

Empathy Resources

What is Empathy?

From Harvard School of Education: Empathy is at the heart of what it means to be human. It's a foundation for acting ethically, for good relationships of many kinds, for loving well, and for professional success. And it's key to preventing bullying and many other forms of cruelty.



Empathy begins with the capacity to take another perspective, to walk in another's shoes. But it is not just that capacity. Salespeople, politicians, actors and marketers are often very skilled at taking other perspectives but they may not care about others. Con men and torturers take other perspectives so they can exploit people's weaknesses. Empathy includes valuing other perspectives and people. It's about perspective-taking and compassion.

From Elena Aguilar: Empathy is feeling someone else's pain or seeing through their eyes. It's also a precursor to compassion, which is empathy in action—a commitment to doing something that relieves someone else's suffering.

But here's another reason to foster empathy for others: Experiencing empathy can make your own life better. Empathy can open your heart, letting in more feelings, but also softening some of the tough experiences. As we build empathy for others, we understand them more and can connect with them differently, which boosts our resilience—the ability to bounce back after challenges.

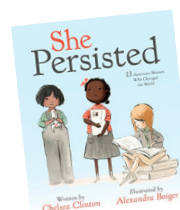
Greater Good Science Center: [What is Empathy?](#)

The term “empathy” is used to describe a wide range of experiences. Emotion researchers generally define empathy as the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.

Contemporary researchers often differentiate between **two types of empathy**: “Affective empathy” refers to the sensations and feelings we get in response to others' emotions; this can include mirroring what that person is feeling, or just feeling stressed when we detect another's fear or anxiety. “Cognitive empathy,” sometimes called “perspective taking,” refers to our ability to identify and understand other people's emotions.

Books: Primary

- Mango Abuela and Me, by Meg Medina and Angela Dominguez
- We're all Wonders, R. J. Palacio
- She Persisted, by Chelsea Clinton
- Those Shoes, Marabeth Boelts and Noah Jones
- [Last Stop on Market Street](#), Matt de la Pena
- Crown, by Derrick Barnes
- Sweet



- The Proudest Blue, by Ibtihaj Muhammad
- Charlotte's Web, EB White

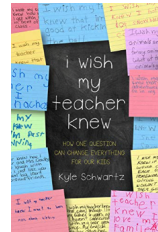
Intermediate

- Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson
- Where the Red Fern Grows, Wilson Rawls
- I am Human, A Book of Empathy, Susan Verde
- Wonder, RJ Palacio
- Fish in a Tree, L. M. Hunt



Secondary

- I Wish My Teacher Knew, Kyle Schwartz
- Stand in My Shoes, Bob Samson
- The Invisible Boy, Trudy Ludwig
- I am Human, A Book of Empathy, Susan Verde



Video:  Brené Brown on Empathy

Parents/Caregivers

- [5 Tips for Cultivating Empathy](#), Harvard Graduate School of Education
- [8 Ways to Teach Empathy to Your Child](#), Understood.org
- [Teaching Empathy: Evidence based tips for fostering empathetic awareness in children](#), Parenting Science
- [How to Teach Empathy to Kids](#), Nadia Hlebowitsh, Think Psych

Empathy:
 "Let me hold
 the door for you.
 I may have
 never walked
 in your shoes,
 but I can see
 your soles are worn,
 your strength is torn
 under the weight of a story
 I have never lived before.
 Let me hold the door for you.
 After all you have walked through,
 It is the least I can do."

Morgan Harper Nichols