

EMPATHY Tips and Tools



Easy for parents, Good for kids

TIPS & TOOLS TO HELP BUSY PARENTS RAISE HAPPY, SUCCESSFUL KIDS - IN 10 MINUTES A DAY



How EMPATHY leads to Happiness and Success

Individuals who feel empathy in abundance experience greater happiness and less stress and make friends more easily. These benefits ripple outwards - patients of empathic doctors are more satisfied with their care, spouses of empathic individuals are more satisfied in their marriages, children of empathic parents are better able to manage their emotions, and employees of empathic managers suffer less from stress-related illness. Empathy strengthens our social fabric, encouraging generosity toward strangers, and tolerance for people who look or think differently than we do." - Jamil Zaki, War on Kindness.

"When a home or a workplace lacks empathy, relationships deteriorate. Both parties wonder; How in the world could anyone ever think or do that? They remain fixated on the other person's failings instead of finding a way to relate. The result is a mental and emotional standoff where everyone sticks to their guns, no problems get solved, and situations appear irreconcilable...When a person feels understood, they are more likely to reciprocate the effort and attempt to understand the other side. In time, this type of exchange builds a trusting relationship where both parties are motivated to give the other person the benefit of the doubt and forgive minor failings." - Jason Bariso, EQ Applied.

Mindsets for Happiness and Success



EMPATHY

We can only understand another person's behavior when we put ourselves "in their shoes."

How to talk to kids about EMPATHY

Everyone wants to feel like they belong somewhere... that they are an important and valued part of a group. For children, that group is the family unit. But everyone is different. To make someone feel valued, you really need to know what that means to them. Sometimes it's easy to see and sometimes it's not. The KEY to ME tool (below) is a great way to share how we really think and feel. If you want to start talking to your kids about Empathy, IN YOUR SHOES is fun way to get the conversation going. Ask each family member to make an outline of one of their shoes on a piece of paper with their name. Fold them up in the center of the table and have everyone grab one. Take turns sharing what it would feel like to be mom, dad, grandma, brother, or sister. LET'S TALK about EMPATHY conversation starters help children develop Empathy by asking them to imagine what it would feel like to be a variety of animals, people they know (neighbor, coach), and then people they don't know in challenging situations (blind, handicapped, etc.)

Partners in PEACE

Unless someone or something is getting hurt, jumping in to referee a dispute between your children is usually a huge waste of time. (1) Kids often argue because they are bored or because they want your attention. Rewarding fighting with attention will only bring about more fighting. (2) If you didn't see what happened, it's hard to be sure who's telling the truth. It's impossible to make any kind of judgment. They know, and that's why they are the only ones who can really resolve the dispute. (3) Kids need to learn how to resolve differences on their own, and that takes lots of practice. Family is where we feel safest, emotionally, because we are stuck with each other. We can make mistakes and not worry about losing someone's love. Sit everyone involved down and tell them that if they can resolve the argument on their own in _____ minutes, they will be rewarded with: _____. Give them each a pen/pencil and a PARTNERS IN PEACE card to fill out. Explain that it "takes two to tango," and that disputes are rarely one person's fault. Everyone adds to the "fire," and it IS possible to walk away from someone who started it. Help the young ones fill in their cards.

[Download LET'S TALK - Empathy](#)



[Download Partners in PEACE](#)

The HappyHome ELVES and the Key to EMPATHY

Each of the HAPPYHOME ELVES comes with a bed-time story by an award-winning author, an antique key, 50 tokens to reward good behavior, and 30 cards telling children what they can do to earn the Key of Resilience, Kindness, Optimism, Gratitude, Responsibility, Courage, Mindfulness, Empathy, Purpose, Generosity or Respect.



The HAPPYHOME ELVES pop up around the house (one per month), holding prompt cards for children, who love the magic and mystery of it all. Kids are excited to wake up each morning and see what message the ELF has brought, and end up doing more for their friendly ELF than they would for their parents. Parents learn how to parent like an expert without reading a single book. The prompt cards teach them what to say to their kids, and what activities to encourage that will help them develop the mindsets and habits that lead to happiness and success.

[See all 12 ELVES](#)

The 3-IN-1 FAMILY FUN Activities for EMPATHY

The three most important things happy families do is (1) sit down to meals and talk about what's important, (2) have fun together - without technology, and (3) celebrate family life with rituals and traditions that create memories and build strong family ties. 3-IN-1 FAMILY FUN ideas have been developed to deliver all those benefits in one simple activity.

Our most cherished childhood memories usually revolve around the holiday traditions we celebrate as a family. The fact that we repeat these traditions over and over again is one reason why they stick with us, but it's also because they involve so many of our senses; festive decor, yummy food, fun activities, and relaxed time with people we love. If you want your children to remember important life lessons, the easiest, and most effective, way is to weave them into holiday traditions and family rituals. That's what 3-IN-1 FAMILY FUN is all about. Below are three activities/tradition ideas for the month of September, all about EMPATHY and one that is perfect for Grandparent's Day.

Stories of my life

Describe your parents. What were they like? What did they do? What was the most important thing you learned from them, positive and/or negative?

Describe your childhood, your family life, and your siblings or friends. What do you remember as your happiest and your saddest memories?

As an adult, what were your goals & dreams? Did you encounter obstacles? Describe your greatest achievements and toughest disappointments.

STORIES of my LIFE

Empathy is a result of listening and learning. Listening with an open mind to what someone else has experienced and learning why they think and feel the way they do about those experiences. Based on personality, upbringing, and past experiences, two people can see the same situation from completely different perspectives. Use STORIES OF MY LIFE cards to listen and learn more about older family members (grandparents, aunts/uncles). Send a packet in the mail or call them up for a quick interview. Five simple questions about their parents, childhood, dreams, and the accomplishments, obstacles, and disappointments they've experienced. Help your children build empathy by understanding how people they know developed their beliefs, opinions, and perspectives. Bonus: You now have a precious family keepsake. It's perfect for Grandparent's Day!

EMPATHY:
What would it FEEL like to be...

...a beetle, a turtle, a bird, a snake, a monkey, a pig, a giraffe, an elephant, a bear, a butterfly, a dog, a horse, a lion, a dolphin, a penguin, or a crocodile...?

What would it FEEL like?

An easy, and very effective, way to help little ones begin to develop empathy is to talk about how it might feel to be one of the many familiar creatures they see and read about in their storybooks. Go around the square of sixteen creatures and ask some of the following questions about each one, adjusting the questions based on what you know your child will understand. You can always end with: Which one would you want to be? Or not want to be? And why?

1. What do they eat?
2. What do they do all day?
3. What would make them happy?
4. What do you think they are afraid of?
5. How is their life different from yours?

The Key to Me

Three things that make me HAPPY are...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Key to Me

Three things that make me ANGRY are...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Key to Me

When I am sad, the best way to COMFORT me is...

The KEY to ME

Empathy is about learning to imagine how someone else might be thinking and feeling about a situation, another person, or life in general. This creates a level of understanding that leads to happier and more productive relationships. The flip side of empathy is intentionally sharing your own thoughts and feelings with those close to you - so they don't have to guess. Relationships are difficult because we often assume others think or feel like we do, or we assume they should just "know" how we feel. Then we get upset when they say or do things that hurt us. Married couples spend decades trying, and failing, to please or comfort each other - simply because they guessed wrong. Help your children fill in their KEY to ME cards, after you complete yours. Take turns sharing. You'll be surprised at how much you don't know.

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