

# Empathy – Challenge

My feelings, Your feelings – Giraffe language  
Entrepreneurial Culture

## Our Feelings – a reflection-challenge (for students aged 9-12 years)

*Empathy* is another word for compassion or the capacity to place oneself in another's position and thus understanding their feelings.

If we want to treat others respectfully and attentively, we need a language that “comes from the heart”. This is why a new language was created: the “giraffe language”. Why? Because giraffes have the largest heart from all land animals.

### How the giraffe speaks



The giraffe asks:

How do you feel?  
What do you need?

The giraffe says\*:

I see/hear...  
I feel...  
I need...  
I request...

Thank you!

*\*With these 4 keys you can also translate jackal sentences and express true appreciation and gratitude*

Tell your parents about the new language you are learning and ask them to read this and the next pages.

Also, practise giraffe language at home!

The American psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg (1934-2015) developed the process of Nonviolent communication, for which he used giraffe language and jackal language as symbols.



The giraffe has the largest heart of all land animals, which makes her the perfect symbol for an empathic language of the heart. This language helps us express ourselves honestly and clearly, voice our feelings and needs and ask others about their feelings and needs – in short, we choose words that connect us.



Also, in jackal language we express our needs. But here we choose words that make it harder to be understood or to understand others. We use jackal language when we want to offend, insult, hurt, punish, reward or praise others. But we also speak like a jackal when we want to be right, look for someone to blame or want to flatter somebody, when we judge what is right and what is wrong and when we want to make sure that there are winners and losers.

Marshall Rosenberg has acted as a mediator in many conflicts around the world. He found out what factors support connection, communication and conflict resolution:

- I describe what I see/hear without judging or interpreting it.
- I express my own feelings and needs without blaming or criticising the other person.
- I make requests (instead of threatening, manipulating or blackmailing the other person).
- I express appreciation without praising or flattering the other person.
- I try not to take accusations, criticism and demands personally but instead listen empathically and try to find out which unmet needs are behind the other person's words.
- I keep in mind that everything we say and do is an attempt to meet universal, human needs.

Jackal language features:	Giraffe language features:
I'm right and you're wrong.	I also respect your views and preferences.
It's your fault.	I assume my share of responsibility.
This is wrong/right. This is good/bad.	I separate observation from judgement and interpretation.
I demand something.	I request something. I'm open to different options.
I praise your behaviour. I flatter you.	I express appreciation and gratitude.
I threaten you. I blackmail you with a reward.	I say how I feel and what I need.

When we use giraffe language, we tell each other how we feel. But we can also express our feelings with our body. Let's try it:

- Show with your foot that you are angry.
- Show with your mouth that you are shocked.
- Show with your hands that you are helpless.
- Show with your chest that you are proud.

- Show with your whole body that you are happy.
- Make a scared face.
- Make an angry face.
- Make a happy face.

What happens within your body when you make all those things? How do you feel?

Not only in the current Covid-19 situation it is important to be aware of your own feelings and those of your family and fellow citizens.

**Try it out right away with your siblings and/or parents:**

Instead of using sentences starting with „You have...me “, use „I am... “ - here an example:

You are making me angry -> I am angry

Try these with the following words: not seen, provoked, forced, hurt, disappointed, etc.

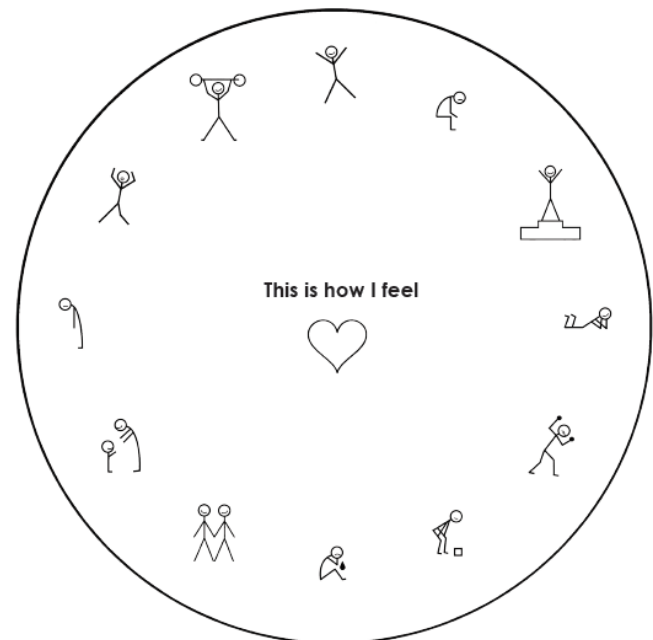
How do you feel when someone says „You have ... me“ to you? Discuss this and try to start your sentences with “I am ...”.

