



Emotional Intelligence for Innovative Leadership

SESSION 2 MANUAL

Leading with Empathy

Empathy is the secret weapon of effective leadership. Particularly in today's climate of multiple demands from a range of stakeholders through various mediums – online and in person.

To build trust, loyalty and collaboration in their organisations, leaders need to become aware of their own emotional state and approach as well as those of their team.

By actively listening and understanding the perspectives of team members, leaders can foster the open communication critical to creating an inclusive culture, one that is able to harness the diversity essential to innovation. Increased empathy within the workplace leads to greater employee engagement, higher levels of innovation, increased productivity and all-round wellbeing. An environment in which employees feel seen, heard, valued and consulted means they can bring their authentic selves to work – a condition which brings out the best in everyone and optimises human potential for a greater return to the individual and the collective.

Key Concepts

- Why do we need to lead with Empathy?
- What does leading with Empathy look like?
- How do we lead with Empathy?
- What happens if we don't develop Empathy in Leadership?





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Why do we need to lead with Empathy?

<p>1</p> <p>Complex Demands</p> <p>Leaders today must deal with multiple urgent demands interacting with others through various modalities and guiding diverse groups of individuals.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Inclusive Leadership</p> <p>Leaders need to understand their and others' emotional state to build bonds for effective collaboration at work.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Leaders need to become more aware of their approach, especially given that hybrid communication is a daily requirement.</p>
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Source: Nakamura, Y.T. and Milner, J., 2023. *Inclusive leadership via empathic communication.*

1: Empathy in your life

When has empathy made a difference in your life? What impact did it have?



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Why is Empathy Important?



Why is Empathy linked to innovation?

Empathy in leadership drives innovation by understanding and prioritising the needs of various stakeholders – including team members and customers. By understanding the needs of their customers, they can deliver value accordingly.


In fact, the process of creating value, otherwise known as Design Thinking, starts with connecting and empathising with a customer. If companies are failing to innovate, they are invariably failing at connecting and empathising adequately with their customers. This speaks of the value of empathy not being lived within a company, with leadership in a central and leading role.


Empathetic leaders encourage diverse perspectives and inspire collaboration. They create a safe space for risk taking and they view challenges as opportunities. These conditions create the possibility for true innovation.





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Characteristics of an Empathetic leader

LISTENS ATTENTIVELY  Engage with sincere curiosity, actively seeking diverse viewpoints.

MAKES CONNECTIONS  Possess high levels of compassion and empathy, fostering deep connections that enhance well-being and teamwork.

INVESTS IN GROWTH  Prioritise coaching and development, tailoring leadership to individual needs. Inspire others through personal example, promoting a culture of growth.

CREATES SAFE SPACES  Cultivate an environment where individuals feel valued, respected and empowered to express themselves fully, unlocking their potential.

2: Empathy in your organisation

Why is it necessary to develop Empathy in your organisation?



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3: Developing empathy

- What is the role of empathy in fostering inclusion and driving innovation?
- How empathetic do you consider yourself?
- What could you do to become more empathetic at work?

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What does leading with Empathy look like?



