

# EMPATHY ASSESSMENT REPORT



**Aditya Parmar**

Empathy is the ultimate form of customer insight

- *Don Peppers* -

Conceptualized & Designed by Centre of Strategic Mindset

## Introduction - What is Empathy?

The definition of empathy varies. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Empathy as ‘the action of understanding, being aware of; being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing others’ feelings, thoughts and emotions, whether emanating from their past or present experiences’. To make it more concise, empathy implies an accurate understanding of someone else’s perspectives and experiences. To be empathic would not only mean seeing others’ perspectives (both intellectual and emotional) but also gaining an insight into the legitimacy of that perspective.

*“It is important to note that, in most cases, an intellectual understanding is insufficient – to be empathic one must understand the emotional experience of that individual”.*

**Empathy is not a soft nurturing value, but a hard commercial tool that every business needs as part of their DNA to stay relevant as well as significant.**

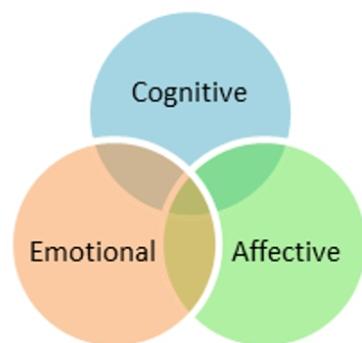
In Harvard Business Review (Parmar, 2015b), it is also stated that there is an obvious correlation between empathy and commercial success. Besides, businesses are far more profitable and productive when they act ethically, and treat their staff with respect, and communicate better with the customers. The fact that supports this statement is that the top 10 companies in the Global Empathy Index 2015, increased in value more than twice as much as the bottom 10, and generated 50% more earnings. The average earnings of the top 10 companies went up by 6% in 2015, while the average earnings of the bottom 10 companies, further dropped 9% (Dishman, 2015).

The past decade has seen a growing movement towards a view that postulates empathy as a multidimensional construct. Therefore, it is worthwhile for us to understand the construct and apply it in our lives.

## Empathy Construct

We talk about empathy, most commonly as a single attribute. But a closer and deeper look at empathy reveals three guiding components and their inter-relationship, that influences human behaviours in a variety of situations. Each component is important in its own way and their interoperability manifests in a variety of ways. The three components are as below :-

- **Cognitive Empathy**- Cognitive Empathy-the ability to understand another person’s perspective;
- **Emotional Empathy** - the ability to feel what someone else feels;
- **Affective Empathy** - the ability to sense what another person needs from you



## Background Research

Our tryst with empathy is two decades old. In our research on empathy, we have closely observed more than 5000 people and interviewed 500 plus leaders across industries and levels, to arrive at 10 critical insights as under:-

1. Empathy is learnable through reflections and structured discipline.
2. There are stages that can be acquired, honed and mastered.
3. Each preceding stage is a precursor to understanding and learning the next stage.
4. In nutshell, it is a simple process of activating ‘Stop-Start-Continue’ discipline when it comes to understanding and manifesting empathetic behaviours.
5. Empathy is rooted in observation as well as non-judgement, almost simultaneously.
6. Empathy is about striking a balance between the inner world as well as the external or someone else’s world, through a series of interactions between stimuli and responses.
7. Empathy is a muscle that develops with deliberate and disciplined exercises.
8. Empathy is not mere sympathy; it is rooted in concrete actions triggered by a ‘moving experience’.
9. Empathy is critical to innovation, relevance and significance.
10. Empathy is severely under assault due to modern day distractions, temptations and an excessive focus on ‘I - me - my’ syndrome.

## Key Questions that Influenced COSM’s Research on Empathy

1. What is true empathy?
2. How does it differentiate itself from sympathy?
3. What behaviours exhibit themselves on the spectrum of Apathy, Sympathy and Empathy?
4. Why empathy can lead us to an ‘Epiphany’ (the moment of truth)?
5. Why empathy is such a misconstrued or misunderstood phenomena?
6. How come empathy is such a hard thing to develop?
7. Why empathy is often considered to be a misnomer when it comes to driving hard and aspirational results?
8. Why do we need to practice or lead with empathy?
9. How to develop empathy in a structured and conscious manner?
10. How to cultivate an Empathetic Mindset?

