



# HeartBeat

ON THE QUALITY PATIENT EXPERIENCE™

Insights, tips, tools and resources to help you achieve the unparalleled patient, family and employee experience



RESHAPING  
THE CULTURE  
OF CARE



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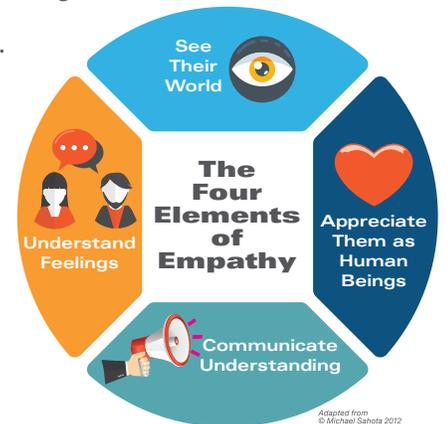
### Soapbox: What Empathy Is Not!

By Wendy Leebov, Ed.D., Partner & Founder, Language of Caring, LLC

*“The hearing that is only in the ears is one thing. The hearing of understanding is another. But the hearing of the spirit is not limited to any one faculty, to the ear or the mind. Hence it demands emptiness of all of the faculties. And when the faculties are empty, the whole being listens. There is then a direct grasp of what is right there before you that can never be heard with the ear or understood with the mind.”*

--Chuang-Tzu

We know that empathy is good for patients. It engenders trust, which increases patient comfort, reduces anxiety, fosters engagement, and leads to more positive health outcomes. When physicians are empathic, patients feel a connection or common ground and their recovery rates improve. Empathy is also good for providers. It helps doctors do their jobs well and reduce their own disillusionment and burnout. And empathy among members of the care team builds relationships and strengthens collaboration.



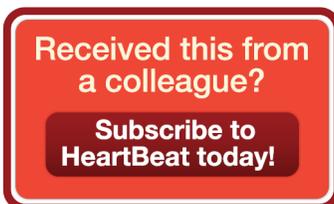
### Often We THINK We're Being Empathic, But We Aren't

Most of us learned to listen with our minds. We think about how to respond or how to fix the problem or what this reminds us of in our own lives. When we listen with our minds, we are not in the moment and we are not really connecting with the other person. Empathy involves mindful questioning, curiosity and wondering about the other person's experience— connecting at a deeper level.

**Situation:** Your coworker says, *“My boss expects the impossible!”*

Below are typical responses, NONE of which are empathy. I'm not saying they are inappropriate responses. I'm just saying they are not empathy.

NOT EMPATHY	EXAMPLE
<b>Sympathizing</b>	<i>“I hate your boss for doing that.”</i>
<b>One-Upping</b>	<i>“You think you have it hard. If I'm not stressed out, my boss thinks I don't have enough to do! I remember a time when my boss...”</i>
<b>Fixing</b>	<i>“I think you should tactfully confront your boss. I could help you practice.”</i>
<b>Therapizing</b>	<i>“I think you're overreacting. Everyone's under pressure, but you have a poor me attitude.”</i>





NOT EMPATHY	EXAMPLE
<b>Advising</b>	<i>“Did you ever read the book <b>Games Mother Never Taught You?</b> You should read that. And you might also go to Human Resources about your boss.”</i>
<b>Discounting</b>	<i>“Hey, that’s par for the course when you have a boss. And anyway, you get a lot done, so maybe those high expectations work!”</i>
<b>Minimizing</b>	<i>“You’re a big boy. You’ll get over it.”</i>
<b>Interrogating</b>	<i>“What’s he expecting of you that you feel is unfair? Is there a pattern here?”</i>
<b>Analyzing</b>	<i>“You seem to overreact to what are normal pressures at work. Have you had a problem in the past with people who expected too much, like your parents?”</i>
<b>Defending</b>	<i>“Look, he’s under terrible pressure to produce for HIS boss! It’s not easy to be a boss with so much responsibility. Believe me, I know.”</i>
<b>Pollyanna-izing</b>	<i>“It feels bad now, but it will ease up. You’ve felt that way before and it always gets better.”</i>

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“Feeling empathy involves tuning in eyes, ears, heart and soul--to really hear a person’s feelings and needs.”

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Feeling empathy involves tuning in eyes, ears, heart and soul--to really hear a person’s feelings and needs. Expressing empathy involves acknowledging these needs and feelings through words and nonverbal behavior. In the situation above, empathic responses sound like this:

- “You sound so frustrated. Are you?”
- “It sounds like a really stressful time for you.”
- “I’m so sorry you’re going through this.”
- “I feel for you. It sounds maddening.”

**From Habitual Responding to Intentional Empathy**

Many of us have habitual ways of responding that kick in when patients or colleagues reveal feelings, complain or express needs. See if you notice yourself using any of the “non-empathic” forms of responding. The challenge is to take a breath and CHOOSE how to respond when we want to show our empathy. Perhaps begin with the simplest form of empathy: asking “Are you feeling \_\_\_\_\_?” The result: connecting at a deeper level, learning more and having a stronger basis for helping going forward.

To learn more about the difference between empathy and sympathy, [\*\*watch\*\*](#) this great short video.



**Watch** hospital staff and patients share their stories of giving and receiving compassionate care at **MedStar Washington Hospital Center** with the *Language of Caring for Staff* program. “Compassion is as important as the treatment we are giving the patient,” says Dr. Zacharia Cherian. Patient Nanci Young says, “The warmth, the love, the caring attitude from the very first meeting was unbelievable.” Providers and staff agree that in making their hospital a better place for colleagues, patients and families: “**We** starts here, **we** starts now, **we** starts with us.”



