

AWWWARDS®

# Aaron Gustafson

*Designing with Empathy*

A COLLABORATION WITH  Internet Explorer

# Designing with Empathy



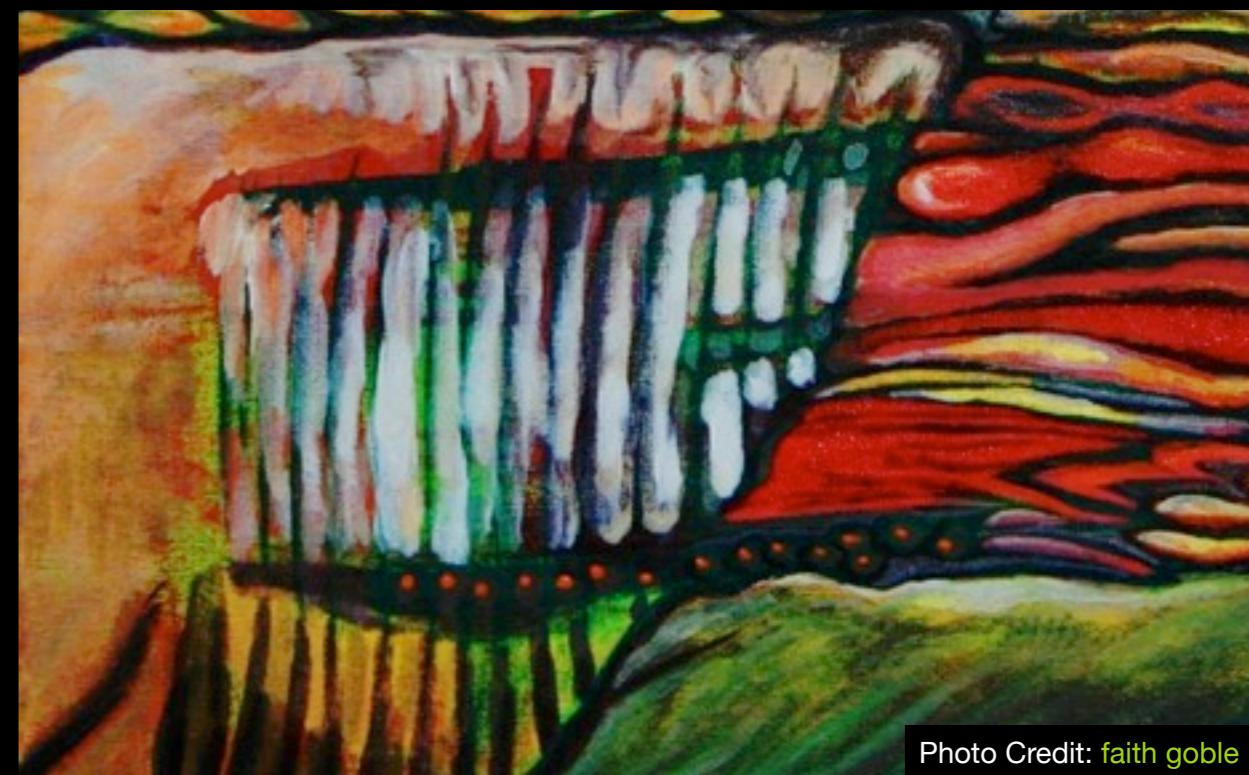
Aaron Gustafson  
@AaronGustafson  
[adaptivewebdesign.info](http://adaptivewebdesign.info)



# Designing with Empathy



# Design ≠ Art





Art serves the Artist

**“I’ve been amazed at how often those outside the discipline of design assume that what designers do is decoration—likely because so much bad design simply is decoration. Good design isn’t. Good design is problem solving.”**

**– Jeffrey Veen**



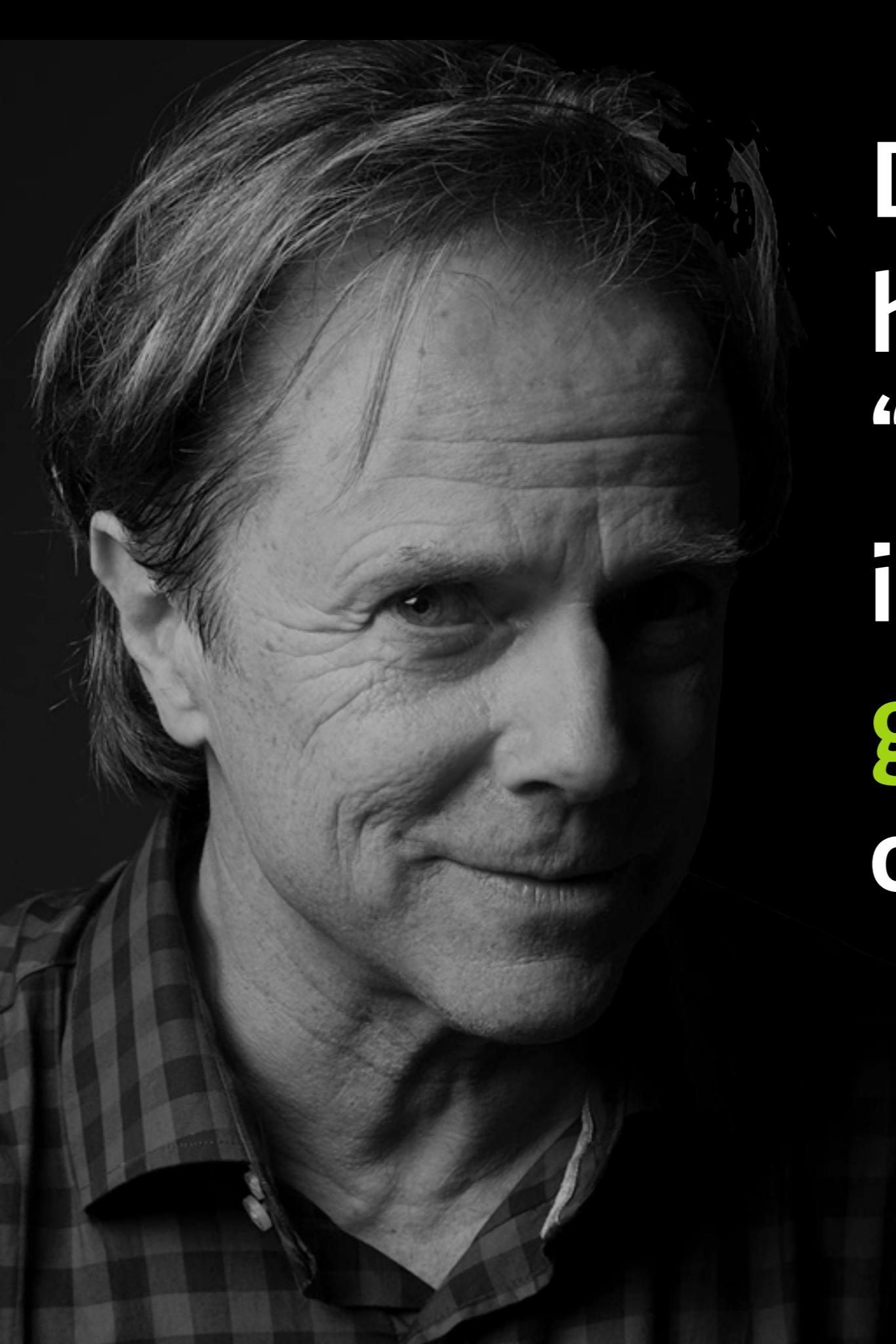
# de-sign

/də'zīn/

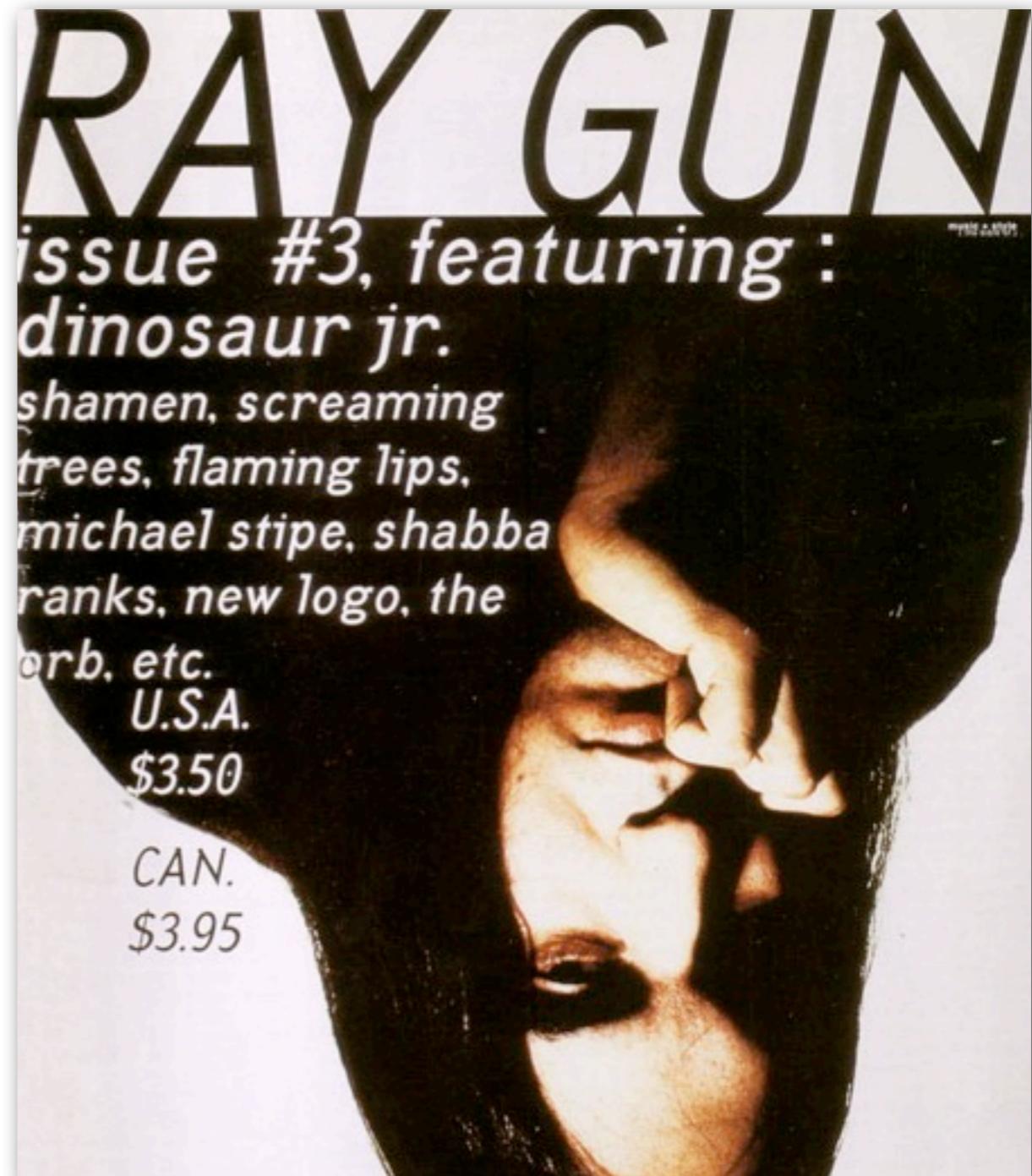
To devise for a specific function or end

