

# Navigating the Digital Jungle

## Where tech meets family life

### SEASON 2

## EP 02: Digital Empathy: Teaching Compassion & Kindness in a Virtual World

Sue: Welcome back to Navigating the Digital Jungle with Sue Atkins and Friends, where we help families find their way in the ever evolving landscape of technology. I'm Sue Atkins, parenting author, broadcaster and speaker, and your guide on this journey. And I'm here today with Angeline Corvaglia, creator of Data Girl and Friends, empowering young minds with online safety and AI literacy videos, games and educational materials.

And today we're diving into a crucial topic that impacts every family, digital empathy, teaching compassion in a virtual world.

So, in our increasingly digital world, our children are spending more time interacting online whether that's through social media, video games, or virtual classrooms. But, with this shift comes a challenge. How do we teach our kids to be empathetic and kind when so much of their communication happens behind screens?

What do you think, Angie?

Angeline: You know what, actually this is one of the topics that I'm quite passionate about, because you know, I deal with AI quite a bit, these AI chatbots have brought another aspect to this, the more people have access to AI The more they have to understand empathy, the difference between a computer, a machine and a person, and also to understand how technology can impact other people.

That's something I feel really strongly about, and I even have a lesson on it, because it's so important for me, for young people to think about.

Sue: Where can people find that lesson, Angie?

Angeline: You can find it on the Data Girl and Friends website, and it's on the tab Digital Navigators codes. It's designed for young teens.

Sue: Yeah. Oh, it's very important. I think digital empathy is the ability, really, to understand and to share the feelings of others in online interactions, just as we do in face to face. I mean, I think it's about recognising that there's a real person with real emotions on the other side of the screen. So, developing these skills is essential, I think, in children in a world where miscommunication and online bullying can so easily take root.

Because even when friends send me the odd WhatsApp or something. You can't get the context, you can't hear the tone of voice, so you can misunderstand quite easily. And I remember seeing Parvin's post on LinkedIn. All about Alex Jones, that right wing conspiracy theory who's, you know, quite famous for promoting dangerous stuff.

And I wrote a blog now and we've put it into the show notes and it's on LinkedIn about the charisma of chaos. Because these people are very popular and very influential but they show no empathy, no kindness. So, it's a really kind of polarising world and we need to talk and teach kids that what they say online, is an extension of who they are.

So I think that's where we want to focus today on some of this. So let's talk about online bullying, perhaps a little bit, or cyberbullying as it's known, because it's one of the most harmful aspects of digital communication, I think. And as we know, it can take many forms. I mean, mean comments, you know, people think they can hide behind their posts because it's not showing any kindness or empathy.

They spread rumours, don't they, or they exclude other people from their groups. So, these effects can be really devastating, and as we know, it leads to anxiety and depression and even more severe consequences like self harm and suicide to the extremes. So, I think it's really important for parents to recognise the signs of online bullying and to talk and teach children about kindness, empathy and being kind of kind online, really. So let's look at a few steps that you can take with your child if they are experiencing a slight online bullying or a great deal of online bullying. So I think the important things for parents is to keep the lines of communication open so that your child feels that they can be comfortable coming to you with their concerns.

You're going to listen without, judgement, and you're going to validate their feelings. The other thing to do then is to record the bullying incidents, such as with screenshots or save messages, because they can be useful if you need to report it. Teach your kids how to block and report bullying or mean behaviour to the platform or the website where it occurred.

So that, that's very important. You need to know how to do that so you can tell your kids how to do that. And then, do seek some support, perhaps from a counsellor or a therapist. I mean, what are your thoughts, Angeline, around empathy, online bullying, mean comments that people put up? What do you say about that?

Angeline: Well, as you said before, it's very difficult, and I think especially difficult for young people who are just learning about the world and others, to really I really appreciate the fact that there's a person on the other side, even when I say about AI, it's not a machine, it's actually a person behind the machine, like the Wizard of Oz.

There's always a person on the other side, and just a constant reminder. You know, there's all sorts of apps that now they're really nice you can put on and that will remind your kid or anyone actually, do you really want to send this? So I think that's something to really consider, something like that.



And so just to keep in mind that it might not even be intentional, even I, I can think back for a few times in my childhood where I said something that was very hurtful and I didn't realise before I said it, luckily in those times I had people who told me that was actually really hurtful, what you just said, and I remember, still now.