***Watch now***



- “When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.”  
-- **Ernest Hemingway**
- “The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy.”  
-- **Meryl Streep**



**WHAT’S YOUR LINE?**

**Purpose:** To take a break from being task-oriented and connect by learning more about each other.

**Instructions**

1. If your team has 10 people or fewer, do this with the whole group. Otherwise, divide into groups of 5.
2. Give the group(s) a sentence starter from the list below, or use your own.
3. Each person in the group completes the sentence. Listen carefully to each other.
4. Repeat at least five rounds with a different sentence starter each time.
5. Ask your team to suggest their own sentence starters.
6. Afterwards, invite reactions to the activity.

**Suggested sentence starters:**

- a. The people who make me feel the best are those who...
- b. The most important factor affecting my morale on my job is...
- c. The greatest satisfaction I get from my job is...
- d. If I could make one change in my work, it would be...
- e. The most irritating part of my job is...
- f. When something at work really aggravates me, I usually...
- g. When I can’t get help with problems at work, I usually turn to...



**Study: Computers and Paperwork Steal Time from Patients**

Physicians spend almost twice as long doing electronic health records and desk work as they spend face-to-face with patients, according to a recently published **study** by the AMA and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health System. *Even while in the exam room with patients*, over a third of their time was spent on documentation tasks. Then physicians spend an additional hour or two of their personal time each night on data entry. “This study reveals what many physicians are feeling – data entry and administrative tasks are cutting into the doctor-patient time that is central to medicine and a primary reason many of us became physicians,” said AMA Immediate Past President Steven Stack, MD.



**Are you attending the ANCC National Magnet Conference October 5-7 in Orlando, Florida?** If you or a colleague will be there, come say hello to Jill Golde and Cheryl Glass of the Language of Caring team at **Booth 734** to access great resources and learn about our patient experience solutions.

**Want to set a time to chat?**

Just email Jill at [jgolde@languageofcaring.com](mailto:jgolde@languageofcaring.com) or call 314-571-9607.



**HealthStream’s Healthcare Improvement Forum *Partnering to Achieve Outcomes*** in Nashville, October 26-28.

Please join us! Language of Caring’s Dorothy Sisneros, Partner & SVP, Client Services and Jill Golde, Partner & SVP, Market Development will present a session called “*Mindfulness, Empathy, and Engagement: The Soft Skills Revolution*” on Thursday October 27 from 10:45 – 11:45 am EDT. You can sign up for the Summit by [clicking here](#). If you want to meet with Dorothy or Jill in person, please reach out to them by email:

Dorothy Sisneros – [dsisneros@languageofcaring.com](mailto:dsisneros@languageofcaring.com)

Jill Golde – [jgolde@languageofcaring.com](mailto:jgolde@languageofcaring.com)

**We hope to see you there.**



## LANGUAGE OF CARING WEBINAR SERIES PRESENTS A **COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR**

WEDNESDAY,  
December 7,  
2016  
1-2 PM  
(EST)

### How to Align Recognition Practices with Your Pursuit of the Great Patient Experience

It is human nature to want recognition for your strengths, accomplishments, hard work and contributions. Our employee survey results tell us that, while most of us recognize our teams for their efforts and results, our employees crave even more appreciation. In this webinar, we identify concrete ways to ensure that your recognition practices and programs align with, support and advance your organization’s values and the exceptional patient, family and employee experience.

#### Highlights:

- The elements of an appreciative culture
- Common myths and facts about employee recognition
- Tactics that spark commitment, engagement, and peak performance of individuals and teams
- Holiday Time: How your organization can promote meaningful gift-giving
- Our all-time favorite approaches

**SIGN UP FOR THE  
COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR  
[HERE](#)**

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- *Patient experience champions, managers, supervisors, executives, physician leaders, practice managers, HR and employee engagement professionals, training and OD professionals.*

#### WEBINAR FACULTY



Wendy Leebov, Jill Golde, and Dorothy Sisneros, Partners at Language of Caring, are passionate advocates for creating healing environments for patients, families, and the entire healthcare team. They’ve served as healthcare leaders, organization development professionals, instructional designers, strategists, and coaches. Together, they provide high-impact programs and consulting services, supporting healthcare organizations with culture change strategies, training and tools for enhancing the patient, family and employee experience.



## Achieve Communication Excellence with Our Patient Experience Solutions

- Web-based training programs that **hardwire** best practice communication skills
- **Proven** CAHPS and patient experience breakthroughs
- Engages and fulfills **Staff** and **Physicians**

### Learn More

Attend a  
Webinar Overview

OR

Contact Us

Join the 200+ organizations who are transforming their cultures with the Language of Caring



American  
Red Cross



MEMORIAL  
HERMANN

### Contact Us!



314 300 7701



Jill Golde, MS, Dorothy Sisneros, MS, MBA  
and Wendy Leebov, EdD—partners at  
Language of Caring.

### Spread the Resources

- Forward this month's Heartbeat email to others.
- Share and tweet the following link:  
*What Empathy is Not!*

<http://languageofcaring.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/what-empathy-is-not.pdf>

Join our LinkedIn Group **"Quality Patient Experience and HCAHPS Improvement"** and add to the rich discussions.

PLEASE FOLLOW US!



Language of Caring

*Achieving an unparalleled patient experience and a culture  
of caring through exceptional communication.*