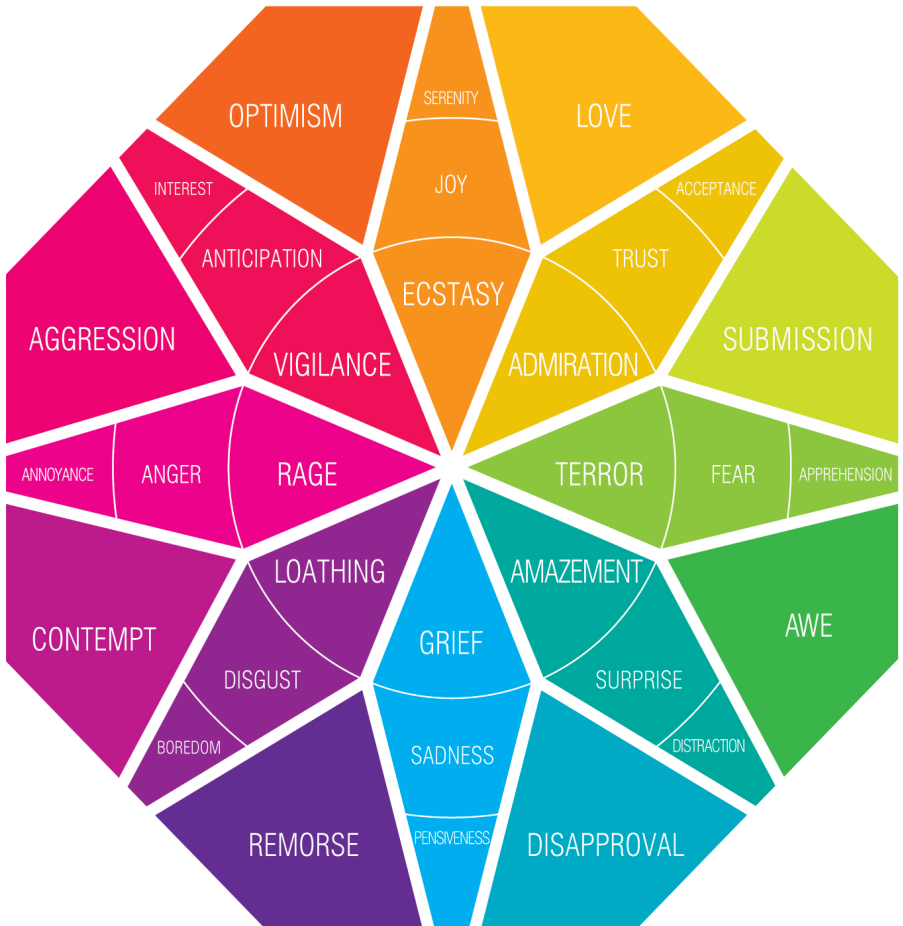




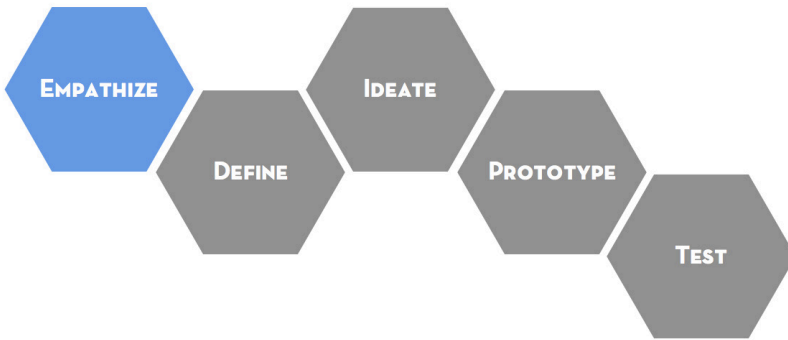
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EMPATHY FIELDGUIDE



Empathize



Empathy is when you can feel what another person is feeling. Empathy is the foundation of a human-centered design process; by deeply understanding people we are better able to design for them.

To empathize, we:

Immerse: Experience what your user experiences.

Observe: View users and their behavior in the context of their lives.

Engage: Interact with and interview users through both scheduled and short 'intercept' encounters.

Empathize to discover people's expressed and latent needs so that you can meet them through your design solutions.

Understand People

Through observation and interviews, we can build a picture of our users' motivations based on what they say, do, think, and feel.



<<< **OBSERVE**

INFER >>>

You can directly observe what people say and do. The job of the designer is also to infer what they think and feel. This will help you understand the deeper meaning.

