

Being empathetic is good, but it can hurt your health

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The Washington Post:

Your husband was just passed over for a promotion, and he's depressed. Your friend's breast cancer has returned. As a supportive spouse and friend, you feel their pain. Growing research suggests there's a cost to all that caring.

Empathy — the ability to tune into and share another person's emotion from their perspective — plays a crucial role in bringing people together. It's the joy you feel at a friend's wedding or the pain you experience when you see someone suffering.

It's an essential ingredient for building intimacy in relationships, says Robin Stern, associate director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. "When someone feels seen and heard by you," she says, "they begin to trust you."

But this seemingly positive emotion can also have a downside, particularly if someone gets so consumed by another's feelings that they neglect their own feelings and needs. Stern says those who regularly prioritize others' emotions over their own are more susceptible to experiencing anxiety or low-level depression.

Read the whole story: [*The Washington Post*](#)