



others

A game of empathy for one
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You are special. Important. You are smart, creative, and capable. There are people who are like you. They are also smart, creative, and capable. Out there, you feel at home with those like you. If you can, you surround yourself with them and they get you.

Then there are the Others.

The Others are not like you. They are stupid, ignorant, and dirty. They are everywhere. It's impossible to not feel them near you wherever you go out. You see them everywhere. On the news. On social media. On the bus.

You do your best to avoid the Others but you can't always. Your life requires you to engage with them, on some level. Maybe at work, during transit, or in social situations.

As much as you dislike them, it's necessary for you to understand them.



● **About this Game**

Others is a one player game for exploring the world of those we see as different than ourselves. The game encourages us to look at people we see as different from us and ask questions about them. This one player experience will not ask us to directly engage with the Others, only to look at them.

You will need to have access to a public space such as a busy street, park, library, or bus, to social media of some kind, to a news source of some kind, your memories, and a consumer space, such as a shop, coffee shop, or mall. You do not need to have access to all of them, but participating in all three scenarios is helpful.



● **Boundaries and Limitations**

Engaging in people watching, either from the comfort of a screen or from the discomfort of a park bench, can be exhausting and uncomfortable for some. Please ensure you engage in *Others* with your comfort in mind, including physically, emotionally, and mentally. Only play *Others* when you want to. If you grow tired or uncomfortable, stop playing the game.

● While the game suggests you use a journal to record your findings, simply engaging in the mental activity will give you access to most of the desired effect. If journaling is a struggle for you, then please do not try to force yourself to do an activity you find troublesome or upsetting.

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Set Up

Select a journal or notebook to write in. Or, if you prefer, play paperlessly and simply use your mind to complete the exercise.

To begin, think about yourself. Think about what makes you, you. What defines you. Think about people like you, and what similarities you share between you. What qualities do they have that are like yours? That you like? That you admire? Why do you enjoy spending time with them? What do they look like? What are their morals and ethics? Their values? Think of as many details as you can, noting them as you go.

Write these answers down or think on them for a moment and begin to create a picture of who your people are. Once you have a firm idea, write one sentence about your people, summarizing them as best you can.

Once complete, keep your journal ready to go and choose a scenario below.



Scenario 1 - On the News



Open a news app or website. If any article makes you feel uncomfortable in a bad or unhealthy way, do not engage that article. Glance through articles until you encounter something that feels different or apart from your people or yourself. It may be an article discussing politics you dislike, a sports team you dislike, an event that is upsetting or uncomfortable, or a report on actions you don't agree with.

When you find one, open it and look at who wrote it. Then read through the article. Note the names of anyone who isn't part of your people. Who is one of the Others. When you encounter one of these names, imagine who this person is. If you can see their picture, look at them, and think about what makes them Other.

Once you have chosen one of the Others to focus on and have decided why they are part of the Others, choose three of the following questions to answer in your journal, or in your mind.

- What kind of tea does this person like?
- Who is waiting at home for them?
- Do they have any pets?
- What did they want to be when they grew up?
- What is the background on their phone?
- What shows are they into?
- How often do they exercise?

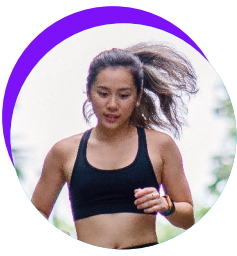


After answering three questions, move on to another article or piece of news, and do the same process again. Do this three times and then close the news source. Take time to think about how you feel about these Others you have named in your journal. Then answer the following question in your journal or mind:

How do I feel about these Others?

The first scenario is now over. Thank yourself for completing the exercise.





Scenario 2 - The Outside

Go outside to a free public space where you can sit and watch people. This may be a park, bus, sidewalk, or library. If any particular space makes you feel uncomfortable in a bad or unhealthy way, do not engage that space. Take time to look at the people around you. Pick out the ones who are your people, but more importantly, find some of the Others around you.

When you find one, take note of what they look like, how they're acting, and what they're doing. Notice how they're occupying the public space you're in. Imagine who this person is. Glance at them, but try not to stare or engage them.

Once you have chosen one of the Others to focus on and have decided why they are part of the Others, choose three of the following questions to answer in your journal, or in your mind.

Do you think they are early or late more often?

What do you think their name is?

What do they do for a living?

What's their favourite drink?

What kind of car do they drive?

What's their favourite vegetable?

Where do they want to go on vacation?

After answering three questions, move on to another person, and do the same process again. Do this three times and then stop watching those around you. Take time to think about how you feel about these Others you have named in your journal. Then answer the following question in your journal or mind:

How do I feel about these Others?

The second scenario is now over. Thank yourself for completing the exercise and head home.



Scenario 3 - Social Media

Open a social media app, preferably Twitter or Facebook. If any image or post makes you feel uncomfortable in a bad or unhealthy way, do not engage that article. Glance through posts until you encounter something that feels different or apart from your people or yourself. It may be a thread on views you disagree with, a picture of something you find awful, or a selfie of someone you don't like.