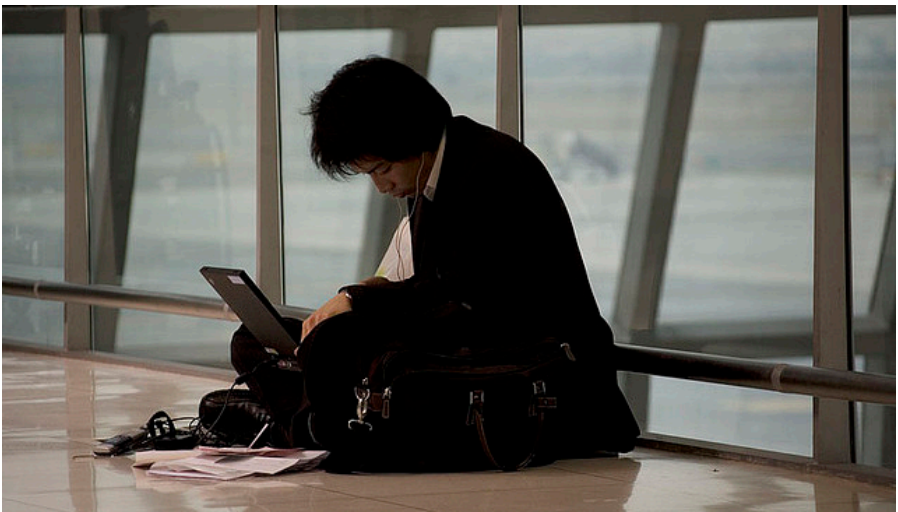
Observation

Technique: What?|How?|Why?

This simple scaffolding allows you to move from concrete observations of a particular scene to thinking about the more abstract emotions and motives that are at play in the situation.

Divide a sheet into three sections:
What?, How?, and Why?

- 1 **What** is the person you're observing doing in a particular situation? Note the obvious as well as the surprising. Just report the objective facts.
- 2 **How** is he doing it? Does it require effort? Does he appear rushed? Pained? Happy? Is the activity impacting the user in either positive or negative way?
- 3 **Why** is he doing what he's doing, in the way he's doing it? This step usually requires that you make informed guesses regarding motivation and emotions. This step will reveal assumptions that you should ask users about, and often uncovers unexpected realizations.



CC photo: flickr/@Saigon

WHAT

- SITTING AT EDGE OF WALKWAY
- LOOKING DOWN AT LAPTOP ON LAP
- EARPHONE IN EARS

HOW

- SITTING CROSS-LEGGED, BACK UP AGAINST RAIL
- LOOSE PAPERS AND ELECTRONICS ON THE GROUND
- BAG RIGHT NEXT TO BODY
- SEEMS TO BE 'IN THE ZONE' — JUST CONCENTRATING AND WORKING

WHY

- NEEDS TO FINISH SOME THINGS UP BEFORE GETTING ON FLIGHT
- ONLY AVAILABLE ELECTRICAL OUTLET AROUND, WITHIN EARSHOT OF GATE
- WANTS TO RELAX ON FLIGHT? GET THIS STUFF DONE NOW.

Observation

Technique: What?|How?|Why?

What is the person doing?

