

You 2.0: The Empathy Gym

August 07, 2019

What books are on your summer reading list?

If you're reading mostly nonfiction, consider the benefits of adding a novel to the mix.

“There’s a fair amount of evidence now that the more fiction that people read, the more empathetic that they become,” says Stanford psychologist [Jamil Zaki](#). “Because fiction is one of the most powerful ways to connect with people who are different from us who we might not have a chance to meet otherwise.”

Zaki argues that empathy is like a muscle — it can be strengthened with exercise and it can atrophy when idle. On this episode of *Hidden Brain*, we talk about calibrating our empathy so we can interact with others more mindfully.