

Designing with Empathy



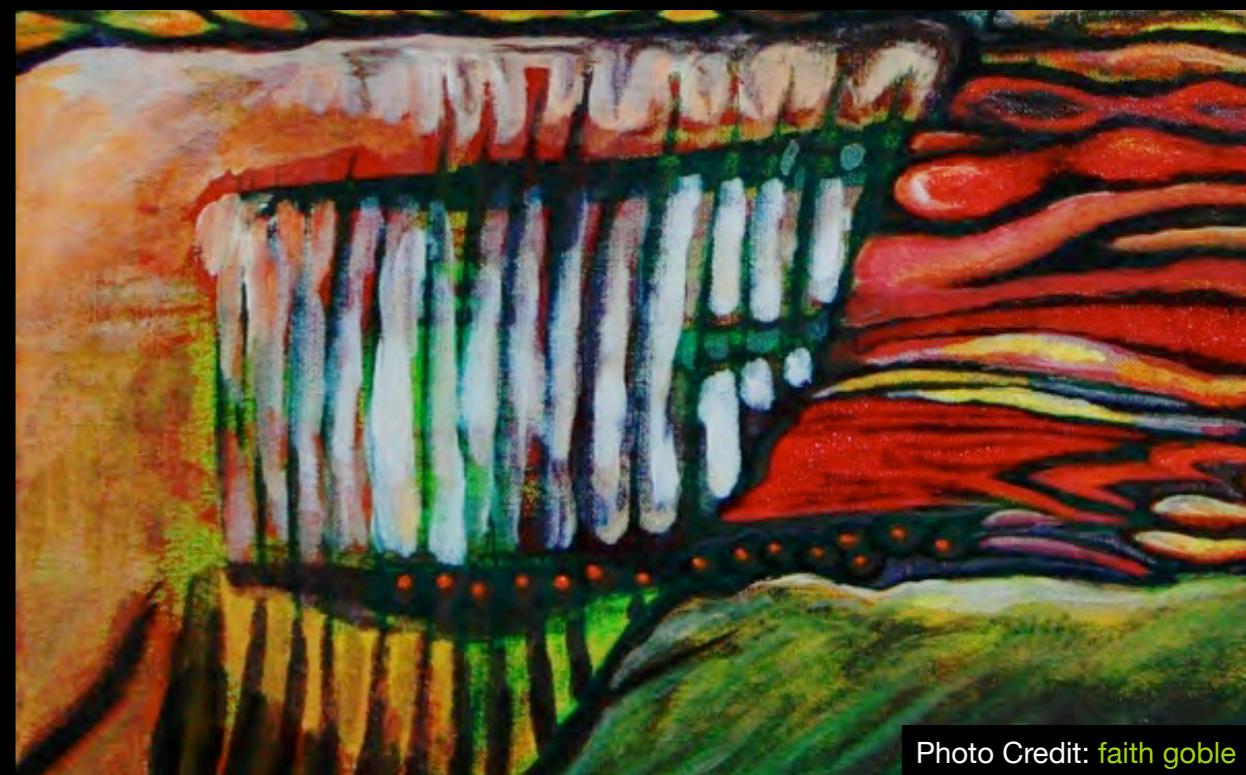
Aaron Gustafson
[@aarongustafson](https://twitter.com/aarongustafson)
adaptivewebdesign.info



