



# Empathy Experiment

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# Empathy – Perceiving the Unique Human Needs of Another

## MERRIAM-WEBSTER DEFINITION OF EMPATHY

- The ability to perceive and connect to another person’s emotions and experience
- The ability to share someone else’s feelings, the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another

Empathy, the ability to understand the unique context, feelings, and needs of customers, is at the heart of a powerful culture of customer experience. Imagine having a relationship with a service provider or friend where you do not feel understood or where your needs are not met. Would you stay in that relationship?

Empathy is the skill of identifying the customer’s feelings, emotions, and needs *so that* we can offer support and innovative solutions that are tailored to their unique opportunities.

## THE SKILL OF EMPATHIC LISTENING INVOLVES:

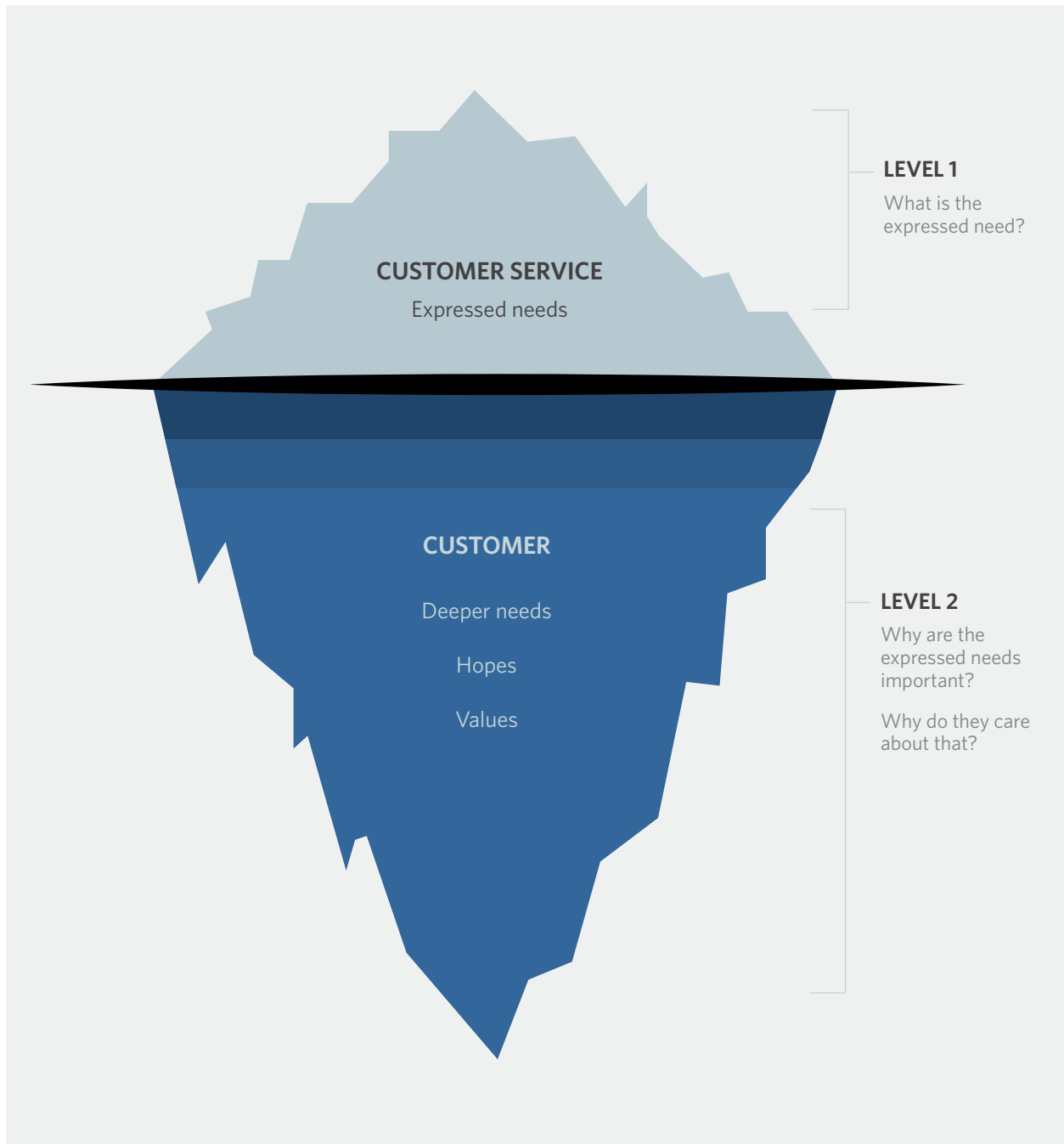
- Being present (not distracted)
- Being genuinely curious about what it’s like to be the other
- Perceiving the feelings and needs behind the other’s words
- Noticing the body language of the other
- Phrasing empathic responses supportively and sincerely

 “We have to **teach empathy as we do literacy.**”

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# Empathic Listening Iceberg



# Empathic Listening Steps to Connect to Our Customers

# 1

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## Listen to the customer

- Put full attention on the customer
- Listen to the words and story of the customer
- Listen for the feelings and needs you hear and see behind the words

# 2

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## Give empathic responses to connect with the customer

**LEVEL 1 - The story and the expressed needs. Repeat back verbatim or paraphrase in your words what the customer is saying**

- I hear you saying that . . .
- If I get you right X happened and now . . .

**LEVEL 2 - The underlying feelings and emotions. Reflect back the feelings you hear or perceive**

- I hear you are feeling . . .
- I hear what's important to you is . . .

# 3

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## Check if your interpretation is correct

- Did I get you right?
- Is this what is going on?
- Is this what you are feeling?



# Empathic Listening Tips

## THE RIGHT WAY

- Give full attention to the customer
- Acknowledge what the customer says - "I hear this situation was difficult for you."
- Stay focused on the customer as the center of attention
- Acknowledge emotions and normalize them - "It sounds like you were really frustrated and that's totally understandable, who wouldn't be."

## THE WRONG WAY

- Give advice/opinions - "This is what you should do."
- Talk about yourself - "That happened to me once, too."
- Diminish the customer's emotions - "You should not feel this way/that way."
- Ignore the emotions expressed or pretend emotions are not there
- Take it personally and become defensive - "It's not my or our fault...the policy manual won't allow this, etc."

## *Action Worksheet –* **Listening to Our Customers with Empathy**

**Listen to and  
empathize  
with internal  
and external  
customers**

- Pay attention to both the content/situation and emotional elements of what customers are saying
- Listen first to understand customers when they are upset – before providing explanations
- After listening deeply to a customer, summarize your understanding of what you have heard and what is their need
- Acknowledge how a person is feeling

*“You must be very disappointed that you do not qualify for the loan at this time – let’s review the steps that will qualify you...”*

*“I can see that you are angry about the delay of this report – I would feel the same way in your shoes...”*

1. Key ideas I want to remember from this session.

2. How can I apply them in my role as a CE Leader?

