

Empathy

in the classroom

WHY WE SHOULD CARE

The benefits of empathy in education include building positive classroom culture, strengthening community and preparing students to be leaders in their own communities. A report

Benefits of EMPATHY in Education

As educators, incorporating empathy into instruction can have positive results for your immediate classroom, as well as the community outside the school building, says coach Diip Trivedi

1. EMPATHY BUILDS POSITIVITY: With the diversity of students entering classrooms each day, paralleled by an increase in globalisation, it's necessary more necessary than ever for teachers to actively construct a positive classroom culture. Through empathy, he explains, students learn to understand each other, which helps them to build friendships based on relationships of trust.

2. HELPS IN COMMUNITY FEELING: Given that the definition of empathy involves understanding another's feelings without having experience, empathy helps students deepen relationships with their current classmates and people that they know outside school. In our increasingly globalised world, these people may be coming from different cultures and different socio-economic backgrounds than before, thereby necessitating better developed empathy skills.

3. CONVERTS STUDENTS TO ACHIEVERS: Leaders must understand the people they lead and be able to show that they care. Students must be able to empathise with those they lead in order to make them feel valued. This validation will strengthen trust between the leader and followers. As teachers, we must equip our students to be the future leaders of our communities and beyond.



HAPPY CHILDREN

Science explains that the good feelings we experience when being empa-

thetic are produced by a chemical (endorphins) that activate areas of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection and trust.

It's proven that these feelings of joyfulness are contagious, encouraging more kind behaviour by the giver and recipient.

THINK & TAKE STOCK

How emotionally intelligent are you?

You have probably taken a test to measure your IQ (intelligence quotient). While IQ is important for your academics, emotional intelligence (EI) is essential for your all-round development. Emotional Intelligence requires you to develop empathy and patience. It can be improved by reading books and writing down your thoughts and feelings. There are some websites and apps that will help improve your emotional intelligence. Here's our pick...

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL (Download on Apple iStore)

This is a 49-page digital graphic novel that teaches children to feel good about themselves. It is based on the Middle School Confidential series written by anti-bullying activist Annie Fox and illustrated by Matt Kindt.

Features:
► **STORYWISE:** It is an app about



a group of friends who help bolster one another's self-esteem in the face of teasing, bullying and self-doubt. But their friends know

what to say to turn things around and give them a perspective.
► **INTERACTIVE:** The app enables the reader to interact with the story by zooming in for frame-by-frame reading or zooming out again for a page-by-page view. There are eight interactive quizzes to test what you would do in a sticky social situation.

What you learn:
► To identify your strengths and weaknesses
► To self-reflect and communicate better
► Emotional development

A TALE OF TWO SONS (Google Playstore)

This is an interesting story of older and younger siblings on a quest to acquire medicine from a magic tree which has the power to save their father.

Features

► **TEAMWORK:** This app uses teamwork and wits to solve problems — moving obstacles, operating machinery, climbing ledges — and help people. Many tasks can only be achieved by making both perform actions at the same time. Working alone, their abilities are greatly diminished.

What you learn:
► Co-operation and teamwork
► Empathy
► Overcoming obstacles

SIX WORDS PLEASE (Any Playstore)

Smith Teens is an online platform for teens between 13 and 19.

Features

► **SIX-WORD MEMOIRS:** This website challenges you to describe your life in just six words.
► **FORUMS:** Users discuss memoirs and tell their own backstories here.

What You learn:
► It offers you a platform to vent your ups and downs.
► It teaches you to convey your feelings effectively

TEACH TALK

A feeling of empathy is innate in all human beings, but in varying degrees. Hence, it is necessary that an institution such as a school, plays a proactive role in helping children inculcate the feeling from initial years.



An example of empathy is when students are encouraged to share food or stationery with others. Caring and sharing make one a kinder soul, after all!

In school, students come from diverse backgrounds. Empathy helps students relate with others better. It helps them to understand the circumstances in which their fellow students have grown up. Further, students can even develop that feeling in a classroom during group projects. The feeling of empathy can be inculcated while playing games as well. Morning assembly, peer counselling, peer assessment, inter-school fests, community service are some other avenues.

— SANGEETA TANDON, principal, Shri Shikshayatan School, Kolkata

Empathy needs to be developed among children, with a lot of patience and without them knowing it. For instance, if there is a special child in the class, get other students in the class to assist him or her in several ways. Give them tasks to help out academically weaker students in the class study better.



— HEMA NAIR, principal, DAV, Mumbai

Empathy empowers tolerance and acknowledgment of others. As an educationalist, holding class meetings regularly and discussing the issue that has occurred recently is one way through which we can get students to learn about empathy. Also, reading short stories may help.



— A RITA MANU, principal, BIPS, Bengaluru

Empathy is an important skill for all students. Teaching empathy allows for better intercultural understanding and community cohesion. It can be instilled by incorporating community service. Being a role model is equally important as children observe and learn from us.



— VINITA CHHETRI, Army Public School, Clement Town, Dehradun

WHO ARE THE GREATEST EMPATHISTS OF ALL TIME?



GEORGE ORWELL: He was disgusted at the brutality of colonialism and stepped into the shoes of working people to discover what their lives were like.



HARRIET STOWE: American novelist faced the issue of slavery in the US. She published her story Uncle Tom's Cabin, a political tract against slavery.

Empathy is the ability to experience the feelings of another person. It goes beyond sympathy, which is caring and understanding for the suffering of others. Both words are often used interchangeably — (incorrectly so) they differ subtly in their emotional meaning



MAHATMA GANDHI: Gandhi's empathetic instinct took him across religions. He fervently opposed the creation of a separate Muslim state.