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



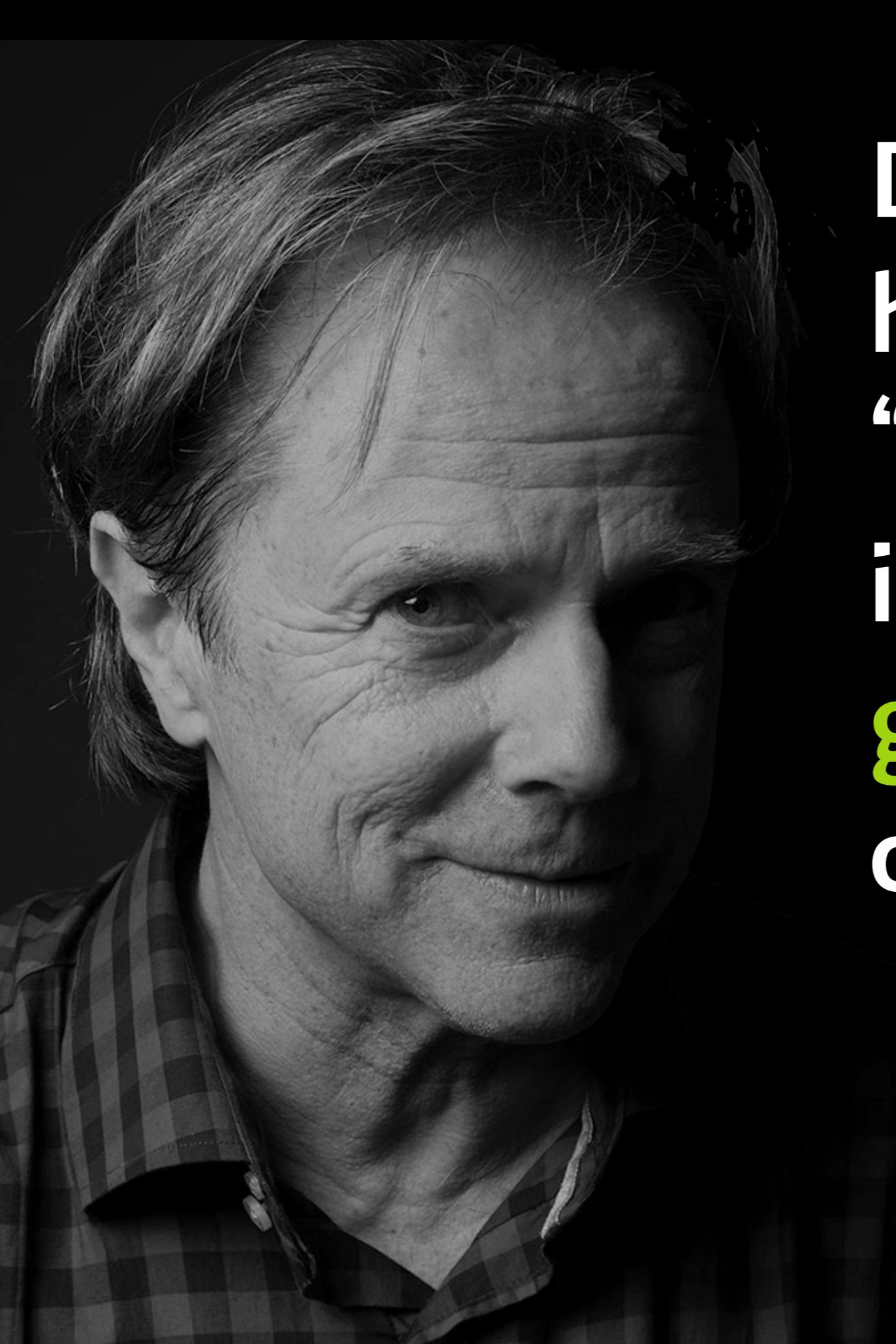
de-sign

/də'zīn/

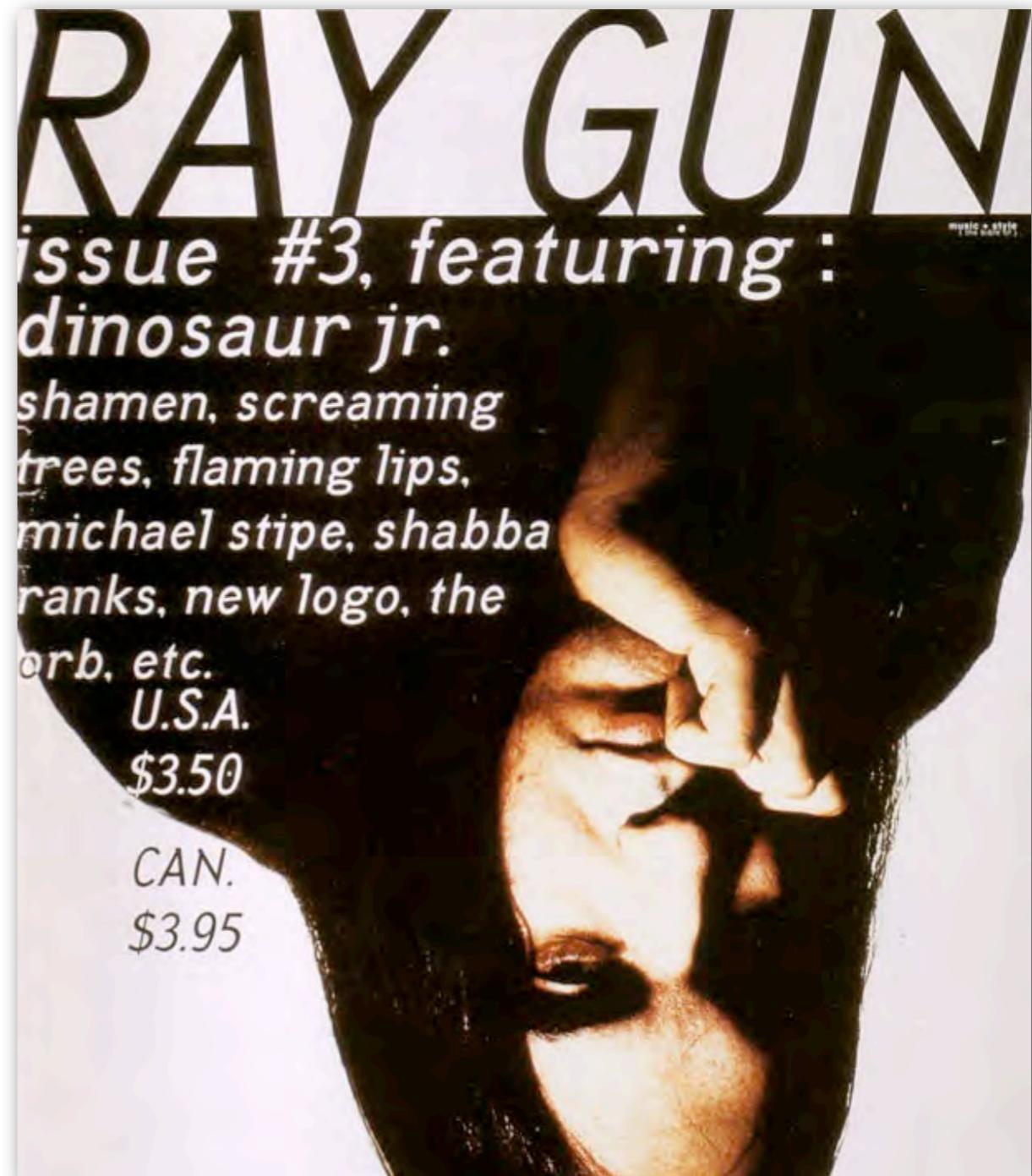
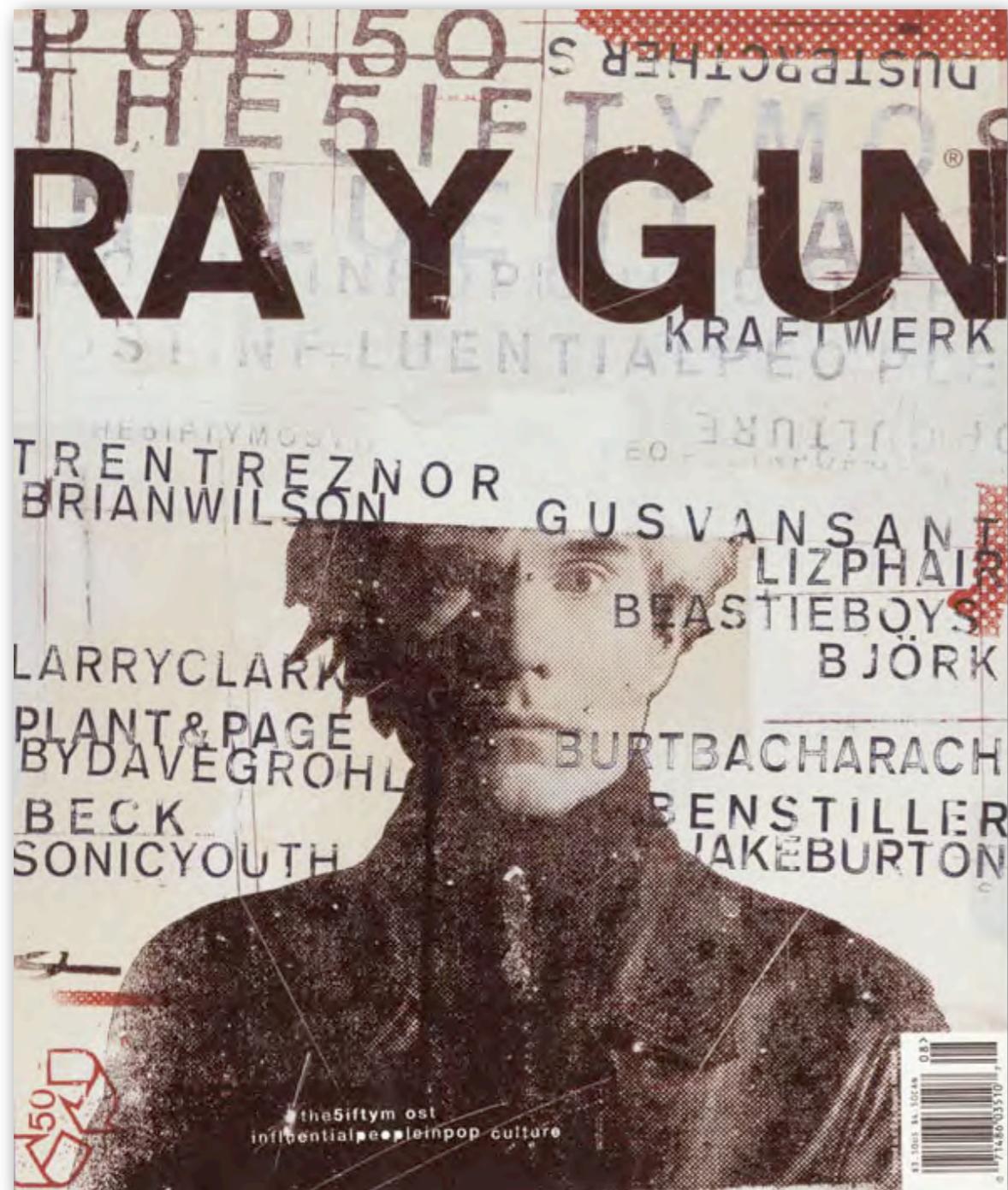
To devise for a specific function or end

Classical: To indicate