### Craft a Feelings Clock

You will need 12 Feelings Cards – for each of these write down a word of emotion



Everyone can use a clothing peg to attach her/his name next to the image on the Feelings Clock that best expresses his/her current feeling. This will show that not everybody feels the same way in any moment.



Read off the feelings clock and write down how you and your family feel. What do your own feelings and those around you tell you? What may the other person need?

There are no right or wrong answers.

You can only guess what others need, but you cannot know it. But, for example, you can ask the person "Do you need a calm and peaceful place?", "Do you need help?", "What do you need right now?", etc.

**For every jackal sentence, find a giraffe sentence that you could use instead (connect the jackal sentence to the matching giraffe sentence).**



jackal sentences



giraffe sentences

It was your fault that we were late this morning.
That's mean. You're not allowed to jump the queue.
If you give me sweets, you'll be my very best friend.
You are so nice! You are such a good helper!
You're greedy. You never let me taste your lunch.
You're such a good friend. You always let me taste your lunch.
Because of you being so loud, I don't know what this is about!
You're much smarter than Florian. You always explain everything to me.
You're so stupid. You cannot explain the maths exercise correctly.
If you do not give me sweets, we are no friends anymore.

Thank you for helping me hang out the laundry today.
I really want to be at school in time. Can you please hurry up a little tomorrow morning?
I want to get on the bus peacefully.
I really like the look of your lunch. May I taste some of it, please?
Thank you for giving me some of your lunch. I liked it very much.
I love sweets. Will you please give me some of yours?
Thank you for explaining it to me. It was very helpful for me.
I'm happy that you spoke up three times in today's lesson.
I'm interested in what we are learning right now. Could you please be quiet during the lesson?
I don't understand this maths exercise and need help. Could you please explain it to me?



Change these jackal sentences into giraffe sentences. Work with one of your family members:

Jackal: You never put away your stuff!

Giraffe: I can see that \_\_\_\_\_ is lying on your table.

Jackal: You're so tired!

Giraffe: I can see that you \_\_\_\_\_.

Jackal: You eat nothing but sweets all the time.

Giraffe: I have seen that you have eaten \_\_\_\_\_ .

Try other examples and write them down. Try to always use the 4 keys of the giraffe language during the day. Is it hard for you? How do the others react? Talk to one person about it.

### Expressing gratefulness an appreciation instead of praising

When giraffes tell someone what they like about them, they do not want anything back. They only want to share their joy with the other person. Giraffes observe very carefully. They describe what somebody did or said and why it makes them happy.

How would a giraffe say it? Find an appropriate translation for each jackal sentence (connect the jackal sentence to the matching giraffe sentence):

Today you paid good attention.	I'm impressed that you managed to climb over the obstacle the first time around.
Well done.	Thank you for lending me your pencil.
You're a good friend.	I'm happy that you answered three questions in the final quiz.
You are such a good helper!	I had a lot of fun building Lego with you.
Thank you for always standing by me.	Thank you for saying earlier: "Please give her back her sharpener."

## Main task

You have become aware of your feelings and can find out which needs are behind them. You have learnt to empathise with yourself and others and to speak mindfully and respectfully.

1. When is it easy for you to use giraffe language?
2. When was the last time your inner jackal spoke up?
3. How did you react?
4. Craft/draw a Feelings Clock on a poster and write down your feelings as well as those of your family members (anonymously - for example, use words like Dad, Mom, etc.)
5. Write on Post-its what each family member could need and stick this on the Feelings Clock
6. Write a thank you letter to at least one person. In the letter, describe what exactly this person says or does that you are thankful for (1/2-1 Din A4-Page).
7. Always use the giraffe language.

Take a picture of the poster and put it up on the wall in your class or school.