

# Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing

*"When ... someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without trying to take responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good!"*

Instead of offering empathy, we tend to give **advice** or **reassurance** and to **explain our own position or feeling**.

With **empathy**, we give others the time and space they need to **express themselves** and **feel understood**.

Careful of:

- **Advising:** "I think you should ... " "How come you didn't ... ?"
- **One-upping:** "That's nothing; wait'll you hear what happened to me."
- **Educating:** "This could turn into a very positive experience for you if you just ... "
- **Consoling:** "It wasn't your fault; you did the best you could."
- **Story-telling:** "That reminds me of the time ... "
- **Shutting down:** "Cheer up. Don't feel so bad."
- **Sympathizing:** "Oh, you poor thing ... "
- **Interrogating:** "When did this begin?"
- **Explaining:** "I would have called but ... "
- **Correcting:** "That's not how it happened."

*Adapted from Nonviolent Communication, Marshall Rosenberg*

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