

Hi JHCS Families,

We made it to the end of the year! I hope you and your family are happy and healthy. As I ponder on what many are needing this year, the word empathy came to mind. Many of us confuse and mix up empathy and sympathy. Simply put, "Empathy is feeling with people. Sympathy is feeling for them."

You may have heard of Brene Brown; she is a therapist and researcher. She has written many books, but the one I am focusing on is called *Dare to Lead*. In a few pages of the book, she addresses empathy. She breaks empathy down into two categories: empathy as a skill and empathy as a miss.

**Empathy as a skill:**

1. To see the world as others see it or perspective taking: our point of view of the world is unique because of our experiences and point of view
2. To be nonjudgmental: we judge in areas we are most susceptible to
3. To understand another person's feelings: step back and see it from their perspective
4. To communicate your understanding of that person's feelings: Listen first to really hear what someone is saying before you respond
5. Mindfulness: take a balanced approach to negative thoughts

**Empathy as a miss:**

1. Sympathy vs. Empathy: remember the definition, "Empathy is feeling with people. Sympathy is feeling for them."
2. The gasp and awe: Think before you speak and how your words affect others
3. The mighty fall: expecting perfection from others and when they do not meet our expectations how do we react
4. The block and tackle: when we feel weak or vulnerable to position ourselves to feel in a stronger position and hurt others around us
5. The boots and shovel: trying to force to make things better
6. If you think that's bad: one upping gets in the way of listening

When we think of the word empathy at first, we may not think of it as difficult. However, often we get in our own way. Learning to truly be empathetic is part of our emotional literacy growth. "When we cannot name and articulate what is happening to us emotionally, we cannot move through it." So to move through it:

1. Identify it
2. Name it
3. Talk about it

In an ever changing and evolving world, empathy is needed more than ever. May you and your family have a wonderful, safe and loving holiday season.

Best Wishes,  
Sam Grabert

**Information taken from:** *Dare to Lead: brave work, tough conversations, brave hearts.* By Brene Brown

**Resources:**

Brene Brown on Empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw>

Shame and Empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQIFa7KfF0>

The power of Empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baHrcC8B4WM>

Psychology Today Empathy: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/empathy>

Six Habits of Highly Empathic People:

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six\\_habits\\_of\\_highly\\_empathic\\_people1](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_habits_of_highly_empathic_people1)