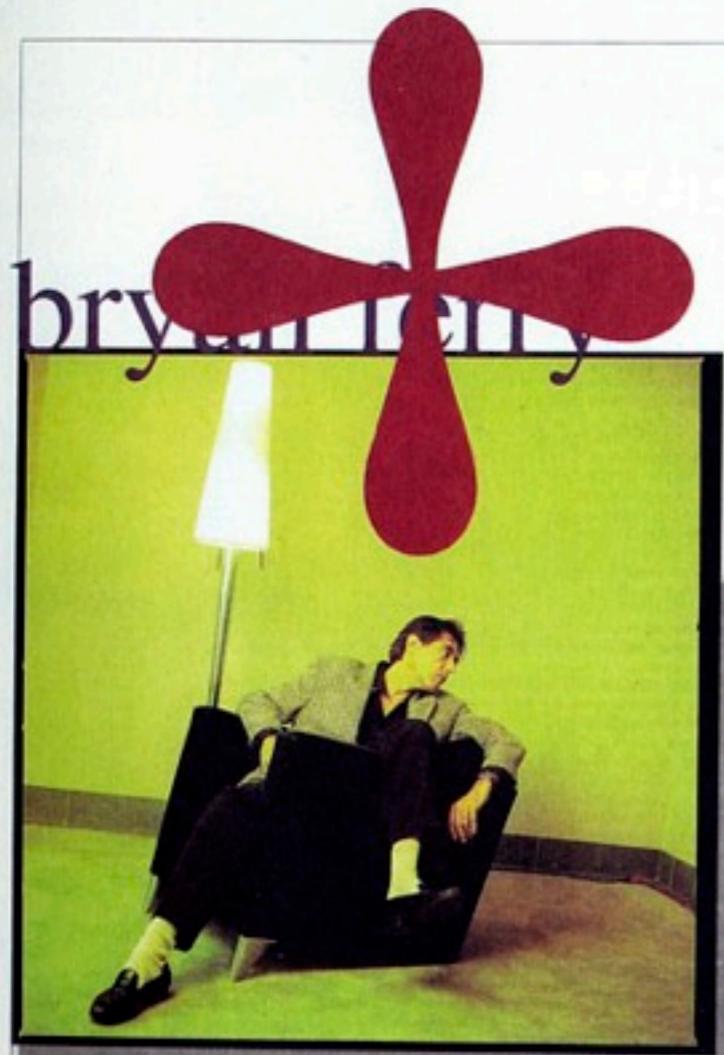
Classical: To indicate

Medieval Latin: *designare*, to mark out

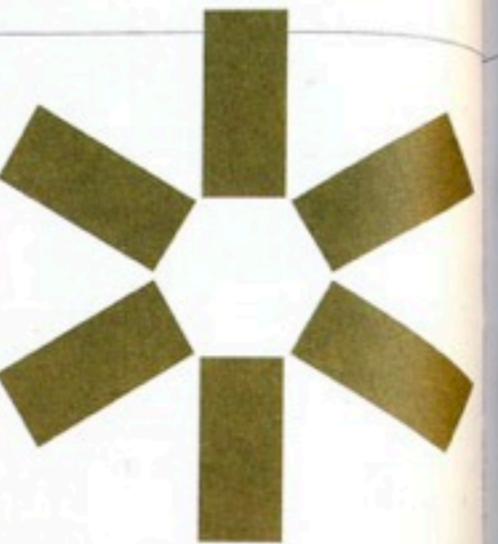
A black and white close-up photograph of David Carson's face. He has long, light-colored hair and is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a dark, collared shirt.

David Carson  
has been called  
“the most  
influential  
**graphic designer**  
of our times”





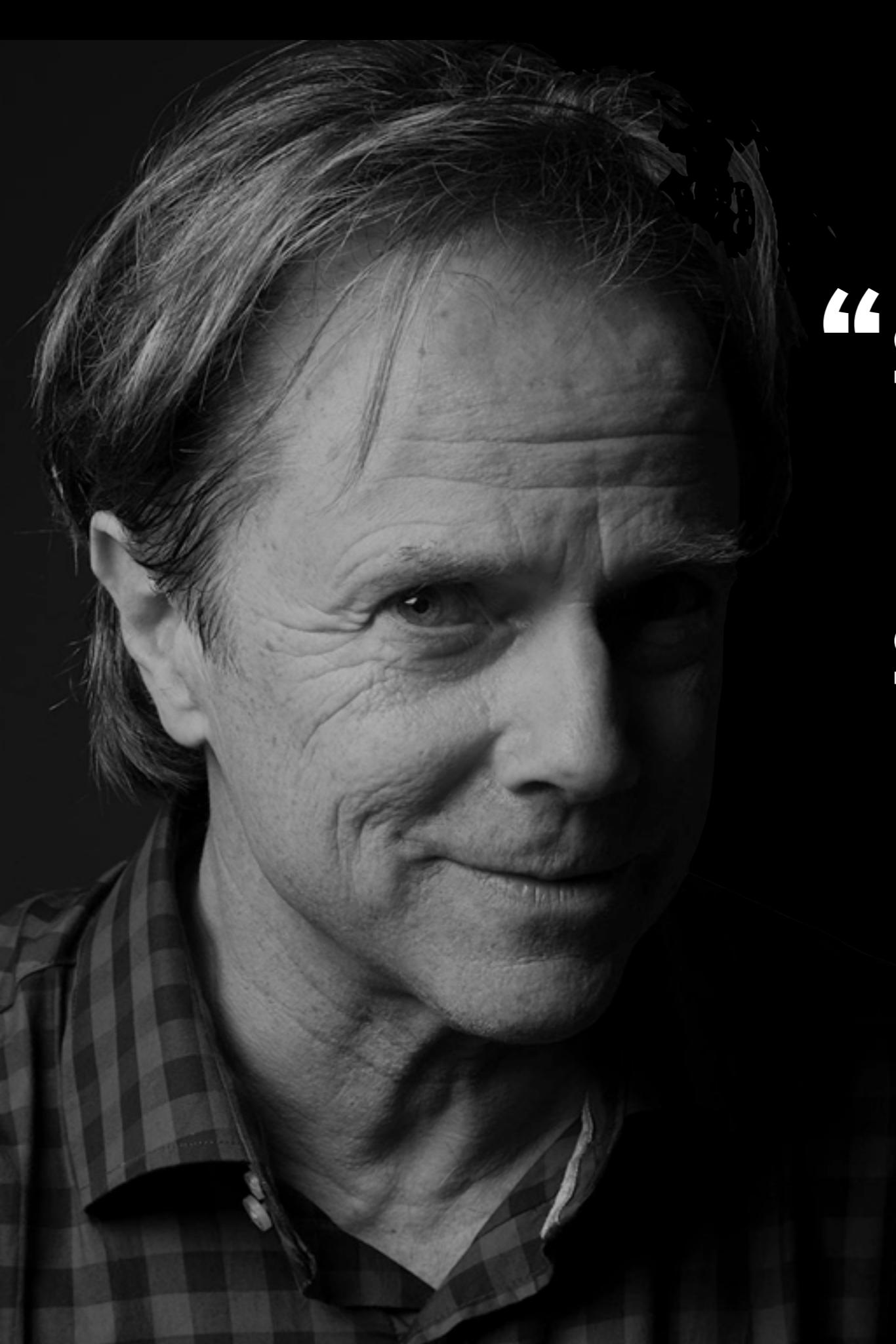
photos: Peter Morello, stylist: Jill Spector



the first time i ever saw a real propeller plane was in a movie. i was about four years old, and i was so fascinated by it that i asked my mom if we could get one. she said no, but i still wanted one. i asked her again, and she said yes. i was so happy! i got the propeller plane, and i played with it every day. i loved it! i still have it today, and i'm so glad i got it. i think it's a great reminder of my childhood.

**It was Art**

**It was Ego**

A black and white close-up photograph of a man's face. He has long, dark hair and deep-set eyes. He is wearing a plaid shirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on one side of his face.

**“subjective,  
personal, and  
self-indulgent”**



“Your ego is a  
bad designer.”

– Christopher Butler



#04 #05 #07 #18 #25 #33 #40 #49 #51 #61 #74 #86 #92 #96 #114 ⓘ



#04 #05 #07 #18 #25 #33 #40 #49 #51 #61 #74 #86 #92 #96 #114 ⓘ

Easy Flat System

# YESHIVAH OF FLATBUSH

## הישיבה דפלטבוש



X

Yom HaShoah Community Program- featuring Witness Theater Sunday April 7 7:00pm



quick news: 3/06/2013 - 1st Annual Engineering Symposium at JBHS! [Read More](#)





quick news: 4/15/2013 8:00 PM - Yom Ha'atzmaut Community Program Monday April 15, 2013





Just because you can  
**doesn't** mean you should





Design  
isn't about  
showing off

# Design to



communicate  
not alienate

**Design = Creativity  
for Communication**

# Designing with Empathy

# em·pa·thy

/'em-pə-thē/

From the Greek *empathia* meaning  
“state of emotion”

# **em·pa·thy**

**/'em-pə-thē/**

**The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another ... without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner**