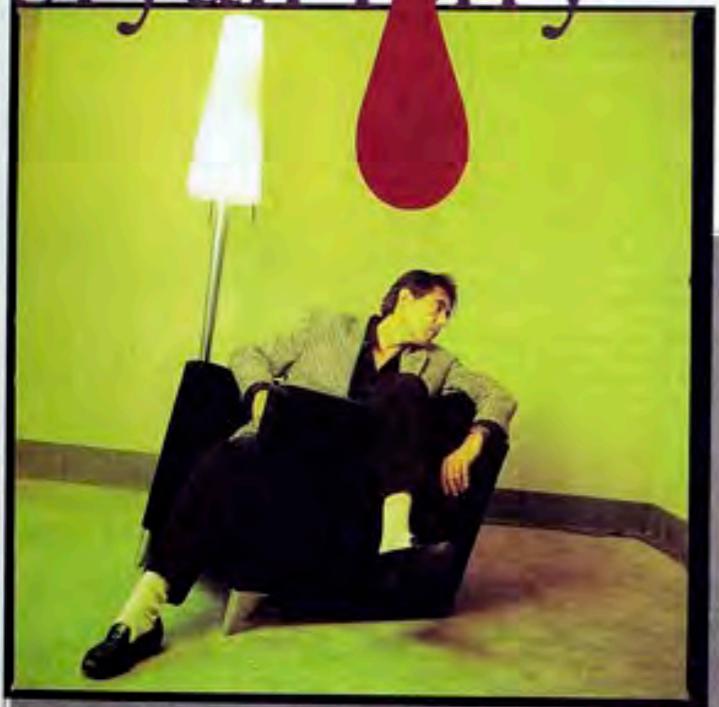
Medieval Latin: *designare*, to mark out

A black and white close-up photograph of David Carson's face. He has long, light-colored hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His skin shows signs of age, including wrinkles and a prominent brow.

