

## Where You Can Find Sympathy

&nbsp;by: Gene Simmons Ask any of my kids and they'll tell you immediately that you'll find it in the dictionary between "sh—" and "syphilis". Wasn't that absolutely cruel and unkind of me to instill in them a nearly total disdain for the concept of "sympathy"? With so many individuals in the world suffering in so many ways, how could I possibly be so heartless? I am without a doubt, an uncaring, evil SOB! Well, maybe not. Here are a couple of things to think about. First, I'll give you my definition of sympathy: "A sharing or agreement of feelings with another person". It's not exactly what shows in the dictionary but it's pretty dang close. I know, so what's the problem with that? It's showing caring, compassion and maybe even love isn't it? Hang on for a sec. Let's take a look at another word. "Empathy". Again, here's Gene's definition: "The ability to intellectually identify with and understand the source and manifestation of another's feelings - or situation." See the distinction here between the two words? "Sympathy" basically implies that I'm going to feel your feelings and as a result, experience your mental and emotional disruption. "Empathy" on the other hand, implies that I'm able to logically understand why you feel as you do without subjecting myself to your emotional trauma and expending of energy. How can this distinction affect us personally? Here is look at both sides of the "sympathy" coin. If you're the type of person who has been conditioned (programmed) to consistently look for sympathy from others – for whatever reason, just stop it! Golly, all you're doing is splattering your friends with your yucky feelings and on top of it, you're even asking them to join you in your pity room. Whoopee, won't that be fun? Now you can have other folks whining and moaning right along with you. Turn on some "get-me-down" music too. That'll add significantly to the ambiance at the victim's table. OK, so maybe I got a little carried away in the preceding paragraph, but dang it folks, it's just not fair – much less kind and considerate – to try to shove off our misery on other people. Others have enough burdens without any of their "friends" adding to it. The other side of the coin of course, is our personal willingness to provide our sympathy to our "friends" who are requesting it. To emotionally buy into their difficulties and drain our emotional bank in the process. Why would we ever willingly do that? We have enough stuff to think about without trying to pile any more onto our mental/emotional plates. If you are the type of person who really "feels" the emotions associated with another's problems, you might want to consider transitioning to "empathetic" approach. Try to remove yourself mentally from the personal attachment to whatever might be occurring. This will not only save you lots of emotional wear and tear, but it will likely also give you the ability to perhaps offer more constructive suggestions. Suggestions that just might be able to help your friend move out of the pity room and into a more stable (and enjoyable) environment. So you see, I really wasn't being a cruel, heartless ogre when I told my children where they could find the sympathy they frequently (at least initially) requested from me. Instead, I was encouraging them to face their problems and do whatever was necessary to put them in the past. Seems like a productive way to approach life, don't you think?

## About the Author

Gene, through [NuPathz.com](http://www.nupathz.com), provides an easy reading self-help blog, articles and links along with affordable books and materials written to help folks find the road to a more enjoyable lifestyle, to pass on some of life's "secrets for survival" in a chaotic world & offer a few smiles along the way. It's a down-to-earth, simple approach to discovering a better life. You can visit Gene at <http://www.nupathz.com/gene@nupathz.com>

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