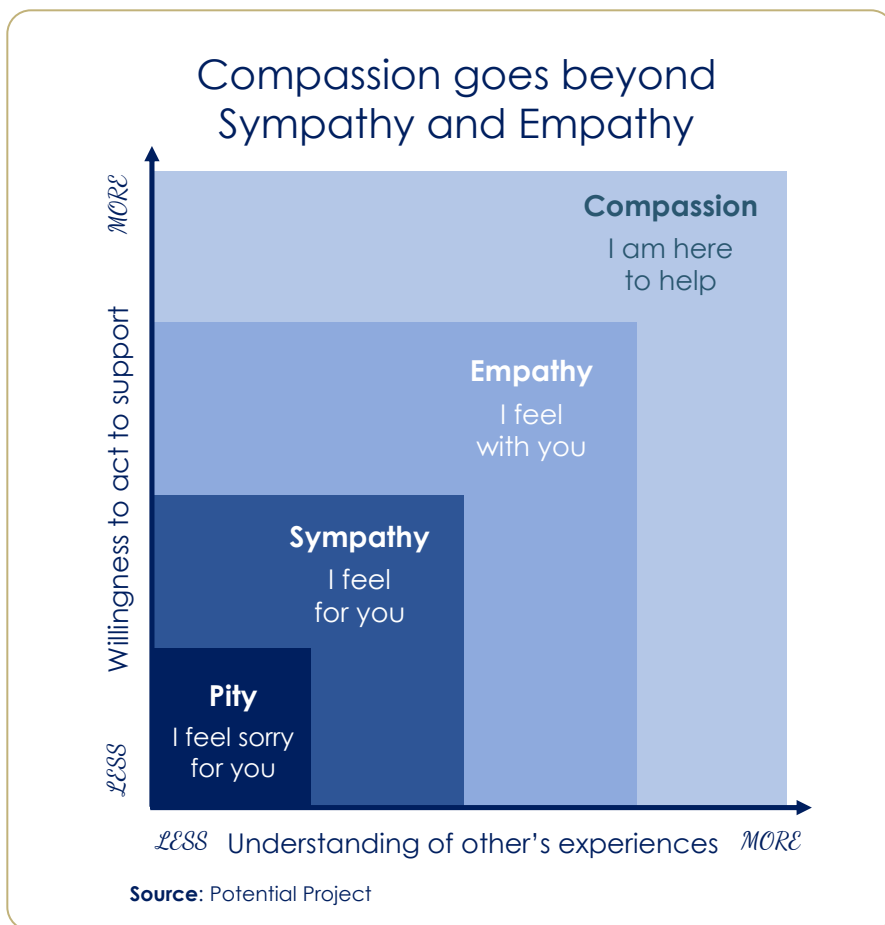
Empathy takes a range of forms:

- **Cognitive Empathy:** the ability to intellectually understand another person's point of view. It doesn't require a lot of emotional engagement.
- **Emotional Empathy:** the ability to share another person's emotions on both a physical and mental level.
- **Compassionate Empathy:** is a combination of the above, which allows people to connect with and help another.



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Pity, Sympathy, Empathy and Compassion



4: Sympathy, Empathy and Compassion

Which of the above (pity, sympathy, empathy, compassion) do you operate from more? Why do you think that is?



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5: Leading with Empathy

Think about what kind of leader you would like to be. What do you think it will take to get there?

How can I develop my Empathy?

Empathy Toolkit:

1. Rapport
2. Active Listening
3. Reframing and Seeking the Best Self
4. Empathy Mapping
5. Creating Inclusive Work Environments

6: Rapport

With whom in your life do you have a strong rapport? How does it feel to spend time with them? What makes you feel so connected to them?

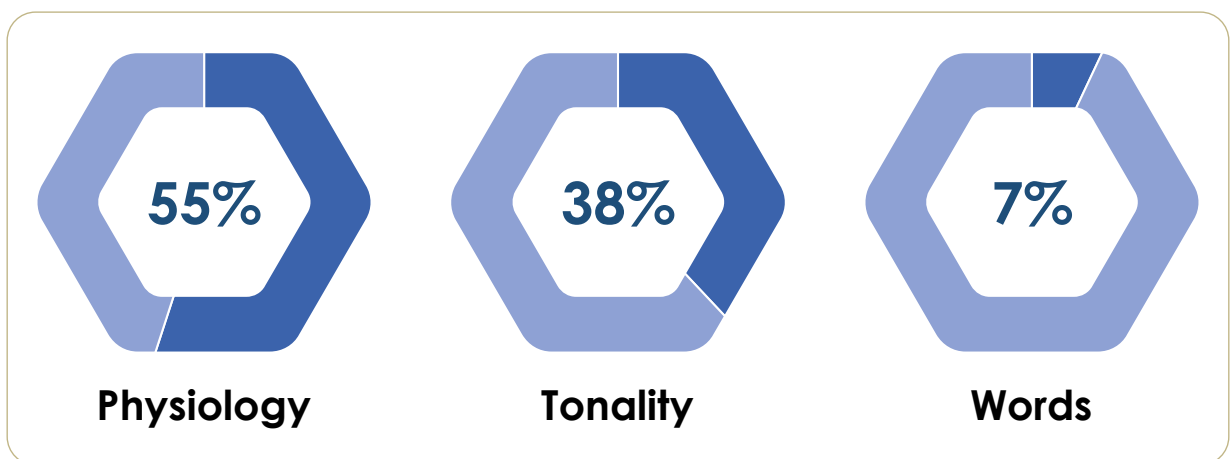


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Tool #1: Rapport

Building rapport is essential for establishing a positive and harmonious connection with others. The major elements of rapport, as outlined, focus on nonverbal and verbal communication cues that contribute to this connection.

