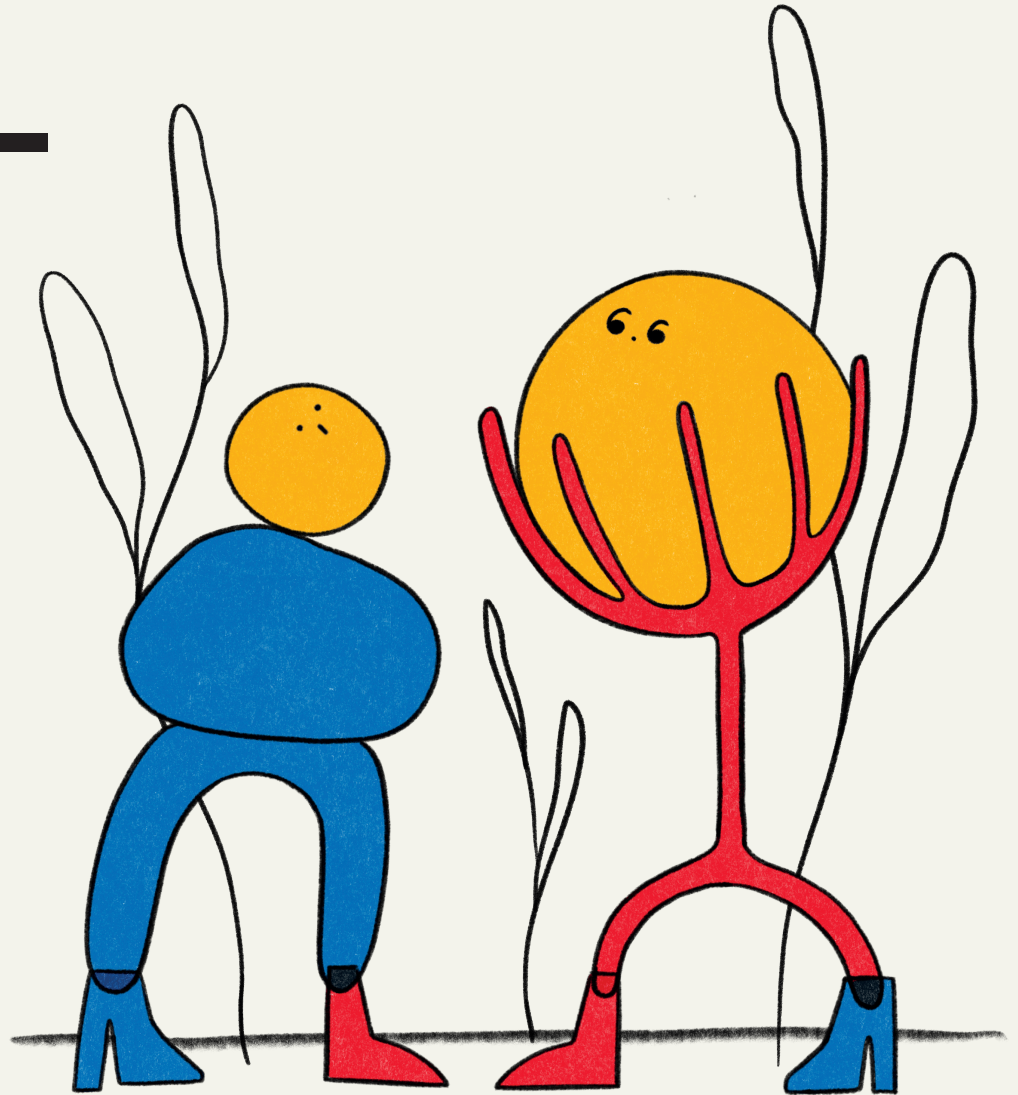


em- pa- thy

Empathy is the ability to sense other people's emotions and imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.



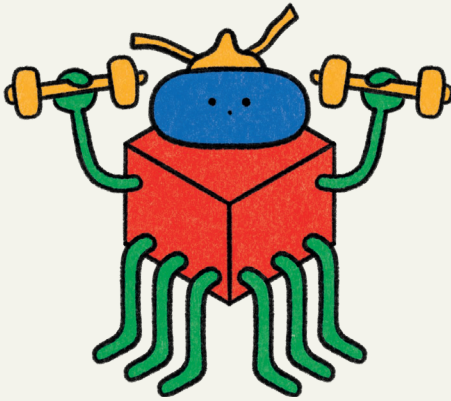
Reflection Questions for Parents

Reflect on the following statements¹ and consider how much you agree or disagree with the statements as well as opportunities for growth in your empathy towards others.

- I easily feel sad when the people around me feel sad.
- Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.
- I find that I am “in tune” with other people’s moods.

Why cultivate empathy?

Empathy helps parents understand their child’s perspective and anticipate their needs. Adolescents with more empathic parents are better able to regulate their emotions. What’s more, parents with greater empathy tend to have greater self-esteem and life purpose than parents with less empathy.²



Practices to Help Parents Foster Empathy

Active Listening: Connect with someone through empathy and understanding.



Active listening helps listeners better understand others' perspectives and helps speakers feel more understood and less threatened.³ This technique can prevent miscommunication and spare hurt feelings on both sides. Active listening can make relationships more enduring and satisfying by improving communication and preventing arguments from escalating.

Read More About Cultivating Empathy in Greater Good. Six Ways to Respond to Your Kids' Big Feelings



When adults help children feel heard, it helps everyone feel less distressed and more calm.

Why support children and teens in cultivating empathy?

Research suggests that teaching children empathy skills helps them socially and morally.

Studies⁴ have found that empathy decreases bullying and aggression among kids and makes them kinder and more inclusive toward their peers.

With more empathy, kids may be more willing to help and share with others—one type of empathic response—which can foster greater social competence and positive relationships.⁵

Practices to Help Children and Teens Foster Empathy

Talk With Kids About Emotions: Labeling feelings can help elicit your child's empathy and generosity.



When adults label the emotions of others, children can make sense of internal experiences that people may be having that are not obvious on the surface.

Listening to Teens With Love: Create a warm, non-judgmental space for teens to talk.



When teens can rely on parents to be good listeners, they feel a sense of freedom and confidence in their capacity for self-expression and a greater sense of connection with their parents.

