

# CHARACTER CONNECTION



“What is right is right, even if no one is doing it. What is wrong is wrong, even when everyone is doing it.”

## Character Trait:

### EMPATHY

**Empathy:** the ability to identify with and understand somebody else’s feelings or difficulties.

## Diversity Awareness:

### WOMEN’S HISTORY

Women’s History Month is celebrated every March in the United States. This year’s theme is *Women Inspiring Innovation Through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*

## Quote Of The Month

“Empathy is not simply a matter of trying to imagine what others are going through, but having the will to muster enough courage to do something about it. In a way, empathy is predicated upon hope.”

--Cornel West

## DID YOU KNOW?

Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919) was commissioned assistant surgeon for the Union Army during the Civil War and is the only woman ever to be awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award.

For more fun facts about Women's History go to: <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0906934.html>

## Are You Empathetic?

- |  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 1. I often think about other people’s feelings   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| 2. I don’t make fun of other people because I can imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes. | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| 3. I listen to others about what they’re going through   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| 4. I try to understand other people’s point of view.   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| 5. I am aware that not everyone reacts   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |

## The Importance of Empathy

Empathy is the ability to identify with the world from another person’s point of view and the motivation to treat others with kindness based on that understanding. Empathy requires both an emotional and a cognitive element. To have empathy one must be able to feel what another is feeling and to act upon this feeling appropriately. It is the cornerstone of the ability to love and is at the core of good character. The development of empathy begins very early in life. The seeds for empathy are planted by responsive parenting during the infant-toddler period. (e.g. baby cries, parent picks baby up, changes diaper, feeds baby... or toddler giggles parent laughs with child...). Empathy continues to grow during preschool. However, it is during the elementary school years that empathy either takes root and becomes a way of life or emotional callousness sets in. Children that are overwhelmed have a difficult time developing empathy. Because they struggle to cope with the overwhelming circumstances and emotions, they may get into the habit of ignoring their feelings. This may cause them much difficulty throughout their teen years and into adulthood. The lack of empathy has been cited as a possible factor in the development of antisocial behaviors, including bullying. An inability to recognize and care about the plight of the victim leaves the bully unable to experience guilt and gives little reason to change behavior. On the other hand, empathetic teens really blossom and give joy to those around them. They generally develop good friendships and have a better sense of self-control.