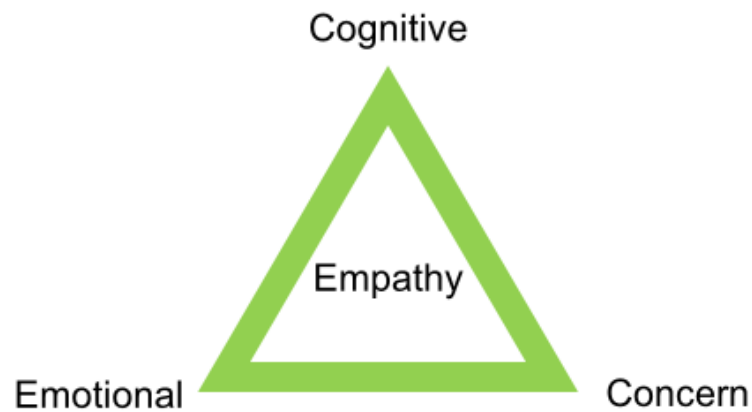


# EMPATHY TRIAD



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According to psychologist Daniel Goleman there are three aspects to empathy:

- **Cognitive empathy** – the ability to see things as others see them
- **Emotional empathy** – the ability to ascertain how someone else feels emotionally
- **Empathetic concern** – the ability to sense what another person needs from you

As a manager and leader an understanding of the three aspects of empathy can facilitate better interactions with staff, stakeholders and customers. It makes a leader more aware of how matters are affecting others and can guide appropriate responses.

The empathy triad can be used in a practical manner in the workplace.

## **Cognitive Empathy:**

If a team member has made a serious error you can endeavour to engage cognitive empathy and see the issue from their point of view. It is most unlikely they made the mistake deliberately. Ferdinand Fournies said, “Most people don’t do stupid things deliberately.” They acted on the information they had to hand, the level of knowledge and skills they actually have and their state of attention at the given time. If we truly engage cognitive empathy it will temper our response.

## **Emotional Empathy:**

Next, you as a leader can apply emotional empathy to ascertain the emotional state of the team member who has made a serious mistake. They may be upset, stressed, embarrassed. If they are in an emotional volatile state it may not be the best time to give them feedback on the issue, as they simply will not be able to actively listen to you, thus defeating the purpose.

## **Empathetic Concern:**

Finally you can engage empathetic concern, you can endeavour to ascertain what the team member requires from you. Is it support, is it to listen, is it to console?

A leader who acts towards others with empathy will build solid relationships, loyalty and a positive working environment.

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