



E D W A R D S

Ray Edwards Show, Episode 436

Selfish Empathy

[00:00:00] Speaker 1: It's Tuesday, February 4th, and this is the Daily Ray.

[music]

[00:00:09] Ray: Live at Five. Today's topic is empathy. This is the key to writing good copy, empathy. What is empathy? Most people don't have very much in this world of rage culture and divisiveness, and hatred boils up on Facebook because somebody posts their political preferences. That's an overreaction to something by the way. If you get offended by somebody's stated political preference, if you're offended by that, if you're angered by it, you might want to look inside and see what's going on with you because it's got more to do with you than it does to do with him.

Just a proposal, just a thought to consider if you're unhappy most of the time, perhaps start by looking inside. Let's start there. Let's start with this. If you're not happy now, there's nothing out there in the future that's going to make you happy. I don't care what's going on in your life right now. I do care, but regardless of what's happening in your life, whether you're going through a divorce or business collapse or legal problems, or whatever may be happening in your life, you have an illness. If you're not happy, don't think it's because of that circumstance.

Look back before that circumstance occurred and ask yourself, "Did I have any happiness before that?" Do I tend to be a happy person or tend to be an unhappy person over the last few months, few years, few decades? That's a question worth asking. What happens is we have an emotional event. I didn't think I was going to go here, but I'm going to, inside my notes. I've been working on something; I've been working on a model of functional human behavior. That is some fancy talk right there. I want to walk you through it right now.

I don't have slides, but I got notes. You're going to be blown away, because you're going to see this and you're going to have the lights going to go on, you're going to realize, "Oh, crap, that is how my mind works." This is the functional human behavior formula. You start by receiving a stimulus, something happens in your external world. Maybe you get a letter, or you have a conversation with somebody, this is something

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that makes you angry or you find out some bit of news about your health, you get a diagnosis, stimulus.

Something outside yourself occurs that is a fact of reality. It's not an opinion, doesn't mean you have an opinion about or something you think about, it's something that happens that is an undeniable fact. Anybody else could look and say, "Yes, that happened." Then you have cognition. The stimulus hits your brain. You see the letter, you hear the news, gets the diagnosis, you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin as it rises over the horizon. You think this just happened. You have a thought about it.

That sets off an emotion, because what happens right on the heels of the thought of the recognition that, "Okay, this person just said these words to me, what do those words mean?" That's what happens with cognition, you begin to think about what does this mean that just happened? What's the meaning of this event in my life? As soon as you give it a meaning or a possible meaning, your brain obliges you by cooking up a cocktail of neurotransmitters called a feeling and emotion.

You feel this emotion about the thing that happened, the stimulus, because the thoughts you had about it, then you move to action. You have an emotion which drives your action. Our actions are driven by our emotions, we like to think they're driven by our thoughts, and they are one step removed. Most of you respond out of emotion, you take the action, then you have an outcome. Then after the outcome, you evaluate what just happened and you begin to form an imprint.

If it happens in a state of heightened emotion as a unique circumstance, and happens more than two or three times, you get an imprint, a permanent record in your brain of how your neurons fired together because the neurons that fire together wire together. This is a fact of neurobiology, the neurons that fire together wire together. Think about this with me, stimulus, effective reality, unarguable it happened, whatever it is. If your bank account is zero, that is a fact of reality. It's a stimulus of circumstance.

Cognition is what you think about that circumstance. It's not a fact, it's just what you think about it. Let's take a different example, you're in a house alone, it's late at night. Your family's out of town maybe, you're in the house alone. It's 2 AM and you hear a door slam and a floorboard creak. That's a stimulus. You're wide awake now. You have a thought, "Somebody's in the house," that's an opinion, you don't know that for sure. It could have been the wind blow the door open, blow the door shut, could have been. Could have been the dog making the floorboard creak or could have been ceiling of the house, but you don't know for sure. You have a thought, "Somebody in the house."

You've already left to a conclusion. If someone's in the house, your family's out of town, then someone must have ill intent. They're either going to steal from you or they're going to hurt you. Now, your brain makes up a cocktail fight or flight response. Adrenaline, norepinephrine. Your heart rate rises, your respiration rate rises, your blood is boiling with anticipation that something is about to happen to protect you from violence, to fight if you have to, run away if you have to, whatever you have to do to survive.

Now you're in panic mode. That's the emotion. Whichever the action. You jump out of bed, you grab the baseball bat in the corner, you open the door, you raise the bat to swing it and you realize, it's the cat or it's your spouse who came home earlier than expected. Thank goodness you didn't swing the bat, right? It would have been a terrible outcome.

