



# The Empath Path

By Penney Peirce

Brook told me she has become so sensitive that she can feel what her friends feel, as though their emotions are her own. And it's information she doesn't really want sometimes. A little would be fine, but she feels like she's getting huge downloads, and of course, she usually notices the negative emotions more quickly than the positive ones. If her friend Liza is in a bad mood, Brook can tell whether her mother 1) ignored, 2) criticized, or 3) gave her "helpful" advice that she didn't want or need. She knows when there is frustration caused by a boyfriend, or when she didn't study enough for an important test that morning and there's a faint tinge of fear, or even if she just needs some space but can't pull away from her phone and is starting to get frazzled and short-tempered. And all this without verbal communication.

Brook is not alone in her increasing ultra-sensitivity. Many people are becoming real experts at "reading" other people, knowing what others are thinking before they say anything, and anticipating actions and outcomes in advance. Psychologist Elaine Aron began researching "highly sensitive people" in the early 1990s and said that at that time she estimated about twenty percent of the population are "HSPs." These days I see this percentage increasing. Life has accelerated significantly and everything is moving faster. There is more pressure to digest large amounts of information and more fear surfacing into our consciousness—in our own lives and in the news. The speed and complexity of life are hard to ignore.

## ARE YOU A HIGHLY SENSITIVE PERSON?

Being highly sensitive is a precursor to becoming an empath. We'll talk about that in a minute. But first, let's look at what it means to be an HSP. Though being an HSP is a little like being an introvert, there's more to it. HSPs can be overwhelmed easily, often need alone time, and are sensitive to light, color, sound, textures, temperature, and smell. Here are a few other behaviors:

1. They feel overwhelmed when there's too much to do or too much information.
2. They are uncomfortable in crowds, in a room full of people talking, or when too many things are occurring simultaneously.
3. They find environments with loud or repetitive noise deeply uncomfortable, chaotic, and even painful, and have trouble functioning well.
4. They can get irritated when they're hungry.
5. They don't perform well when they're being observed.
6. They're deeply moved by the arts, acts of kindness, or heroism.
7. They recognize other people's discomfort and can feel others' pain.
8. They retreat and need to recharge when things become overwhelming.
9. They avoid violent, shocking media and the news when it's negative.
10. They experience anxiety easily and can have physical symptoms in response to negativity.
11. They take things personally, are easily hurt, and can beat themselves up over perceived slights and failures.
12. They keep a lot inside and can have trouble letting go of negative thoughts or emotions.

So many of these character traits might seem like handicaps. Though they certainly can be problematic, it's only when the traits are unconscious and not seen in a positive light—when we don't understand how to work with ultra-sensitivity as a gift—that we can feel drained and blocked. If you fit into the highly sensitive person category, there's absolutely nothing wrong with you! Hey—I've made an entire career out of it! I might add that the growing ultra-sensitivity on the planet affects boys as much as girls and applies equally to all races and nationalities. The important thing is to welcome the insights and feelings, be conscious of what you're noticing (and ask why), and not numb yourself to this pre-verbal "energy information" that comes to you from your body—which is like an extension of your brain.



**An empath uses ultra-sensitivity to increase knowledge and help others.**

**SO WHAT IS EMPATHY? WHAT IS AN EMPATH?**

When you accept the fact that you are good at feeling and sensing subtle information coming to you via energy, you can then refine your ability. And this can prove to be a valuable asset. You can find common ground with others by deeply understanding their feelings and states of being. By being on the same wavelength with others, you can communicate more effectively. And you can put yourself in another's shoes to increase your own heartfelt compassion and wisdom. In addition, an empath learns to tune in to higher, non-physical sources of knowledge to increase creativity, innovation, and genius. An empath can merge with patterns of knowledge, potential realities, trends, and even problems to sense visions, guidance, and best possible scenarios. An empath can "feel into" plants, animals, the earth, and people to understand how something needs to heal, what it needs for optimal "self-expression," or how to create win-win-win situations and solutions.

If you're a highly sensitive person or an empath, it's not a curse! You can use this gift as an artist, designer, actor, musician, counselor, professional intuitive, teacher/trainer, healer, inventor, writer, humanitarian, or even as the CEO of your own company.

