

Types of Empathy



These Things Called Empathy, Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena. Read the following example on how our different psychological states can impact our capacity for empathy.

Imagine that you meet a friend for lunch. She seems distracted, staring into space, not very talkative, a bit down. Gradually, she begins to speak, then to cry. She explains that she just learned that she is losing her job because of downsizing. She says that she is not angry but that she is hurt, and a bit scared. You feel very sorry for her, and say so. You are also reminded that there has been talk of job cuts where you work as well. Seeing your friend so upset makes you feel a bit anxious and uneasy. You also feel a brief flash of relief—“Thank God it wasn’t me!” At least eight different psychological states you might experience in this interchange correspond to distinct concepts of empathy.

(from Batson, 2009)

We are only going to go over 5!



Review 5 types of empathy from the Roots of Empathy Symposium

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdhMY_DNb1M

5 Types of Empathy

1

Emotional/ Empathic Resonance

receiver of emotional information feels what the other is feeling - you feel the feelings of the other person; the emotional actor feels felt

2

Perspective taking

you see the world as the other person sees it

3

Cognitive empathy

(empathic understanding) – realization that memory and emotion influence our present moment; a remembering moment for the emotional actor (differs from perspective taking in that we are trying to **understand** the actor, not just perspective take)

4

Empathetic concern

(synonym for compassion) – “I feel your pain and I want to do something to reduce your suffering.” “I am thinking about your pain and what I am going to do to alleviate it.”

Step 1: Receive suffering from another

Step 2: Feel badly about it

Step 3: Experience empathic imaginations – what can I do to alleviate pain or suffering of the other

Step 4: Actually do something

This is action oriented empathy

5

Empathic joy!

to be joyful at someone else's joyful experience - “I am so excited about your success” – underemphasized empathic skills we have (overlaps with emotional resonance)

Story Corps

StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

We do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, to strengthen and build the connections between people, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone's story matters. At the same time, we are creating an invaluable archive for future generations.

Retrieved from: <https://storycorps.org/about/>

Listen to each story, decide upon your empathic response (choose one of the 5) either as a listener or by putting yourself in one of the storytellers shoes, explain why you chose your empathic response.

- Sean Smith and his mother Lee Smith*
- Erika Kalberer and Kris Kalberer*
- Greg Gibson and Wayne Lo*
- Damn Sahr and Asma Jama*
- Ronald Ruiz*
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