Careful, obviously every time you hear you've done something hurtful, then you can be more careful, and I think that's important.

Sue: That's why I think it's important to teach empathy. I think it's something that can be taught, and our guest today has empathy, comes from Empathy Lab, where they use stories to talk and teach kids around this idea of stepping into the shoes and socks of that person.

It's different to sympathy, which is sort of standing aside and just looking and feeling sorry for someone. Empathy is actually standing in their shoes and socks. And I think I've got an image that I send around on social media. It says, pause to ponder. And if you can get your kids just into a habit of pausing to ponder for that split second before they reply and think, is this kind?

Because that is a very simple thing that would actually help them just to step back from that moment before posting. So I think it's important. One thing I just wanted to say before I forget is if people want some support with cyberbullying, they can go to the Anti Bullying Alliance. That's a great place also.

So while it's important to address the negative aspects of online interactions, we also want to focus, or I always like to be positive in life, and I want to focus on the positive. forms of communication because teaching your children to be kind and empathetic in the real world is just an extension of them being kind and empathetic online.

And we can help them build strong, healthy relationships in the digital world. So today, I'm delighted to introduce you to our guest, Sarah Mears, Co-Director of Empathy Lab. Welcome. Thank you for joining us today.

Sarah: Thank you very much for inviting me.

Sue: Well, let me talk about Empathy Lab because you believe that empathy is a beacon of hope in a divided world.

And you are the first organisation to build children's empathy and social activism through a real systematic use of high quality literature and stories. And your strategy is just based on science. And I do find it a very powerful tool for helping parents and helping children develop empathy. So, tell us a bit more about how this mission began and share what inspired its creation.

Sarah: Yeah, sure. Well, we're really excited because next year we'll have been going for 10 years, which we can hardly believe. So, we were founded in 2015. Social Enterprise and, as you say, Special Education, specialising in literature to build children's empathy, awareness and skills. We started really, I think some of you may know Miranda McKearney who used to run the reading agency and she retired.

And she said, well, you know, there's something else I want to do and it's something around reading and social and emotional skills, not quite sure what it is. I was working in public library service, I still am, but I was working in public library service at the time and I was also really interested in social and emotional skills and learning through books.

And a couple of other colleagues joined us from the world of education and children's story. So we got together and we were really lucky. We had a thinking at the Southbank Centre. We just invited everyone we could think of who was interested in the area and they all said it's empathy. Empathy is what you really need to focus on.

So Empathy Lab was born. And the reason really is, I think, and it's becoming more and more, sadly, important, that, you know, empathy is a thing that helps us to, as you know, step into someone else's shoes, see things from someone else's point of view. So, it's all about connecting people to each other and reducing that othering and those horrible divisions that we're seeing in society today.

You know, our mission is to raise an empathy educated generation who can really kind of sweep through that and really understand what other people are thinking, feeling, going through, and just build those connections that hopefully will reduce those divisions in our society.

Sue: Well that's amazing, isn't it? I know you want to reach a million children if you can.

Sarah: That's our ambition, indeed, yes.

Sue: Which would make a huge difference to society too, wouldn't it? I mean, what's the challenges that you see nowadays with children in social media and online, full of screens? Why do you think empathy is really important now?

Sarah: I think, you know, what we need to do is obviously screens, social media, the digital world is here to stay.

Sue: Of course.

Sarah: Benefits for children as well, but we almost like need to give children, I don't want to say an armour because we're not about battles, but it's about giving them those tools and that understanding to use it for good rather than for real, I think.

And that's really important. And I think sometimes there's a bit of a worry that screens, social media can almost divorce children from the real person at the other end of that message. And so they need to understand that other people have feelings, even if it's through the medium of a phone, and that words typed can hurt.

So it's about, you know, helping children take a step back to think about, if I say it like that, what's the impact going to be? How's the other person going to feel at the other end of that? And I think it also is giving children the tools to understand emotions. One of our key skills is building emotional vocabulary, so really understanding what feelings are.



But also, you know, things like body language actually, how do you read body language and all of those things, I just, I think it's about thinking before you write, connecting with real people, but also I think one of the other things is about perspective taking, you know, being able to put yourself in other people's shoes.

But also it's about helping children experience different lives and experiences, which is why books are so powerful. And, so that they're not just speaking to people like them and then, you know, othering people who aren't like them, but they're broadening who they see as being part of their tribe the wider we make that tribe, the better for everybody.