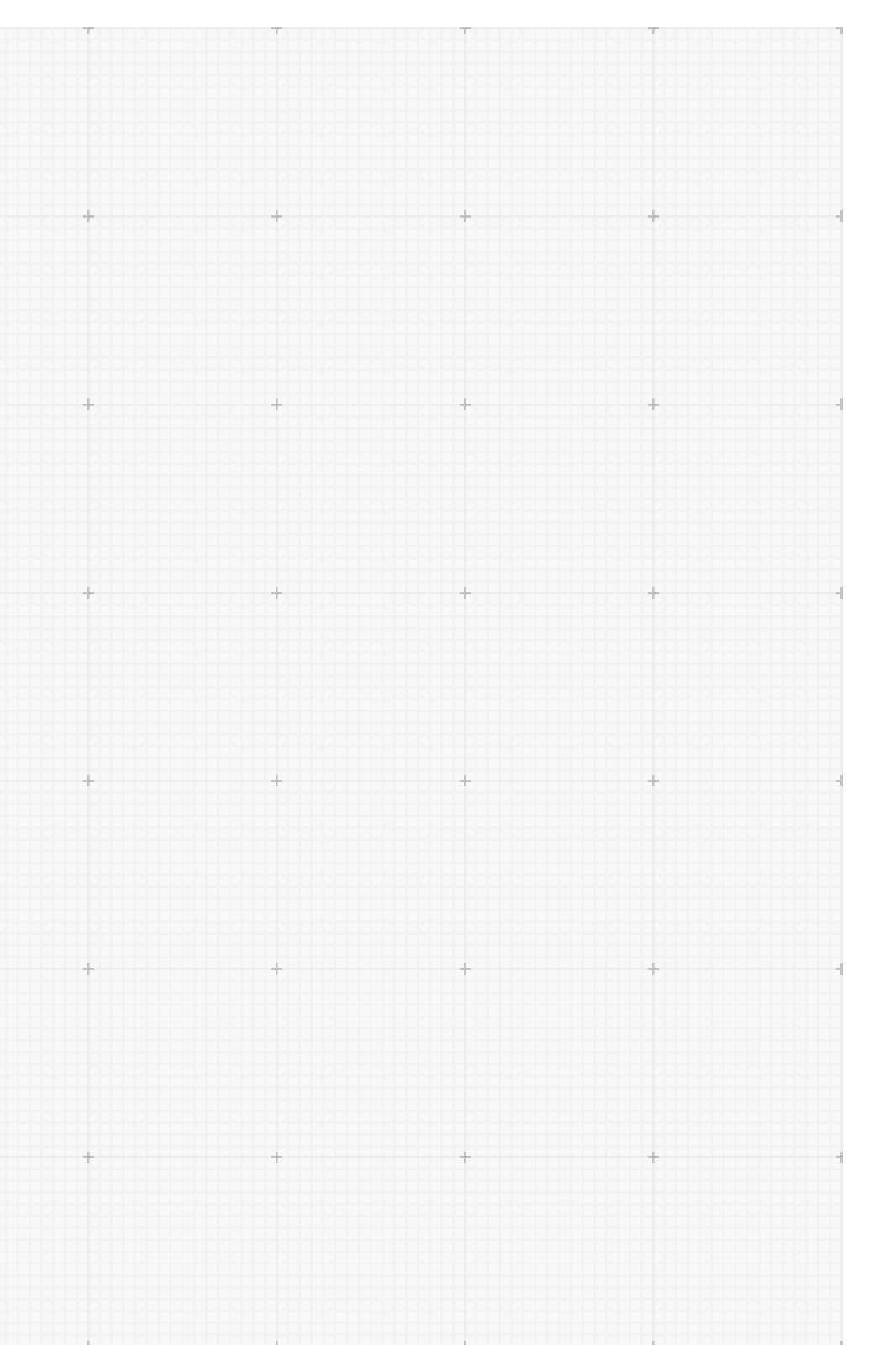
(what are the observable facts?)

How is the person doing that?

(what emotions and techniques are present?)

Why is the person doing that? in that way?

(what inferences can we draw?)

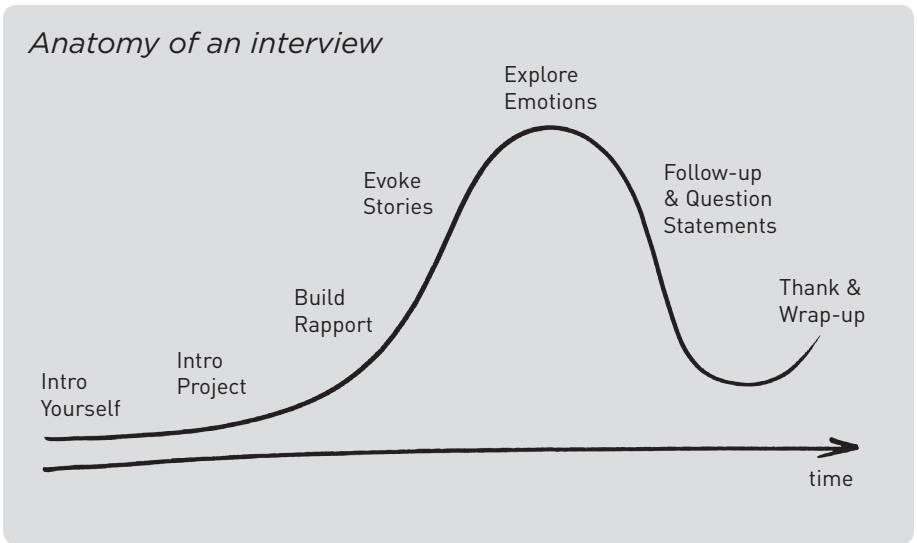


How to interview? Have a conversation.

Be human.

Seek **stories**.

Talk about **feelings**.



