



# Empathic Listening

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*Being heard* is one of our most fundamental of needs as human beings. In NVC, no matter what the other person says or how they say it, we only hear what they are observing, feeling, needing, and requesting.

## What Empathy IS ...

- **Presence:** listening with our whole being
- **Focus:** bringing our attention to what the other person is feeling or needing—no matter what is being said
- **Space:** empathy is mostly silence, giving the person all the space they need to express themselves fully, and to be with the feelings & needs that arise
- **Intention:** listening empathically to this human being is the most joyful activity I could be doing in this moment
- **Wonder:** extending myself through wonder & curiosity ... what is this person experiencing?
- **Caring:** seeing & valuing the beauty within the person

## What Empathy is NOT:

- "Fixing"
- Advising
- One-upping
- Educating
- Consoling
- Story-telling
- Sympathizing
- Explaining
- Correcting
- Interrogating
- Analyzing

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## 2 Ways to create connection:

1. Expressing honestly
2. Listening empathically

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*I can testify that when you are in psychological distress and someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without trying to take responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good! At these times it has relaxed the tension in me. It has permitted me to bring out the frightening feelings, the guilts, the despair, the confusions that have been a part of my experience. When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to re-perceive my world in a new way and to go on. – Carl Rogers, A Way of Being*

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## Empathy vs. Sympathy

- **Empathy** is focusing your full consciousness on the feelings & needs of the other person
- **Sympathy** is when one's consciousness is focused on our own feelings & needs

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*Intellectual understanding blocks empathy.*  
–Marshall Rosenberg

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