Meet  
Charlie

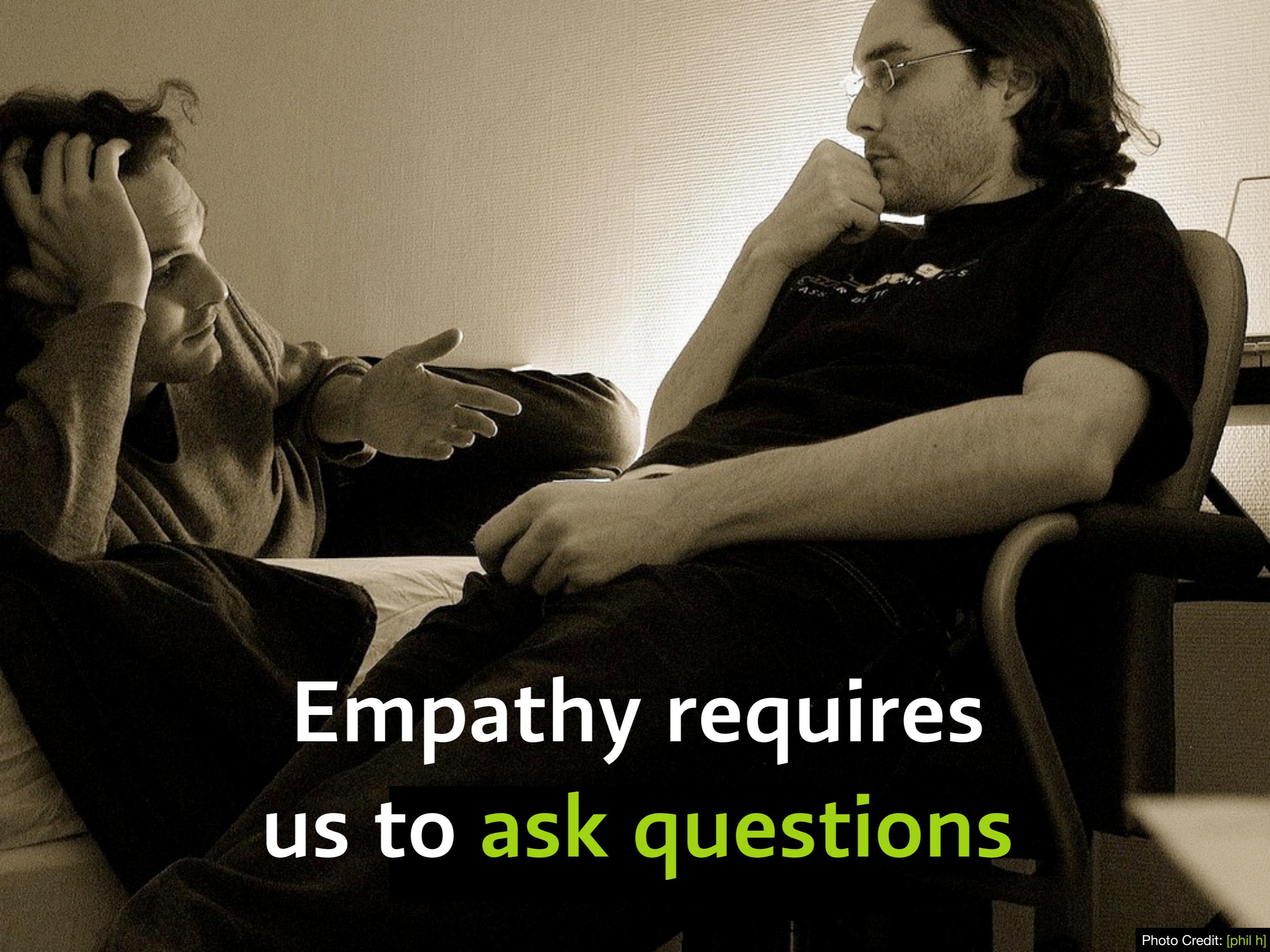


and  
**Jack**

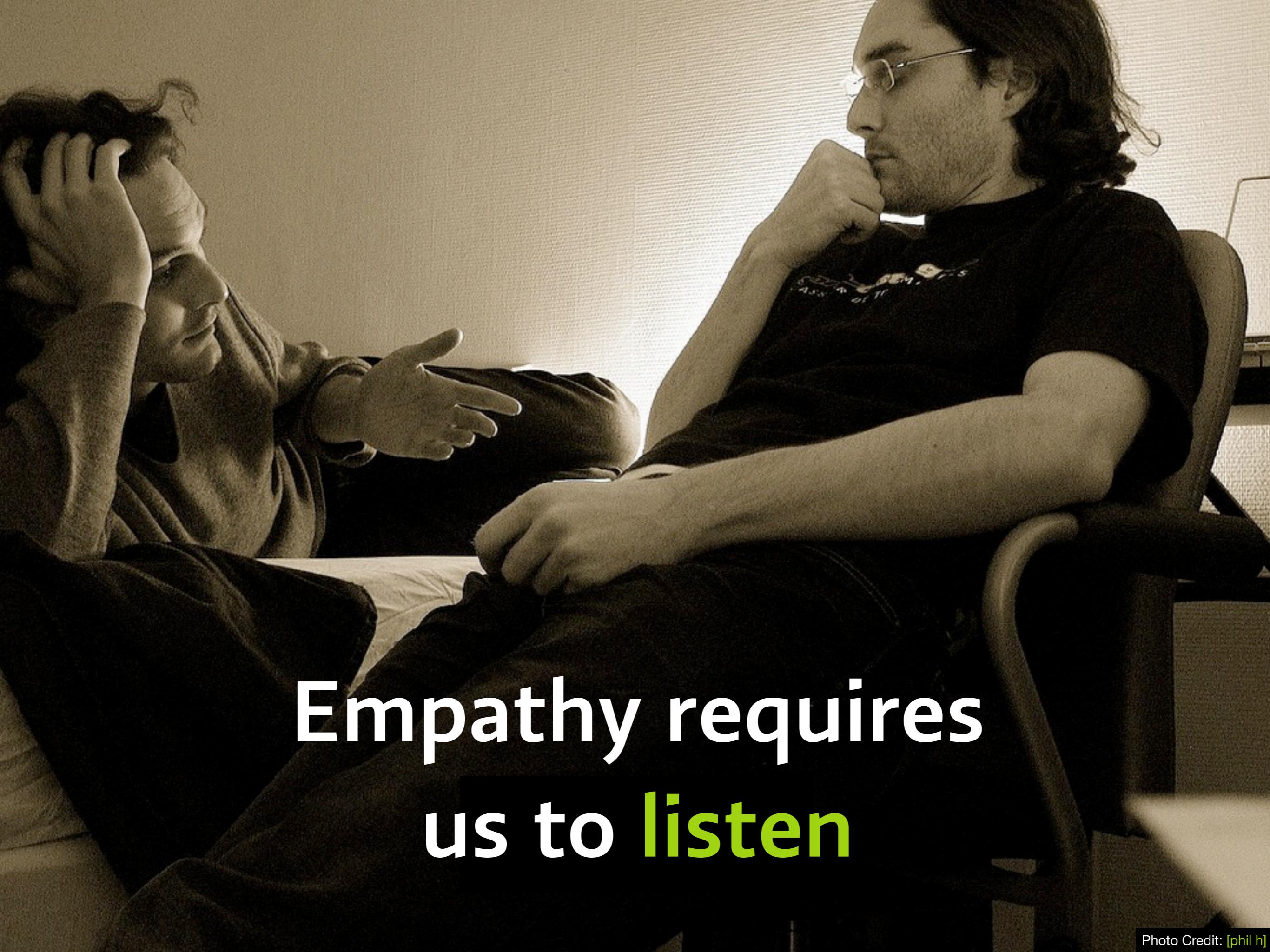


A black and white photograph of two people in a dimly lit room. A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt, is seated and gesturing with his hands as if speaking. A woman with her hair tied back is lying down, looking up at him. The lighting is dramatic, creating strong shadows.

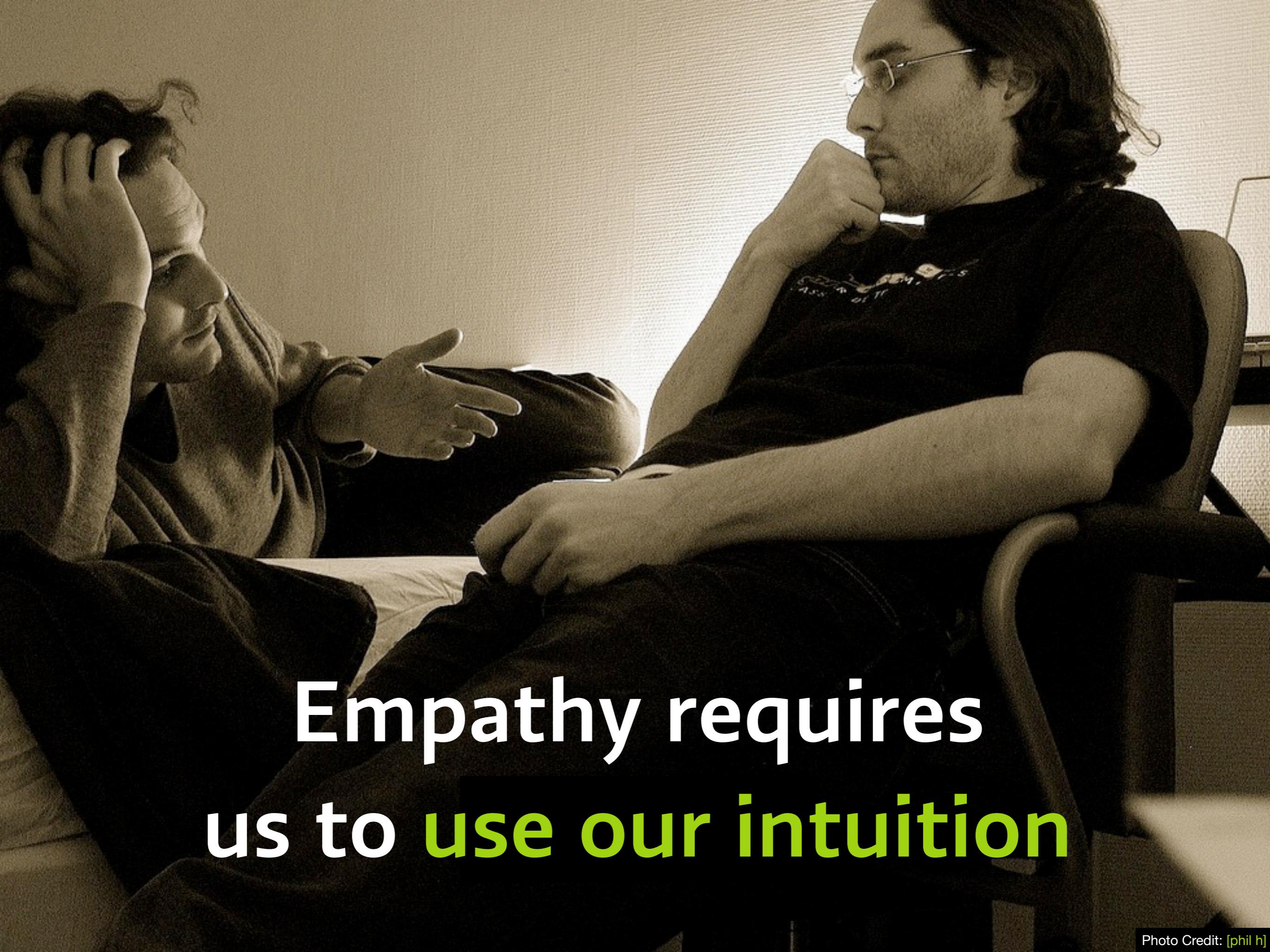
Empathy requires  
us to observe

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman in a dimly lit room. The man, wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt, is seated and gesturing with his hands as if speaking. The woman, with her hair tied back, is seated across from him, looking down. The lighting is dramatic, creating strong shadows.