**WHY YOU MIGHT FEEL DRAINED OR ANXIOUS.**

We are tribal by nature and naturally empathic, even at birth. We bond energetically with our parents to survive and babies are known to get upset when another baby suffers. We learn to "frequency-match" other people in order to minimize upsets and dangerous situations, to communicate better, to find common ground for working and creating together, and to help us find life part-

ners and friends. The problem is that if we're not conscious of what we're doing, we can frequently-match someone with a lower vibration than ours. For example, you might be in a good mood, then you're around a friend who's angry or upset, or complaining and acting like a victim, and suddenly you don't feel so good. You've lowered your own high vibration to get along with someone; they have literally "brought you down." Of course, they didn't do this *to* you—you unconsciously shifted your energy level to connect or fit in—or even to help guide someone, and you got stuck there for a while.

**When you "merge" with others, you match their energy level and temporarily forget your own frequency.**

In another example, you might walk into a room that's cold, dark, and smelly, or where the high-pitched humming fluorescent lights make your skin look blue and sickly and give you a headache. If you try to be creative or brilliant in a space like that, it will likely be difficult. You'll feel much better when you leave.

Your ultra-sensitivity might also cause you to feel drained if you receive too much conflicting information at once. Your friends are texting you, you're listening to some new music, you have to read a lot of material for an assignment, you hear about some dramatic negative national news, you're late for an appointment, and you still have work to do when you get home. If you let all that pile up and unconsciously feel you must do it all at once, you'll go into a state of overwhelm and probably just "check out" for a while or look for distractions. The stress of this self-created pressure is often there because you get ahead of yourself and feel you must rush to keep up.

**YOU CAN BUILD YOUR EMPATHIC SKILL.**

When you're ultra-sensitive, it's seriously important to stay centered in your body and pay attention to what's happening around you, to the various levels of your thought and feeling process, and to what you're noticing moment to moment. Some people call this *mindfulness*; I like to think of it as being super-conscious and engaged with life. When you notice what you notice, you can then talk to yourself about it: Why am I seeing this squawking crow—is it a symbol of something? Why am I thinking about that old friend? What is the deeper me trying to tell or show me? Making your noticing conscious reduces overwhelm and lets you use the insights in positive ways.

When a lot of things gang up on you and it's too much to register, process, or enjoy, remember: You don't have to do everything at once! Just do one thing at a time—with full attention—and enjoy it. Then go on to the next thing that feels most interesting or has that sense of "psychic weight." You have time. Keep the enjoyment of whatever you do as your priority. You don't owe everyone and everything your attention.

**Be a magnetic center. What you need to know will come to you as you need it.**

Stay centered in your own *home frequency*, or your preferred state. This is how you feel when you really like yourself, are enjoying life, laugh easily, and aren't the least bit self-conscious in a limiting way. It's fine to "feel into" other people, or spaces,

or potential situations to gain insight. But notice what you notice about what you've merged with, then disengage and come back home to your own center. Ask yourself: What do I feel or know about this? Does this work for me? Do I want to be more like that? You don't have to stay merged with what you're observing.

See if you can learn not to project your attention into the past or future. Instead, stay centered in the present moment and engage and interact with what's arising around you. Be a magnetic center. What you need will emerge from the field of energy around you, just as you need it. And it will dissolve when you don't need it anymore. Being present increases your super-consciousness and helps you understand the energy information you're picking up from the environment.

Finally, it's OK for you to ask your inner self to let you notice just what you *need* to notice, what you can actually do something about, what's useful. You don't have to know everything! Especially all in one moment. You don't need to be overwhelmed—because that's not an efficient use of your energy and mind. It's also OK to say what you need to friends, family, teachers, and coworkers: I need a break, I need a little quiet time, I need to talk about something, I need help interpreting something I noticed.

Let your increasing sensitivity and empathy be your best friend. As you listen to it and work with it, you'll find it gives you an edge that other people may not have yet.

**Penney Peirce** is an articulate and accurate clairvoyant empath, visionary, and author of 10 books on intuition development, inner energy dynamics, expanded perception, dreamwork, and personal transformation. She coaches business and government leaders, psychologists, scientists, celebrities, and those on a spiritual path about the hidden dynamics of what makes for true success. Her books include *Transparency*, *Leap of Perception*, *Frequency*, *Be the Dreamer Not the Dream*, and *The Intuitive Way*.

