

## *It is a matter of Empathy!*

Experience attitude

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What is this thing “empathy”? The dictionary definition describes empathy as “the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another”. To have empathy would then mean that you, an individual with experiences of your own, would have the ability to see the world through another person’s experience. This would be a valuable tool in the world of business. Empathy is mandatory. Empathy is a value that can be learned by any one that desires to possess it! I remember a story told about United Airlines. I have not been able to verify that this event actually happened, but I believe that it did. In the beginning of this new airline named United feedback was given by numerous customers that luggage mishaps occurred frequently. The complaints escalated to a point that the executive team of United Airlines sent a memo to all managers about the issue. Months went by and no change occurred. A continual flow of negative comments and a management team that felt impressed to manage other complaints and not this one. One particular executive with United Airlines decided to give his managers a specific lesson. To accomplish the training he deemed necessary he had his management team meet him at three different locations over the course of a thirty day period. The meeting places chosen were remote and required that all of his managers fly. One of the locations he instructed the team to bring spouses and kids to a retreat. In each of these flights this executive arranged for the managers and their families luggage to either be lost or late requiring the team to do without their luggage or have to make arrangements to go back the next day to pick late luggage up.

Needless to say this was an “extreme lesson” in empathy. These managers will forever have the ability to experience the feelings and thoughts of the passengers they have stewardship over. I don’t believe we ought to actually have the experience to empathize with another person’s experience, but it can really help us empathize if we do. Remember empathy matters. We need to groom the value of empathy into our tool box of tools we use in our relationships. Empathy is a key to showing others that we value them and their experiences. It is a trait that managers and employees enjoy if they are thriving.

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