Sue: I know, and what you were saying, actually, I can identify with, because the tone of voice is not there either.

Sarah: That's right, yeah.

Sue: You miss that, you know, you say, what's the matter with you? Or, what's the matter with you? There's an inference in the way we say things, and that can be missed if you are texting or you're not looking at people.

We're here looking at each other, so it makes that connection a bit easier actually, but if you're not on a screen necessarily looking at the person, you can't see them look hurt when you've said something.

Sarah: Absolutely, yeah.

Sue: I mean, what are a few of the practical ways parents can help their children develop empathy in this tech heavy environment, do you think?

Sarah: Well, we're all about reading, so I would say the key thing is read, read and read again. And read together, read aloud, you know, it's really important to share stories, but take time to talk to children about what they're reading.

Sue: Yes.

Sarah: You know, refer back to stories, you know, saying things like, do you remember when in that story that happened to that person?

Just giving them those kind of I suppose, again, it's about giving them pathways through to respond to people. Visit the library, choose books together. But I think talking about books is really, really powerful. And we often talk about empathy book talking, which is all about talking about the character, helping children see through the character's eyes, not hiking them out of the story into real life, because that can be quite, you know, it may be unsafe to do that, because, but if you're within the story, seeing through the character's eyes, it's just helping children navigate the world of relationships and emotions. So I'd say that was a really key one. But also parents can explain what emotional words mean to help children build that emotional vocabulary. And all the research shows that if children can explain how they're feeling and understand what the behaviour is like for the words, they can do that with other people as well.

Obviously, parents role modelling empathy, so taking time to listen to children and help them understand the word as well, help them understand what empathy means because there is research that shows that if you know what empathy is and you know that you can develop empathy through life, then research shows you're more likely to practice it.

And then I think the other thing is to give them the opportunity to take action, so joining campaigns that they feel strongly about, doing something to support their community because empathy grows as you practice it. for your time. And the other thing I'd say is go on an Empathy Walk and I can talk a bit more about that later on.

Sue: Oh, what's an Empathy Walk? Tell us now, that's intriguing.

Sarah: Okay, so an Empathy Walk is something we created a couple of years ago as part of our, one of our annual Empathy Days which was happening in June. And there, you walk around your community, doesn't have to be very far, you can even just go and stand in the middle of a, Town Square or something.

But what you're doing is noticing, not the buildings or the landmarks, but the emotions and the behaviour and the feelings of the people around you and what you feel as well. So there are some, on our website, there are some lovely empathy walks that authors have done for us. But, you know, it's just things like maybe spotting a homeless person and thinking, you know, what's their life like?

Or a lost cat sign on a poster in a park and thinking, oh, what must those people, that family be feeling who've lost a cat? What's that cat? Or litter in the streets? And you know, what's that doing to the community? So it's spotting those kind of things and talking about those things with children is really important. But it's a lovely way of building your connection with children too.

Sue: Isn't that lovely? I've never heard of that before. And also observing more. I'm a great observer. If I'm on the train or a tube or something, you're sort of observing people and some people look stressed and you think, well, what's I wonder why they're feeling like that.

Because you never know what's underneath. We only see the tip of the iceberg, don't we? You never really know what people are going through. So an Empathy Walk sounds like a really interesting, fun thing you could do with toddlers or teenagers, couldn't it?

Sarah: Absolutely, that's the beauty of it. And I think one of the things that makes quite a difference is that I know some teachers have done it with boys, teenage boys, and said, you know, and it could be teachers or parents or whoever, but, you know, it's a lot easier to talk when you're not sitting face to face, and so if you really want to engage with somebody, actually walking with them, you know, walking side by side, just chatting, looking at what's going on around you is very powerful.

Sue: Yeah, because I often say, I've got three dogs, so with my kids, you're walking and not being intensely looking at each other, you can raise topics like that, and a walk, an empathy walk, without being all heavy about it, it's quite a light touch with it, but it's quite fun, you don't have to do it all the time, you just even now and again when you're walking, talking and sharing and getting that mindset going, I think it's lovely.





Angeline: If I can just say something about this Empathy Walk, because I really love it. I have a story I created, I create these short stories for kids, and one of them features a girl who realised that she was in an information bubble because she was out walking and realised that people around her were different than the one she was seeing online.