Let's break down how these elements relate to building rapport:



Physiology (55%)

This element emphasizes nonverbal communication through body language and physical cues. Various aspects play a role in establishing rapport:

- **Posture:** The way you hold yourself communicates your level of comfort and engagement. Maintaining an open and relaxed posture can make the other person feel at ease.
- **Gestures:** Matching or mirroring the gestures of the person you're interacting with can create a sense of connection and understanding.
- **Facial Expressions & Blinking:** Facial expressions convey emotions and intentions. Matching the other person's expressions and blinking rate can foster a sense of shared emotional experience.
- **Breathing:** Syncing your breathing with the other person's rhythm can help create a calming and synchronized atmosphere.



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Tonality (38%)

This element focuses on the vocal aspects of communication that influence rapport:

- **Voice:** Paying attention to the way the other person’s voice changes, especially in the last few words they say, can give insights into their emotional state and help you respond more appropriately.
- **Tone (Pitch):** The pitch of the voice carries emotional nuances. Adapting your tone to match their emotional tone can create resonance and understanding.
- **Tempo (Speed):** Matching the speed of speech can establish a rhythm that makes the conversation feel natural and comfortable.
- **Timbre (Quality):** The quality of the voice carries additional emotional information. Adjusting your own voice’s timbre to align with theirs can foster rapport.
- **Volume (Loudness):** Matching their volume level helps in creating a balanced and comfortable communication environment.
- **Content Chunks:** Breaking down your responses into similar-sized chunks of information can help maintain a conversational flow and ensure both parties are engaged.

Words (7%)

Words play a role in aligning communication:

- **Predicates:** Using similar sensory predicates (words related to seeing, hearing, feeling, etc.) as the other person can establish common ground and understanding.
- **Key Words:** Incorporating important keywords from their conversation shows active listening and engagement.
- **Common Experiences & Associations:** Sharing experiences, stories, or associations can create a sense of shared understanding and connection.

7: Developing Rapport

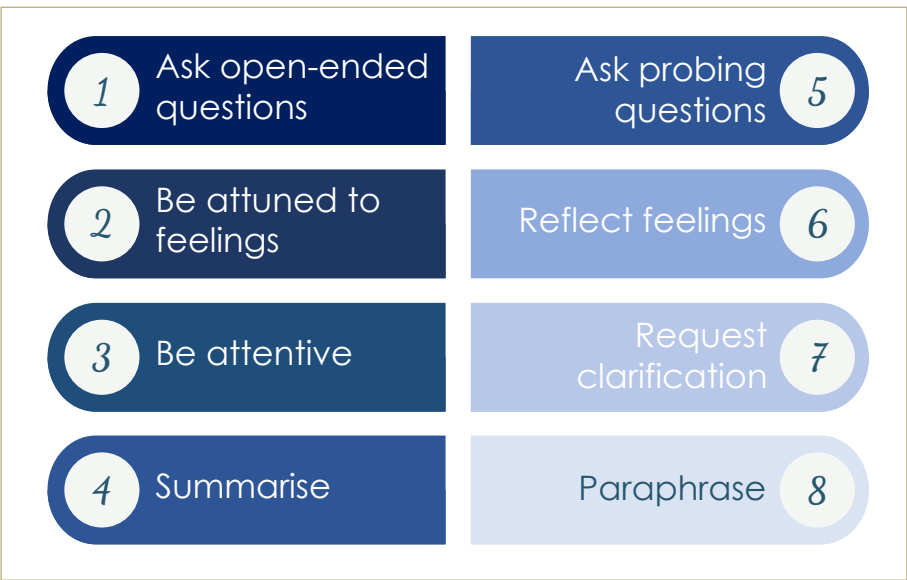
What does Rapport mean to you? What would you gain by developing your ability to create Rapport?



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Tool #2: Active Listening

Active listening is a communication skill that involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what the other person is saying. In other words, it requires you to be fully present with the person you are listening to. It goes beyond just hearing the words spoken and requires the listener to engage with the speaker, both verbally and non-verbally, to demonstrate genuine interest and understanding.



