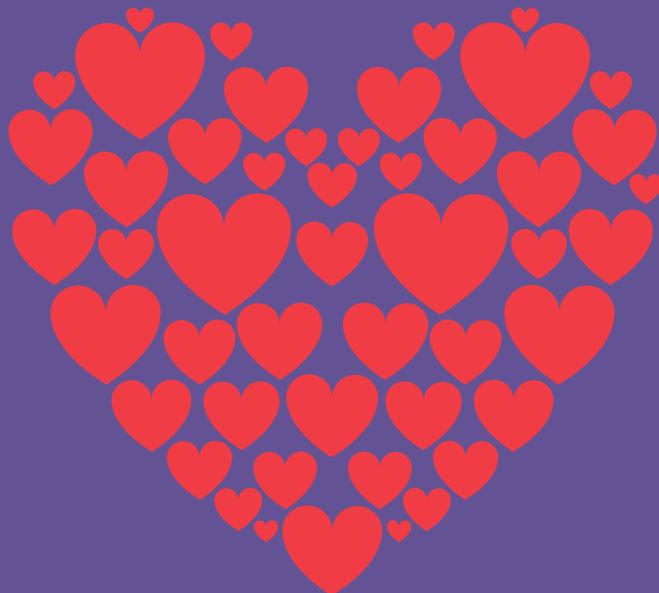Lifehacksforkids

*presents*

the
BEST
ME.

*empathy*

## what is empathy?

The dictionary defines EMPATHY as:

## The act of understanding, being aware of, or sensitive to another persons feelings, thoughts and experiences.

So, empathy is when you try and experience life as if you were another person, another way of saying this is that you WALK IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S SHOES.

You don't have to actually physically put someone else's shoes on, that might be tricky- especially if they are still wearing them!

Instead, this is something that you do inside your head, you use your IMAGINATION.

## why is empathy important?

There are lots and lots of reasons why empathy is important, here are 3 that we really like:

## ♥ Empathy helps you to be a better YOU.

Imagine if you had a friend who always knew exactly what you were thinking, what you were feeling and what you needed at any time.

How amazing a friend would they be?

Well that's what empathy is!

You won't always get it right, but by trying to understand where somebody else is coming from, you end up being a great friend, brother, sister, son, or daughter.

## ♥ Empathy helps you to solve problems.

Imagine trying to do a really difficult jigsaw that has lots of pieces and you have no idea what the picture you are trying to make looks like.

It would be pretty tough, right?

It's the same with people.

If you really want to help and solve problems, you can only do so if you know and understand what the problem truly looks and feels like.

Solving problems is an extremely important skill for you to have, and empathy will really help you to see what the picture looks like, so you can put the jigsaw together.

# EMPATHY

♥ **Empathy means that you get to FEEL AWESOME.**

Understanding other people, being a better brother, sister, child or friend, helping people to solve problems...
WOW, imagine how great you are going to feel!
It's like having a superpower.

## quiz

Here's a little quiz that will help you to think about how empathy works in real life.
The answers are on the next page.
Good luck!

**1** A person with EMPATHY is someone who:
A) Listens and understands others.
B) Doesn't listen to others.
C) Can understand exactly what their pet is saying.

**2** Which of the following best describes someone with empathy?
A) They prefer to spend time with animals.
B) They love spending time with people.
C) Their best friend is a robot.

**3** You see that your best friend is very sad, what do you do?
A) You feel sorry for them, it's not nice to be sad.
B) You understand why they are sad and you are there for them.
C) You get upset as well.

**4** If everybody had a bit more empathy :
A) The world would be just the same.
B) The world would be a nicer place to live.
C) The world would be worse.

**5** How does empathy help you to solve problems?
A) It doesn't, this is a trick question.
B) Because when you truly understand how someone is experiencing a problem, you can think of a better solution.
C) It doesn't matter if you have empathy or not, you can still solve problems.

**6** Which of these is the best description of empathy?
A) The ability to sense when someone isn't feeling well.
B) The ability to understand and share another person's experiences and emotions.
C) The ability to read another person's mind.

**7** Your friend is really struggling with a maths problem that you find easy... what do you do?
A) Let them work it out for themselves.
B) Show them how to do it.
C) Ask your friend if they are ok and if they need some help.
D) Ask the teacher to help your friend.

**8** If you have empathy, you are most likely to be good at...
A) Crossword puzzles.
B) Solving problems.
C) Doing homework.
D) Playing sports.

