

Empathy is to:

- connect with another human in the present moment (without losing oneself)
- meet this person where he/she is (not what I want)
- keep the focus on the speaker, listening fully without filling in
- acknowledge, feel compassion for his/her feelings and needs (longings, intentions)
- give silent presence OR rephrase, reflect, check what I think I heard
- trust that he/she knows best how to move forward
- know that this is very often "help enough"

Just to sit, without expectation, with someone who is in grief or fear or loneliness or despair, without trying to fix them in any way, or manipulate their experience to match your idea of how it should be; just to listen, without playing the role of 'expert' or 'enlightened guru' or 'the one who knows best'; just to be totally available to the one in front of you, and to walk with them through the fire, to hold their hand when they are broken - this is empathy.

Beyond our roles, unprotected, unresolved, undefended, we truly meet.

- Jeff Foster

Other ways of Listening

Fix / solve it: "What will help is..."

Advice: "I think you should..."

Interrogate: "How did it happen?"

Explain: "She said that because..."

Correct: "That not how it was..."

Educate: "You can learn from this..."

Console: "It wasn't your fault..."

Judge: "How lazy of you!"

Storytell: "That reminds me when..."

Evaluate: "If you hadn't been so rude..."

Sympathize: "You poor thing! How awful"

Agree: "He did that to you, that jerk!"

Subdue emotion: "It's nothing to cry over"

Give perspective: "See it like this..."

