

STRENGTHSFINDER[®]



Empathy

You can sense the emotions of those around you. You can feel what they are feeling as though their feelings are your own. Intuitively, you are able to see the world through their eyes and share their perspective. You do not necessarily agree with each person's perspective. You do not necessarily feel pity for each person's predicament-this would be sympathy, not Empathy. You do not necessarily condone the choices each person makes, but you do understand. This instinctive ability to understand is powerful. You hear the unvoiced questions. You anticipate the need. Where others grapple for words, you seem to find the right words and the right tone. You help people find the right phrases to express their feelings-to themselves as well as to others. You help them give voice to their emotional life. For all these reasons other people are drawn to you.

Empathy Sounds like this:

Alyce J., *administrator*: "Recently, I was in a meeting of trustees where one of the individuals was presenting a new idea that was critical to her and to the life of this group. When she was finished, no one heard her opinion, no one really heard her. It was a powerfully demoralizing moment for her. I could see it in her face, and she wasn't herself for a day or two afterward. I finally raised the issue with her and used words that helped describe how she was feeling. I said, 'Something's wrong,' and she started to talk. I said, 'I really understand. I know how important this was for you, and you don't seem like yourself,' and so on. And she finally gave words to what was going on inside her. She said, 'You're the only one who heard me and who has said one word to me about it.' "

Brian H., *administrator*: "When my team is making decisions, what I like to do is say, 'Okay, what will this person say about this?' 'What will that person say about it?' In other words, put yourself in their position. Let's think about the arguments from their perspective so that we can all be more persuasive."

Janet P., *schoolteacher*: "I never played basketball because they didn't have it for women when I was a kid, but I believe I can tell at a basketball game when the momentum is changing, and I want to go to the coach and say, 'Get them revved up. You are losing them.' Empathy also works in large groups; you can feel the crowd."