And I think that's also something very powerful that children could also notice, right, that also takes empathy. To realise I'm seeing something and actually what's out in the world is completely different. I love the Empathy Walk. I think that can also help children find truth.

Sarah: That sounds lovely, yeah. I like the idea of children finding truth, yeah, and in their environment.

Sue: Tell us a little bit about how schools and educators can integrate empathy into the activities. You've got a wonderful load of resources. Tell us a little bit about the school side of things too.

Sarah: Yeah, so we have an affiliate schools programme that schools can join. It's a year long programme where we train all the staff and give them empathy building techniques that they can integrate into their school day. So it's not about adding on another programme, but it's actually integrating empathy techniques. And obviously core to that is the way that they use books. So we have, we publish an annual Read for Empathy book collection.

Sue: Yes, I've seen that. I put it in my book club actually, the Sue Atkins book club. Oh, fantastic.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Every February we actually had the final meeting for the secondary collection last night. So we've got the final decision making for the primary one next week and then that will be published on the 13th of February next year. So every year we have one and we're building our list as we do it every year.

So I'd say use books, you know, not just books. The empathy reads book collections, but any books, you know, all books have, speak to different children as well. So, I say use drama, creative activities alongside the book, so you're helping children to step into character shoes and taking time to really reflect on the character.

Make sure children understand what empathy is. Do those things around listening, having empathy conversations and we, we've done that for Empathy Day in the past where we get children just to have a conversation with other and find out about each other, especially children they don't know. And I know some of our schools have actually embedded that into the school day, so at the start of a week, before they actually start learning, they just get everyone to pair up with somebody they haven't been friends with or they haven't known that well and just have an empathy conversation to get the week off to a great start.

And we have a thing called a listening switch that one of our authors Joe Cotterill designed for us. So it's about, switch on your listening switch and make sure you're listening 100 percent. So, and that goes for teachers, parents, and other children in the class as well. And I'd say, think about a people centred approach, you know, particularly in secondary school as well, so thinking in history, what are people feeling?

Not just what happened, but what were they feeling? One of our secondary schools did a wonderful thing where they had their empathy conversation in their modern foreign languages class, so they were actually using the empathy conversation but, you know, using it in Spanish and French and so on. I'd also say for schools, join our Empathy Day activities this year.

Our Empathy Day is actually going to be an Empathy Festival from the 2nd to the 12th of June, so there'll be streamed all through events throughout that period, opportunities to take part in things like Rhyme Times and webinars for adults as well. But they'll be also as talking direct to children. And we'll also, as part of Empathy Day, have an Empathy Challenge.

So that'll be nine activities that schools can get children to do in the run up to Empathy Day. So things like create an Empathy Bookshelf, your favourite empathy reads, and take a photo of that, share it with us. We're going to have Empathy Posts, create an empathy card that you send to somebody else to connect with them and send them a message of empathy.

Emotion Maps, where children map their emotions over a day. And we're going to have an Empathy Power Pose, where you have a power pose with your favourite empathy read, so things like that. But also, the other thing schools can do is encourage children to take part in social action. I don't mean go and demonstrate, but actually what can they do for their community, or even in their school, to make lives better for everybody.

Sue: Wonderful. I mean, I noticed there's, isn't November Empathy Month?

Sarah: That's right, it's Empathy Action Month.

Sue: Tell me about that, because I noticed that, yeah.

Sarah: When we have Empathy Day in June, we ask everyone to make an empathy resolution. So, Empathy Action Month, it gives us an opportunity to revisit those resolutions or make new ones if we haven't made a resolution.

And throughout this month we have authors and illustrators focusing on their resolutions but also there's loads of resources looking at the role of empathy in communities, empathy for family and friends. So, each week we're focusing on a different topic. So on the Empathy Lab website you'll be, you'll see all those wonderful author videos that you can watch and download now.

Sue: I've written tips for empathy for parents and some scripts that go for that to start those conversations and give some ideas around what empathy looks like with different ages, whether it's a toddler or a tween or a teenager. So that'll be up on [navigatingthedigitaljungle.com](http://navigatingthedigitaljungle.com)

We're coming to the end of our time together. If there's one key message that you'd like to leave with parents about nurturing empathy in the digital age, what would it be?





Sarah: I think it would be ensuring human connection. So make sure there's time for connecting in the real world, connecting physically, talking, reading with children, not denying technology, but making sure that children have the tools and the skills to actually deliver and work with technology in an empathetic way and that's about human connection.