8: Active Listening

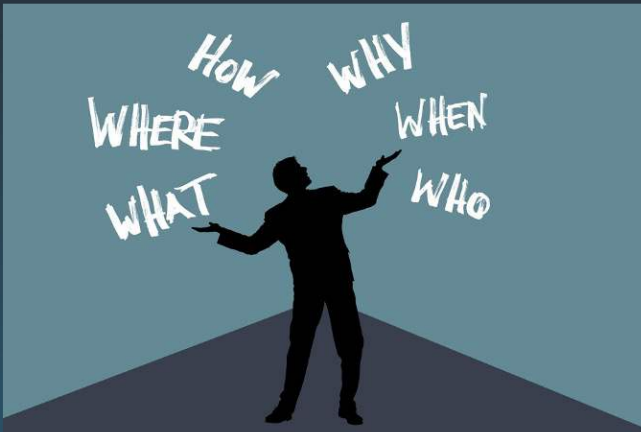
How good do you think you are at Active Listening? Why do you say that?



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Open Ended Questions

- What would happen if...?
- I wonder why...?
- What do you think about...?
- In what way...?
- Tell me about...?
- What would you do...?
- How did you...?
- How can we...?
- What do you suppose?
- If you were to know, what would you suggest for...?



9: Developing Active Listening Skills

Do this task over the next week.

- Rate yourself out of 10 for how present you were when listening.
- Observe when you used open and closed questions in the workplace.
- Notice what the nature and quality of response is.
- Where relevant, try to use open questions instead of closed at least 3 times.

Note down your insights.



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Tool #3: Reframing and seeking the Best Self

Reframing in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a powerful technique used to change the meaning or perspective of a particular situation, thought, or belief. By altering the way someone interprets an experience, reframing allows them to shift from a negative or unhelpful mindset to a more positive and empowering one.

Context

- What would this mean in a different context?
- How does changing the context, change the meaning?

Meaning

- What else could this behaviour mean?
- How can we interpret this behaviour literally, taking out any negative connotation?

Content

- What information is missing?
- Has anything been deleted, distorted or generalised?

Situation: She cut me off in traffic – we could have had an accident!

Context reframe: She was rushing to the hospital

Meaning reframe: She moved in front of me and halted my progression.

Content reframe: She actually didn't cut me off – it was her right of way.



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10: Reframing Practice

Reframe this situation.

Situation: I didn't answer his question straight away, so he snapped at me in the meeting.

Context reframe:

Meaning reframe:

Content reframe:



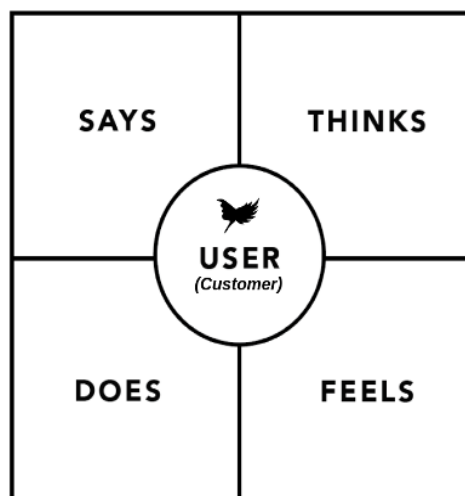
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Tool #4: Empathy Mapping

Empathy mapping is a simple and effective technique to understand and empathise with your target audience. Be that your customer, your colleagues or your direct reports.

Here are four steps to creating an empathy map:

- 1. Define your persona:** Identify the specific group or individual you want to understand better. This could be your customers, suppliers or employees.
- 2. Gather information:** Collect data and insights about your persona through interviews, surveys or observations. Understand their needs, desires, pain points and motivations.
- 3. Create the empathy map:** complete a simple chart with four quadrants representing the following: "Says," "Thinks," "Feels," and "Does." Fill in each quadrant with the information you gathered in step 2, using sticky notes or bullet points.
- 4. Analyse and gain insights:** Look for patterns and connections in the empathy map. Use this newfound understanding to tailor your products, services, strategy or communication to better meet the needs and wants of the people you have in mind.





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Empathy Mapping Quadrants

 SAYS <p>This section captures what the user says during the interview. Quotes and direct speech are recorded.</p> <p>For example: "I want something reliable." "I need a better way to filter my emails."</p>	 THINKS <p>This quadrant documents the user's thoughts during the interview. What occupies their mind? Investigate reasons for non-sharing, such as uncertainty, politeness, or fear.</p> <p>For instance: "I don't understand why we're using that HR form."</p>
 DOES <p>The user's actions are recorded here. What physical actions do they take? How do they perform tasks?</p> <p>For instance: "Comparing prices while shopping." "Spending considerable time on emails."</p>	 FEELS <p>The "Feels" quadrant goes into the user's emotions. Include adjectives or other descriptive words. What worries or excites them? How do they emotionally engage with the experience?</p> <p>For example: "Confused: overwhelmed by options." "Isolated: distant from my team."</p>

11: Empathy Mapping

Who in your organisation would you most like to understand?