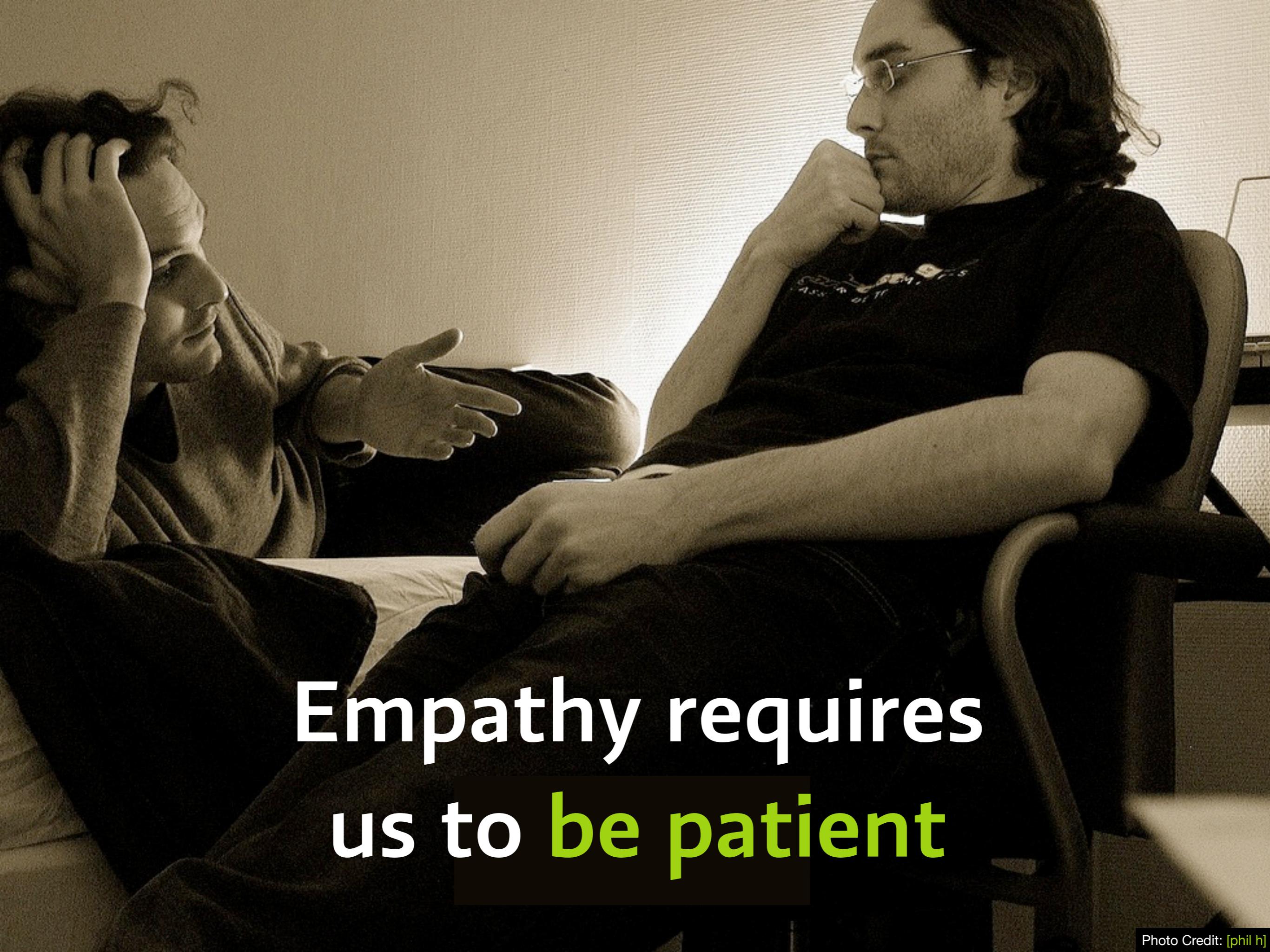
Empathy requires  
us to ask questions

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman in a dimly lit room. The woman, on the left, is gesturing with her hands while speaking. The man, on the right, is wearing glasses and has his hand near his chin, appearing to listen attentively.

Empathy requires  
us to **listen**

A black and white photograph of two people in a dimly lit room. A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt, sits in a chair with his hand near his chin, looking thoughtful. A woman with her hair tied back, wearing a light-colored hoodie, sits across from him, gesturing with her hands as if speaking or explaining something.

Empathy requires  
us to use our intuition

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman in a hospital room. The man, wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt, sits in a chair with his hand near his chin, looking thoughtful. The woman, wearing a light-colored hoodie, lies in a hospital bed, gesturing with her hands as if explaining something. A medical device is visible on her chest.

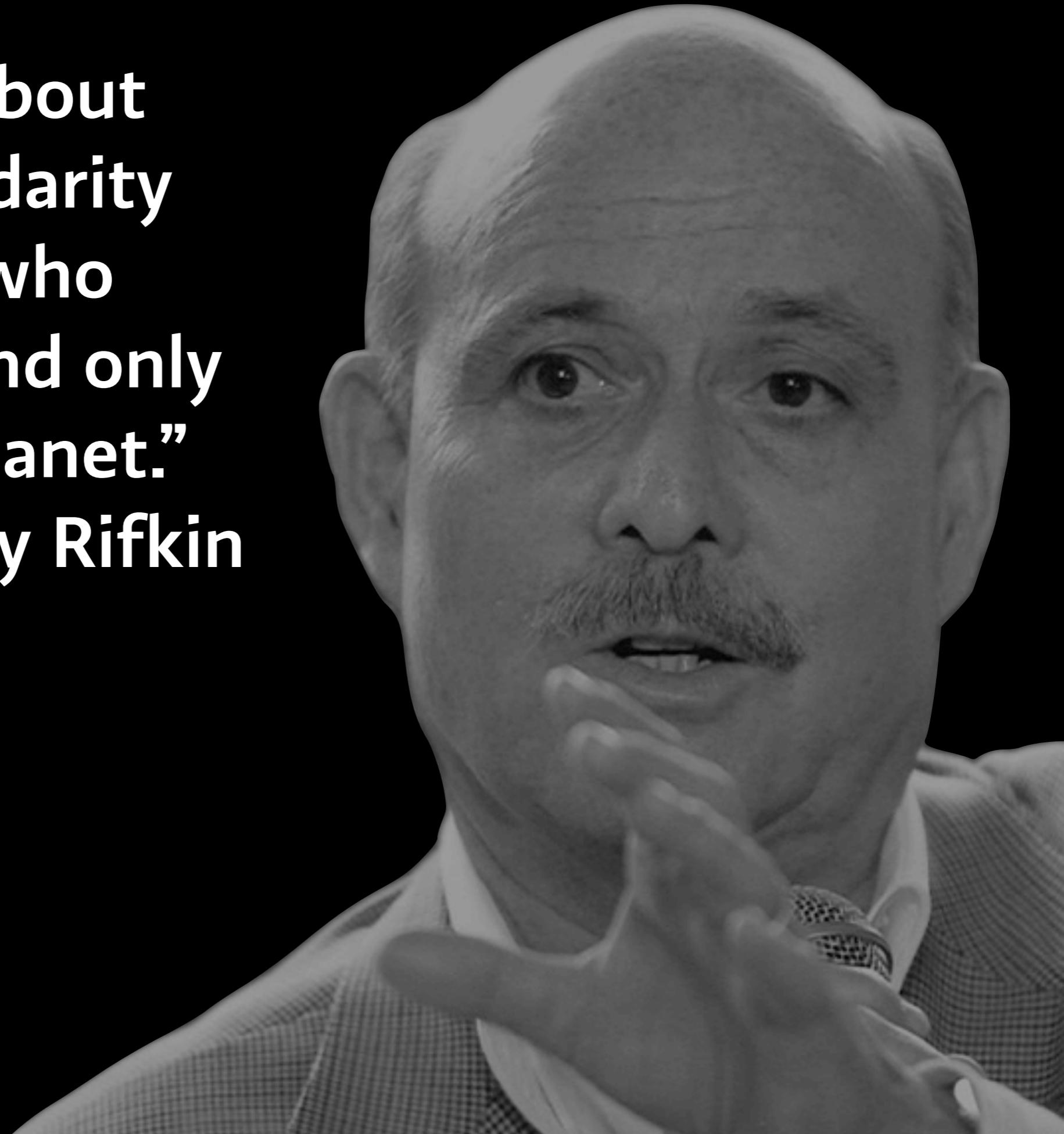
Empathy requires  
us to be patient

# Perspective is everything



**“Empathy is about  
showing solidarity  
with others who  
have a one and only  
life on this planet.”**

**– Jeremy Rifkin**





Solidarity requires  
communication

# Global Community



## Nation States



## Religious Groups



## Tribes



Global response  
within 3 hours

# **em·pa·thy**

**/'em-pə-thē/**

**The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another ... without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner**

