

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

are in so much pain ourselves that we find it impossible to empathize with another. This usually means that we are in need of empathy ourselves. In this case, consider telling the person with whom you are talking: “I am noticing that I am in distress and so I am struggling to be present for you. Would you consider empathizing with me a few moments so that I can become more present for you?” If the person is unwilling to do this, or if you are uncomfortable making this request, consider removing yourself from the situation until you can fill your own empathy tank. It is important to take the time to do so before attempting to help someone else fill theirs. You are doing no one a favor if you pretend to be present when you are not.

Be aware of moments today when you struggle to be present with another person, and take steps to fill your own empathy tank.



JULY 16

“I think patience is what love is,” he said, “because how could you love somebody without it?”

—Jane Howard

Bringing the Topic of a Conversation Back to Your Needs

You pop into your colleague’s office to say hi and ask what time it is. He offers a lengthy dissertation on how clocks work. You think you could walk out the door without him