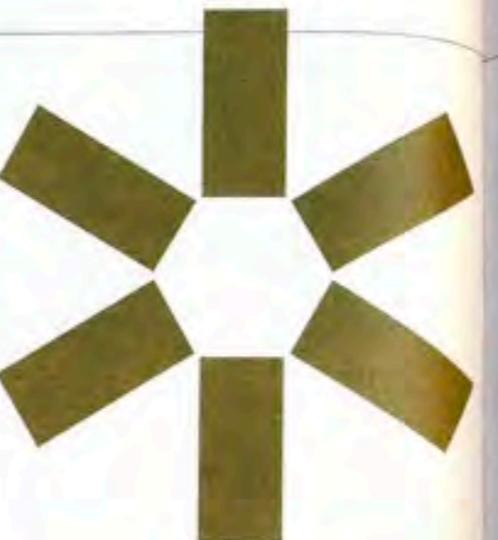
David Carson
has been called
“the most
influential
graphic designer
of our times”



bryant + terry

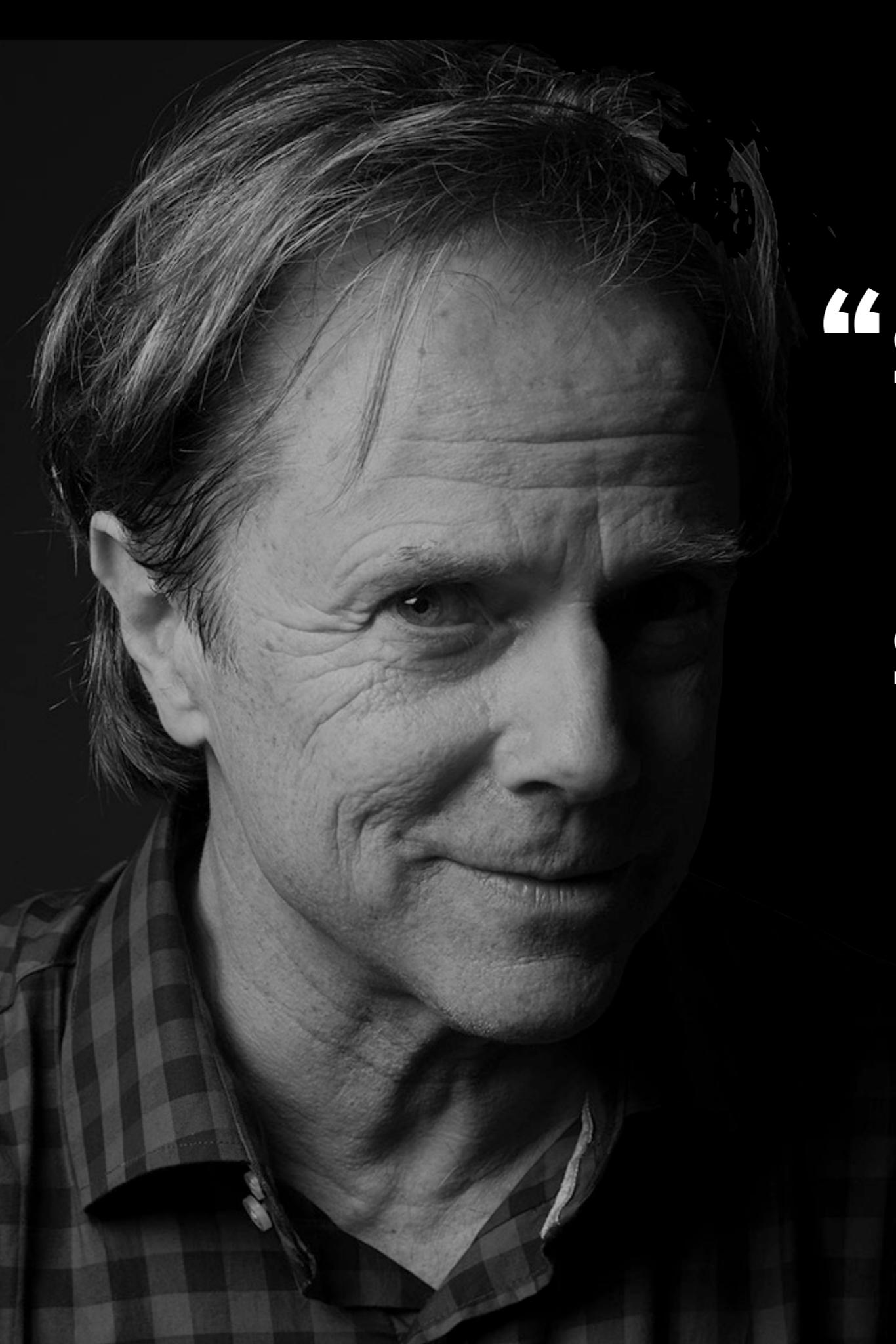


photos: Peter Morello; stylist: Jill Spectre



It was Art

It was Ego

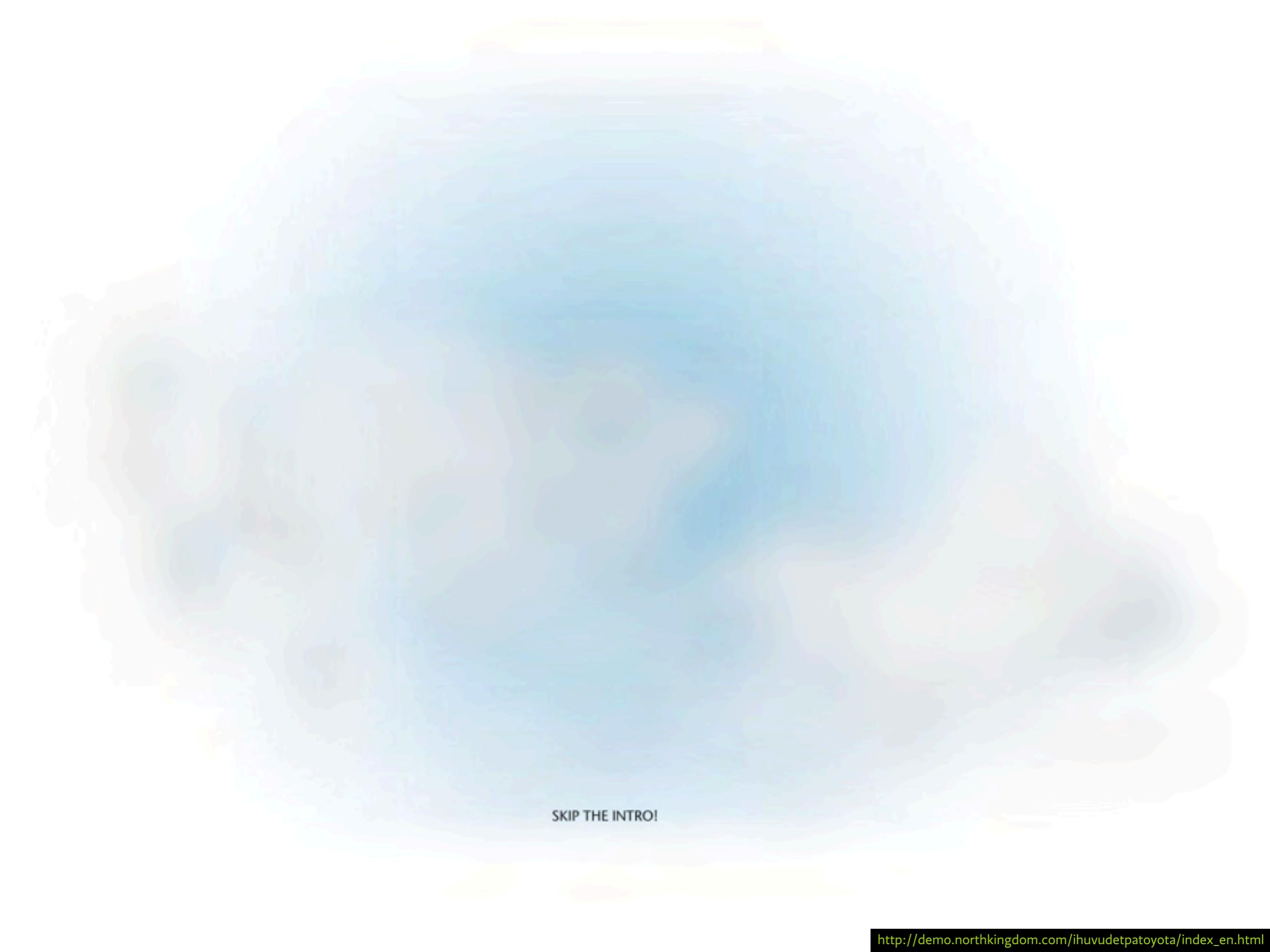
A black and white close-up photograph of a man's face. He has long, dark hair and deep-set eyes. He is wearing a plaid shirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on one side of his face.

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



“Your ego is a
bad designer.”

– Christopher Butler

A blurry, out-of-focus photograph of the interior of a Toyota vehicle. The dashboard, steering wheel, and center console are visible but lack sharp detail due to the blur.

SKIP THE INTRO!



TOYOTA

#04 #05 #07 #18 #25 #33 #40 #49 #51 #61 #74 #86 #92 #96 #114 #0



TOYOTA

#04 #05 #07 #18 #25 #33 #40 #49 #51 #61 #74 #86 #92 #96 #114 #120

Easy Flat System

YESHIVAH OF FLATBUSH

הישיבה דפלטבוש



X

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

MENU



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 to



communicate
not alienate

Design
isn't about
showing off

**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

A photograph of a man and a woman in a dimly lit room. The man, wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt, is seated in a chair, looking down and to his right with a thoughtful expression, his hand near his chin. The woman, wearing a light-colored top, is seated across from him, gesturing with her hands as if speaking. The lighting is dramatic, creating strong shadows.

Empathy requires **listening**



Empathy requires questioning



Empathy requires **observation**



Empathy requires intuition

A photograph of a man and a young child sitting together. The man, wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt, is looking down at the child with a thoughtful expression, his hand resting near the child's head. The child, wearing a light-colored shirt, is looking up at the man. The lighting is warm and focused on their interaction.

Empathy requires patience

Perspective is everything



Ego is a shield





“Empathy begins with vulnerability. And being vulnerable, especially in our work, is fucking terrifying.”