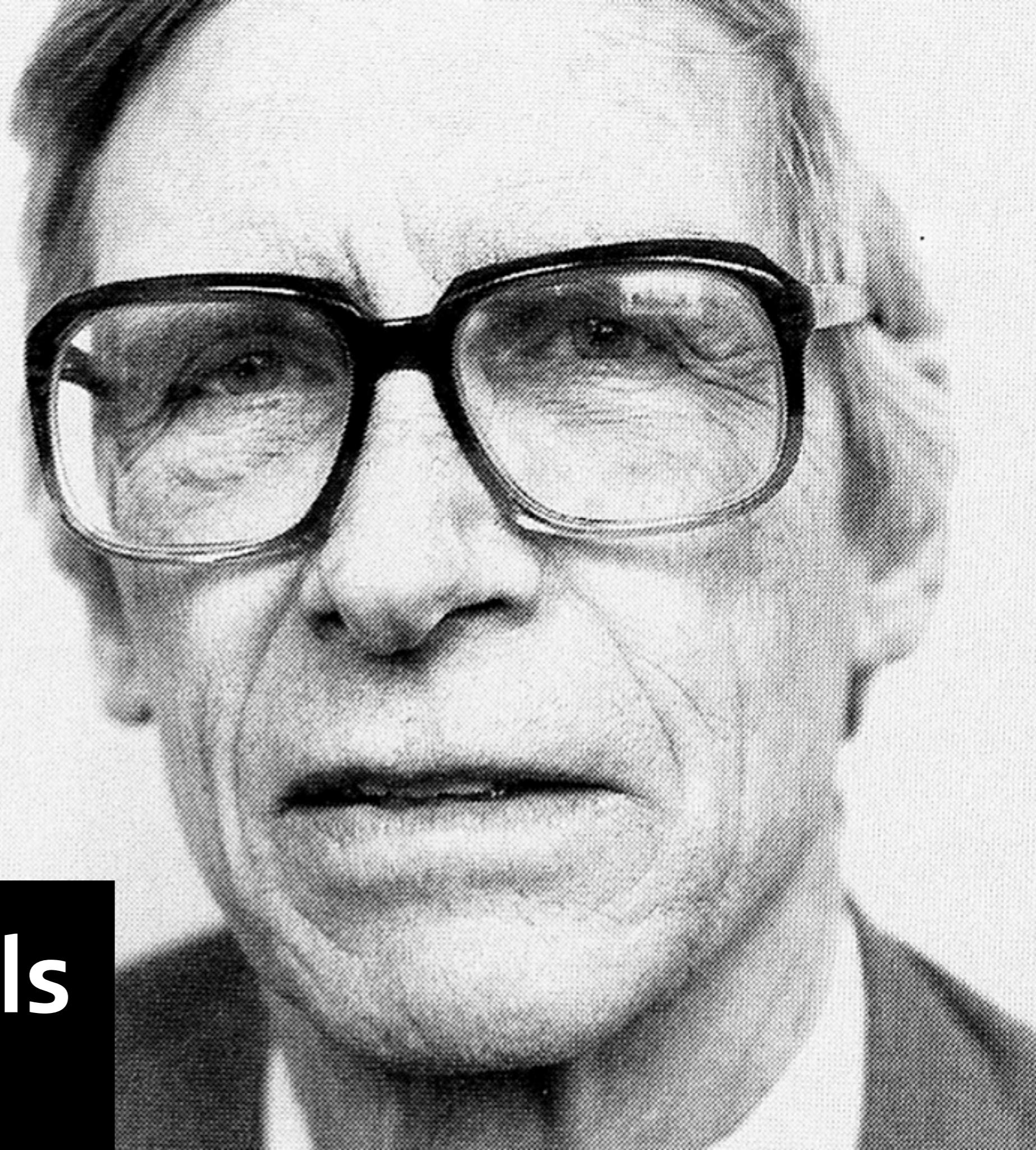
# **em·pa·thy**

*/'em-pə-thē/*

**The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another ... without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner**

**Also:** the capacity for this

**John Rawls**  
1921-2002

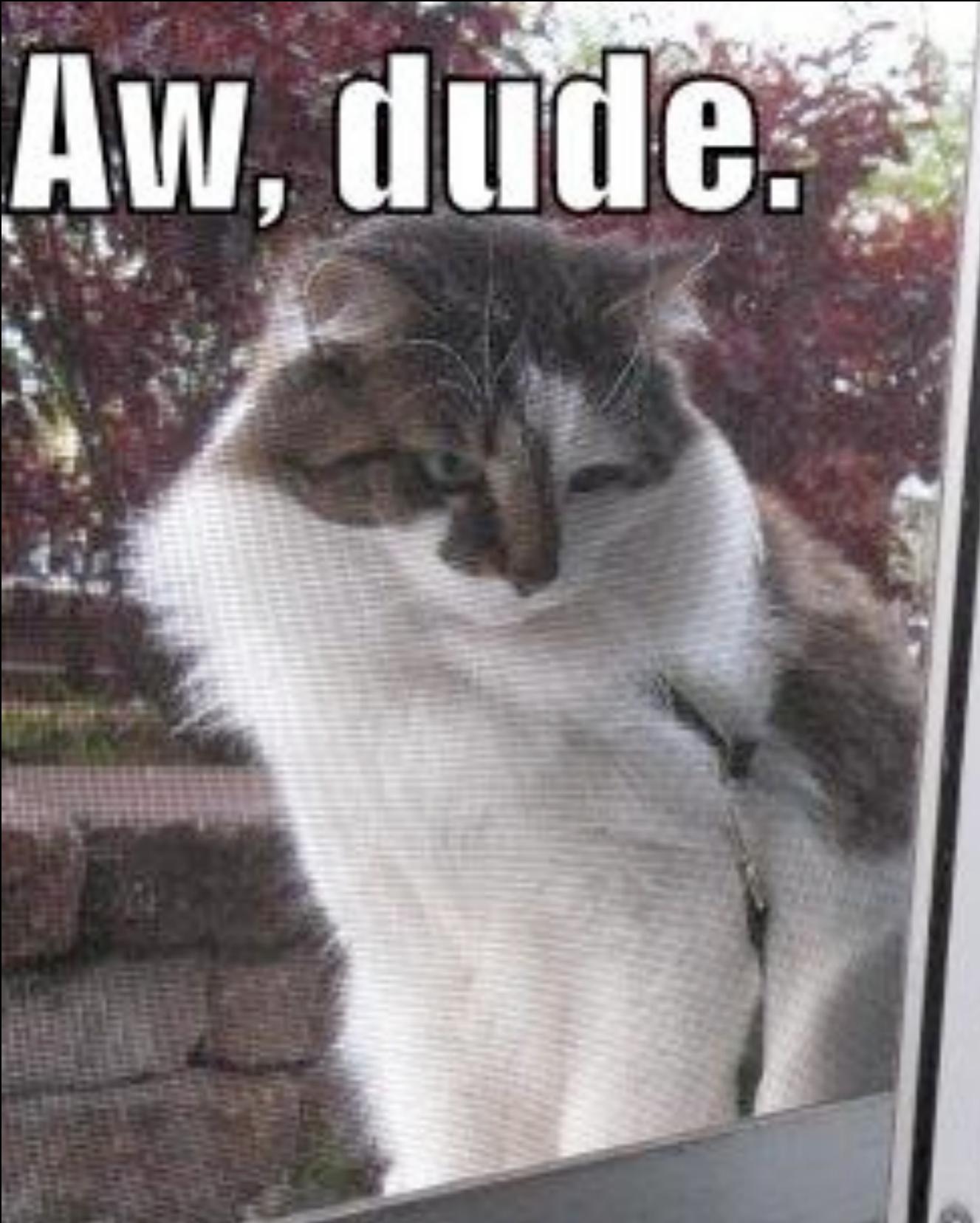


# Selfishness is a **survival instinct**



We are able to empathize by  
seeing ourselves  
in others.





**Aw, dude.**



**That SUCKS.**

# Personas

# foster empathy



“Tell me more! I need Internet at home and in my classroom. So, it’s got to work. When I do have trouble, though, I want to be able to fix it quickly on my own.”

My school continuously strives to be a premier educational institution in the state of Georgia. Technology is now a part of our everyday lives, so I use technology and the Internet in my classroom. I use it for personal projects, but also for classroom projects with all of my students. When in a classroom with 30 middle school kids, I don’t have time to call the DSL provider if I have trouble with the connection. So, I

Teach Me

# TINA

## LEARNING FOCUSED Teacher

title

Science Teacher

company name

Crabapple Middle School

industry

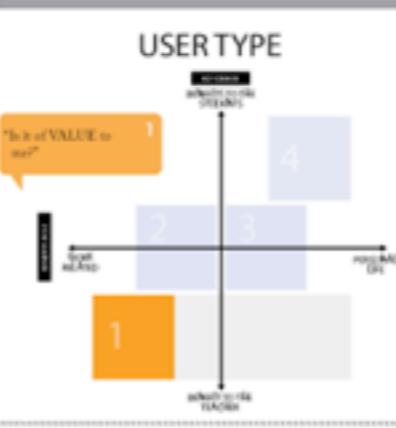
Education

location

Roswell, Georgia

description

Crabapple Middle School has enjoyed twenty plus years of excellence in education since its opening in 1983. In 1988, Crabapple Middle became Fulton County's first National School of Excellence and a Georgia School of Excellence. In 2003, Crabapple Middle was recognized as one of the first Georgia Lighthouse School to Watch for excellence in middle level education.



### EMPLOYMENT

- » Medium sized middle school - Science teacher - Southeastern United States

### TECH SAVVY

- » Knows some computer jargon, but may need further explanations for some terms and concepts

### COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

- » Likes seeing connection speed and other detailed information pertaining to her DSL connection

Credit: Kevin O'Connor

They also  
frequently  
devolve  
into another  
name for  
**“the user”**





Personas  
need to  
be real.

They need  
to be  
human.