CLAIBORNE PAUL ELLIS: He was born into a white family in North Carolina. He worked tirelessly for the betterment of people of his colour.

THE SPEAKING TREE

<http://www.speakingtree.in>

KEEP YOUR EYE ... on the goal

Azim Jamal
By staying focused on our vision and purpose, we are able to achieve success despite facing obstacles. Obstacles are part of the journey of life. When we keep our eye on the goal, obstacles are not threats. In fact, they become opportunities to create breakthroughs. The ener-

gy will come from focusing on the vision, not on the obstacles.

Every time one door closes, many doors open. In life every setback presents opportunities. So, where are we going to keep our eyes? We need to keep them on the opportunities and on doors that are opening. In professional soccer, scoring a goal and winning

the game is the objective. This requires getting past the opponent's defenders (obstacles). If we focus on the goal, we will find a way to get past the defenders. Such is the case with corporate life.

If we find that things are getting unmanageable, we can break our tasks into smaller pieces. Our goals can be semi-annual, quarterly, monthly, or weekly. We can even further break down our weekly goals into daily goals. ■

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

One day, a holy priest sat down at a restaurant for a cup of coffee, which was all he could take, it being a day of fast. To his surprise, he saw a young member of his congregation devouring a massive cake at the next table. "I trust I haven't shocked you, Father," said the young fellow, "Ah! I take it that you forgot that today is a day of fast," said the priest. "No, I remember it very clearly." "Then the doctor must have forbidden you to fast." "Not at all, I am in the best of my health." At that the priest raised his eyes and said something which amazed the young fellow. The priest said to God: "What an example this younger generation is to us. Isn't it great that they admit their sins than lie?"

THE FEAR FACTOR

Seeker: Sometimes, it seems to me that fear is used by the leaders of every religion to control those who subscribe to that religion. Am I wrong in thinking this?

► **Rabbi Rami:** Rather than prove you wrong, I tend to agree. Every religion posits a dis-ease that it then sets out to cure. Regardless of the specific dis-ease they promote and promise to cure, religions are united in the notion that something is wrong. Yes, there is suffering, sin, ignorance, pride, and alienation — in this, the religions are correct. Where they are mistaken is in the notion that these realities are somehow wrong; that we can

and must overcome them, do away with them, find a way to escape from them. And because we long to escape from reality, we invent religions that problematise reality and

As long as we fear, we will not question the reality of what we fear.

promise us a way out of it. As long as we cling to our desire to escape, we make ourselves easy marks for those who promise a way of escape. What is the result of all of this? Fear. And this is by design: as long as we fear, we will not question the reality of what we fear. ■
Rabbi Rami is a Jewish spiritual teacher

SACRED SPACE No Obstacles



You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

Swami Vivekananda

It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you.

Gautama Buddha

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential — these are the keys to unlock the door to excellence.

Confucius

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it.

W C Fields

SPECIAL SERIES

WHAT IS AFFILIATIVE LEADERSHIP?

Have you heard the saying that "Team work is at the heart of any great achievement"? We often hear talks of synergy between teams leading to success. But what is this synergy and how do you, as a leader, ensure you have synergy in your team? The answer to these questions lies in our discussion on "Affiliative Leadership". Continuing on our journey to emerge as an effective leader, let us understand different leadership styles in this series.

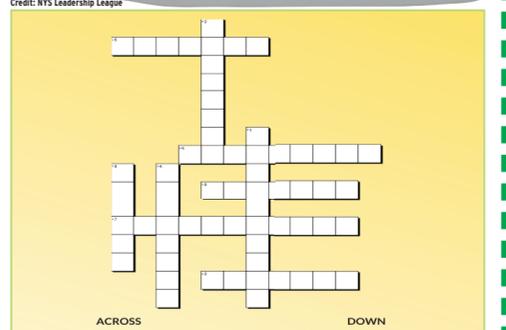
So who is an Affiliative leader? A leader who works towards bringing more harmony among the team members to get the synergy effect in the outcomes is an Affiliative leader. In other words, an Affiliative leader is harmonious. By focusing on resolving conflicts and problems among the team members, the affiliative leader ensures that the team works happily side by side towards achieving the goals and enjoys doing so. A happy team member is more likely to give his/her 100% towards achieving success. A genuine effort by the

leader to make sure the team members feel connected with each other improves the morale of the entire team.

Generally, the idea is to have a happy team which connects emotionally to the leader and among themselves. For this, the affiliate leader lavishly praises the efforts of the team members. Rather than criticism on faults, the leader provides encouraging feedback. Rather than giving strict instructions, the leader encourages flexibility to suit the team's needs and supports the members emotionally. The biggest leadership quality that is demonstrated here is empathy. The biggest advantage of having affiliative leadership style is that the team gets freedom to innovate and work creatively. Rather than a strict style like autocratic leadership, this style of leadership works best when the team needs to be motivated from within to innovate and come up with new ideas.

In situations where the team is trying to unite after a stressful event, this style works best.

NYS (NURTURING YOUNG SEEDS)



ACROSS
5. affiliative leader creates _____ among team members
6. team has a sense of _____ with affiliative leadership
8. biggest trait of affiliative leadership
7. harmonious leadership style
3. combined performance greater than individual efforts

DOWN
2. feedback by affiliative leader is generally _____
1. team members become _____ with extravagant praise
4. affiliative leader focuses on resolving _____
9. feeling of being connected improves the team's _____

So how can we start this journey of LEADERSHIP and how can we see if we are really on the right path? Let us start with this CROSSWORD to see where we stand and where we should improve. Needless to say, have fun while filling it with utmost honesty! Send in your entries to embark on this journey of Leadership with us at toiie175@gmail.com.