

EDITORIAL

Essentials of Empathy

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One of the most neglected human behaviours is empathy. We seldom put our selves in the shoes of others to understand their feelings. What we often do is that we form an opinion about others by what they express instead of understanding why they express a particular trait.

Empathy can change our entire outlook of people around us.

At times, our near ones like our parents, spouse and children behave in a way that seems out of the normal to us. We expect something different from the response they actually give. This is because at times we do not realize what actually is bugging them or making them behave differently. We have to put ourselves in their place and then evaluate the situation. Many a time we would agree that in the given circumstances, their behaviour was justified and it was we that needed to revise our expectations.

Similarly, if people are angry with us or express their anger at something which is seemingly needless, a deeper analysis may reveal the reason. As a result, we may appreciate this anger and may end up having sympathy and support for such people. We may realize that the anger may be overblown but it does have a valid basis and maybe we can do something to help that person. At once, a persona non grata becomes a bonafide individual in our eyes.

One of the greatest benefits of empathy is that it brings us closer to our fraternity, especially those around us. Instead of being put off by their attitudes and behaviour, we end up coming closer to them by analyzing what has made them adopt a particular unexpected or abnormal attitude.

A second benefit is that an empathetic person is not impulsive in his response. He thinks deeply before he expresses a response

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because strange behaviours from his peers induces him to find out the reason behind it. If a person can train himself in this virtue, it will help him a lot in every sphere of life. He is never reckless and impetuous. He becomes cautious and circumspect.

A third benefit is that the culture of empathy in a society makes it a heaven on earth. People become caring and helpful to each other. A personality behaves in totality. A person who is empathetic will find himself always accommodating the needs of others and adjusting to straitened circumstances.

Finally, empathy is an indispensable trait for a leader or a person in a position of responsibility. He will win the confidence of those who look up to him.
