



**EMPATHY**  
SACRIFICEUNITY  
HOPE STRENGTH 4,645  
RISE PUERTO RICO  
**HURRICANE MARIA**

# Open Hearted

"Look with the eyes of another, listen with the ears of another and feel with the heart of another." - Alfred Adler. I begin my writing with this great phrase because this sums up or largely defines what my experience was after the passage of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. During Hurricane Maria I was watching from my residence and when the rain and wind activity ended I realized that in the area where I reside absolutely nothing happened, a tree did not fall, all the residences were intact, of course we did not have communication services, electric and drinking water. Fortunately in my home we were well prepared and had enough food and water supplies. As soon as everything calmed down we left the urbanization and I find multiple enclosed areas, fallen trees and many people trying to get to check the status of their relatives. With this chaos I return to my residence and climb to the roof where I can see on a larger scale the devastation caused by the hurricane, seeing whole areas under water broke my heart. Two days after all this I meet up with a very important person for me and he tells me about all the things that happened where he resides, and the loss of some neighbors. That was when I understood that I was very lucky, but thousands of people did not have the same thing, seeing people without homes, people who lost a family member, where their lives were at risk and even seeing families with children without being able to feed them.

So before the situation of others and see the opportunities that I had, to what I had within my reach I could give food, thread and water to those who needed it. Even in the two weeks in which I was without electrical service we shared some extensions to our neighbors that did not have one. I understand that many families will have a good time these days thanks to the efforts of neighbors and friends whom I help. Honestly, the idea of seeing how you were doing well but your neighbors needed you was inevitable not to join to help so many who needed it. I saw how many aid came from outside and did not reach as many places as needed. Unfortunately this was affected by the government. I understand that it could have been improved if the government allowed more direct participation to all the people who came to offer us their help, so that the aid would have been better distributed. I urge all people who have the opportunity to help in situations like those we live in Puerto Rico, do not limit yourself and in efforts and help we never know how many people we can save with our initiative. Now I want to close with the phrase of Martha Sialer that says "If you are going to listen to someone, your heart is not asleep. That is empathy." Let us awaken our heart, let us have it open to help others and empathize with their situations, we do not have to live it in our own flesh to feel it.

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