



The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy.

Meryl Streep
(b. 1949)
Actress

Travel broadens our minds by activating our curiosity. When we travel, we meet new cultures and landscapes. We learn about another's life. When we empathize, we meet new experiences and emotions. We resonate with another's life.

Empathy broadens our hearts by activating our understanding.

Empathy has the power to expand strength. With empathy, we draw near to someone else's view of what is within them. We sense their feelings; we grasp the state of their being. Connected, but separate, we bring fresh resolve to their situation. Uncertain, but not as vulnerable, we bring courage as a resource. Joining what they possess with what we can offer, changes whatever another is going through.

Empathy has the power to stretch imagination. The task of walking in another's experiential shoes requires leaps of insight. We can never truly know another's world so we must listen carefully and construct the rest. We align with another's experience by drawing upon our own emotional memory. We test and check and adjust until we notice our spirits linking. Our hearts then rest in each other.

Empathy has the power to grow hope. It takes a decision to empathize. We choose to ask questions, we choose to reflect feelings, and we choose to embody healing companionship. Christmas can be thought of as a radical act of empathy – the divine becomes human to better understand us. With each empathetic choice, isolation fades further and further away.

Loneliness is replaced with hope as a result of steadfast presence.

*What interrupts me from being fully present to another?
How can I express my empathy?*