

to her life and meet our own needs for contribution and connection. It is priceless, powerful, and healing. It can defuse a violent situation in a few seconds and provide a level of clarity that catapults someone to a deeper level of personal understanding. It is what most people long for, but few know how to get.

The process is simple; listen for the feelings and needs of the other person. If your spouse is screaming at you because you were an hour late for your date, empathizing means that you listen for her feelings and needs without bringing your story into the picture: “Sounds like you’re furious and maybe scared because you value commitment and respect.” That’s it. Simply listen for the underlying feelings and needs of the other person and reflect them back to her. It is amazing how healing it is to be deeply understood when one is angry. It only takes a few words, but it can move mountains of pain. Once the other person is heard, it is then your turn to express yourself.

Be aware of opportunities to express a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing today.



JULY 14

*Life is not a problem to be solved but a
reality to be experienced.*

—Søren Kierkegaard

We Don't Need to Fix Other People

When empathizing with someone, we listen for their feelings and needs and don't try to fix their problem for them. The very process of giving someone space to talk about their issue without our judgment, to be truly understood by us, and to be deeply heard is very healing, enough so that most people will organically find their own creative ways to resolve their issues. Rely on this process and you will lose all desire to fix people's problems. Instead, you will learn to trust their ability to resolve their issues. All it takes is your presence and your desire to hear their feelings and needs. Amazing!

Be aware of opportunities to listen to someone
without trying to fix their problem today.



JULY 15

*The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you,
the better you will hear what is happening outside.*

—Dag Hammarskjöld

When Our Own Pain Keeps Us From Empathizing With Another

At the beginning of a flight, flight attendants advise that if the plane loses air pressure, passengers should put on their own oxygen masks before putting them on their children. This is because an adult who dies of suffocation is of no help to a small child. So it is with empathy. Sometimes, we