## Empathy – An Instrument for Epiphany

We live in an interdependent world. Our thought process and actions impact others; and others’ conduct impact us favorably or adversely. If there is one thing that makes this interdependence work at its peak effectiveness, it is empathy. Empathy is core to **‘Problem Discovery’** and is a critical imperative to be considered even before contemplating any resolution. It takes knowledge, understanding, personal experiences, a compassionate mindset and most importantly a rigorous discipline to be empathetic.



How do we balance our personal needs with others’ requirements forms the basis of **EMPATHY EQUATION** between two stakeholders or among multiple ones. And it is never a perfect or a stationary balance. It is an oscillating or shifting balance. As long as we are able to appreciate this reality, and are willing to make adjustments, we can succeed in keeping this balance intact, and the empathy equation in a desirable equilibrium.

## Empathy Index – Fundamental Dimensions

Empathy Index is based on five fundamental dimensions. Each of these dimensions displays a distinctive and predictable pattern of relationships with definitive measures that provide a considerable evidence for a multidimensional approach to empathy.



### RELATABILITY

Ability to relate to the emotions that people around us carry, and their state of mind, which drives their actions and behaviours. People are a product of their experiences that influence their beliefs, logics and frame of references. If we can pause to appreciate where others are coming from, we can adjust our approach, responses and hopefully influence our outcomes.



### RESONANCE

Ability to feel something deeply and resonate with others' emotions and feelings, without judgement. The basic approach here is 'Appreciate First - Critique Later'. The core discipline to adhere here is, to gain entry into others' world with a sense of wonderment and curiosity; and not with prejudices. It is our capacity to resonate with another person in a manner, which is positive, affirming and empowering so that the rapport is established.



### REFRAMING

Ability to come out and reframe our understanding that existed prior to experiencing others' world. The propensity here is to challenge and realign our assumptions as well as belief systems, in the light of contradicting information or thought-patterns manifested by others. This allows us to understand others' point of view, find opportunities to eliminate our assumptions and make new frames of references. Assumptions are the least form of knowledge, so reframing our understanding is critical.



### REORIENTATION

Ability to adapt and calibrate our stance, position or approach with new or better understanding of the stakeholders and situations, to build rapport, create alignment and strike breakthroughs. This calls for agility, flexibility and capacity to reconsider or re-examine your actions as well as responses, based on others' thought process. It is our calibre to frame new belief systems or alter existing thoughts to navigate the relationship challenges and prime ourself to respond to other person's needs.



### REIMAGINATION

In the end, it is all about reimagining possibilities, visualizing prospects and neutralizing constraints, through better understanding, relatability, resonance, reframing and reorienting our approach. This is the level of empathy that is required for mutual win-win, co-creation, innovation and change. It is the prowess to skilfully design behaviours that are in resonance with own value system, yet respectful of others' belief systems, thus leading to affable responses.

## Using the Report

The Empathy Index Report is designed to give you an insight into your **Empathy Quotient** along five empathy dimensions. Each dimension was subject to self-evaluation on eight survey items that capture the most conspicuous behaviours and belief systems. Your responses have been indexed on a five point 'Frequency Scale' as under:-

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Seldom
4. Often
5. Always

The purpose of the scale is not to test your awareness; whether you know or do not know a particular dimension, but to give you a chance to self-evaluate the frequency with which you bring these behaviours into a conscious realm of application.

Your scores will broadly determine your ability to exercise empathy and gain a critical insight into others' world (customers and stakeholders) and the barriers that you will do well to overcome, through structured reflections and translating your insights into behaviours on ground.

Having a better understanding of our own empathetic quotient, enables us to reframe and realign our thought processes to meet the empathy needs of the users.

Hope you enjoy your report as much as we enjoyed creating it.

# Overall Empathy index – Interpretation of Scores

OVERALL EMPATHY INDEX						
Scale	0	40	80	120	160	200
Absolute Score				122		
Percentage Score			61 %			

Please read following guidelines to make sense of your scores and devise your measures to enhance your empathy index.

**You have got a score of 122/ 200 as a combined total of EMPATHIC INDEX.**

Let us understand what this score means for

**180-200 (90% to 100%) : Level 5** = You understand, embody, and exemplify empathy, exceptionally well. You have the wherewithal to ‘role-model’ empathy in your context and be a champion. Keep up the good work but be wary of the empathy fatigue and its potential overuse, by actively asking this question, “Is there something getting overlooked or ignored in the garb of empathy”?

**140-179 (70% to 89%) : Level 4** = You often understand and demonstrate empathic concern at a cognitive as well as emotional level but will do well to enhance your effectiveness by identifying opportunities for real application.

