

## GIVING OTHERS EMPATHY

Empathy is a quality of being present with someone, and going as deep as possible with what is most alive in the moment. One way we support this "going deep" in Nonviolent Communication is by inquiring about what need is present through empathy guessing.

The intention with empathy guessing is to connect with the other person. An empathy guess is my wondering where the person is - it is put in the form of a question so the person can reflect on the feelings and needs and respond with affirmation or corrections. It's not so important whether my guess is accurate; the support comes from my intention to be present with the other person, wherever they are.

Example:

A: When you notice Susan arrives ten minutes late to work every day are you feeling frustrated because you're wanting some consideration?

B: It's not that, really. Honestly, I'm just kind of angry that this is even an issue.

A: You're angry because you're not getting the accountability you would like in the workplace?

B: Yes, absolutely.

Exercise: empathy guessing

speaker: share something that happened to you recently with which you are not satisfied

listener: use the Feelings List to begin guessing at what the speaker was feeling.

speaker: listen to the guesses being offered by the listener and allow yourself to check in with how the specific guesses resonate. If you notice anything specific, feel free to share this with the listener.

listener: after you have arrived at the right feeling word(s), use the Needs List to begin guessing what the speaker was needing.

speaker: listen to the guesses being offered by the listener and allow yourself to check in with how the specific guesses resonate. If you notice anything specific, feel free to share this with the listener.