**9** A person who has empathy will be...
A) More in tune with how they feel.
B) More in tune with their thoughts.

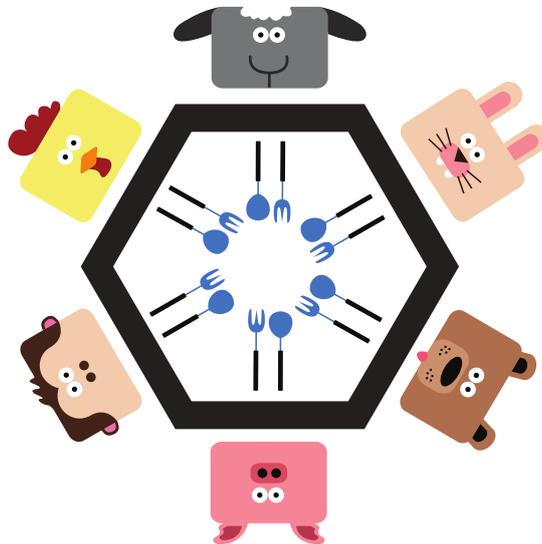**10** Can empathy be learned?
A) Maybe.
B) Nope.
C) Absolutely.

quiz answers

| | |
|---|---|
| 1= A. | 6= B. |
| 2= B. | 7= C. |
| 3= B. | 8= B. |
| 4= B. | 9= A. |
| 5= B | 10= C. |

## activity 1: walk in another person's shoes

**This is a fun exercise to do while you are eating a family meal.**
**Instead of sitting in your usual seat, everybody needs to swap to a different seat.**



**During the meal, you each have to pretend to be the person whose chair you are sitting in.**
**Everybody takes a turn to imagine and explain to the table how the day went for the person whose chair they are sitting in.**
**Once that person has finished, the person whose normally sits in the chair tells everyone what actually happened to them that day and how they felt.**
**Once they have finished, you move onto the next person until everybody has had a turn.**

## some questions to help you think

*What did that person do today?*
*How did they feel during their day?*
*What different sorts of emotions did they have?*
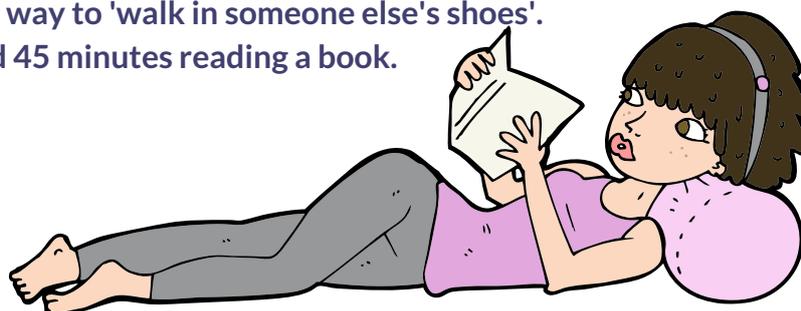*What were they thinking about?*

## activity2: read a book

**Science tells us that this is a fantastic way to improve your empathy skills.**
**When you read a story your brain has to imagine what it's like to be the characters you are reading about.**
**Which is a great way to 'walk in someone else's shoes'.**
**So, go and spend 45 minutes reading a book.**

## activity 3: empathy in action

Now it's time to take what you have learned and practice empathy in the real world .
Ready?

### step 1: choose somebody that you know

It can be a friend, a family member, teacher, neighbour... anyone.
As we are going to show our empathy by doing something nice for this person, it might be really cool to choose someone who is having a tricky time- but you can choose anyone.

### step 2: empathise

Just like with the chairs at the dinner table, imagine what that person is going through at this particular moment:

*What's happening in their life?*
*How are they feeling about it?*
*How are they coping?*
*What might they need or really appreciate?*

### step 3: do something for them

Now, think of something that you can do that will help them to feel better.
Here are some suggestions below, but please feel free to come up with your own.

**Got some toys you no longer use: Why not give them to a children's home or nursery?**

*An elderly neighbour who is lonely: Make/ Buy a cake, pop round and share it with them.*

**Not seen your grandparents for a while: Send them a card/ email/ or call them and tell them that you miss them.**

**A Friend is feeling stressed about a test: Offer to help them with their studies.**

**Start peeling some vegetables for dinner to help your parents or caregiver.**

**Mum/ Dad/ Caregiver has a got a big project to finish: Make her a cup of coffee and give her some peace and quiet.**

**Brother/ Sister helped you with your homework: Write them a quick note to say "Thanks!".**

*empathy challenge*

Practice your EMPATHY and see if you can check off ALL 7 of the challenges below over the next 7 days.

**You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**1** Say thank you to someone who has been kind to you, tell them you appreciate what they did for you.

**2** Smile at somebody, it could be someone in your family or at school. See if they smile back.

**3** Do a chore without being asked, e.g. clear or set the table, tidy a room, clean the bathroom.

**4** Give someone a hug, whether it looks like they need one or not- everyone loves a hug!

**5** Ask someone about their day, really listen to their answer, ask them questions.

**6** Give someone a compliment, everyone loves being told that they look nice, or that they did well.

**7** Be kind to yourself- you are important too!
What is 1 thing that you are grateful for about YOU?

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