User Scenarios =  
situational empathy

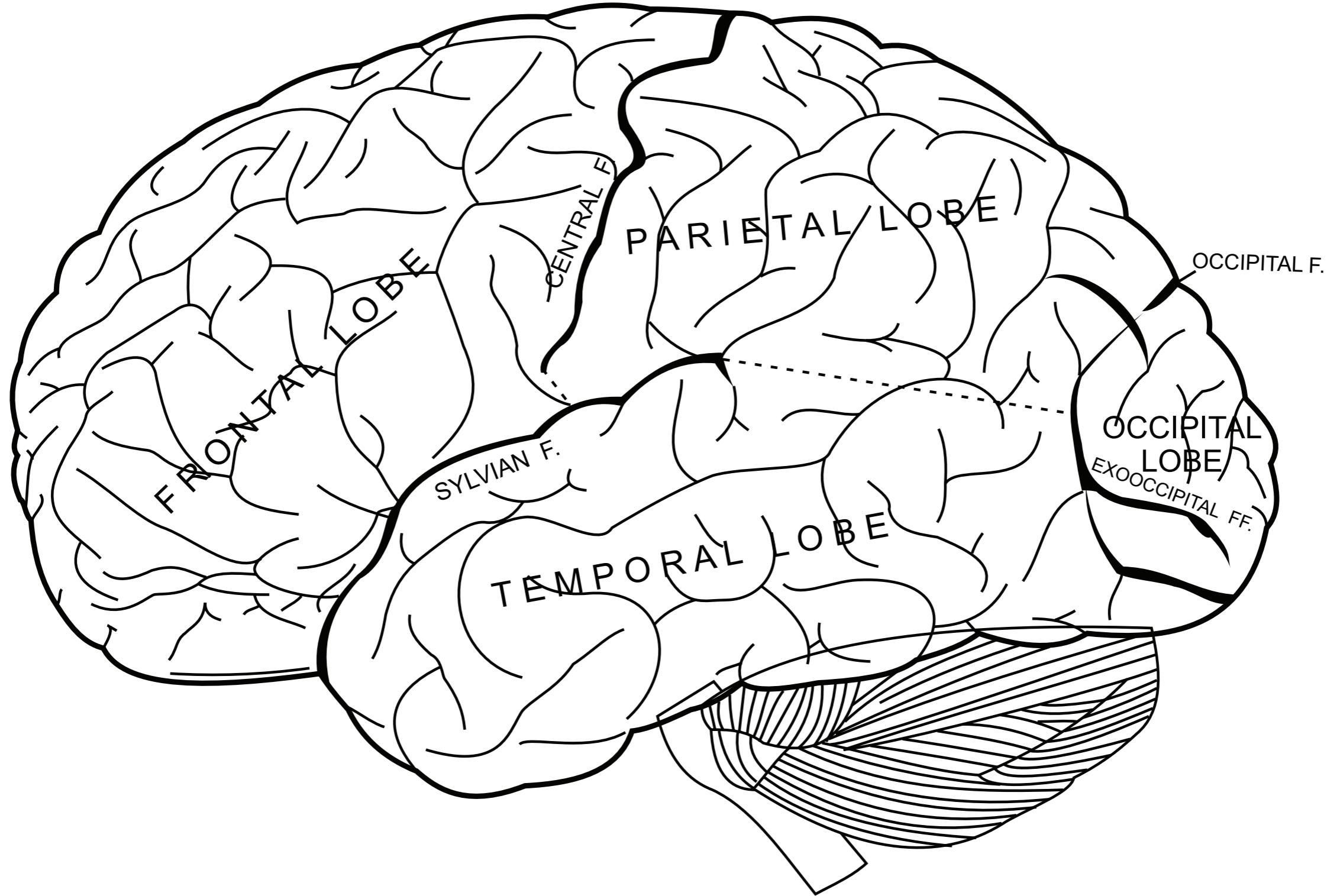


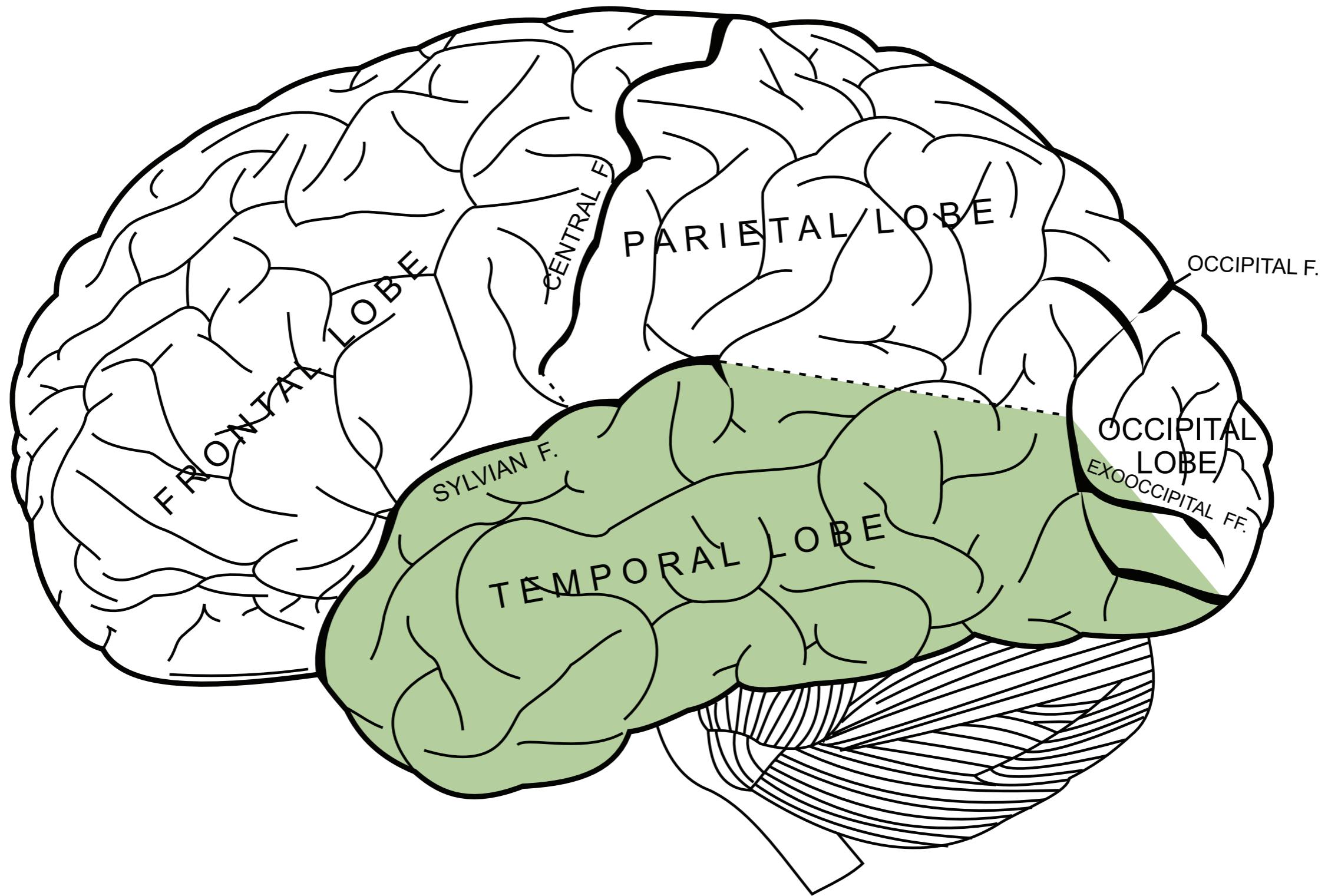
User Scenarios =  
situational empathy

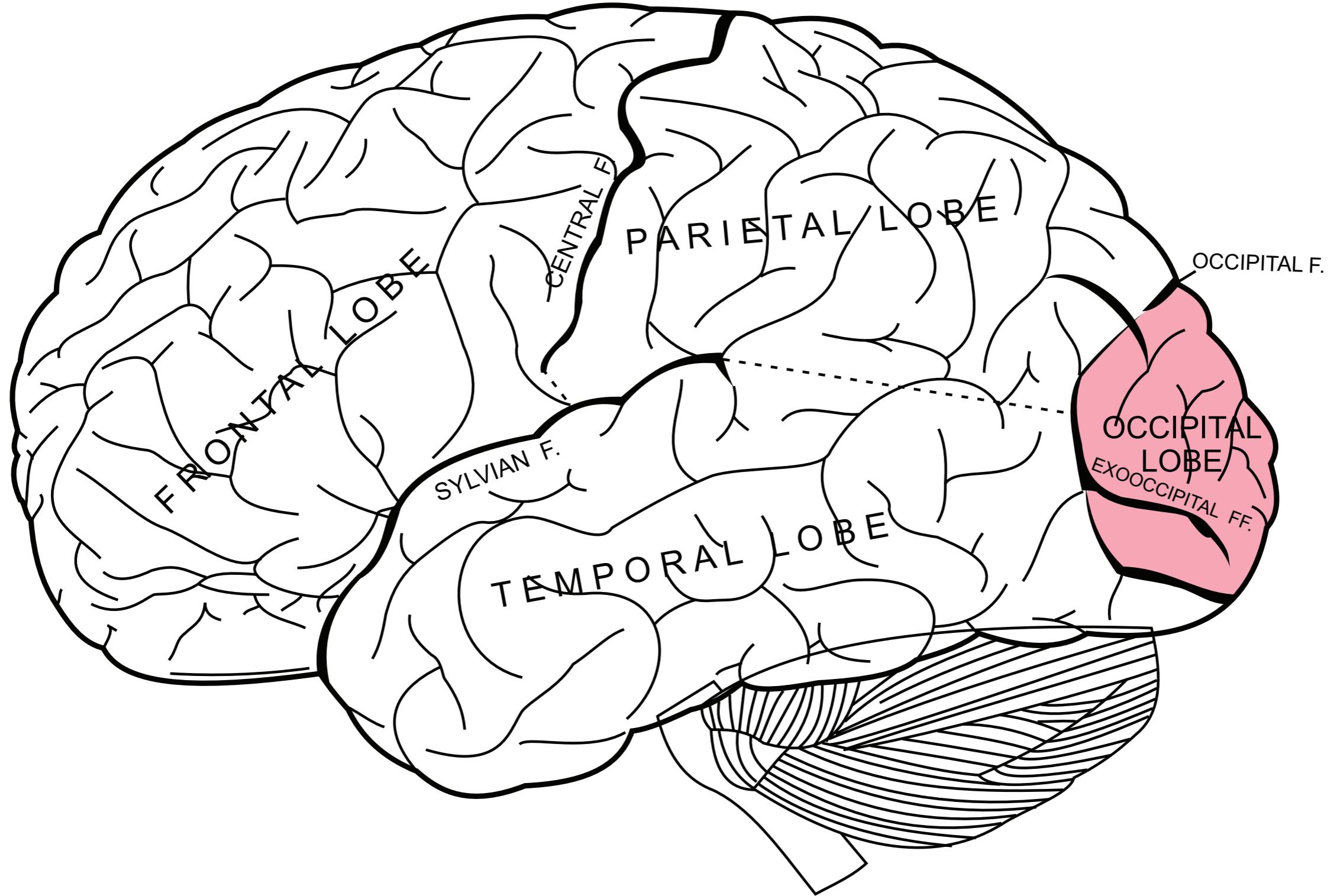


Design is  
problem  
solving









# Call out the relevant facts:

Bob is a mechanic

He is left- handed

He wants to look up parts info (and possibly order a replacement part) while under a car



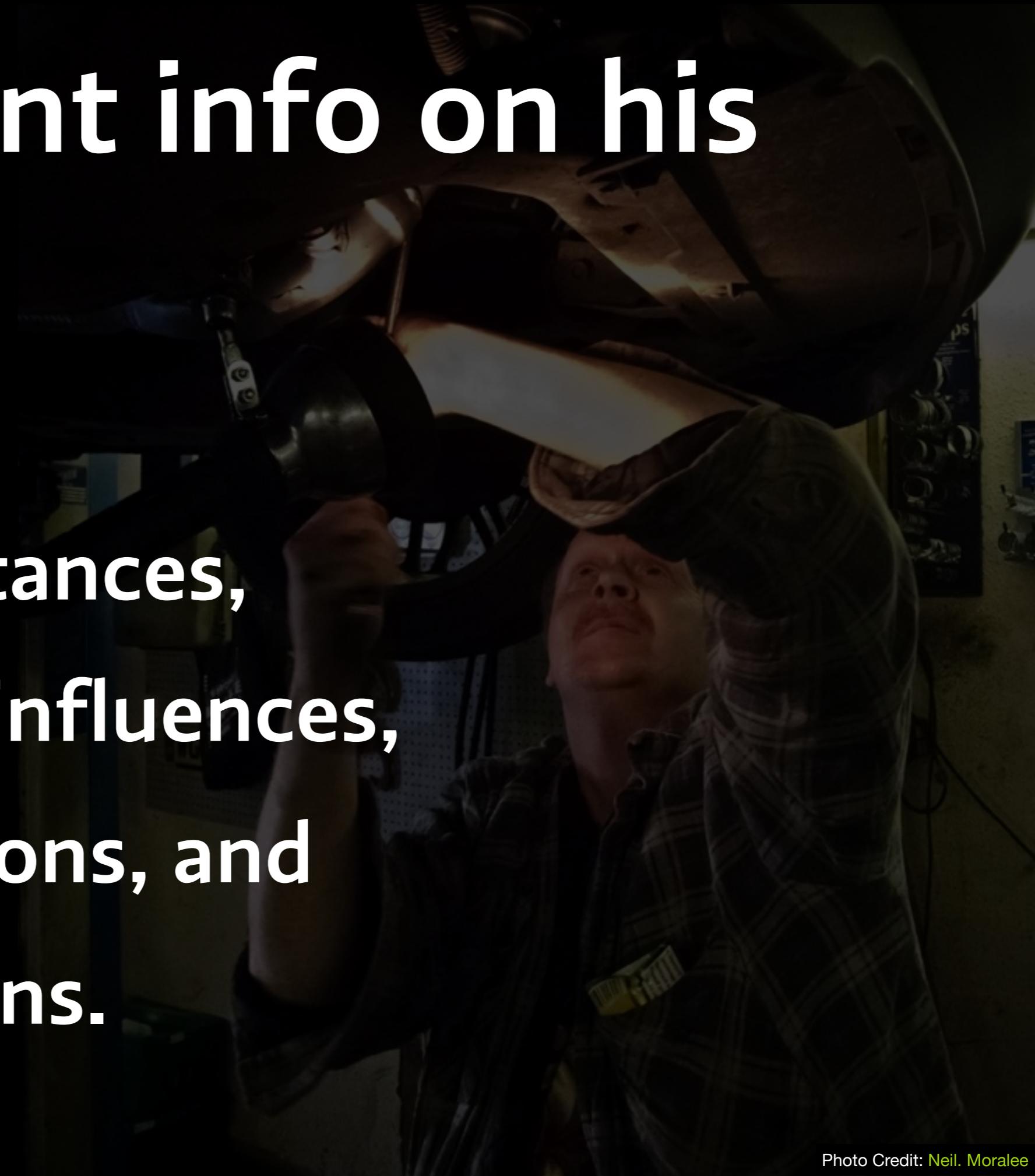
We only need **enough detail**  
to be able to put ourselves in  
his shoes.