How could you use Empathy Mapping to deepen your understanding?

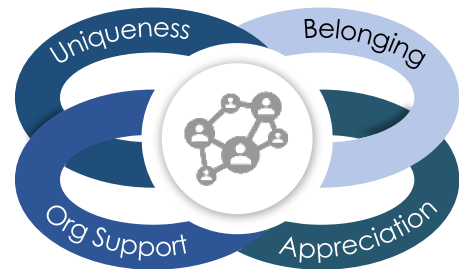


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Tool #5: Creating Inclusive Work Environments

Inclusive work environments are key to harnessing human potential and accelerating innovation.

Leaders and influencers have the greatest influence on creating inclusive psychological safe environments and key to that is their level of empathy.



12: Creating Inclusive Environments Checklist

1. Fostering Employee Uniqueness

- Do you support employees as individuals?
- Do you promote diversity?
- Do you empower employees?
- Do you contribute to an employee's Learning and Development?

2. Strengthening Belonging within a team

- Do you ensure there is equity?
- Do you build relationships?
- Do you share information and decision making?

3. Showing Appreciation

- Do you recognise efforts and contributions?

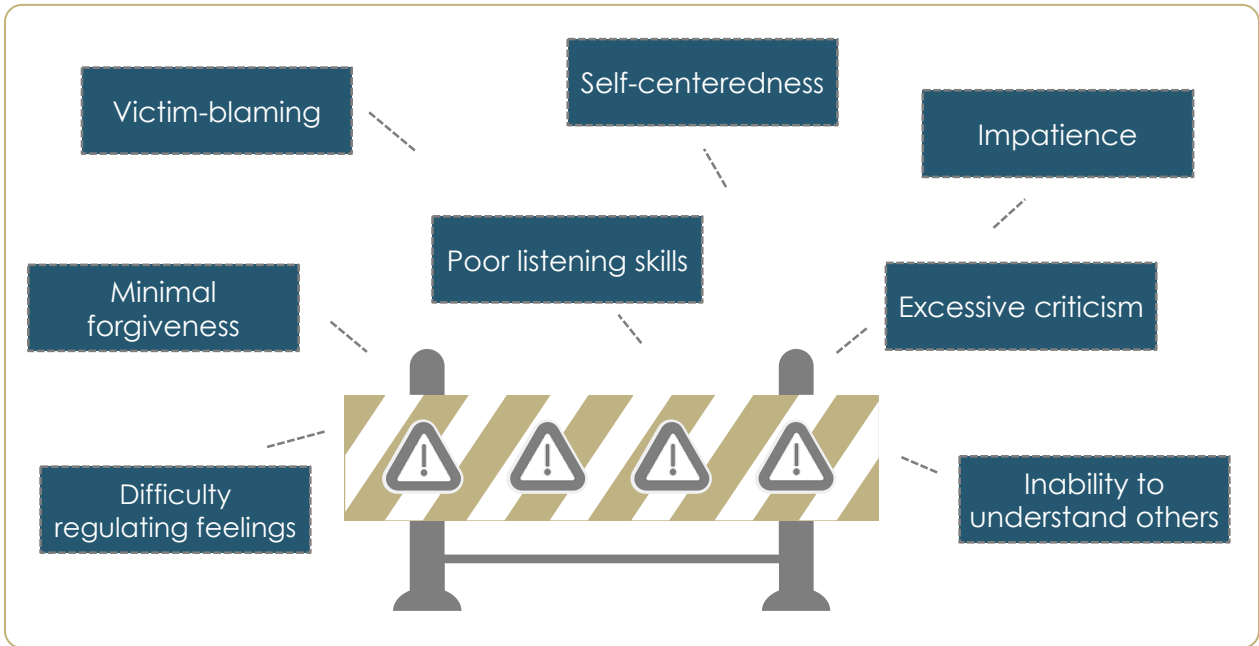
4. Supporting Organisational efforts

- Are you open to organisational change?
- Do you promote the organisations mission on inclusion?



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What happens if we don't develop Empathy in Leadership?



13: Risks of low levels of empathy

- Which of these results do you currently see at play in your organisation?
- What do you think will happen if you don't develop Empathy individually and collectively?
