**Empathy and Communication**

**Bene Brown video:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw)

**Ted Talk:** [**http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2014/01/the-difference-between-sympathy-and-empathy.html**](http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2014/01/the-difference-between-sympathy-and-empathy.html)

**Empathy** is the ability to re-create another person’s perspective; to experience the world from the other’s point of view. It involves three dimensions:

1. Perspective taking: an attempt to take on the viewpoint of another person. You must set aside your own opinions and it requires a suspension of judement.
2. Emotional dimension: get closer to others’ feelings; feel the joy, sadness, etc.
3. Concern: for the welfare and well-being of the other; going beyond just thinking and feeling.

**Sympathy** means you feel compassion FOR the other other person’s predicament, but you don’t have a personal sense of what that predicament actually feels like.

The difference involves validity. We sympathize only when we accept the reasons for another’s pain as valid, whereas it’s possible to empathize without feeling sympathy; you can empathize with a difficult relative, a rude stranger, or even a criminal without being sympathetic. Empathizing allows you to understand another’s motives without agreeing with them.

**Read: *Sibling Rivalry: A New Perspective*** page 120.

*“I know how you feel”:* Neither sympathy or empathy. Hearing someone else’s account might remind you of similar experience you’ve had. It is unlikely the two of you feel the same way; furthermore, it can be interpreted as merely a method to allow you to start telling your story, instead of listening to theirs.

Total empathy is impossible to achieve. Completely understanding another person’s point of view is simply too difficult a task.

Also, *Empathy and the Golden Rule* page 121.

**The Pillow Method**