

## **Art of Empathy: 12 Steps**

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### **1. Timing/Intention**

Do you have the spaciousness/presence to give empathy in this moment? What is your intention? Do you truly want to connect with the other person or correct them? Or, is your intention to get your own way?" (if your intention is anything other than connection, go to self-empathy)

### **2. If You are Defensive/Reactive/Triggered**

If you are stimulated and unable to feel the empathic connection, try a cool down, or let the other person know you are struggling with your reactions and will respond later.

### **3. Pause**

Stop whatever you are doing and give the other person your full attention.

### **4. Breathe**

Exhale fully, then take a few deep breaths. Bring awareness to your body.

### **5. Relax your body**

Release tension especially in the belly, shoulders, and jaw.

### **6. Be Present**

Consciously focus on being presence and centered.

### **7. Empty Your Mind**

Remind yourself "This is not about me." Set yourself aside for the moment, then extend a flow of empathic energy toward the other.

### **8. Guess, Don't Tell**

*If you choose to use words, respectfully guess the others feelings and needs and/or reflect back what you heard them say.*

### **9. Consciously Track & Focus on Last Thing Said**

Make your guesses tracking the last thing you heard the person say. This requires you to constantly let go of what was originally said and stay present to how they respond to each guess. Their story may transform into something quite different if you track carefully.

### **10. Match Energy and Take Your Time**

Notice their energy. It helps if you can match it. Pacing is important. Allow people to go inside and formulate their thoughts/feelings.

### **11. Body Response**

Stay with empathy until you sense a bodily relaxation or release in the other person. Or you may notice the other person has become quiet. A simple sentence such as "Is there more you want to say?" will help clarify if there is more.

### **12. Request**

You may want to help clarify a request by saying "Is there something you are wanting from yourself or another right now?" Once the other person has been heard and understood, you can decide if the timing is right for you to share your experience, feelings, and/or needs. It may sound something like this "I have some thoughts about that and I want to check and see if you'd like to hear it."