

 **SMARTER TOOL – DEVELOPMENT PATHS TO EMPATHY**

Some people are naturally and consistently empathetic, resulting in positive connections with others. Practice these behaviors to sharpen or further develop your empathy muscle.

1. Listen.

Listen with your ears, eyes and heart. Pay attention to body language, tone of voice, hidden emotions and the context (perspective) of what others are, or are not, saying.

2. Shadow.

Shadow someone who is known for his or her interpersonal sensitivity.

3. Invite perspective.

Intentionally invite other's views and perspectives. Tell others you are developing a higher level of empathy, and ask them for suggestions and feedback.

4. Default communication style.

Think back to when your views differed from someone else's. Inquire: How was your communication received? What is your default communication style when hijacked? Is it crucial, avoidance, victim, bully, retreat or silence?

5. Do not interrupt people.

Do not dismiss their concerns offhand. Do not rush to give advice. Do not change the subject. Allow people their moment.

6. Tune in to non-verbal communication.

What do actions or silences tell you about how someone really feels, even when verbal communication says something different?

7. Practice the 93% rule.

Professor Emeriti, Albert Mehrabian of UCLA, found that words account for only 7% of the total message that people receive. The other 93% of the message is contained in our tone of voice and body language.

8. Use people's names.

Remember the names of significant people in other's life.

9. Be fully present when you are with people.

Avoid your email or phone calls when interacting with others at work. How would you feel if your boss did that to you?

10. Encourage people, particularly the quiet ones, when they speak up in meetings.

A simple thing like an attentive nod can boost people's confidence.

11. Give genuine recognition and praise.

Pay attention to what people are doing and catch them doing the right things. *"You are an asset to this team because..."*

12. Show people you care—have lunch once a month with a friend or with someone new.

Remember birthdays and Friday "I care" phone calls.