

Creating an Empathy Picture

One way of developing our empathy is through using our imagination. And this activity has the added benefit of providing the opportunity to enhance our use of our intuition. As Mentor, ask the Mentee to come to session with one or more images cut from a newspaper or magazine. It needs to be an image of an individual set within a particular scene as we will be focusing on just that one person. **EG.** someone standing at a bus stop in the late afternoon/early evening; someone on their hands and knees weeding a lush garden in the countryside; someone washing the windows of a high rise building with the city scape behind them. Encourage your Mentee to find images that are evocative and that create curiosity.

- Stick the image onto a larger sheet of paper, a flip chart, white board– so that you can both sit back and look at it together.
- Ask a range of questions about the person in the image, their life and times.
 - Who is this person – what is their name? Do they have a family – of whom is it constructed? Where do they live? What job do they have? What kind of economic condition are they in?
 - They are being called at this time to make a decision in their life? What is this decision? Or what action do they need to take as a result of a circumstance or decision already made?
 - What is impacting this decision – both within the image and outside it?
 - What might they say about their situation? How would they describe it?
 - What are others (friends, family, colleagues, etc.) saying or telling them to do? How are they responding to this? How is it impacting them or making them feel?
 - What do you imagine the steps are that they will take? How will they feel about their decision?
 - When you think about this person and their life, what thoughts and feelings come up for you?
- As Mentor you can write their responses on the paper, flip or whiteboard around where the image is pasted.
- The situation can and most probably be a product of the person’s imagination as they look at the picture.
- De-brief the activity to determine how they might use this process of insight to apply to real people in their life ? **EG.** Ask the Mentee to choose an actual person in their life, and go through the same process. Notice how much they know about them or not. Where are the gaps ?

NOTE: This activity can be done alone, and the results brought for de-briefing. If so, just provide the questions to the Mentee.