

Empathy Worksheet

1. Someone at work says to you:
"I couldn't sleep until 3am last night, thinking about our presentation today. So this morning I figured I'd better drink lots of coffee to keep me awake and alert...but now my head is killing me! Why do I always get hit with headaches when something important needs to be done!?"
 - a) Give a reply that demonstrates intellectual understanding of the situation by addressing the speaker's question in the last sentence.
 - b) Give a reply that demonstrates sympathy.
 - c) Give a reply that offers advice.
 - d) Give a reply verbalizing empathy.

2. At a meeting, while you are in the middle of a sentence, someone turns to you suddenly and says, "Don't you ever let someone else have a chance to talk?" Respond to this person with empathy by:
 - sensing and reflecting back what the person might be observing
 - sensing and reflecting back what the person might be feeling or needing
 - sensing and reflecting back what the person might be requesting

Sample Responses:

1.
 - a) "It's probably because you have a lot of tension when you are anticipating something important. Or maybe it's a combination of stress, lack of sleep, and the caffeine that's causing your headache."
 - b) "I really feel for you. It's the worst thing to have a horrible headache when you are about to do an important presentation!"
 - c) "Why don't you take this ice pack and lie down for about 10 minutes?"
 - d) "Are you frustrated because you would really like to be feeling energetic, healthy, and clear-headed for this presentation?"

2.
 - "Are you referring to my going, 'Oh no, oh no, oh no' when Peter pointed to the map?"
 - "Are you feeling irritated because you want everyone to be heard?"
 - "Would you like for us to go around and hear from everyone before I speak again?"

(from Nonviolent Communication: Companion Workbook by Lucy Leu)