– Sara Wachter-Boettcher

Trust makes
vulnerability
productive



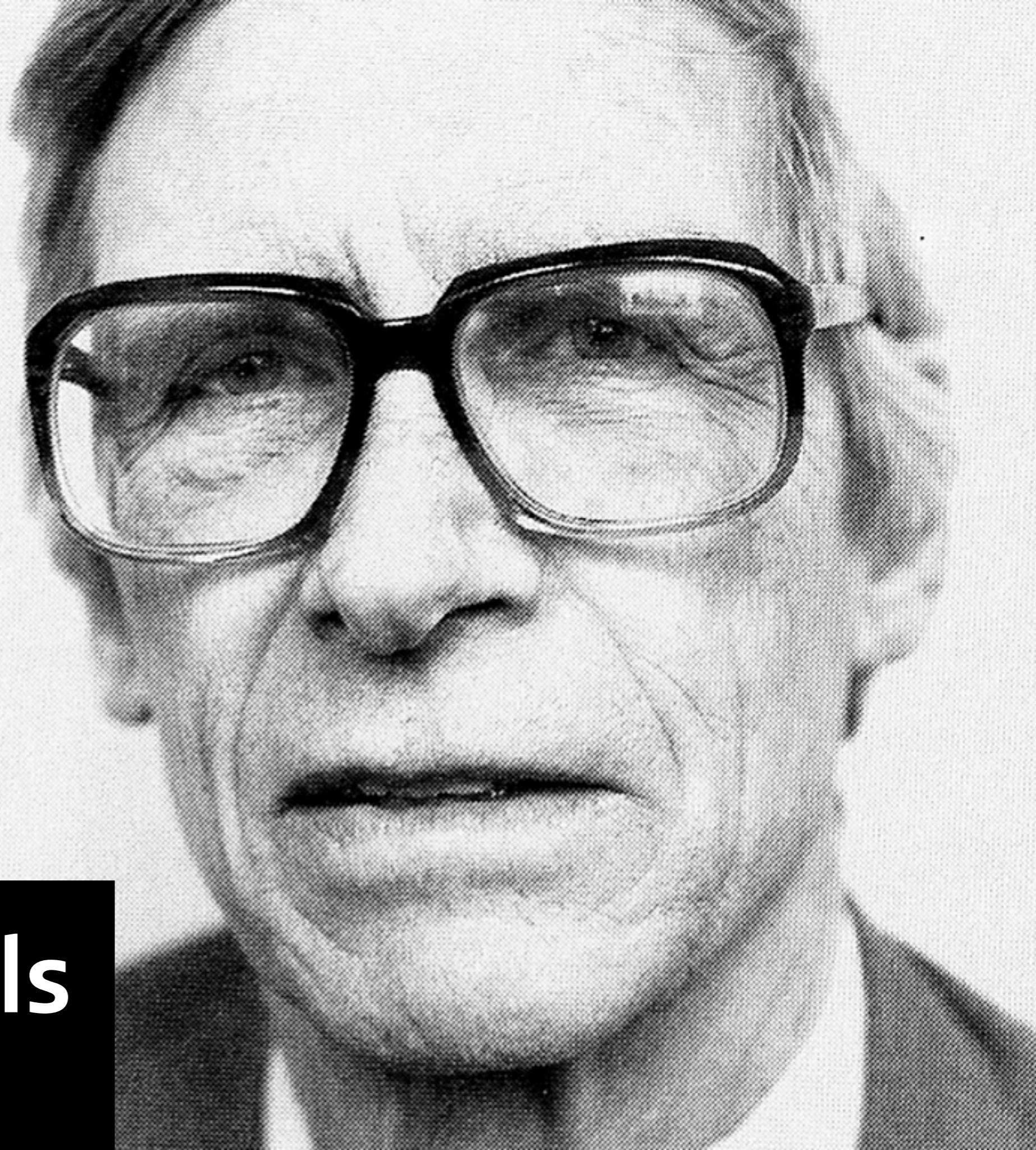
em·pa·thy

/'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

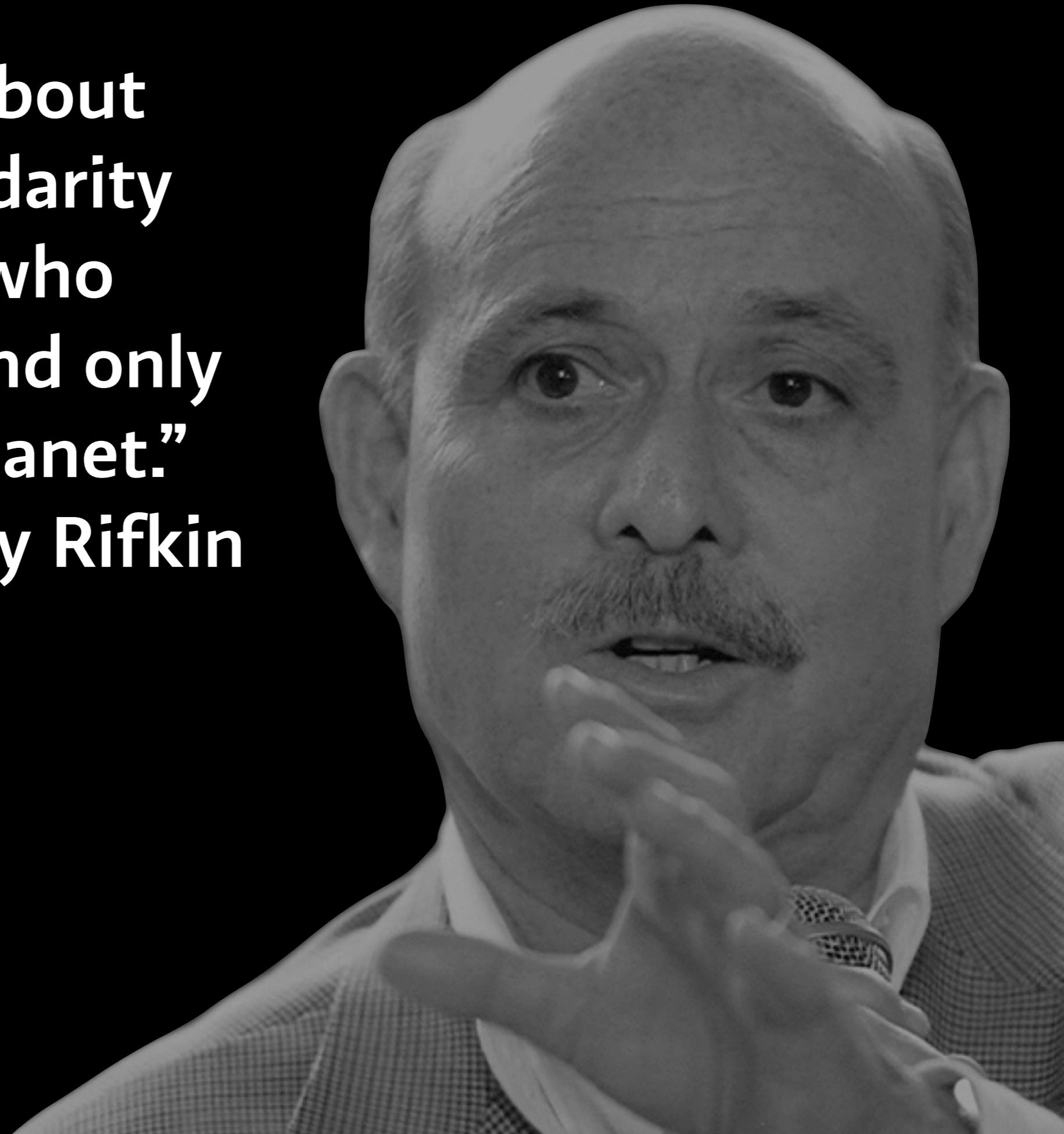
Also: the capacity for this

John Rawls
1921-2002



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

– Jeremy Rifkin



Aw, dude.



That sucks.



