

Active Listening as a way of life.

Carl Rogers coined the term “active listening” in 1957

By focusing on and validating another person’s perspective, active listening helps build empathy.

Simultaneously, this focused, empathic process strengthens the Pre Frontal Cortex (PFC)’s role in reasoning and emotion regulation while also diminishing the amygdala’s “fight-or-flight” response, creating a calm awareness.



Active listening allows for a shared understanding of another person's thoughts and feelings, which builds empathy and validates their experience.

This can help calm the amygdala.



However...

in ***authoritarian*** trained brains,
the same region of the brain
(with overlapping neurological pathways)
activates for a completely
different purpose:

 **DISGUST** 



Innate Foundation:

Disgust is an innate, natural, instinctual emotion, which can be profoundly shaped, trained, and exploited into what *appears* to be “normalized” attitudes and behaviors, including violence, domination and grandiosity.

Disgust is considered one of the six basic, universal emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, and disgust) with a strong evolutionary basis, often linked to a “behavioral immune system”.

Its primary function is to avoid spoiled food.



Social Conditioning

Social conditioning can effectively use the brain's emotional pathways, specifically involving the insula and the amygdala, to promote negative emotions like disgust and anger towards out-groups.

These mechanisms exploit the brain's fundamental wiring for survival and social interaction, manipulating them to foster prejudice and intergroup hostility.



Social Dynamics:

Psychological theories of in-group bias and the scapegoating of out-groups stem from defense mechanisms like reaction formation and underlying inferiority complexes in the IN-GROUP members.

Inferiority Complex:

Coined by psychologist Alfred Adler, this refers to a person's feelings that they lack worth or are not good enough. When this feeling is shared among group members, it can create a collective sense of inadequacy.



Reaction Formation:

This is a defense mechanism where a person consciously feels and acts in a way that is the exact opposite of their unconscious feelings. To deal with deep-seated feelings of inferiority, a group might unconsciously adopt an air of superiority and arrogance.



Projection and Scapegoating:

The perceived inferiority is then often “projected” onto other, more vulnerable groups (out-groups). These out-groups are then made into scapegoats, blamed for problems or viewed as inferior, which serves to validate the in-group’s fragile sense of superiority and distract from its own insecurities.

In this framework, the aggressive and exclusionary behaviors of the in-group are not a true reflection of genuine strength or superiority, but rather a defensive, often unconscious, reaction to feelings of weakness or inadequacy. This dynamic is frequently discussed in analyses of prejudice, discrimination, and group conflict.



On an individual level, healing strategies include:

Developing self-awareness: Practices like mindfulness can help individuals perceive and witness their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, rather than being **ruled** by them.

Finding safe spaces: Processing emotional pain requires a safe environment, whether through talking with a trusted friend, support group, or Empathy Circles.



Creating a new narrative: By exploring and sharing one's trauma story, it becomes less upsetting. This can happen through writing or speaking with trusted individuals.

Practicing self-regulation: Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and physical activity can help regulate the nervous system and calm the "fight, flight, or freeze" response.

Active Choice: Individuals can choose to break the cycle by seeking healing, forgiveness, and a living relationship with Self, thereby creating a different path for their own and future generations.



**Most people do not listen with the intent to understand;
they listen with the intent to reply.**

Empathy doesn't begin with speaking.

Empathy begins with listening.

Empathy begins with calm curiosity.

It begins when someone quietly wonders:

"What is it like to be you?"



And then listen long enough to find out.

Not to win an intelligence argument.

Not to have the last word.

**But to leave people feeling a little more understood
than they did a moment ago.**



Words Matter: "Role" (1606):

In medieval France, because paper, like time, was expensive, actors did not receive full scripts, just a part.

The director would write each individual actor's lines on a long, rolled-up strip of parchment called a rôle.

This word literally gave us the theatrical definition we use today, and humans are still performing their role in life.

With enough practice, performers became popular performers, acting like perfect mythical heroes.

Are humans still performing as we did in the middle ages?

Listening is the foundation of empathy.



