

# The Double Empathy Problem

Coined by the autistic researcher, Dr. Damien Milton, the Double Empathy Problem suggests that empathy is a two-way street and that both neurotypical individuals and autistics can struggle to understand and empathize with each other.

The Double Empathy Problem challenges the traditional view of empathy as a one-way street where neurotypical people have the ability to empathize with autistics, but autistics are seen as lacking this ability.

*Source: [crossrivertherapy.com/autism/double-empathy-problem](http://crossrivertherapy.com/autism/double-empathy-problem)*

**The Double Empathy Problem exists because autistics and neurotypical people have very different ways of processing information and communicating. Autistics often rely on visual and sensory information to understand the world, while neurotypicals rely more on verbal and social cues.**

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**Multiple studies have shown that autistics communicate effectively with other autistics.**

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE DOUBLE EMPATHY PROBLEM

Because under current diagnostic criteria, autism is recognized as a social communication disorder. It's implied that the autistic must be taught to adhere to neurotypical normative social constructs. Their own authentic culture and experience are discounted. Many times, therapies that are intended to "help" autistics learn to "function in the real world" are harmful and traumatic.

## PUTTING THE THEORY OF DOUBLE EMPATHY INTO PRACTICE

Be curious about and open to another's perspective.

Check for understanding.

It is **NOT** the responsibility of the autistic to conform to neurotypical social conventions.

Understand the amount of emotional and cognitive energy it takes for an autistic to simply exist.

## MORE INFORMATION ON THE DOUBLE EMPATHY PROBLEM CAN BE FOUND AT:

@Neurowild "The Double Empathy Problem in a Nutshell"  
@dat\_autistic-advocate  
socialciphergame.com

[Reframingautism.org.au/miltons-double-empathy-problem-a-summary-for-non-academics](http://Reframingautism.org.au/miltons-double-empathy-problem-a-summary-for-non-academics)

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