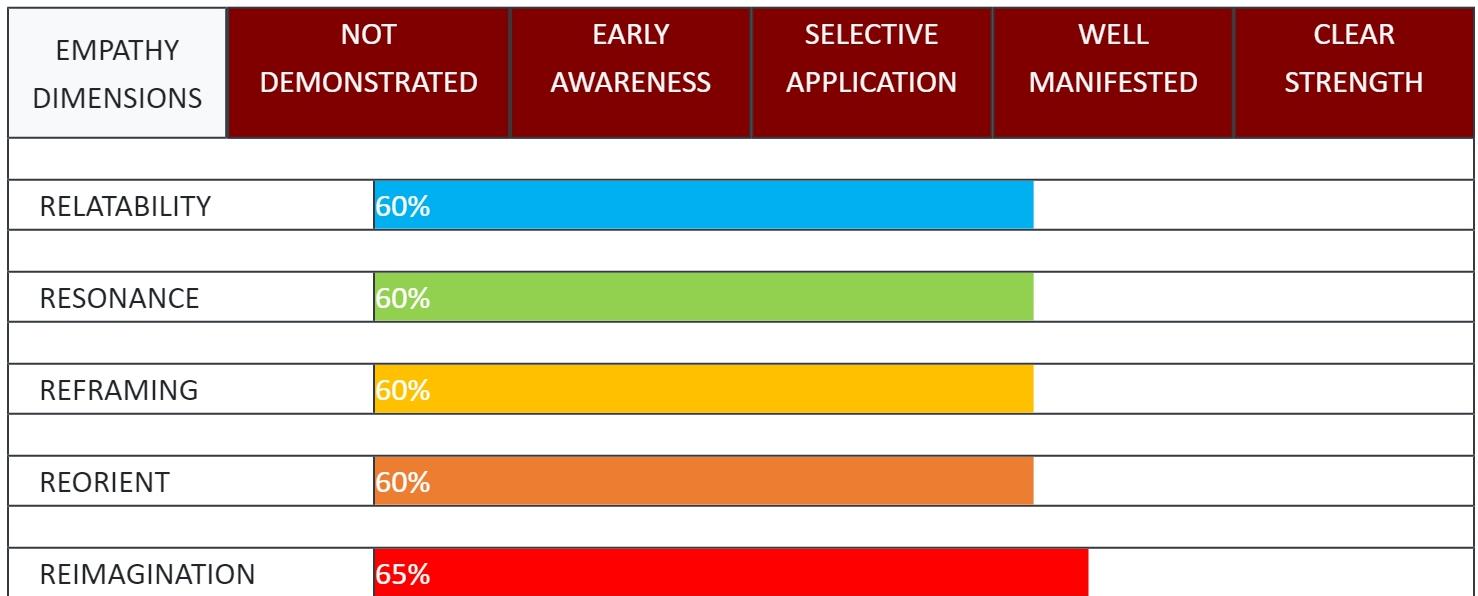
**100-139 (50% to 69%) : Level 3** = You show selective evidence of understanding and practising empathy, but your record is sporadic, and consistency is missing. Having understood the power of empathy, you will do well to increase your attempts of applying empathy and creating a positive lasting residue.

**60-99 (30% to 49%) : Level 2** = There is little evidence to suggest that your tryst with empathy has begun, yet. It may be a good idea to explore, if there are any contradictions in your mind as regards the understanding as well as the potential of empathy, as an instrument of transformation and impact.

**01-59 (0% to 30%) : Level 1** = Your scores suggest a huge gap in understanding empathy and a missing opportunity in appreciating its impact on the people that you lead or may lead in future, in a given context. The sooner you begin this journey, the better you will get at the game of leading.

## Dimension Wise Interpretation

Below graphic exhibits a visual depiction of how well, or inadequately, you have fared on five fundamental dimensions of Empathy Index.



Not Demonstrated	Early Awareness	Selective Application	Well Manifested	Clear Strength
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**ABILITY TO RELATE** - Ability to relate to the emotions that people around us carry and their state of mind, which drives their actions and behaviours. People are a product of their experiences that influence their beliefs, logics and frame of references. If we can pause to appreciate where others are coming from, we can adjust our approach, responses and hopefully influence the outcomes.

