

## Sympathy versus Empathy

By Wendy C. Norris

Empathy is different from sympathy. Empathy involves listening; sympathy involves reacting. When we empathize with others, we understand their feelings without getting involved in them. When we sympathize with others, however, we identify with their feelings to the point where we take on their pain. The empathetic person asks questions; the sympathetic person may be moved to offer advice and solutions rather than allowing others to come to their own realizations. We are not meant to suffer when other do; their suffering can aid their growth. But we are meant to be there for others with a loving and supportive heart. The highest gift we can give others is a chance to express themselves and to reach their own-not our- conclusion.

<b>Sympathy = Enable</b>	<b>Empathy = Empower</b>
<b>When I am sympathetic:</b>	<b>When I am empathetic:</b>
I feel responsible for others.	I feel responsible to others.
I    Fix	
Protect	I show Empathy
Rescue	Respect
Control	I    Listen
Carry their feelings	Encourage
Don't listen	Share
I feel... Tired	Confront
Anxious	Am at their level
Fearful	Am sensitive
Liable	I feel...Relaxed
	Free
	Aware
	High self-esteem

<p>I am a manipulator.</p> <p>I am concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The solution</li> <li>Answers</li> <li>Details</li> <li>Being right</li> <li>Performance</li> <li>Circumstances</li> </ul>	<p>I am a helper-guide.</p> <p>I am concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person</li> <li>Feelings</li> <li>Relating person to person</li> </ul> <p>I believe if I just share myself, the other person has enough to make it.</p>
<p>I expect the person to live up to my expectations.</p> <p>I can't let go.</p>	<p>I expect the person to be responsible for himself and his own actions.</p> <p>I can trust and let go.</p>