Adapted from Michael Barry

Be human: build rapport

Introduction: introduce yourself and your project in way that is comfortable to you. Try something like:

“We’re in a Stanford design workshop. We’re doing a project on the _____ experience. Could we talk to you for a few minutes?” Exchange names.

Kickoff: shift the focus to your user.

“How are you doing today?” (and actually listen).

Build trust: offer something of yourself. Be affirming.

“Tell me a little bit about (your experience today . . . , how you use . . . , what you think about . . .)”

Seek stories

Evoke **specific** stories to learn about what your interviewee does, and more importantly, thinks and feels. We are **talking about the past and present**, not the future.

“Can you tell me about the first time you _____?
What do you remember about that (day)?”

“What was your best/worst/craziest/most memorable experience with (area of focus).”

“Could you tell me story about a time . . .”

“What would I find surprising about . . .”

Talk about feelings

“Walk me through how you . . . (made that decision, completed that task, got to a place, etc.). What were you thinking at that point?”

“Why do you say that? . . . “Tell me more.”

“How did you feel at that moment, when ____ happened?”

“Could you tell me why is that important to you? What emotions do you have (about that)?”

Interview preparation

Do this now:

1. On this page, quickly list a bunch of potential questions to ask, covering a number of different aspects of the topic.

2. On this page, rewrite your questions to be **open-ended and neutrally-stated** — and organize them into a conversation arc. Think of your questions not just as topics to cover, but as **ways to get people to share**.

Build rapport

Understand your user

Dig for stories and emotions

Interview tips

Don't suggest answers to your questions: Even if they pause before answering, don't help them by suggesting an answer. This can unintentionally get people to say things that agree with your expectations. Ask questions neutrally.

Don't be afraid of silence: Often if you allow there to be silence, a person will reflect on what they've just said and say something deeper.

Look for inconsistencies: Sometimes what people say and what they do (or say later) are different. Gracefully probe these contradictions.

Be aware of nonverbal cues: Consider body language and emotions.

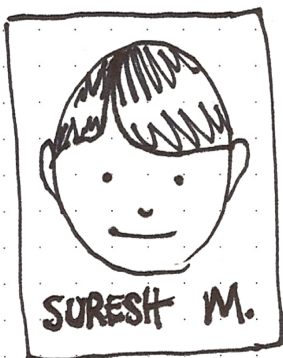
Stay on the same path of a question: Respond to what your interviewee offers and follow up to go deeper. Use simple queries to get him to say more:

"Oh, why do you say that?"

"What were you feeling at that point?"

ASK "WHY?"

"What is the reason for that?"



9 Y.O. WAITING AT BAG CLAIM
FOR HIS AUNTIE SHILPA

Q: WHERE TRAVELLING?

A: AKRON ~> SFO TO VISIT
FAMILY, FIRST TIME FLYING
ALONE, FAMILY NO WHERE
IN SIGHT (BITES LIP, WORRIED?)

▶ PLANE SWITCHED TERMINALS, CAN'T FIND FAMILY
NO CHANGE FOR PAY PHONES.

Q: WORRIED?

A: YES! FLYING WAS FINE "STEWARDESS. WAS AWESOME!"
BUT "IN THE AIRPORT, I FEEL LIKE I'M IN
A BLENDER!" TOO MANY THINGS WHIZ BY
TOO FAST "I FEEL EMBARRASSED NOT KNOWING
WHAT TO DO"

Q: WHY EMBARRASSED?

A: "EVERYONE'S ANGRY, IT'S LIKE A FIGHT AND
I DON'T WANT TO SHOW WEAKNESS"

Q: WHAT WAS SO DIFFERENT ON THE PLANE FROM
THE AIRPORT?

A: ALWAYS SOMEONE TO HELP YOU ON THE PLANE
→ THEY ASK IF YOU NEED HELP.

IN SFO, "NO ONE WANTS TO HELP YOU"

"YOU'RE ALWAYS IN THE WAY"

Extreme Users

Extreme users are people who are **extreme in some aspect related to your project**. Because extreme users' behaviors and feelings are amplified, they help you notice nuances and develop insights. Engage with extreme users to discover remarkable insights that help you understand the larger population.

The extreme could be a consistent attribute or a temporal situation. For example, for an air travel design challenge, extremes might include:

- A family with young children flying
- Someone who is scared of flying
- Someone who uses the wheelchair services
- A foreigner who doesn't speak the local language
- Someone who commutes by plane
- Someone with a short connection time
- Someone with oversized or precious baggage



CC photo: flickr/chloester

Who are your extreme users?

1. List 3-5 aspects of your project.
2. Then write a number of options for who is extreme in each of those aspects.



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