RATING				
NOT DEMONSTRATED	EARLY AWARENESS	SELECTIVE APPLICATION	WELL-MANIFESTED	CLEAR STRENGTH
(ND)	(EA)	(SA)	(WM)	(CS)
BEHAVIOURAL INPUTS				
	ND	EA	SA	WM
I can easily tune in, to sense how others are feeling at a given point of time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 
I prepare myself by calming down my inner chatter for active listening, during conversations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>
Intuitively, I can sense when someone is feeling awkward or hesitant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>
I get those vibes when other person has something to say or talk about.	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During interactions, I find myself anticipating as to what is coming next.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capturing cues of dissonance or disapproval comes naturally to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can sense if I am intruding into others' world, even if they do not exhibit any emotions, openly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to step into others' shoes and minds, to gauge as to where are they coming from.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 	<input type="radio"/>

**ABILITY TO RESONATE** - Ability to feel something deeply and resonate with others' emotion and feelings, without judgement. The basic approach here is 'Appreciate First - Critique Later'. The core discipline to adhere here is gain to entry into others' world with a sense of wonderment and curiosity; and not with prejudices. It is our capacity to resonate with another person in a manner, which is positive, affirming and empowering so that the rapport is established.

#### RATING

NOT DEMONSTRATED	EARLY AWARENESS	SELECTIVE APPLICATION	WELL-MANIFESTED	CLEAR STRENGTH
(ND)	(EA)	(SA)	(WM)	(CS)

#### BEHAVIOURAL INPUTS

	ND	EA	SA	WM	CS
People find it easy to share with me, as to what is bothering them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
I am able to park my views in order to appreciate others' problems and perspectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can make out what upsets people, and why.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In a conversation, I am able to sense the elements of synergy as well as discord.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picking cues that progresses the conversation forward, comes naturally to me.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying and addressing potentially conflicting issues is an effortless exercise for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People's struggles or pains at their work draw out my compassion for resolution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While observing people in their pursuits and act, my first response is appreciation rather than critique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**ABILITY TO REFRAME** - Ability to come out and reframe our understanding that existed prior to experiencing others' world. The propensity here is to challenge and realign our assumptions as well as belief systems, in the light of contradicting information or thought-patterns manifested by others. This allows us to understand others' point of view, find opportunities to eliminate our assumptions and make new frames of references. Assumptions are the least form of knowledge, so reframing our understanding is critical.

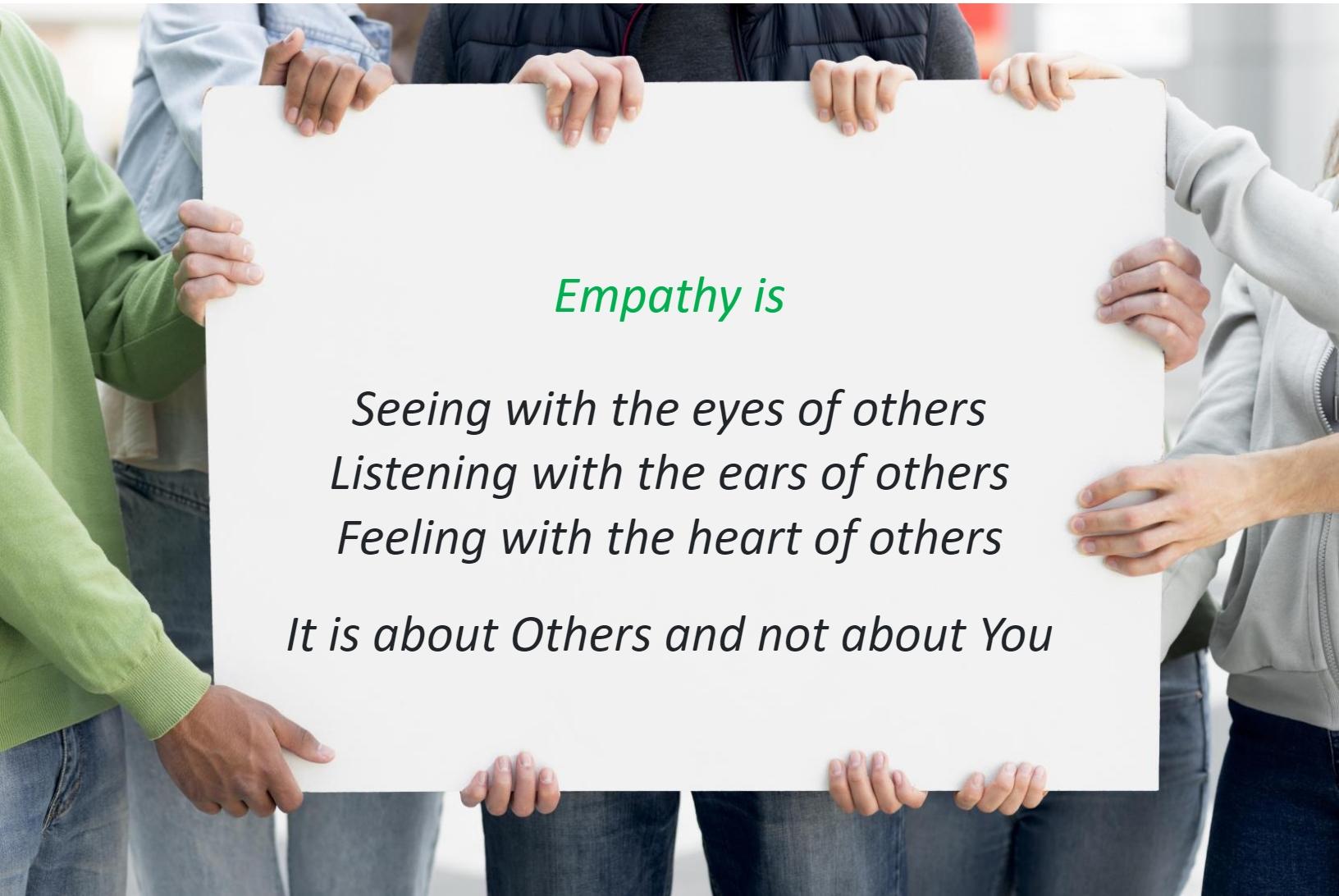
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BEHAVIOURAL INPUTS						
		ND	EA	SA	WM	CS
I find it easy to change my initial position and stance, when new insights emerge.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I see others' dissonance and disagreements as opportunities to refine or enhance my understanding.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I like entertaining 'Why' and 'Why Not', almost parallelly to broaden my perspectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I believe there are two sides to every question and I try to look at both.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
I believe there are multiple ways to address an issue or a subject and my job is to find the one that works	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I am comfortable parking my viewpoints for the sake of deeper discovery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I prefer asking questions rather than relying on untested assumptions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
For me, others' strong opinions are usually an opportunity to self-reflect, wonder and explore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

