is a Keystone Habit

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The presence or absence of empathy determines whether or not a human ecosystem can flourish.
Developing the habit of empathy can make you a keystone contributor in your organization.
Understanding Empathy
Understanding Yourself
Understanding Others
Understanding Each Other
Seven things you can try
Two disclaimers
“Well, now I’m dropping names almost constantly. That’s what Kanye West keeps telling me...”

Weird Al Yankovic,

“Tacky”
Understanding Empathy
empathy  noun
em-pa-thy  |  \em-pə-thē \ 

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
Perspective-Taking
Raise your hand if your job would be easier if you were better at... building trust.
Raise your hand if your job would be easier if you were better at... influencing others.
Raise your hand if your job would be easier if you were better at... enabling collaboration.
Raise your hand if your job would be easier if you were better at... working with conflict.
Research has shown that perspective-taking helps with:

- Creativity
- Interpersonal conflict
- Bias and stereotype reduction
- Relationships & social bonds
Work happens within the container of relationships
Understanding Yourself
Self-awareness is the first step towards understanding others.
Know Thy Selves: Learning to Understand Oneself Increases the Ability to Understand Others
Personality Assessments

DISC
Predictive Index
StrengthsFinder
Riso-Hudson
Enneagram Type
Indicator
The F-word
Feelings
Tip #1: Treat Feelings as Data

Dr. Marshall Rosenberg
What am I observing?
What feeling am I experiencing?
What need of mine is/isn’t being met right now that gives rise to that feeling?
What might I do to help meet it?
Understanding Others
Tip #2: Listen at Level 2 (at least)
Levels of Listening
Levels of Listening

1. Internal Listening (Self)
Levels of Listening

1. Internal Listening (Self)
2. Focused Listening (Other)
Levels of Listening

1. Internal Listening (Self)
2. Focused Listening (Other)
3. Global Listening (Context)
Empathic Presence
Tip #3: Notice Your Judgements

Dr. Virginia Satir
Satir Interaction Model

1. Intake
2. Meaning
3. Significance
4. Response
Satir Interaction Model (Simplified)

1. What did I just see or hear?
Satir Interaction Model (Simplified)

1. What did I just see or hear?
2. What did that mean?
Satir Interaction Model (Simplified)

1. What did I just see or hear?
2. What did that mean?
3. How do I feel about that?
Satir Interaction Model (Simplified)

1. What did I just see or hear?
2. What did that mean?
3. How do I feel about that?
4. What will do I now?
Satir Interaction Model (Simplified)

1. What did I just see or hear?
2. What did that mean?
3. How do I feel about that?
4. What will do I now?
What story am I telling myself about what I just saw or heard?
Tip #4: Ask WTF?
Tip #4: Ask Where’s That From?

Ellen Grove
Fundamental Attribution Error
My actions are a reflection of my circumstances.

Your actions are a reflection of your character.
Understanding Each Other
Tip #5:
Help Others Empty Their Cup

Lee Jun-fan (Bruce Lee)
Knowing that their ideas are understood by someone else helps the other person to empty their cup.
Reflective Listening
Advanced move: You can ask for help emptying your own cup.
Tip #6: Know & Disclose

Jim McCarthy
Hi, friends!

I'm feeling a little overwhelmed and unskilled right now. You know what would help me out? Reminders of either (a) a time you and I did something awesome together, or (b) a time I did something that was helpful to you, or (c) a time I was kind to you in a meaningful way.

Thanks!
Rachael Groynom You've always been nothing but kind! I miss hanging out.

Like · Reply · 35w

Tim Newsome We're still married, and I remember our officiant with fondness. 😊

Like · Reply · 35w

Linda Ellen Hyde You are just so damned likeable.

Like · Reply · 35w
John Cutler  Great 1:1 conversations that both challenged my perspective and provided support.

Like · Reply · 35w

Angelo Cavelli  It's not an exaggeration to say that you showed me how great a professional facilitator can be. Emulating you has helped me be a better coach and person.

Like · Reply · 35w

Oana Theogarajan  Paul you not only helped teams form and find their groove but in the process you helped us become friends. That was fuckin awesome

Like · Reply · 35w
Heidi Shetzer Helfand I'll never forget when you stood on a table while facilitating 40 people!!!

Like · Reply · 35w

Heidi Shetzer Helfand And when you gave me strength so that together and only together we could cofound the sb agile Meetup group

Like · Reply · 35w

Heidi Shetzer Helfand And when you led the charge so we could do a constellation with 200 people and then you coached me to lead one that afternoon

Like · Reply · 35w · Edited
Blake Rickter: I haven't seen ya in years, but I remember Trevor Bliven, you and I would crash your basement pretending we were WWF wrestlers. Someone always got hurt. I think we also all had to pick our finishing move.

Like · Reply · 35w

Trevor Bliven: You got me into cub scouts and tee ball when we were kids

Like · Reply · 35w

Trevor Bliven: And that was in spite of the fact that I was regularly a jerk to you

Like · Reply · 35w
Tom Hockensmith Paul Tevis: I probably haven't seen you since 1996... but as Samuel Spade mentioned you are part of some of my greatest memories from the 90's. I'm sure you're still the smartest person in the room but most will notice your kindness first. You are one of a kind. You got this.
Paul Tevis: Holy crap you guys. Who is chopping onions in here?
Tip #7: Ask for Reactions Me?
When things get tricky, slow down and help with the processing.
Ways to ask for reactions:
Ways to ask for reactions:
● How was it to hear that?
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● How was it to hear that?
● How does that land with you?
Ways to ask for reactions:
● How was it to hear that?
● How does that land with you?
● What does that bring up for you?
Ways to ask for reactions:

● How was it to hear that?
● How does that land with you?
● What does that bring up for you?
● I’m wondering if that was hard to hear...
Understanding Empathy
Understanding Yourself
Understanding Others
Understanding Each Other
Treat Feelings as Data
Listen at Level 2 (At least)
Notice Your Judgements
Ask “Where’s That From?”
Help Others Empty Their Cup
Know & Disclose
Ask for Reactions
These things are simple.
That doesn’t mean they’re easy.
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