

## Ms. Haley's SEL word of the week:

Empathy is understanding how another person is feeling. I have empathy when I imagine myself in someone else's shoes.

Empathetic people connect more deeply to the people around them. They listen to every word in a conversation and truly give their full attention. An empathetic person doesn't listen just to say something back. They are genuinely interested in what the person has to say. Most people listen to say something back or debate an issue. The problem with this is that the connections created aren't as strong. Empathetic people even listen with their body language. They indicate they are actively listening with their gestures, energy, and posture.

Empathetic people are sincerely interested in another person's habits, experiences, and knowledge. They ask about their interests, dreams, and goals. This is a great way to develop empathy. It will also help you see things from another person's point of view. Empathetic people don't blindly maintain the same opinions their entire lives. Instead, they listen, ask, and learn. They understand that there isn't just one answer to everything. They aren't interested in being right all the time, they prefer to exchange ideas. If they do change their opinions, it's because they researched the issue with an open mind and now truly believe something different.

To be more empathetic, talk with people who think differently than you on a variety of subjects. Listen to their ideas and respectfully give yours. The most important thing in this process is that you don't try to convince anyone that your ideas are right. Just listen. The words you use are as important as listening. Empathetic people understand that words can help or hurt people. So, they are very careful about what they say and speak without judging or demanding. They also ask if they can give advice or their opinion before they share it.

Being empathetic means letting go of your arrogance and pride and accepting that there is more than one way to be right. This doesn't mean that empathetic people don't make decisions or say what they want. Just the opposite: they explain what they feel or want, but they always keep their listener in mind, and they do so respectfully without being insensitive or offensive.