You made meaning out of the stimulus. The sound of the door and the floorboard, you had a thought about it which created an emotion which pushed you into action. Fear-based action. The outcome could have been disastrous, but it wasn't in this case that I've just illustrated. There have been instances where people shot their loved ones because they had this panic reaction in the middle of the night.

When this happens two or three times and let's say it's the cat every time, you begin to evaluate. Every time you jump out of bed and panic you realize the cat just came through the cat door, made the floorboard creak, there's no need to panic. You make an imprint. When you hear those noises, you have that circumstance occur, it's not a big deal, it's not something to be scared about.

Think through this. The next time you hear the door slam and the floorboard creak, what if it's a person who came to murder you. My point is not to make you panicky about noises in the middle of the night, my point is to say we don't know what things mean much of the time we jump to conclusions. It's not what things mean all the time. All the time. The privilege we have as human beings, homo sapiens, is that we get to decide how this process goes down.

We get to decide what happens between stimulus and cognition. We can stop any point in this process and say, "Is this real?" I hear the door slam, I hear the floorboard creak, I think someone's in the house. Is that true? That stops the process of forming the emotion in its tracks. "Is this true?" Or "What does this mean?" are good questions to ask when you have the stimulus occur.

If you think to yourself, "Well, I don't know if it's true or not. I don't know if it's a cat, I don't know if it's a person, I don't know if I actually heard that or I dreamed it. What should I do?" That's the next question. Should I do anything? Perhaps I should lie here and wait and re-evaluate. Do I hear a second floorboard creak? If the floorboards creak and you only heard one creak, ain't nobody walking if there ain't no creaks, right?

If you hear steps coming down the hallway, then you need to think about, "Okay, there's somebody walking down the hallway, what does this mean? Maybe the best thing for me to do is to say in a loud deep voice, who goes there?" If it's somebody with nefarious purposes who thinks you're out of town, out of the house, they may run away because they're scared. If it's your spouse they may let you know that, "Hey, it's just me." If it's a kidnapper, they may say, "It's the kidnapper. I'm here to take you away."

That's a much better response than blindly swinging a bat or pulling out a weapon. It's an extreme example. Think about how many times you do this in conversation. Somebody says something, and we ask ourselves, "What does that mean? What did that person just say? Are they angry with me? Did they mean to insult me? Did they mean to insult my religion, my beliefs, my politics? They don't value me as a person?"

Make all sorts of conclusions and it's usually because, to circle back to my real topic this morning, usually because we don't have empathy.

What is empathy? Empathy is the ability to understand and share another person's emotion. It doesn't mean you agree with the emotion. If you're trying to calm down the person who's panicking in the middle of the night over nothing. You know it to be nothing. You know the panic to be useless and actually harmful to them. You just had a bad dream maybe. If you can understand that they're afraid, you can even share a little bit of that fear just by knowing what it feels like, then you have a connection. You have influence on that person.

You have no influence on people you are not connected to. In fact, if you're judging somebody, you cannot connect with them at all. You have no influence over the person you are judging. For those of you who don't like the way people live their lives, want to tell people what to believe, how to behave, who to love, who to not love. The minute you start judging that person, you judge them, you have no influence on them. That's why they don't listen to you because they can feel the judgment coming off of you in waves. Truth. Hashtag truth.

What is empathy? The ability to understand and share another person's emotion. Why do most people not have it? They're not listening, they're not interested in paying attention to what's happening with other people. They're only thinking about themselves. I have more empathy now than I ever had in my life. It's because I got humbled by a circumstance, I had no control over. A diagnosis of a disease that takes control of my body. Makes me have slurry speech like I do this morning a bit. Makes me shaky sometimes. It's called Parkinson's disease.

I only bring it up because it's undeniable truth in my life. What I make of it, my cognition, my thoughts about it form the emotions I have. Sometimes I get down. Then start thinking, "Well, why am I down?" I'm fast-forwarding to the future to what this is going to be like 10, or 15 years from now. I have no idea what it's going to be like. Maybe they'll find the cure before then. Then it'll be great. Maybe they won't and it'll still be great. It's up to me to make it what I will. It's up here.

Here's the challenge. The challenge is not in the symptoms of a disease or the problem in a relationship or the balance in the bank account, the challenge is these six inches right here. How you think about it's how you feel about it. When we're engaged with another person and we hear them say something that makes us angry like they stated a political belief, or they say something about us or relationship. They say something about their lifestyle that we don't like, we should ask ourselves "Do I know for a fact that's worth getting upset over?" In fact, I still down stuff about me and look at the other person, think about how they feel. I'm not saying you have to agree with them. I'm just saying you have to understand them. Have empathy for them.

