Said

Did

Thought

Felt

Empathy Map

An Empathy Map allows us to sum up our learning from engagements with people in the field of design research. The map provides four major areas in which to focus our attention on, thus providing an overview of a person's experience. Empathy maps are also great as a background for the construction of the personas that you would often want to create later.

An Empathy Map consists of four quadrants. The four quadrants reflect four key traits, which the user demonstrated/possessed during the observation/research stage. The four quadrants refer to what the user: **Said**, **Did**, **Thought**, and **Felt**. It's fairly easy to determine what the user said and did. However, determining what they thought and felt should be based on careful observations and analysis as to how they behaved and responded to certain activities, suggestions, conversations, etc.

Step 1: Fill out the Empathy Map

• Lay the four quadrants out on a table, draw them on paper or on a whiteboard. You can use our blank template which we provide below and print it out.

• Review your notes, pictures, audio, and video from your research/fieldwork and fill out each of the four quadrants while defining and synthesising:

• What did the user SAY? Write down significant quotes and key words that the user said.

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Step 1: Fill out the Empathy Map

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- What did the user DO? Describe which actions and behaviours you noticed or insert pictures or drawing.

- What did the user THINK? Dig deeper. What do you think that your user might be thinking? What are their motivations, their goals, their needs, their desires? What does this tell you about his or her beliefs?

- How did the user FEEL? What emotions might your user be feeling? Take subtle cues like body language and their choice of words and tone of voice into account.

Step 2: Synthesise NEEDS

- Synthesise the user's needs based on your Empathy Map. This will help you to define your design challenge.

- Needs are verbs, i.e. activities and desires. Needs are not nouns, which will instead lead you to define solutions.

- Identify needs directly from the user traits you noted. Identify needs based on contradictions between two traits, such as a disconnection between what a user says and what the user does.
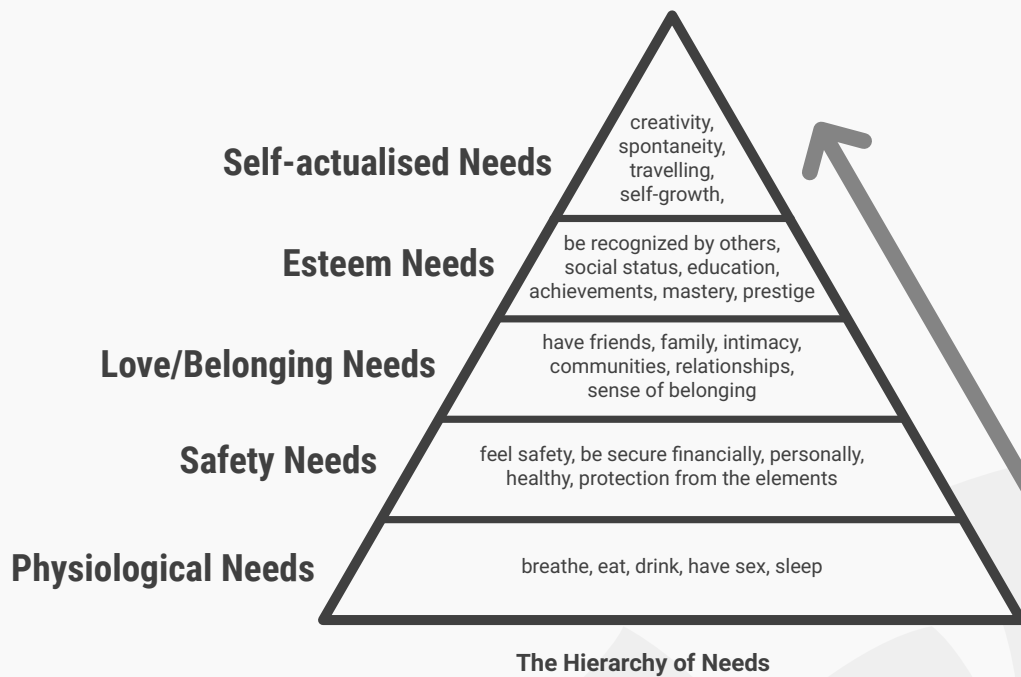
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Step 2: Synthesise NEEDS

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- Use the American psychologist Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to help you understand and define which underlying needs your user has. In 1943, Maslow published his paper, *"A Theory of Human Motivation,"* in which he proposed that human needs form a hierarchy that can be visualised in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental physiological levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top. Maslow suggested that humans must first fulfill their most basic physiological needs, such as eating and sleeping, before fulfilling higher-level needs such as safety, love, esteem and finally self-actualisation. The most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire or focus motivation on the higher level needs. Different levels of motivation can occur at any time in the human mind, but Maslow focussed on identifying the basic and strongest types of motivation and the order in which they can be met. When a lower level of need fulfillment is not in place, it is technically possible to be fulfilled at a higher level. However, Maslow argues that this is an unstable fulfillment. *For example, if you're starving,* it doesn't matter if you're the world's leading User Experience designer, because eventually your hunger is going to overwhelm any satisfaction you get from your professional status. That's why we naturally seek to stabilise the lowest level of the hierarchy that is uncertain before we try to retain higher levels.

- Consult all five layers in Maslow's Pyramid to help you define which needs your user is primary focusing on fulfilling. Start reflecting on how your product or service can help fulfill some of those needs.

- Write down your user's needs.

The Hierarchy of Needs pyramid:

Level	Description
Self-actualised Needs	creativity, spontaneity, travelling, self-growth,
Esteem Needs	be recognized by others, social status, education, achievements, mastery, prestige
Love/Belonging Needs	have friends, family, intimacy, communities, relationships, sense of belonging
Safety Needs	feel safety, be secure financially, personally, healthy, protection from the elements
Physiological Needs	breathe, eat, drink, have sex, sleep

The Hierarchy of Needs

Step 3: Synthesise INSIGHTS

- An "Insight" is your remarkable realization that can help you to solve the current design challenge you're facing.

- Look to synthesise major insights, especially from contradictions between two user attributes. It can be found within one quadrant or in two different quadrants. You can also synthesise insights by asking yourself: "Why?" when you notice strange, tense, or surprising behaviour.

- Write down your insights.

Said

Did

Empathy map template

Thought

Felt

Learn more about how to use this template

Methods of using this template are taught in our online course **Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide**. Make full use of this template and learn more about design thinking by signing up for it today.

Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide

Beginner course

The world's leading companies, such as Apple, Google and Samsung, are already using the design thinking approach—because they know it's the way forward when it comes to innovation and product success. Through **Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide**, you will deep dive into the five phases of this paradigm-shifting approach to problem-solving—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. By receiving detailed guidance on problem-solving activities ranging from ideation techniques—such as brainstorming and using analogies—to ways of gathering feedback from your prototypes, you'll be able to download the other templates involved and effectively use them in your work. Get ready to unpack, explore, and master design thinking—using it to set yourself apart and unlock the next stage of your professional life.

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