**Empathize Stage, pulled from resource guide**

**What**

Empathy is the centerpiece of a human-centered design process. The Empathize mode is the work you do to understand people, within the context of your design challenge. It is your effort to understand the way they do things and why, their physical and emotional needs, how they think about the world, and what is meaningful to them.

**Why**

As a design thinker, the problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of a particular group of people; in order to design for them, you must gain empathy for who they are and what is important to them.

Observing what people do and how they interact with their environment gives you clues about what they think and feel. It also helps you learn about what they need. By watching people, you can capture physical manifestations of their experiences – what they do and say. This will allow you to infer the intangible meaning of those experiences in order to uncover insights. These insights give you direction to create innovative solutions. The best solutions come out of the best insights into human behavior. But learning to recognize those insights is harder than you might think. Why? Because our minds automatically filter out a lot of information without even realizing it. We need to learn to see things “with a fresh set of eyes,” and empathizing is what gives us those new eyes.

Engaging with people directly reveals a tremendous amount about the way they think and the values they hold. Sometimes these thoughts and values are not obvious to the people who hold them, and a good conversation can surprise both the designer and the subject by the unanticipated insights that are revealed. The stories that people tell and the things that people say they do—even if they are different from what they actually do—are strong indicators of their deeply held beliefs about the way the world is. Good designs are built on a solid understanding of these beliefs and values.

**How**

*Observe.*

View users and their behavior in the context of their lives. As much as possible do observations in relevant contexts in addition to interviews. Some of the most powerful realizations come from noticing a disconnect between what someone says and what he does. Others come from a work-around someone has created which may be very surprising to you as the designer, but she may not even think to mention in conversation.

*Engage.*

Sometimes we call this technique ‘interviewing’ but it should really feel more like a conversation. Prepare some questions you’d like to ask, but expect to let the conversation deviate from them. Keep the conversation only loosely bounded. Elicit stories from the people you talk to, and always ask “Why?” to uncover deeper meaning. Engagement can come through both short ‘intercept’ encounters and longer scheduled conversations.

*Watch and Listen.*

Certainly you can, and should, combine observation and engagement. Ask someone to show you how they complete a task. Have them physically go through the steps, and talk you through why they are doing what they do. Ask them to vocalize what’s going through their mind as they perform a task or interact with an object. Have a conversation in the context of someone’s home or workplace – so many stories are embodied in artifacts. Use the environment to prompt deeper questions.

**Stefano**

Empathizing with coworkers at the office:

* People tend to lean back when they want to relax (seat not perfectly perpendicular to the ground)
* Still important to be able to lean forward when more concentration is required
  + Angle of the seat cannot be too far backwards, otherwise this requires too much core strength and can be tiring
  + The chair itself doesn’t have to move, but has to be comfortable to sit in at both positions (leaning back and leaning forward)
* Armrests seem to play a big part in how comfortable the person finds the chair
  + If there are no armrests the person seems to get a bit uneasy
  + Chairs with no armrests tend to be placed in places where we don’t want people to spend too much time (like in a break room)

Empathizing with myself:

* I tend to lean to one side, which means the weight distribution will not be uniform
  + This likely means our chair will have to support more weight than the target weight, otherwise it might break when somebody sits on it
* I tend to sit with my legs to the side of the seat, not quite at the front, as a way to be able to lean forward with my torso while my seat is tilted backward for lower back comfort
  + More comfortable this way, also reduces stress in the core from sitting
* Leaning seems to shift the centre of mass considerably, which could cause falling if the base is not wide enough

**Amlan**

Empathizing with colleague at the office:

* Seating preference at home is mostly seating at the couch with soft, comfortable back support and at the office, sitting in a straight chair with an armrest and back support. Also, leg support risers are also preferable for long-time work.

* Back Support is essential with neck backrest helps to get a little extra comfort.

* For a day-long shift, he prefers a seat that goes forward and backward, the seat with a wheelchair. So sometimes, he can go a little behind the table and bend the body a little bit and take some time to relax.

Empathizing with myself:

* My personal preference is also kind of similar to my colleague. But nowadays, I prefer trendy gaming chairs. These have armrest and leg risers. I always love to have back support and neck support.
* I love to sit on the couch for relaxation, but if it's an excellent comfy couch with a warmer cloth, that gives me the most satisfaction.
* These days the chair cum couch/sofa type of massage chair I like a lot. It has an electric connection for warming the seat and also it gives little messages. So, that is the kind of thing I always like to have.

**Esther**

Empathizing with my sisters:

* To my sisters with children having a stain resistant or stain free material is key with children. To not have to worry about staining material is important.
* Adjustable Lumbar support is also something that the look for, because posture is important
* Durable - with kids jumping, moving, tipping etc the chairs, something that is not easily damaged is something they need

Empathizing with myself:

* Comfort is important - I want to come home at the end of the day and be able to put my feet up and just relax
* Also i’ve had back pain in the past so something that will help ease pain (or not make it worse) is what i desire

**Helen**

Empathizing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

* Learning item 1
* Learning item 2
* Learning item 3

Empathizing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

* Learning item 1
* Learning item 2
* Learning item 3

**Pooja**

Empathizing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

* Learning item 1
* Learning item 2
* Learning item 3

Empathizing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

* Learning item 1
* Learning item 2
* Learning item 3