

Empathy: The Art of Listening

We generally want to respond when people speak to us.

For example, someone says, "I'm so tired, I couldn't get any work done"
Some typical responses listed below are often said with the best of intentions, but can unknowingly create distance and disconnection.

We call these empathy blockers.

- **One-upping**

"I'm so tired myself. I couldn't get any work done either."

- **Advising / Fixing**

"Maybe you should get more sleep."

"Maybe you should get some vitamins."

"Maybe you should..."

- **Educating**

"There's a good book you should get on time management."

- **Analyzing**

"You know, this seems to be a pattern of yours."

- **Consoling**

"I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sure you did the best you could"

- **Discounting**

"Yeah but you really should be glad you have a job."

Some things we can say to express empathy

- **"I hear you."** Said with sincerity, meets a person's need to be heard.
- **"Tell me more."** Said with sincerity, shows you are really interested.
- **"Wow."** Said softly, gives the speaker a sense you are listening.
- **"I don't even know what to say right now, I'm just grateful you told me."**
When someone is in a difficult place, this may be all you have to say.

