

# Empathy

You can sense the emotions of those around you. You can feel what they are feeling as though their feelings are your own. Intuitively, you are able to see the world through their eyes and share their perspective. You do not necessarily agree with each person's perspective. You do not necessarily feel pity for each person's predicament -- this would be sympathy, not Empathy. You do not necessarily condone the choices each person makes, but you do understand. This instinctive ability to understand is powerful. You hear the unvoiced questions. You anticipate the need. Where others grapple for words, you seem to find the right words and the right tone. You help people find the right phrases to express their feelings -- to themselves as well as to others. You help them give voice to their emotional life. For all these reasons other people are drawn to you.

## Action Items for This Theme

Appreciate your gift for getting in touch with the thoughts and feelings of others. Practice naming the feelings you experience and those you observe in others, then help others name their feelings. People who can name their feelings seem to work better with other people.

Build trust with others by letting them know that you know how they are feeling.

Help your colleagues be aware of the feelings of the persons with whom they work.

Identify a friend who has strong Empathy and check your observations with him or her.

Sometimes it is important to be silent. You have the talent to, without talking, let other people understand that you know how they are feeling. Over time, refine your non-verbal communication skills.

Be ready to:

Act quickly and firmly if a person is behaving in a way that is unhealthy for that person or for those around him or her. Understanding someone's emotional state does not mean that you must excuse this behavior. Be aware that when your empathy turns to sympathy, others might see you as a "bleeding heart."

Partner with someone with a strong Command or Activator theme. This person will help you to take needed action, even though people's feelings might suffer as a result.