**ABILITY TO REORIENT** - Ability to adapt and calibrate our stance, position or approach with new or better understanding of stakeholders and situations to build rapport, create alignment and strike breakthroughs. This calls for agility, flexibility and capacity to reconsider or re-examine your actions as well as responses based on others' thought process. It is our calibre to frame new belief systems or alter existing thoughts to navigate the relationship challenges and prime ourself to respond to other person's needs.

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BEHAVIOURAL INPUTS						
		ND	EA	SA	WM	CS
I don't dwell too long when my initial plans and ideas get changed or challenged.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
A new input brings an excitement into my thinking.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me, contradictions are an opportunity to change my lens.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I am able to challenge my own assumptions and viewpoints in a discussion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I am able to recalibrate my responses when I don't see them landing well with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
I believe that the only way to ensure success is to reorient everything around customers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
There is no point holding on to your current approach if it is not yielding positive results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
I find that holding two opposing ideas in creative tension often leads to greater customer centricity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

**ABILITY TO REIMAGINE** - In the end, it is all about reimagining possibilities, visualizing prospects and neutralizing constraints through better understanding, relatability, resonance, reframing and reorienting our approach. This is the level of empathy that is required for mutual win-win, co-creation, innovation and change. It is the prowess to skillfully design behaviours that are in resonance with own value system yet respectful of others' belief systems, thus leading to affable responses.

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(ND)	(EA)	(SA)	(WM)	(CS)		
BEHAVIOURAL INPUTS						
		ND	EA	SA	WM	CS
I like to begin with an end in mind and am willing to figure that out with my stakeholders.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
In the light of new evidences, I am able to re-look at different points of view and alter my end picture.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ability to playback understanding to stakeholders gives them a sense of validation.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can alter the way I approach a problem to be able to create a winning proposition for my client		<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy for me to scrap an entire solution design if it does not fit with client's needs.		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to observe my customers and users in a way that leads to spotting of unmet/unexpressed needs.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
I practise structured reflections over my own observations to re-orient my approach.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see prototyping as an act of challenging assumptions and coming up with an aspirational design.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



*Empathy is*

*Seeing with the eyes of others  
Listening with the ears of others  
Feeling with the heart of others*

*It is about Others and not about You*