Solidarity requires
communication

Global Community



Nation States



Religious Groups



Tribes



Global response
within 3 hours

Selfishness is a **survival instinct**

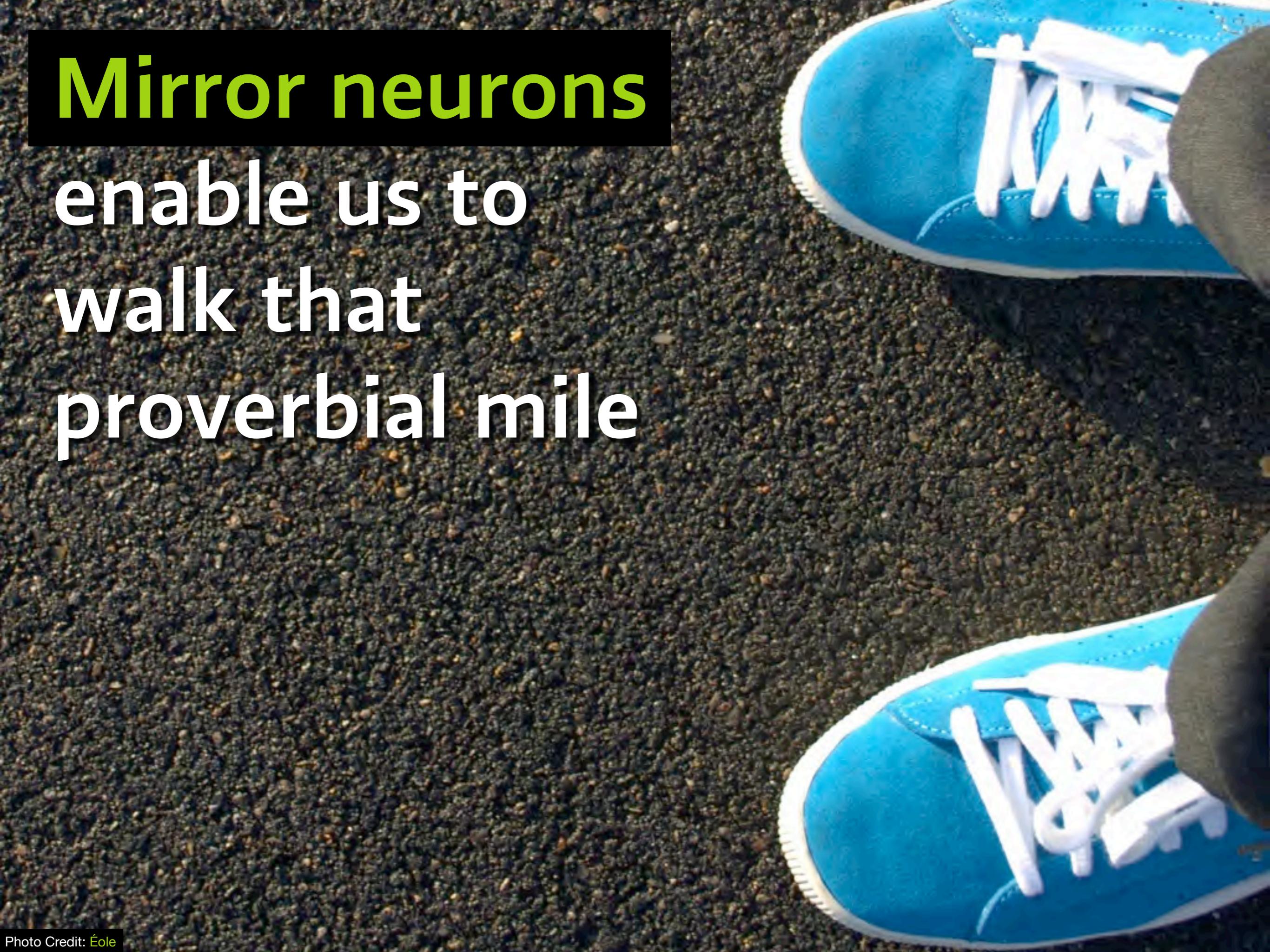


We are able to empathize by
seeing ourselves
in others.



Mirror neurons

enable us to
walk that
proverbial mile



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”



A photograph of a stack of terracotta pots leaning against a wooden garden bench. The pots are stacked in a spiral-like pattern, with some moss growing on them. The bench is made of light-colored wood and is situated on a brick-paved area. In the background, there are green bushes and purple flowers.

Personas
need to
