



SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Developing empathy

EMPATHY WALK

The term “**Empathy Walk**” was coined by **Dr. Edgar H. Schein**, Professor Emeritus at the **MIT Sloan School of Business**, and one of the most well-known theorists of organisational culture. He proposes that a leader should open their heart to their team by taking an empathy walk with them.

PROCESS

1. Spend some time thinking about **someone within your team or organisation who has a very different life experience** to yours.
2. Make contact and arrange **to spend at least half an hour getting to know the person you picked**. (Go for a walk, meet for a coffee, or an online Zoom session). Try to learn enough about that person’s world to get a feel for what it would be like to live in that world.
3. Try to put yourself in that person’s shoes. Listen empathically. Ask questions. **The purpose is for you to understand** the other person’s perspective, **not to influence or change** the person.
4. It might be interesting to **ask questions around what life and career aspirations they have**, and what they think would help them to achieve these.
5. After you come back from your walk or zoom meeting, **write a reflection paragraph** following your empathy walk. Then think about:
 - How can you use empathic listening to better understand the unique points of view, contributions and perspectives of the members of your team, colleagues, etc?

Source: Edgar H. Schein, Professor Emeritus at the MIT Sloan School of Management