When you find one, open it and examine the content. Read through the post or look at the picture or meme. Note the names or handles of anyone who isn't part of your people. When you encounter one of these handles, imagine who this person is behind it. If you can see their picture, look at them, and think about what makes them Other.

Once you have chosen one of the Others to focus on and have decided why they are part of the Others, choose three of the following questions to answer in your journal, or in your mind.

- What kind of soup do they enjoy?
- What song is their favourite?
- What was their first job?
- What artistic skill are they good at?
- What do they watch on Netflix?
- Who do they call when they're upset?
- What was their best subject in school?



After answering three questions, move on to another post or picture, and do the same process again. Do this three times and then close the social media app. Take time to think about how you feel about these Others you have named in your journal. Then answer the following question in your journal or mind:

How do I feel about these Others?

The third scenario is now over. Thank yourself for completing the exercise.





Scenario 4 - Consumer Space

Go outside to a consumer space where you can sit and watch people. This may be a coffee shop, mall, bookstore, or pub. If any particular space makes you feel uncomfortable in a bad or unhealthy way, do not engage that space. Take time to look at the people around you..

When you find one, note what they look like, how they're engaging the space, and what they're consuming. Take time to think about who this person is. Glance at them, but try not to stare or engage them.

Once you have chosen one of the Others to focus on and have decided why they are part of the Others, choose three of the following questions to answer in your journal, or in your mind.

- What's their favourite website to pass time on?
- How often do they post pictures of their pet?
- Which movie do they watch for comfort?
- What does their apartment look like?
- What do they like to snack on?
- How often do they talk to their parent?
- When is their birthday?

After answering three questions, move on to another person, and do the same process again. Do this three times and then stop watching those around you. Take time to think about how you feel about these Others you have named in your journal. Then answer the following question in your journal or mind:

How do I feel about these Others?

The fourth scenario is now over. Thank yourself for completing the exercise and head home.





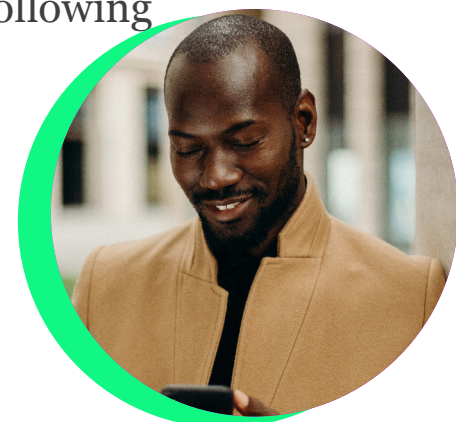
Scenario 5 - Memory

Find a quiet place at home to reflect on some memories. If any memory you feel uncomfortable in a bad or unhealthy way, do not engage that article. Think of times that you or your people have been uncomfortable or annoyed by the Others. Consider times things were difficult, upsetting, or felt invasive because of an Other.

When you think of the memory, take time to go over what happened. Note the names of anyone who isn't part of your people. When you recall the Other, remember who they were. Think about what they looked like, and what about them made them Other.

Once you have chosen one of the Others to focus on and have decided why they are part of the Others, choose three of the following questions to answer in your journal, or in your mind.

- What kind of music did they listen to?
- What is their favourite book?
- How far away from their family do they live?
- Who is their best friend?
- How do they relax after work?
- What dessert do they always order?
- What was their first pet?



After answering three questions, move on to memory, and do the same process again. Do this three times and then take a breath to clear your mind. Take time to think about how you feel about these Others you have named in your journal. Then answer the following question in your journal or mind:

How do I feel about these Others?

The fifth scenario is now over. Thank yourself for completing the exercise.





Ending

Put away your journal for at least a week. While you are living your life, when you see Others, think about the questions you have answered for previous Others and consider the answer for these Others. Engage as often as you like.

After a week, retrieve your journal or recall the experiences you had. Review your responses about how you felt about the Others after answering questions. You have spent dedicated time thinking about the Others.

Go back and review or remember what made them Others. Then read or recall your first entry about what made your people who they are.

Answer the following questions in your journal or mind:

What differences are there between your people and the Others?
How has this experience changed your perspective of the Others?
Would you be friends with an Other?
How do you wish the Others would see you?

Once complete, journal or think about any additional thoughts you have about the experience and wish to make note of. It's okay if nothing else needs to be shared. Close the journal and take a deep breath to clear your mind.

Thank yourself and your heart and mind for examining the Others.

Do whatever you like with the journal and your memories of Others.





After

Once you've finished the Ending of Others, think about your experience answering the questions about the Others. Did it help you humanize them? Did you like them more or less after answering the questions? Was it useful for reminding you they are people too?

Think about what made someone Other to you, and ultimately how sometimes Other isn't always based on systemic marginalization, although it often is. Others can be people with different opinions, views, or experiences than our own.

If you found this a helpful experience for reflecting on the humanness of people we see as different from yourself, think about how you can use humanizing questions to help you approach others with empathy and compassion. How can you integrate this experience into your life to help you grow your empathy?

Thank you for trying this experience and keeping an open heart.