Marshall Rosenberg Flipped the script!

Hey!, Don't just stand there, do something!,

Became, Don't just do something, stand there. [Listen]

Thích Nhất Hạnh said: "When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. Maybe it needs fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. But you never blame the lettuce.

This Zen parable by Thich Nhat Hanh is illustrating empathy and compassionate understanding. Rather than judging people for their performance, it encourages us to look at the environment children grow up in.



**We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are...
Meaning we interpret everything through the lens of our
personal experiences, beliefs, emotions, biases, and
psychological conditioning.**

~attributed to the author Anaïs Nin

**Conformation bias, equates to
"Projection makes perception. ~ ACIM**

**Our survival as a species depends on our ability to recognize
that our well-being and the well-being of others are in fact
One and the same. ~Marshall Rosenberg**

**Our thoughts are like seeds, and we are the gardeners of
our own self-care... and our own planet's self-care.**



Empathy is the peaceful antidote to DARVO, domination, patriarchy, coercive control, scapegoating, racism, apartheid, slavery, genocide, human trafficking, and human sacrifice.

Tightly cloistered “in-crowds” project their collective group trauma onto the innocent children of the universe.

Sociologists note that insular communities (often called “in-crowds”) can amplify fears about the outside world.

This collective anxiety can unintentionally or intentionally shape the worldview of children educated within those “in-crowds”.

Today, we are watching a holocaust on TikTok. ~Gabor Mate

Even when we cannot accept a conclusion, we can still understand how someone arrived there.



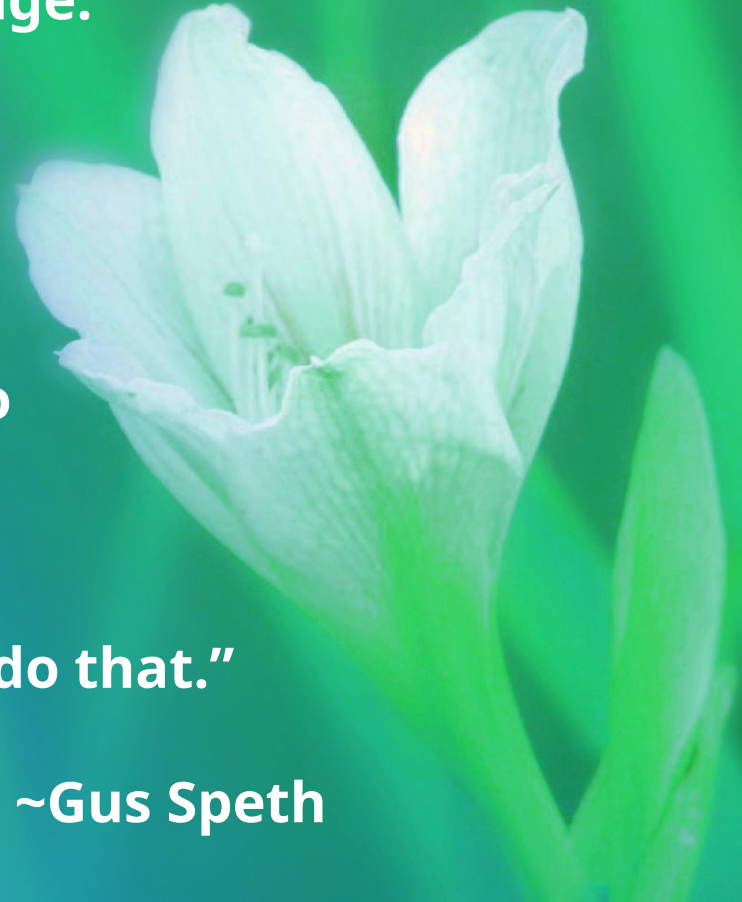
“ I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change.

I thought that with 30 years of good science, we could address these problems, but I was wrong.

The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these, we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.

And we scientists don't know how to do that.”

~Gus Speth



Am i hearing you have concerns
about the seeds we are planting
in the garden?

EmpathyMatters.org

