

Sympathy is easy. You have sympathy for starving children swatting at flies on the late-night commercials. Sympathy is easy because it comes from a position of power.

Empathy is getting down on your knees and looking someone else in the eye, and realizing that you could be them, and that all that separates you is luck.

*Dennis Lehane, American novelist*

*Never take someone's feelings for granted. You never know how much courage it took them to show.*

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*Just like children, emotions heal when they are heard and validated.*

Jill Bolte Taylor, neuroscientist and stroke survivor

Empathy happens on multiple levels. It is experiencing and absorbing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another.

Sympathy is a surface level of demonstrating care, such as expressing pity for someone. Others feel your compassion yet you are not with them because you are outside of their experience.

With empathy you are with them in their experience and this is very healing for others. People say “Yes, you GET me!”

*Lisa Hutchison LMHC (www.lisahutchison.net)*

Empathy is really the opposite of spiritual meanness. It's the capacity to understand that every war is both won and lost. And that someone else's pain is as meaningful as your own.

*Barbara Kingsolver, American novelist*

*People start to heal the moment they feel heard.*

*Cheryl Richardson, author/coach*

*Real empathy is sometimes not insisting that it will be okay, but acknowledging that it is not.*

*Sheryl Sandberg, author, Facebook COO*

Empathy has no script. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of *"you're not alone."*

*Brené Brown PhD, researcher & social worker*