Sue: Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for joining us today, Sarah, and rushing back. I appreciate it and thank you very much. Tell us where again, right at the end here, what's the website so people can go and explore whether they're parents or teachers?

Sarah: It's [www.empathylab.uk](http://www.empathylab.uk)

Sue: Wonderful. And thank you for all the hard work that you do. It's wonderful.

Sarah: It's a pleasure for inviting us.

Sue: Take care, thank you very much for joining us.

So that was Empathy Lab, wonderful things to learn there if you're looking for some empathy and how about doing an empathy walk and letting us know about that because that was so, we were so interested in that, weren't we Angie? That was a fantastic idea.

Angeline: That was amazing, I actually I just need to start doing that right away with my daughter, taking empathy walks.

Sue: Come on, we're going for an empathy walk, whether you like it or not. It's natural, isn't it? And you can do that with a toddler, a tween or a teenager, not heavy stuff.

Just asking the odd question when you're walking along and you're developing that sense of empathy and kindness. And I just thought it was a lovely idea.

Angeline: I agree.

Sue: So, that leads us on to family change, Angie. Off you go!

Angeline: So here we are on our weekly simple, easy, and quick ways to make a small change that will make a big difference in your online family world.

We're going to give a few ideas for simple changes that you can make as a family to really foster digital empathy. And as I mentioned before, I'll start with mine, is really to think about who is on the other side. Challenge yourself and the family members if you're online, or even, this even works if your child doesn't do anything else other than watch TV.

Think about who is making the decisions about what you see, who decided to show you this video, who decided to make that comment. Sometimes there's a name written there. Sometimes, you know, it's not so simple, this way to really gain empathy, to understand there's always a person on the other side. Even if you're talking to an AI chatbot, a person defined that chatbot's personality and actions.

So that's mine.



Sue: Yeah. And I mean, it's, it's almost like saying, would grandma be proud of me if I posted this or said that? I know it's a sort of an odd thing, but it just triggers you to think about being kind. And I mean. For me, a weekly kindness challenge, you could set it for the family when you're just chatting over Sunday lunch or something and saying about, you know, let's think this week what we can do to be kind.

You set the kind of mindset in the, in your children. What could you say that would be uplifting or something, you know, that you could say that would be encouraging? We met my friend Anne, she's based in Ireland. She's written a book about encouragement and she's always posting on Instagram. Little things we can do to encourage another.

So, empathy is part of that too. Instead of pulling someone down, how could we push up? It's a sort of push up rather than a pull down. Even that all helps. And set aside perhaps when you're having your lunch or you're walking the dog or whatever you're doing to think about and discuss your family's online experiences. Talk about what went well, what didn't, and how everyone perhaps could improve on their kindness online. It's just getting them thinking, which I think is great. So every time a family member does something kind online, you know, like complimenting someone on social media or supporting a friend in a game. You could write it down and place it in a jar called the Digital Kindness Jar if you wanted to focus younger children on actually getting that habit around kindness. And then if you want, you know, one of the days over the weekend or something, tip it all out and have a look and celebrate the fact that they were acts of kindness that they had done.

So it's just a mindset. Small little things can make a big difference.

VO: Listeners questions.

Sue: "My son plays a lot of online games and I've noticed that the chat can get pretty toxic. What are some ways I can encourage him to stay positive and kind even when others aren't?"

Well, thank you for your question. Online gaming can be a lot of fun as we know, but it's true that the chat can sometimes turn a bit, well, quite a lot toxic actually, so here are just a few of my ideas of ways that you can encourage your son to stay positive and kind even when others aren't. So lead by example is the first one.

Encourage your son to be a role model in his gaming community. Remind him that kindness is contagious and sometimes just one positive comment can really change the tone of a conversation. And of course don't forget to praise him when he handles the situations well and reinforces that nice behaviour you want to see more of.

Teaching, perhaps, to take the high road, you know, in that sense of don't get drawn in to the negative interactions. You know, I've got a friend, actually, that can pull me down rather than push me up when I'm chatting to to remember sometimes that that's her natural sort of disposition to be a bit sort of negative.



So, again, encourage your son, perhaps, to not respond to some of the negativity and be more positive himself. Again, this is not about being happy, clappy and silly. But it's just being mindful of not necessarily joining in with all that. And you can, you know, diffuse a situation by a compliment or ignoring something or moving on quickly from it.

