

Date _____

Name _____ Partner _____

Understanding Empathy

Our feelings are an important part of our selves. How we feel can affect how we behave towards other people. Our feelings can also affect how well we can pay attention and interact with our friends, with our families, and even in class. Understanding how you feel can be valuable. When you understand how you feel and why you feel that way, it can become clearer how you can find solutions to the problems that you have.

Understanding how other people feel is also important. Because most things in life involve interacting and working with other people, the ability to understand how another person feels can be a very valuable asset. This ability is called empathy.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you understand what empathy is all about.

Directions: To complete this exercise, work as a partner with another person in your class. Try to find someone who you don't normally work with. In turns, ask each other the questions below. Answer the questions as honestly as possible. Write your partner's answers in the blank spaces below.

1. Describe the last time you felt happy. Why did you feel that way?

2. Describe the last time you felt sad. Why did you feel that way?

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3. Describe one thing in your life that you consider a problem. How do you feel about that problem? What is one thing you could do as a step towards solving the problem?

4. How do you feel right now? Why do you feel that way? NOTE: Don't use words such as "good," "bad," "fine," or "OK." Use more descriptive feeling words such as "confused," "frustrated," "bored," "upset," etc.

Answer the following question together:

5. Do you think empathy is an important skill? Why or why not? In what type of situations could using empathy be useful?