Who cares  
about his  
macchiato  
addiction?



# We want info on his

- goals,
- needs,
- circumstances,
- outside influences,
- distractions, and
- limitations.



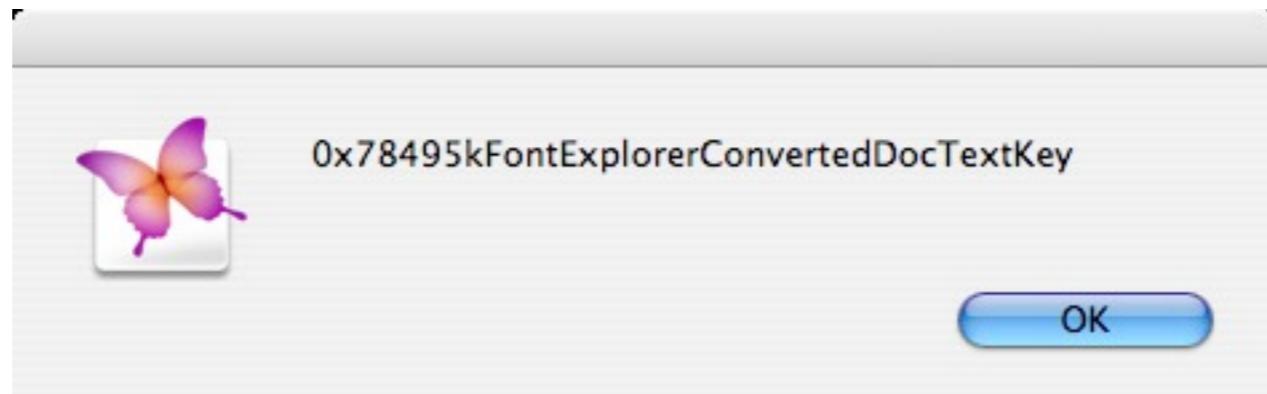
User scenarios help us  
empathize in a **productive** way





# Set a **performance budget**





Author **appropriate** content

# Consider physical limitations





Facilitate **satisfaction**

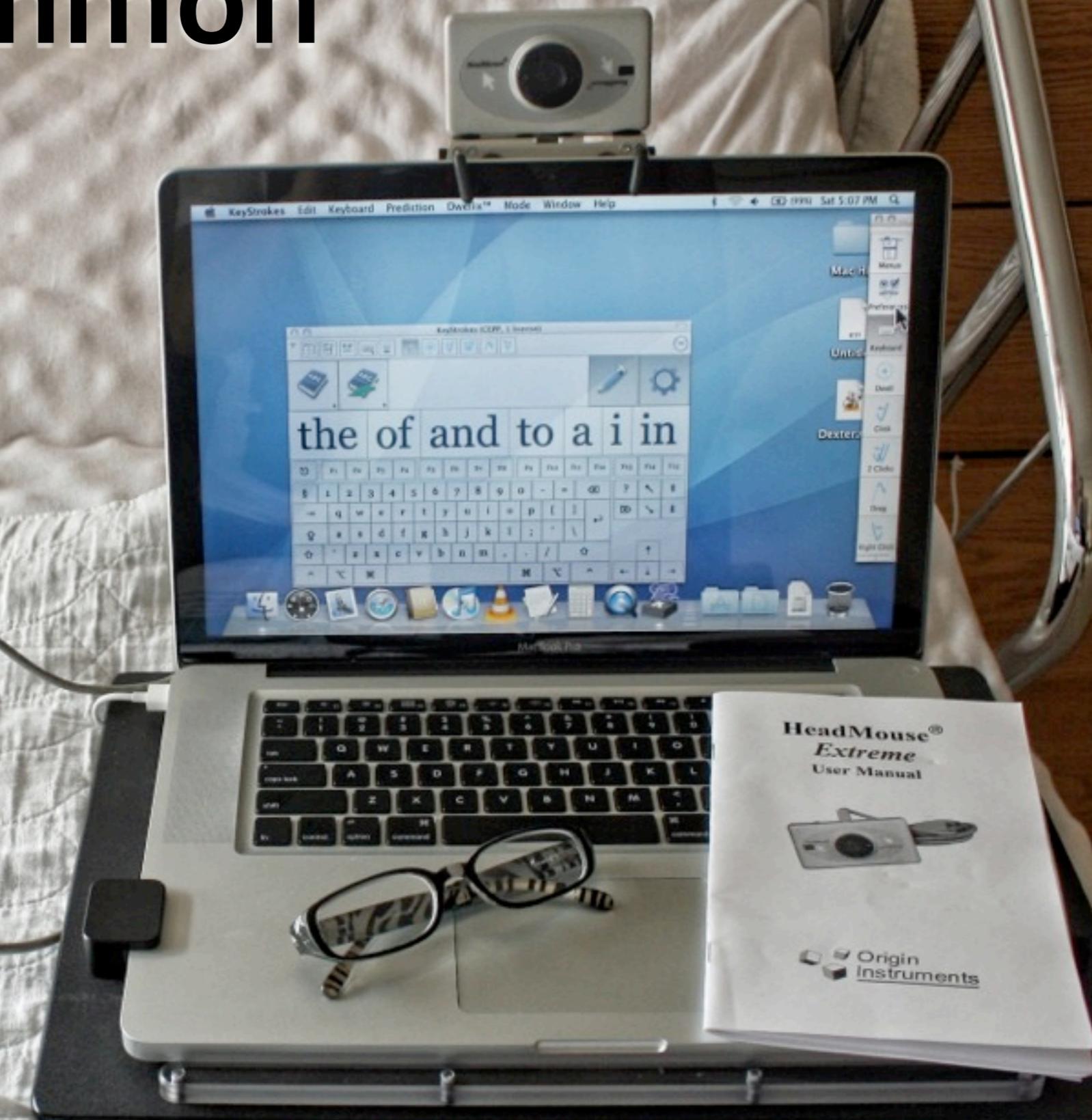
# Don't create unnecessary barriers



Don't force  
your agenda  
on your  
customers



# Support common assistive technology



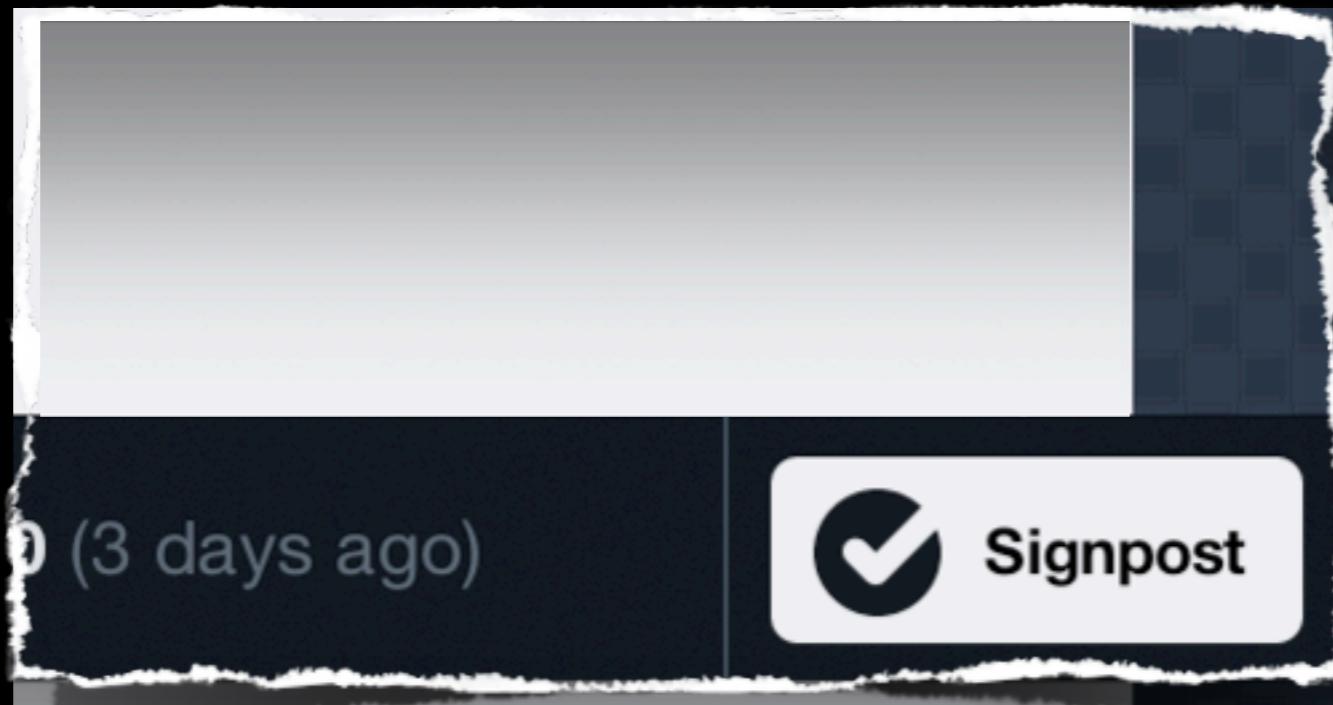
Help users learn to  
accomplish complex  
tasks and

**reward**

them for  
doing so.



