

The Madness of "Empathy"

When you think that something called “empathy” can be taught, requested, demanded or commanded, you enter a mire of inconsistency, as all morality is but a logical mire. Empathy is defined as the action or the ability to understand and share the feelings of another; I will not refer to empathy as an ability, but as an action, for obvious reasons (you cannot teach an ability).

The primary logical error is that, by the very act of establishing the preferability of empathy, you are not displaying empathy yourself. If you request someone to be empathetic it's because you think they are not already being empathetic. Either you are requesting this as a universally preferable rule, or you are not. If not, then you are just ordering someone to change and therefore you have no empathy for them. In this case you will have to provide a rational justification for that rule: why does someone have to become empathetic and not you? (Comments welcome below.)

If yes, then you think “empathy” is *universally* (for all within a certain context) preferable to their current state of “non-empathy”, but you are yourself not accepting the thoughts and feelings of this non-empathetic person when you want them to – and think they should – change. This is your contradiction. Therefore empathy cannot be universally preferable.

You might say it is “not the case” that you want them to change, but that you are just “exemplifying empathy”? Well, you do not exemplify empathy inasmuch as you think and operate from a certain universal preferability for empathy, as shown before. You exemplify empathy by doing what the definition of empathy says: accepting and understanding someone's feelings and choices. So my question is: when you “exemplify empathy”, is this what you do? If your child is not empathetic, how do you respond, with or without empathy?

Considerate deference

The “empathy” question is as old as the “teaching” question. They're both ways in which children are made to obey – period. Everyone knows in their heart of hearts that, what “empathy” usually means, is that they have to force themselves into somebody else's skin and put others first (something ridiculous and self contradictory that you see everyday in our [social behaviour](#)) or else they will be punished; and we know that, because everybody thinks that we need gods and governments; that we need a bunch of arbitrary values (including [good parenting!](#)) or else everyone will begin to murder, rape and pillage... But of course this is not what happens; and the fact that it does not happen in the majority of situations is the best proof that we are naturally empathetic and constantly struggle to cooperate, even after a childhood of abuse and manipulation. What happens, you see, is that your parents made you their servant; they gouged your innate and natural empathy out of you thus, and replaced it with this “empathy” lie.

Believing that empathy can be taught is like believing anything can be taught without the other

already possessing the ability and desire to learn – even if this desire is the result of coercion. The child who supposedly “learns” empathy from you has to first understand and accept your own domineering anxiety and distress at the fact that he is not being “empathetic” – perhaps with another sibling – in order to change his behaviour. **Everything your attempt will require of the child in order to become “empathetic” necessitates his empathy.** Hence you are just being a fool, as parents most often are with children, and you cannot really be talking about empathy you want to teach. Perhaps call it *considerate deference* – to abusers – or *pity*, but not empathy.

The idea that you can possibly teach empathy also brings up the question of how this thing came into existence in the first place. Was there a point in time when some primordial parent acquired such a basic ability as to be sensitive to others in its environment, or is this a case of infinite regression? Indeed, what this belief does is elevate the old over the youth in a complete reversal of the arrow of time and causality: the cause that you have any empathy whatsoever is that you already had it as a child ([‘Do we need to teach our children empathy’](#)) the same as reason, breathing and anything else that is necessary for survival. This belief in “empathy” as some gift from the heavens is the condition for the moral bigotry they call “reason” and all its lofty concepts, which are nothing but falsehood and madness: a travesty of values that are already in reality.