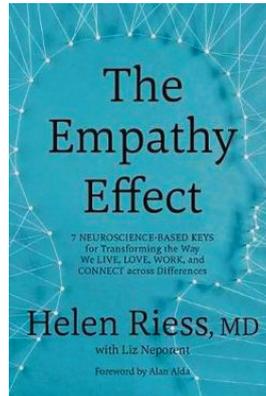




THE EMPATHY EFFECT: SEVEN NEUROSCIENCE-BASED KEYS FOR TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE LIVE, LOVE, WORK, AND CONNECT ACROSS DIFFERENCES.



THE BOOK

**The Empathy Effect:**

Seven Neuroscience–Based Keys for Transforming the Way We Live, Love, Work, and Connect Across Differences.

by Helen Riess



INTRODUCTION

As the world's understanding of the importance of empathy grows and deepens, it becomes more apparent just how important this attribute is.

Leading empathy researcher Dr Helen Riess breaks down what empathy is, why it is vital, and how it can be taught in her fascinating book *The Empathy Effect*.

Not only a deep dive into empathy, this is also a book about empathy in the digital age. Human connection has undergone a substantial shift in the past few decades and Dr Riess does not neglect to recognise its shifting nature and the effect of the internet and social media on the way we relate to others. Engaging and insightful, *The Empathy Effect* is the ultimate guide to compassion in the modern age.

With her E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.® method Dr Riess also breaks down the key aspects of empathy and how you can apply them in all facets of life.

The Empathy Effect is essential reading for any parent, employer, or team member looking for a way to relate better to others.



5 BEST QUOTES

“Parenting is a difficult job. No one in history has ever done it perfectly.”

“When we witness compassion, we know the circle of empathy has been completed: from perceiving another person’s suffering to feeling empathic concern, to being motivated to soothe another’s pain through an act of compassion.”

“There are two important reasons why your brain is primed to experience the pain of others: to teach you what to avoid and to motivate you to help the injured person, whether their pain is physical, psychological, emotional, or some degree of all of these.”

“I hope we never forget the comfort of the human touch, the warmth of a hug, or the knowing glance from your friend that lets you know she saw what happened from your perspective. We all need to know we are not alone in this world and that we are lovable—and that’s something machines will not be replacing any time soon.”

“If one thing has become abundantly clear, it is that empathy informs a vital intergenerational, interracial, and international perspective that must be valued, vaulted, and cultivated on a grand scale. Without expanding empathy beyond our in-groups and borders, civilization as we know it will not survive. Empathy training is the key transformative education.”



7 BIG IDEAS

1. WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Dr Reiss explains that empathy is the way in which we can understand how another person is feeling without being overwhelmed.

For instance, at its most basic, when you see someone cut themselves you 'feel' their pain but not to the extreme that you cannot help. Understanding another person's pain creates the imperative to help, thus continuing the strength of our species.

Empathy differs from sympathy, as Dr Reiss explains, in that sympathy is feeling bad for others while empathy is feeling bad with others. Sympathy is feeling bad for someone shivering in the rain while empathy is going and standing next to them in the rain.

2. THE SPECTRUM OF EMPATHY

Empathy exists on a broad spectrum that manifests in many forms and is generally unique to every individual. Some people have highly developed empathy and others could benefit from guidance. Some will feel empathy much more strongly toward one cause rather than another while their neighbour will feel the opposite. Empathy can also be too strong or misdirected. As a result, it can cause complications.

Where your empathies lie is unique to you, your surroundings and upbringing, and even genetics. The most obvious and well-known example is how a tragedy near where you live is far more impactful than one in a far off country.

Once you understand this spectrum you can take the next steps towards moulding your own empathic powers.

3. E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.

The key to learning empathy from Dr Reiss is her E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. method:

E: Eye contact

The eyes are the window to the soul. In most cultures, eye contact represents respect and acknowledgment. Taking the time to note a person's eye colour when you first meet them is a great way to make them feel seen with just that extra second or two of eye contact.

M: Muscles of facial expressions

We all give ourselves away with our facial muscles. Paying attention to what a friend's facial muscles are doing rather than just what they are saying can give amazing insight into how they are actually feeling.



7 BIG IDEAS

A: Affect

'Affect' is a scientific term for emotion. By taking the time to notice and name the affect of the person or people you are dealing with, you will much better be able to understand how they are feeling.

T: Tone of voice

Tone is what is lost in text messaging and emails. The tone in which a person says something is intrinsically linked to their intended meaning. Take care to notice tone in others and yourself.

H: Hearing the whole person

Dr Reiss calls this 'empathic listening'. Making sure to really listen to what a person is saying rather than simply assuming their meaning. This way, you can often get to the core of a problem that your friend may not be expressing explicitly.

Y: Your response

This runs deeper than simply what you will say next but rather is about what you will do next. A truly empathic response involves you doing what it is the person you are with needs you to do, even if it is just being there.

4. TRIBES

As in the far off tragedies example, peoples empathies tend to focus on those in their 'in crowd'.

It is easier and more natural to feel empathy towards someone of the same race and basic circumstances as you. While this is perfectly natural to empathise with your own kind, it comes with a huge risk; the dehumanisation of 'out-groups'.

Try to broaden your empathy beyond your personal 'tribe'. We are all human and all humans need and deserve compassion from others.

5. CHILDREN

Dr Reiss describes parenthood as "a grand exercise in empathy".

Parents or caregivers and their babies bond through eye contact that creates empathy. Receiving adequate empathy is vital to the healthy upbringing of any child. However, it is important that parents understand how to direct their empathy.

In child-rearing, empathy should look to the future and not the immediate. It may seem empathic to ensure your child is never allowed to suffer in the slightest and always gets their way, but in fact, properly measured empathy understands that children need rules and boundaries.



7 BIG IDEAS

6. DIGITAL EMPATHY

We are now all too familiar with online bullying and trolling. Without physical proximity and many of the visual cues that promote empathy, the online world is wreaking havoc on empathy worldwide. As Dr Reiss points out, there is a reason that when billions of dollars are on the line in big business deals that CEOs fly to meet with their peers in person to finalise deals. There is no substitute for face to face contact. With this in mind, it is vital that we don't lose our humanity in machines and digital technology.

7. SELF-EMPATHY

Self-empathy is a form of self-care that is just as necessary as caring for and about others.

Remember, while you are working to be empathic of others make sure to do the same for yourself. If you are unable to care for yourself, forgive yourself, and find an understanding for why you do the things that you do, you can never be fulfilled.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW THE E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. METHOD**

Understanding the seven-step method is the first key to unlocking your empathy. Simple use of the seven steps will give you higher empathic levels and enhance your ability to interact and communicate with others.

2. BROADEN YOUR 'TRIBE'

As long as you maintain a 'them and us' attitude, you can never truly develop your empathy. Remember that we are all human and all deserve respect and empathy. While it is natural to have preferred groups such as family and friends, humanity is really only one big tribe.

3. PRACTICE SELF-EMPATHY

You can never be happy and fulfilled, no matter how successfully empathic you are if you never turn that empathy inward. You are just as deserving of empathy as everyone else and must make sure to give yourself empathy just as much as others.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of The Empathy Effect is that empathy is a vital part of humanity and must be nurtured and taught. Empathy is innate in almost everyone but can always be improved and most importantly, can be taught.

For decades it was believed that empathy was a stable attribute but now we know better, It can be taught and improved and as a society, we should prioritise empathy.

A society with higher levels of empathy has the potential to be happier and healthier and more productive. Empathy is a key to communication and our forward momentum as a species.



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