



## New Pathways Wellbeing Circles

### EXPLORING FOUNDATIONS OF WELLBEING

and how the theme impacts on various aspects of our life and contributes to our overall health and wellbeing.

## EMPATHY

### Empathy / Sympathy

Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions.

*Roman Krznaric*

Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.

*Alfred Adler*

You can only understand people if you feel them in yourself.

*John Steinbeck*

If you judge people, you have no time to love them.

*Mother Teresa*

When you start to develop your powers of empathy and imagination, the whole world opens up to you.

*Susan Sarandon*

The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy, we can all sense a mysterious connection to each other.

*Meryl Streep*

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

*Henri Nouwen*

Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and, therefore, the foundation of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.

*J.K. Rowling*

Random acts of kindness are an expression of empathy as we feel the needs of another. This allows us to walk in their shoes, reach out to offer a helping hand and make that connection.

*Annette Subhani*

### The Story of Kathryn Lawes

In 1921, Lewis Lawes became the warden at Sing Sing Prison. No prison was tougher than Sing Sing during that time. But when Warden Lawes retired some twenty years later, the prison had become a humanitarian institution. Those who

studied the system said credit for the change belonged to Lawes. But when he was asked about the transformation, here's what he said: "I owe it all to my wonderful wife, Kathryn, who is buried outside the prison walls.

Kathryn Lawes was a young mother with three small children when her husband became the warden. Everyone warned her from the beginning that she should not set foot inside the prison walls, but that didn't stop Kathryn! When the first prison basketball game was held, she went... Walking into the gym with her three beautiful kids and she sat in the stands with the inmates.

Her attitude was: "My husband and I are going to take care of these men and I believe they will take care of me! I don't have to worry!" She insisted on getting acquainted with them and their records. She discovered that one convicted murderer was blind so she paid him a visit. Holding his hand in hers she said, "do you read Braille?" "What's Braille?" he asked. Then she taught him how to read. Years later he would weep in love for her. Later, Kathryn found a deaf-mute in prison. She went to school to learn how to use sign language. Many said that Kathryn Lawes was the body of Jesus coming alive again in Sing Sing from 1921 to 1937.

Then, she was killed in a car accident. The next morning Lewis Lawes didn't come to work, so the acting warden took his place. It seemed almost instantly that the prison knew something was wrong. The following day, her body was resting in a casket in her home, three-quarters of a mile from the prison. As the acting warden took his early morning walk, he was shocked to see the toughest, hardest-looking criminals gathered like a herd of animals at the main gate. He came closer and noticed tears of grief and sadness. He knew how much they loved Kathryn.

He turned and faced the men. "Alright men, you can go. Just be sure you check in tonight!" Then he opened the gate and a parade of criminals walked, without a guard, the three-quarters of a mile to stand in line to pay their final respects to Kathryn Lawes. And every one of them checked back in. Everyone!

*Tim Kimmel*

Empathy may be the single most important quality that must be nurtured to give peace a fighting chance.

*Arundhati Ray*

Learning to stand in somebody else's shoes, to see through their eyes, that's how peace begins. And it's up to you to make that happen. Empathy is a quality of character that can change the world.

*Barack Obama*

If there is only one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.

*Henry Ford*

Have you ever been surfing? Imagine you're on your surfboard now, waiting for the big one to come. Get ready to get carried with that energy. Now, here it comes. That's empathy. No words – just being with that energy. When I connect with what's alive in another person, I have feelings similar to when I'm surfing.

*Marshall Rosenberg*

Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives. If you cannot connect with people to inspire them, then you are going to fall short as a leader. If you cannot see into the minds and hearts of your people, then you will not lead them.

*Oprah Winfrey*

Empathy has no script. Empathy is connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of 'you're not alone.

*Brene Brown*

Sometimes all a person wants is an empathetic ear; all he or she needs is to talk it out. Just offering a listening ear and an understanding heart for his or her suffering can be a big comfort.

*Roy T. Bennett*

Our bodies have five senses: touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing. But not to be overlooked are the senses of our souls: intuition, peace, foresight, trust, empathy. The differences between people lie in their use of these senses; most people don't know anything about the inner senses while a few people rely on them just as they rely on their physical senses, and in fact probably even more.

*C. JoyBell C*

Nelson Mandela once said, 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.' He was so right. When you make the effort to speak someone else's language, even if it's just basic phrases here and there, you are saying to them, 'I understand that you have a culture and identity that exists beyond me. I see you as a human being'.

*Trevor Noah*

### Sympathy and Empathy

First, let's see what the dictionary can tell us:

The two words are synonyms for each other, so it's not surprising that there is some puzzlement over the difference.

