



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

Empathy and Empathic Listening:

**Enhancing Our Ability to Connect with
Others**

- A Mini Course presented by
Sheila Bentley & Margarete Imhof



Listening with empathy: A mini course

We offer a 5-month program with the

aim to provide a process with information, activities, self-reflection, exchange and discussions with you

to explore empathy and to encourage skill development toward becoming proficient at listening with empathy.

Listening with empathy: A mini course

Date	Presenters	Topic
May 28	Sheila Bentley Margarete Imhof	Introduction and Overview of the
June 18	Sheila Bentley Margarete Imhof	How to identify emotions
July 9	Jennie Grau	Establish an Intent for Listening
July 30	Graham Bodie	Receive the Message and Listen with Empathy
August 20	Lori Joubert & Krishna Naineni	Respond with an appropriate empathic verbal and nonverbal message
September 3	Sheila Bentley & Margarete Imhof	Planning an activity for the International Day of Listening
September 17		International Day of Listening: Listen with Empathy Activities

You are invited to attend all sessions.

Participation is free and voluntary donations are welcome.



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TODAY: Prelude and Introduction

1. What is Empathy and Empathic Listening?
2. Anatomy of an Emotion



Defining and exploring the concept

- What is empathy?



Source: <https://gedankenwelt.de/diese-5-merkmale-zeichnen-hochempathische-personen-hep-aus/>

... it is “connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience”
(Brown, 2018, p. 140)



Defining and exploring the concept

- What is empathy?

It is a complex behavior which includes

- Showing an open mind and a non-judgemental attitude
- Displaying multisensory immediacy:
I hear you, see you, I can smell you ...
- Offering person-orientated communication: it's about you
- Practicing mindfulness
- Holding back with solutions and quick fixes
- Building trust and sensing the relationship



Defining and exploring the concept

- ... and what is it not?
 - a. Empathy  Sympathy:
feel *with* somebody vs. feel *for* somebody
 - b. Empathy  Helping and Comforting:
allow the presence of the emotion vs. search immediate solution / relief



What does it take to show empathy?

- Ability to perceive socially relevant, nonverbal information
- Well-developed Theory of Mind:
Understand and appreciate that the other person has a different perspective on the same situation
Language ability to distinguish and describe complex emotions
ability to express emotional nuances
- Emotional self-regulation skills
control your own emotions while listening to others with empathy
be mindful to the effects that showing empathy has on our own emotional balance and to protect ourselves from compassion fatigue
- Appreciate that showing empathy is a choice we make



The four steps to showing empathy

- All things considered we propose to discuss empathy as a four-step process:
 1. Recognize and identify emotions
 2. Establish an intent for listening and a focus on the speaker
 3. Receive the message and listen with empathy
 4. Respond with an appropriate empathic verbal and nonverbal message



Defining and exploring the concept

ACTIVITY



Start an Empathy Journal that helps you to observe and understand how empathy takes place in your world and what your personal point of departure is in terms of developing skills to listen with empathy.



Defining and exploring the concept

ACTIVITY



Suggested questions to get started:

1. Do you remember a situation when you were in need for an empathic listener and the listener missed your need? What did this feel like?

2. In which situations or with whom are YOU more likely to listen with empathy than in others or with others? Can you say what is in YOUR way to listening with empathy?



Defining and exploring the concept

ACTIVITY



Suggested reflections to prepare for the next session (June 18):

Observe in your professional and / or personal life events and situations in which emotions and empathy play a role.

What are they? How are they handled? With what kind of outcome?

Take your notes into your empathy journal and bring them to the session.



Sources

Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead*. New York: Random House. (Section 4)

Meinhardt-Injac, B., Daum, M., Meinhardt, G. & Persike, M. (2018). The two-systems account of Theory of Mind: Testing the links to social-perceptual cognitive abilities. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 12, Article 25. doi:10.3389/fnhum.2018.00025

Schmetkamp, S. (2019). *Theorien der Empathie*. Hamburg: Junius.