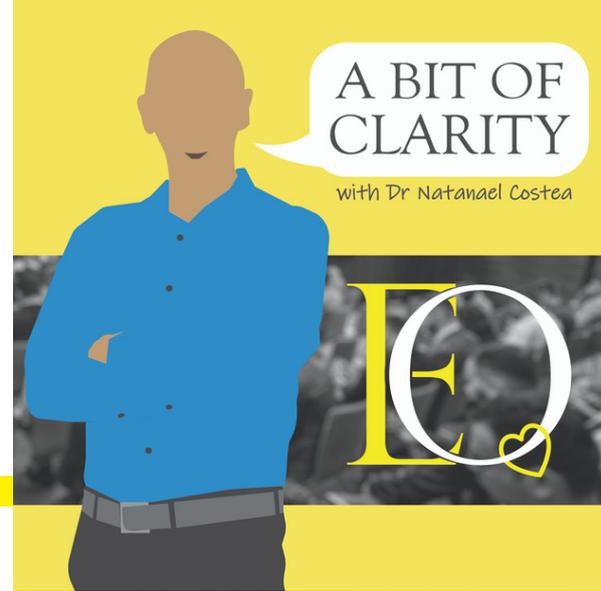


# EP 029 EMPATHY



## SHOW NOTES

### OBJECTIVE

> Develop an understanding of empathy.

### UNDERSTANDING EMPATHY

**Empathy** involves the ability to emotionally understand what another person is experiencing. Essentially, it is putting you in someone else's position and **feeling what they must be feeling**. As humans we are equipped with "mirror neurons" that help us share emotional experiences and become more empathetic toward others.

#### Sympathy vs Empathy vs Compassion

**Sympathy** involves more of a passive connection, while **empathy** generally involves a much more active attempt to understand another person. It also differs from **compassion** which relates to the desire to help not just understand the person.

#### Interpersonal Empathy vs Social Empathy

**Interpersonal empathy**, the ability to feel for and with another person, rests on our unconscious ability to physically mimic the actions of others. This is called mirroring.

**Social empathy** leads us to take in the context of other people's lives. How might their lived experiences be based on the history of their lives? How has the history of the groups they may be members of, whether by race, gender, ethnicity, or religion, impacted their lives?

### WHY DO WE LACK EMPATHY

- 1. We fall victim to cognitive biases.** We often attribute other people's failures to internal characteristics, while blaming our own shortcomings on external factors.
- 2. We dehumanize victims.** We can think that different people don't feel and behave the same as we do.
- 3. We blame victims.** We can easily make the mistake of blaming the victim for his or her circumstances.

### GROWING EMPATHY

- 1. Make listening a priority.** Listen with the ears, and also listen with the heart.
- 2. Share (in) their feelings.** Step beside yourself and adopt their emotion for a few moments.
- 3. Relieve someone's suffering by taking action.** Carry some of their pain and bring optimism and hope.

### APPLICATION

> Think of someone who needs your empathy right now and apply the three points above to exercise it.

### RESOURCES

- > More from Dr Natanael Costea: [www.eq.org.au](http://www.eq.org.au)
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