Sympathy is defined as: Sharing the feelings of another, especially in sorrow or trouble; fellow feeling, compassion, or commiseration

Empathy is defined as: The psychological identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another.

With empathy, we understand what others are feeling because we have experienced it ourselves or can put ourselves in their shoes; and in sympathy we acknowledge another person's emotional hardship and provide comfort and assurance, that may not be received as helpful if the recipient sees you don't understand. With sympathy, we recognize the person is suffering; with empathy we feel their suffering and suffer with them. Both sympathy and empathy imply caring for another person, but with empathy, the caring is enhanced or expanded by being able to feel the other person's emotions. Sympathy conveys caring and concern, but does not convey shared distress.

<https://www.ninestarsolutions.com/which-is-better-empathy-sympathy-or-compassion/>

### The Benefits of Empathy

What's good about empathy is that it can help a person not only personally but also professionally. In the workplace, it is easy to empathize with our peers because we share something in common with them. But empathy can also include taking the perspective of another person. Trying to empathize with your boss may lead to an avenue of connection and understanding. Empathy supports happiness and collaboration in the workplace.

Empathetic people tend to be more creative thinkers and sources of innovation. Empathetic people tend to be better listeners which is perhaps why empathy is the active ingredient in conflict resolution. Empathy expands our perspectives and fosters positive feelings. Empathy also does the body good. Our stress is lessened when we are surrounded by those who have developed understanding and respect.

*Support Linc*

I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.

*Maya Angelou*

If you've ever moved away from your social "home base" then you have a good idea of just how much social connections shape your everyday life and well-being. One study showed that social connection is a greater determinant to health than obesity, smoking, and high blood pressure. And social connection doesn't necessarily mean physically being present with people in a literal sense, but someone's subjective experience of feeling understood and connected to others.

*MindWise Innovations*

Empathy is 'feeling with' someone – being able to put yourself in their place as if you were them and feeling those feelings. There are several different elements that make up empathy. There are also different types of empathy that have been defined by psychologists.

Cognitive Empathy - also known as 'perspective-taking' is not really what most of us would think of as empathy at all. Cognitive empathy is 'empathy by thought', rather than by feeling. It is a useful skill, particularly in negotiations for example, or for managers.

Emotional Empathy is when you quite literally feel the other person's emotions alongside them, as if you had 'caught' the emotions. It is also known as 'personal distress' or 'emotional contagion'. This is closer to the usual understanding of the word 'empathy', but more emotional. Emotional empathy is good because it means that we can readily understand and feel other people's emotions. It also means that we can respond to friends and others when they are distressed. Emotional empathy can be negative, because it is possible to become overwhelmed by those emotions, and therefore unable to respond. This is known as empathy overload.

Compassionate Empathy is what we usually understand by empathy: feeling someone's pain, and taking action to help. The name, compassionate empathy, is consistent with what we usually understand by compassion. Like sympathy, compassion is about feeling concern for someone, but with an additional move towards action to mitigate the problem.  
[www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/empathy-types](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/empathy-types)

A Story - What's Prettier Than Freckles?

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws.

"You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a girl in the line said to the little fella.

Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl, I always wanted freckles," she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek.

"Freckles are beautiful."

The boy looked up, "Really?"

"Of course," said the grandmother. "Why just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles."

The little boy thought for a moment, peering intensely into his grandma's face and softly whispered, "Wrinkles".

*Unknown*

The more we desire to benefit others, the greater the strength and confidence we develop and the greater the peace and happiness we experience. If this still seems unlikely, it is worth asking ourselves how else we are to do so. With violence and aggression? Of course not. With money? Perhaps up to a point, but no further. But with love, by sharing with others' suffering, by recognizing ourselves in all others—especially those who are disadvantaged and those whose rights are not respected—by helping them to be happy: yes. Through love, through kindness, through compassion we establish understanding between ourselves and others. This is how we forge unity and harmony. Compassion and love are not mere luxuries. As the Source both of inner and external peace, they are fundamental to the continual survival of our species.

*Dalai Lama*

*Thank you for joining us this evening. Please reach out if you require additional support.*

Future dates & themes:

- Wednesday 8 November @ 7.30pm - **Theme – Reliability**
- Wednesday 13 December @ 7.30pm - **Theme – Giving**
- Wednesday 14 February 2024 @ 7.30pm - **Theme – Love**

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**Annette Subhani**  
~ accompanying you through transitions of life  
[newpathwayslifecoaching.com.au](http://newpathwayslifecoaching.com.au)  
[newpathwayslc@gmail.com](mailto:newpathwayslc@gmail.com)  
**0418 320 138**