And remember to tell your son that he has control over how he responds, not how others behave. What do you think, Angie? What are your tips around this idea for the listener?

Angeline: To remind them that know who you are, know who you want to be, and even if the situation gets toxic and gets difficult, that they can remember, again, that they can empathy, whatever the reason is that that person is being mean or toxic, they also have their reasons that we don't know about.

And also a little bit of empathy and say, if I push back, I'll probably, we'll just make it worse, right? For the other person and for myself, so taking the high road can help not only the child find themselves, find who they are, but also do something kind for someone who's obviously hurting, otherwise they wouldn't be toxic, right?

Sue: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, I think show your child also, don't forget how to mute or block or report, perhaps if it really gets out of hand, but the whole point really is to not water a weed, it is to water a sort of a flower and a plant, which is the more positive stuff, and I think that's a balancing act that kids, depending on their age and maturity, how they handle it.

So talk, we're always talking on this podcast, aren't we, about talking with, not at your children. So how to handle some of this stuff is part of the conversation and teaching them and reminding them to always communicate clearly. And respectfully, just respect is the key energy, I think, that if they learn to have respect for each other, then that over time makes their experiences better.

And also to know when to walk away. Sometimes the best solution, to be quite honest, is to just remove yourself from the situation. To avoid any further escalation, because even when you see on some of these social media platforms like Twitter, which has become very toxic, people wade in and they kind of get really into it.

I just walk away from it. If I see something a bit controversial, I think, well, I have an opinion, of course I do, but I'm going, is that my battle? Not really, I'm just going to come away from it. And that is not weakness, that's just choice. And I think that's an important thing, really, for kids.

Angeline: It's also something for parents to keep in mind that is very, very different than it was when most of us were young, is that we could walk away.

We walked away because there was no digital world, basically. So you separated and that bullying, as we said before, wasn't there. But kids nowadays, they don't have that luxury. It can follow them and does follow them everywhere. So, walking away is a crucial, crucial skill that they will need a lot of help with.



If they love gaming, you know, kids love gaming. We had an episode in the previous season where we were talking about, you know, a kid loves gaming and wants to get back to gaming. But sometimes you just need to walk away your own mental health and, you know, be able to love it in the long run.

Sue: Yeah, and you don't have to walk away forever.

I mean, even taking a day off, you know, or taking a few hours off it or a week or whatever, just small bite size, remove yourself from it to recalibrate, get grounded and centred, and then perhaps come back with a different mindset to it.

VO: Now for some top tips.

Sue: So, here are our weekly quick tips for promoting digital empathy and kindness in your children.

So, my ones are lead by example, model positive online behaviour yourself, and show your child how to respond kindly in digital conversations and showing empathy. Discuss the impact of your words, and we've talked about this earlier, you know, you can't always get the tone of voice, you can't even see the body language, but your words have power and sometimes they're unkind, so pause to ponder, as I say, that's an important thing for me, and remember to expose your children to different cultures and ideas and perspectives, because that broadens their understanding of other people and of the world.

So they learn to be tolerant and empathetic to other people different to themselves. What do you reckon Angie? What are your tips on that?

Angeline: I have one that's always helped me and that's just to explain to children how I'm feeling. Whatever is happening around. Whether it's them or, you know, something else externally to explain how that is impacting me.

I usually say, this situation is making me very frustrated and I'm going towards being angry, you know, or something.

Sue: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I feel that's quite a good one, isn't it? Start there.

Angeline: You're always the person that they know and trust probably the most. So if you explain how the world is impacting you, then that will help them understand basically anyone in the world.

So that's just actually one tip for today.

Sue: Yeah. No, that's, that's wonderful. So that leads me now into Script of the Week, which is a new feature for the season two. So the quick scripts to start important conversations, as you know, on my resources hub on the website [navigatingthedigitaljungle.com](http://navigatingthedigitaljungle.com), I have created loads of scripts and guides for parents around different subjects.



And so I thought we'd pop one of these into the episode. So this week, I thought I wanted to talk around empathy and how you start that kind of conversation. So here's just a sort of a starter for 10, if you will.

So, you could say, I want to talk to you about a new word that you may not have heard before. It's called empathy and it means understanding how others feel and caring about their feelings. It's like kindness and it's really important and one way that we can practice it is by talking about how different situations make us feel and thinking about how the other people feel. Also, it's about listening to each other without interrupting.