Here's how to practice empathy. First of all, stop talking. If you find yourself interrupting people all the time. You have a lack of empathy. You're not listening. You're being quiet waiting for a chance to wedge in your opinion. Or constructing your rebuttal to what they just said. If you're the person who's always correcting people in conversation, just listen to your own conversation a bit. Do you find yourself always correcting people, actually it means this? Really the facts of the case are that, if that's

you, you're a jerk. You're being a jerk. That's what people are thinking. Why is this person always correcting me? Because you're not listening. Practice empathy, like this. Be silent and listen and then point your eyes at the person who's talking. You'd be surprised how often someone with no empathy is not even looking at the person talking. They're looking off into space, think about what they're going to say.

Keys to practicing empathy are, be silent, point your eyes to the person who's speaking and listen to them. It's that simple. The more empathy you have, the more influence you have. The more influence you have, the better your copy is, or the better your copy is, the more you sell. If you need a selfish reason to be empathetic, there you have it.

Your life will go better, people will like you more, you'll get more what you want if you're empathetic. There's a reward for being a nice caring person who actually understands how people feel. The reward is they don't think you're a jerk they'll give you what you want in many cases. Because you gave them what they wanted you, you heard them, you understood them, you had empathy for them, instead of judging them.

I never really understood this for most of my life because I was privileged. I'm not dumb, white American males but I think it's hard for white American males to understand how privileged they are. How much advantage we have, just by virtue of the color of our skin, where we were born and our gender. I'm not saying it's unfair, mostly, we're mean, I didn't know. Then I got older. I got gray. I started getting treated like an older person. I had somebody at the drive-thru asked me, "Do you want the senior discount?" I realized, "Oh, that's how you see me." I go to conferences now and people who were not around 10 years ago when I started in this business, some of the younger folks were like, "Who are you?" I'm like, "Just nobody, nobody special, just Ray."

It made me understand what it feels like to be a little marginalized. Then I got Parkinson's, and sometimes because of the Parkinson's, I appear to be drunk. My speech is slurred, I'll be weaving back and forth as I walk, I lose my balance, people think I'm drunk. Now I'm the old drunk guy but that's not true. Or, because of the way it affects my speech and my ability to quickly express myself, sometimes I'm just silent, so I appear to be stupid. I have nothing to say, which I still got a few years to balance that out. I had lots to say earlier when I knew nothing. Now that I know a few things I don't have much to say, empathy. I'm not saying I understand every person's situation, I don't understand what it's like to be a person of another race in our society, I don't understand that. I don't understand what it's like to be a person who has a different gender identity than other people think they should have. I can point my eyes to those people and listen to them when they talk. I can imagine what would it feel like to be you and I do know what it feels like to be marginalized for reasons outside your control. Empathy.

I didn't mean this to be a heavy-headed thing, but this is important stuff we're dealing with. When we're selling, we're dealing with human emotion. Human emotion springs from human thought, human thoughts springs from identity, identity, it gets it right who you are. It's impossible to avoid these heavier issues. You're talking about persuasion and influence, buying and selling. It's impossible for me anyway. You have it.

Next time we'll talk about cycling. I don't mean bicycling; I'm talking about cycles we go into to avoid reality. Eating, drinking, watching too much television, overindulging in things in general, to avoid or evade reality. That's called cycling. We just get into a cycle. Some of us are the Netflix cycle sometimes.

Okay, slide five for today. I think we'll call this one selfish empathy, selfish empathy. Something to think about. This week I'm going to be striving to hit live at five every morning I'm traveling. Tomorrow we leave for Redding, California. I will be speaking at the Heaven in Business Conference there at Bethel Church. I think I speak on Thursday or Wednesday. Wednesday maybe. I can't remember.

Anyways, it's a 3-day deal. You should go there and check it out. Type in Heaven in Business Conference, Redding, California. You can fuss about it. I'll meet you there. How is that? All right.

Until then, my prayer for you is that God will do more for you than you can ask or think, or you can possibly imagine because he's good and he's not mad at you. He has lots of empathy. If you want to jump-start your sales for this month, these 29 days of February, you can still join the challenge.

It doesn't matter, we started in the first, but you can always catch up and do it at your own pace. I encourage you to go to rays.com/challenge and join us and jump-start your sales challenge for this month. Until tomorrow. God bless. I love you very much. I'm Ray. See you soon.

[00:15:48] Speaker 1: The Daily Ray is recorded live every weekday at 5:00 AM Pacific on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Back live tomorrow with another Daily Ray.

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