# Progressive Reduction

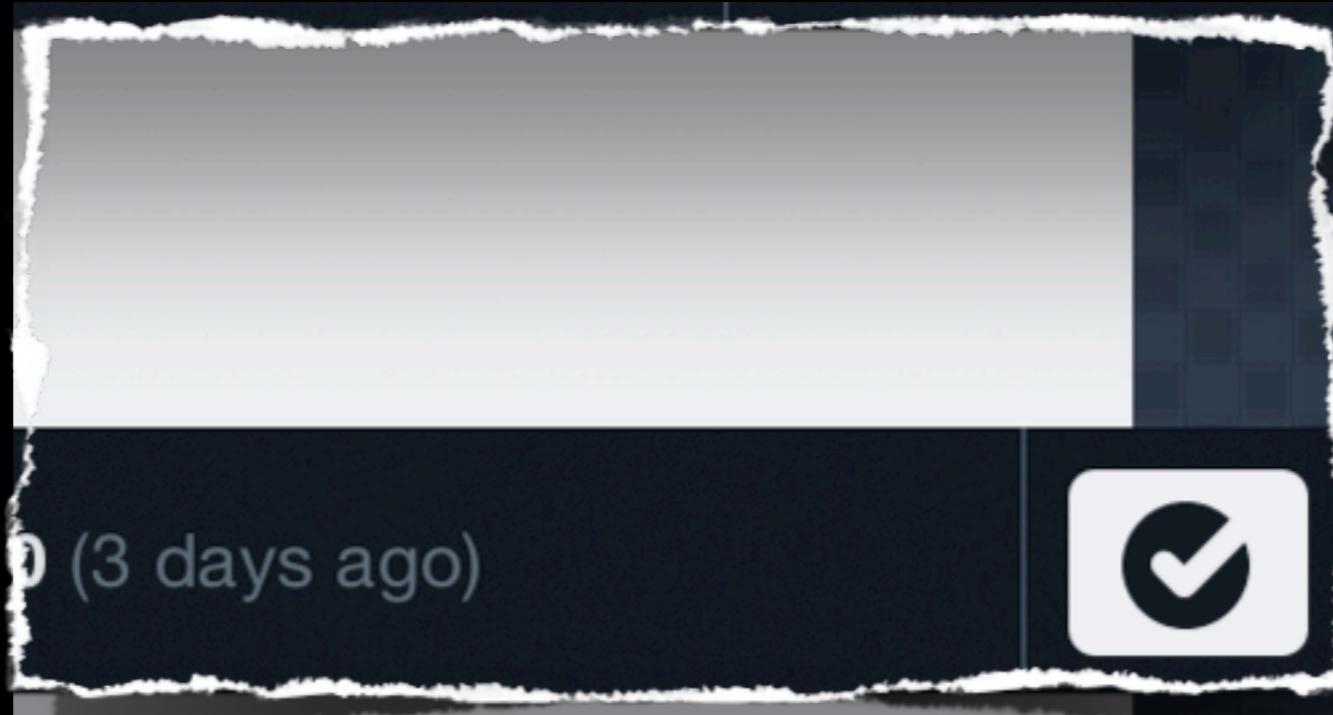


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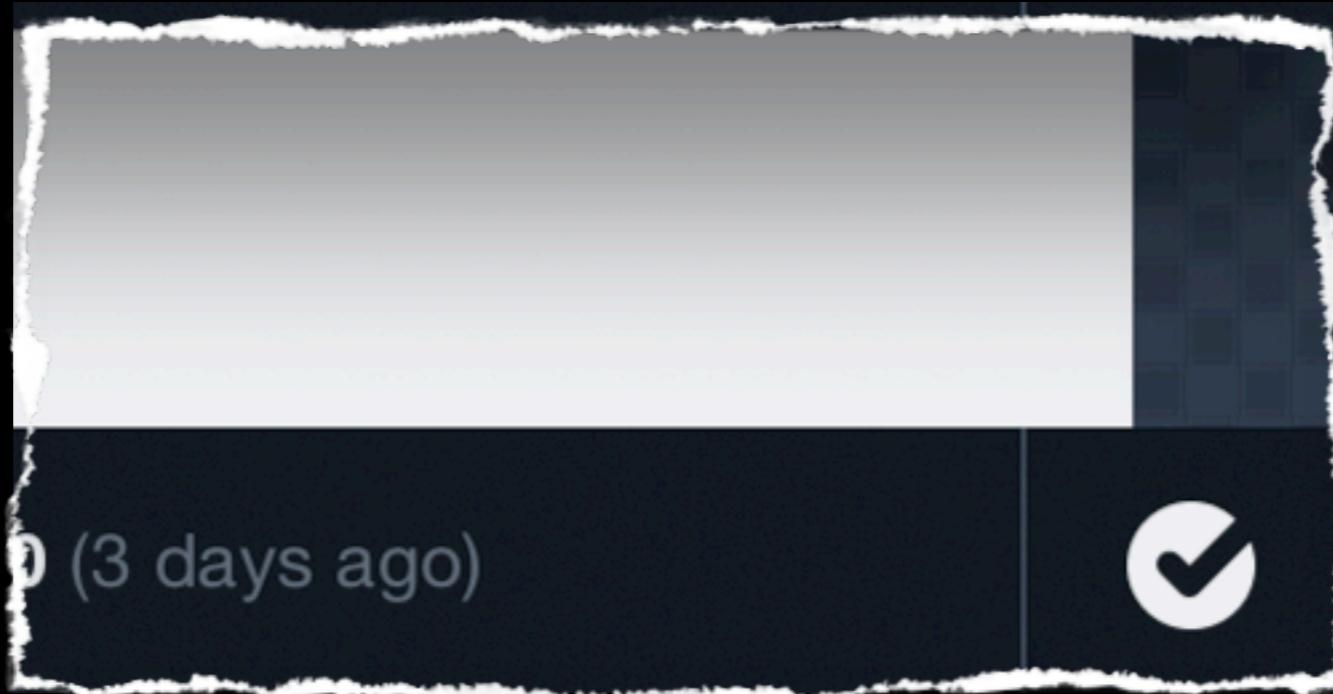


Signpost

# Progressive Reduction



# Progressive Reduction



Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find harmful.

-Buddhism

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

-Christianity

# The Golden Rule

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

-Islam

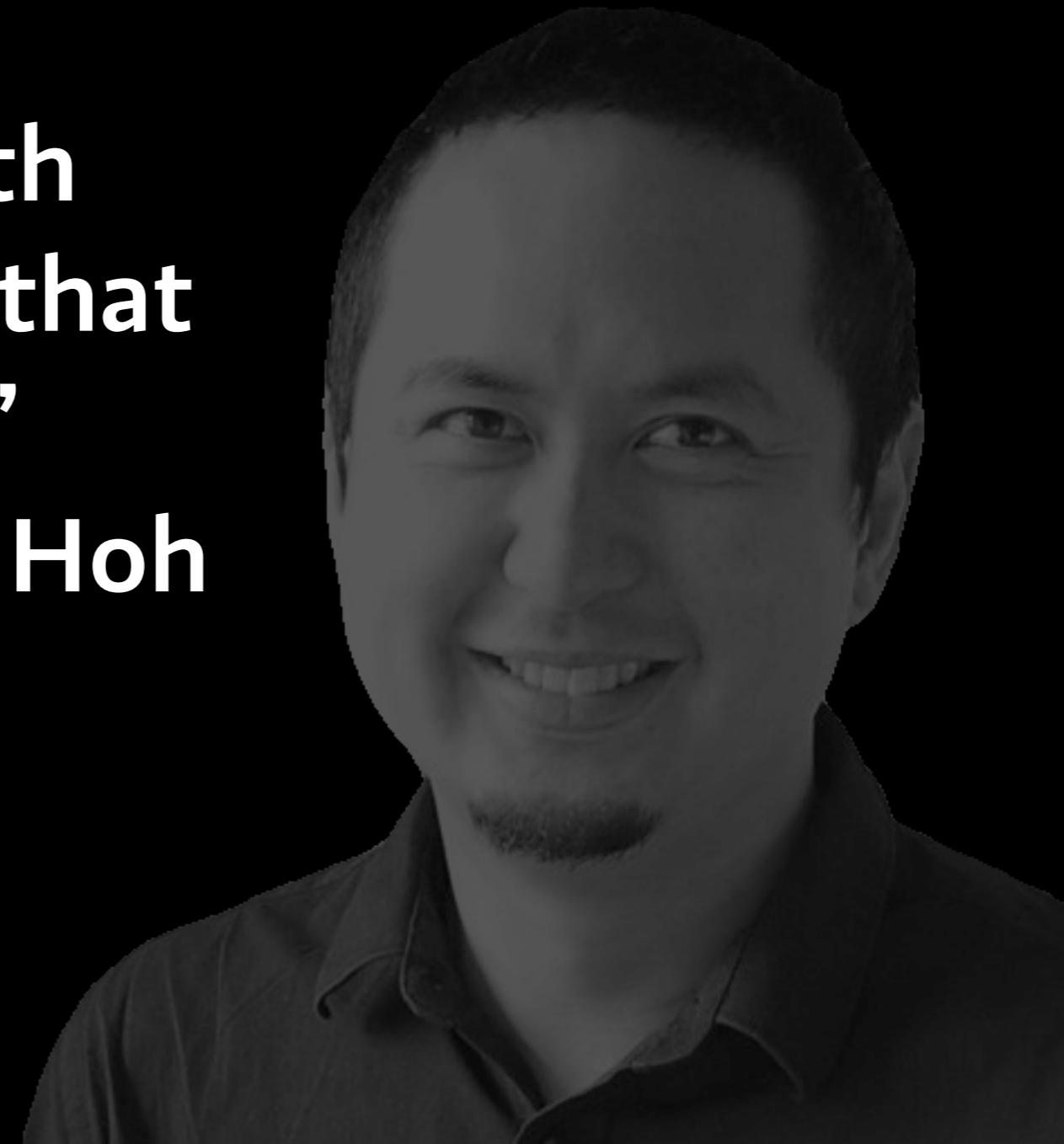
What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary.

-Judaism



“[Progressive enhancement]  
keeps the design open to  
the possibilities of sexiness  
in opportune contexts,  
rather than starting with  
the ‘whole’ experience that  
must be compromised.”

– Ben Hoh



# Egalitarianism

Equality of opportunity,  
not equality of outcome

# Designing with Empathy

# Thanks!

 @aarongustafson

# Designing with Empathy

by Aaron Gustafson  
@AaronGustafson

Further reading:  
[http://is.gd/readlist\\_empathy](http://is.gd/readlist_empathy)

Slides available at  
<http://slideshare.net/AaronGustafson>

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