
Navigating the Human Condition in the 21st Century | Lesson 4 | Overview

First Skill:



The Eye of Empathy allows us to perceive what our physical eyes can't see.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students explain complex behavior by applying the Eye of Empathy.
- Students identify the root causes of specific problems by applying the Eye of Empathy.
- Students generate ideas for addressing specific problems based on the root causes identified.

Materials:

- Ship's logs
- 1 copy of questions prompts page per student
- 1 copy of aggression rubric per student
- *All lessons come with PowerPoint slides and require a way to share these with students. **Note:** the slides in this entire series of lessons often come with additional guidance in the notes section at the bottom of each slide, readable and editable in development mode and readable in presentation mode.*

Time:

- One 50-90 minute period depending on supplemental activities.
- *Supplemental activities are provided at the end of the lesson.*

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1. **Show** Slide 1: Title Slide
2. **Show** Slide 2 Key Map: *Use to review key concepts from previous lesson.*
 - a. *This slide has animation. Click to reveal the following text about the relevance of the skill that students will learn in this lesson.*
 - b. “Aggression is one of the most difficult and dangerous parts of our humanity to deal with.”
 - c. One of the most valuable life skills we can learn is how to help ourselves when we are struggling with aggression, and how to help others when they are struggling with aggression.”
3. **Show** Slide 3: Eye of Empathy
 - a. “Think of empathy as an eye that allows us to see what our physical eyes cannot see. Our physical eyes typically see only the heat of aggression – someone’s outward behavior.”
 - b. “The Eye of Empathy can see the fires (pain/distress) – the **root causes** – beneath their outward behavior.”
 - c. Demonstration:
 - i. **Eye of Empathy Closed** – *On a whiteboard, draw the three heat plumes of aggression rising up from the fires of distress. You or the students can name some of the specific fires of distress beneath the heat plumes. Then draw the eye of empathy being closed.*
 1. “What would happen if I am looking only at the **heat of aggression**, the **outward behavior**, the **surface**, and I keep trying to erase those heat plumes?”
 2. *Erase the heat plumes, and then draw how they keep coming back because the fire is still underneath.*
 - ii. **Eye of Empathy Open** – *Now draw the eye of empathy opening and looking at the fires of distress.*
 1. “When we open our eye of empathy, we are capable of seeing **beneath the heat, beneath the outward behavior, beneath the surface**. What happens if we then work to reduce the fires beneath aggression that we can now perceive? What will happen to the heat?”
 2. *Fully or partially erase the fires to show how this can reduce the heat.*
 3. “Empathy is a practical skill for perceiving root causes of problems – the underlying fires – rather than just the symptoms – the surface heat. This allows us to create practical solutions that address root causes rather than just the symptoms.”

4. "Let's explore how we can use this skill to help people."
5. **Show** Slide 4: Activity (this activity should take a maximum of 25 minutes)
 - a. *This slide has animation. Click to advance text.*
 - b. *Have students work in pairs to discuss and respond to the questions in their ship's log.*
6. **Show** Slide 5: Activity Continued
 - a. *Have pairs of students discuss and respond to two of the following questions in their ship's log. Help students choose questions so that all of the questions are answered by at least one pair of students.*
7. **Show** Slide 6: **Reflection Questions**
 - a. *Have pairs of students discuss and respond to two of the questions in their ship's logs.*
 - b. *Take time to regroup and allow students to share responses to the questions.*
8. "Just as heat from a fire can overwhelm us and distort our perception, the heat of our own aggression can overwhelm us and distort our perception, increasing the likelihood that we will say and do things that we later regret."
9. **Show** Slide 7: Anger
10. "Later, when we are calmer, we may even ask ourselves, 'Why did I do that?!'"
Learning to see the fires beneath aggression can help us to deal with root causes and express these fires in other ways. This helps us not get stuck in the cycle of aggression and helps us avoid the negative consequences of impulsive, uncontrolled aggression.
11. **Show** Slide 8: Circle diagram
 - a. *This slide has animation. Click to advance text.*
 - b. "Aggression is a form of expression."
 - c. "As this diagram shows, aggressive expression is caused by the fires of distress."
 - d. "But distress does not have to lead to aggression; we can express ourselves without using aggression."
 - e. "Aggression is a small toolbox. Non-aggressive expression is a much larger toolbox."
 - f. "When we learn skills for non-aggressive expression, we gain access to a much larger range of options."
12. **Show** Slide 9: Rubric
 - a. "You can think of empathy as an eye that helps you see, but you can also think of empathy as a skill you can develop."
 - b. *This slide has animation. Click to reveal the note and question below the rubric.*
13. **Distribute** Rubric:

- a. *Read through each level of the rubric.*
 - b. *Give an example (this could be a personal story or a scenario you make up) to illustrate each level of the rubric. Or have one or two students think of an example (this could be a personal story or a scenario they make up) to illustrate each level.*
 - c. *Regarding Level 4, tell students, “In terms of this skill being context dependent and able to fluctuate, when you are with your friends you might be able to use this skill very well at diffusing situations, but when you are with your sibling you might have more difficulty using this skill. You might be able to use this skill well on a particular day, but the next day you are tired and stressed and not able to use the skill as well.”*
14. **Show** Slide 10: Key Map

Reflection Activity 1: *Show Slide 11. This is a whole class activity. This slide is animated. Click to advance text.*

1. Are there people who want you to keep your eye of empathy closed?
2. Why might they want you to keep your eye of empathy closed?
3. What are some things people can do when they are trying to get you to close your eye of empathy?
4. Why might someone want to close their own eye of empathy?

Note to Teacher: *Someone trying to get us to close our eye of empathy can be motivated by sinister and harmful intentions, or good intentions. However, as the old adage reminds us, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”*

Supplemental ELA Reflection Activity: *Show Slide 12.*

“The Iliad was written nearly 3,000 years ago, and one of its themes is the harmful consequences of unchecked rage.”

Think of a character in a book you have read who wrestles with their own aggression.

In your ship’s log:

- a. State the book and character.
- b. Reflect on and describe some of the fires that cause their aggression, and explain the consequences of their aggression.

Or choose a particular conflict you have studied from history.

In your ship’s log:

- a. Briefly describe the historical conflict.
- b. What were the main fires that caused the conflict?