So, when your friend is upset, try to imagine how you would feel if you were in their shoes. And you could ask yourself the question, how do you think they're feeling? So it's a very simple script, it's only a few words, but it gets you feeling more confident as a parent, and I think it encourages open conversations and helps children recognise and respond to other people's emotions. So I hope you found that helpful. That is Script of the Week this week.

I'd like to tell you a bit more about my new book. As a parent myself, I know firsthand how overwhelming it can feel to keep up with the digital world our kids are growing up in. That's why I wrote *Navigating the Digital Jungle Essential Scripts* for starting meaningful conversations with toddlers, tweens and teens about smartphones or social media, AI, cyber safety and much, much more.

My book is bursting with ready to use conversation starters that make it easier to guide your kids through everything from screen time and social media to the tricky terrain of online safety and artificial intelligence. It's like having a roadmap for those critical and important chats every parent needs to have.

My book of *Digital Jungle Scripts* is all about giving you the tools to start those difficult but important conversations, no matter your child's age. Easy, practical scripts to help you feel confident and connected. So, if you're ready to feel more self confident around discussing Roblox, Snapchat or WhatsApp, grab your copy of *Navigating the Digital Jungle Essential Scripts* and start transforming those tough tech talks into meaningful family moments. And let's get those conversations started at [navigatingthedigitaljungle.com/resources](https://navigatingthedigitaljungle.com/resources).

Empathy is just as important in the virtual world as it is in the real world. I think that's my message for this episode, really. And by teaching our children to be compassionate and understanding online, I think we're helping to create a safer, kinder, greener digital jungle for everyone. So, I hope you found this episode helpful.

Before we finish up today, Angie, what are you working on at the moment? Where can people find out more about Data Girl?

Angeline: Well, my website is [data-girl-and-friends.com](https://data-girl-and-friends.com), so you can find everything you need there. And my major project I'm working on right now is a global conference, called SHIELD Global Online Safety Conference. I'm really excited because we have all the continents represented now, except for Antarctica, obviously, and we're really going to bring people together that want to make the digital world a safer place and build collaboration, hopefully teams that will move forward. So that's my goal. It's a big project right now.

I'm very excited about it. You can find it, it's a tab on the Data Girl and Friends website.

Sue: It's interesting this week in the news, Australia are leading the world in banning social media for children under 16. It's caused an awful lot of questions to come up about how you're going to make that work and how governments are going to make it work. But this conversation is really interesting and I'm watching it with great interest because we have in the UK also the online safety bill and what's happening around all of that. So these conversations have started off, I don't know, from, you know, Smartphone Free Childhood, who we interviewed last time, to Jonathan Haidt's book about the Anxious Generation.

Real conversations are you know, really out there now and everyone's trying to sort of navigate their way through it. So I hope everyone has found this really interesting. I hope that, you know, you find that you can tell your schools, tell your family about the podcast, look at the resources hub, the parenting hub.

Perhaps, you know, you could share it with other friends and family. Do contact us with questions or how you're getting on or something you've done that you found helpful. We can create images and tell people about it on our Facebook group or all through all our social media. So if you'd like to join us, do join in.

We'd love to hear from you. [info@navigatingthedigitaljungle.com](mailto:info@navigatingthedigitaljungle.com)

VO: Navigating the Digital Jungle with Sue Atkins and Friends.

Sue: So that's it for this week. Remember to subscribe, leave us a review and tune in next week as we continue on our journey through the digital jungle, where we'll be talking about the impact of technology on mental health and wellbeing and chatting all around the links between screen time and sleep, all sorts of topics that we'll be covering as we go through.

So, until then, stay safe and keep exploring.

VO: It's a jungle out there.

Time for a word from our sponsor.

Sue: I'd like to tell you a bit about this episode's sponsor, Gigabit IQ. At Gigabit IQ, they're redefining your internet experience with blazing fast gigabit speeds and award winning online safety. Discover how their FamilyGuard Plus and CyberGuard Plus are safety features that keep your home and your loved ones protected from digital threats.

Ready to upgrade your connection and keep your family safe online? Visit [gigabitiq.com](http://gigabitiq.com) and experience the speed you need with the safety you trust. GigabitIQ, where intelligence this meets internet.