be real.

They need
to be
human.

User Scenarios =
situational empathy



User Scenarios =
situational empathy



A photograph showing three individuals from behind, looking down at a desk. They appear to be working together on a project, possibly related to design or problem-solving. One person in the center is wearing glasses and holding a pencil. A keyboard and a computer mouse are visible on the desk.

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.



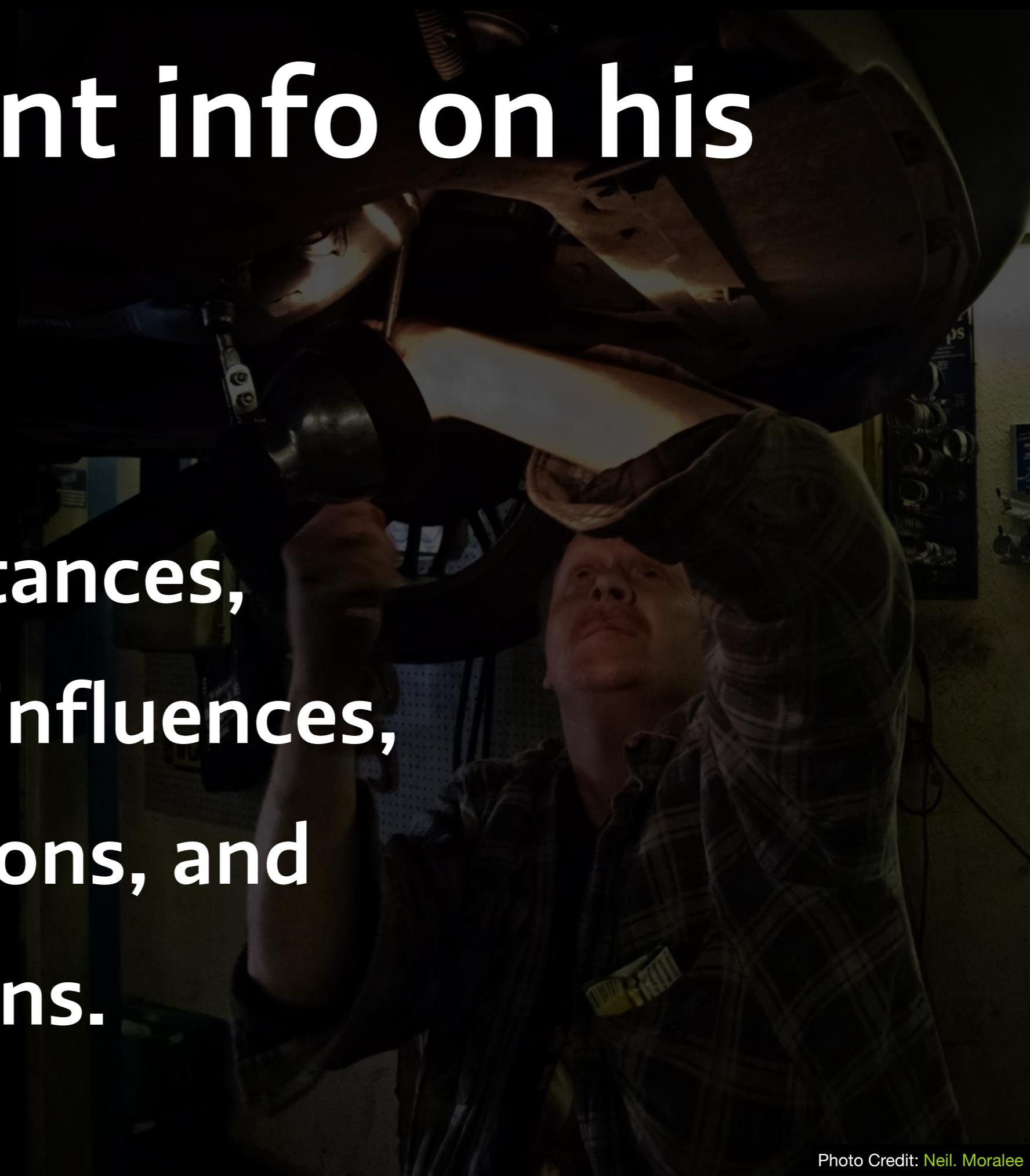
We only need **enough detail**
to be able to put ourselves in
his shoes.

Who cares
about his
macchiato
addiction?



We want info on his

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



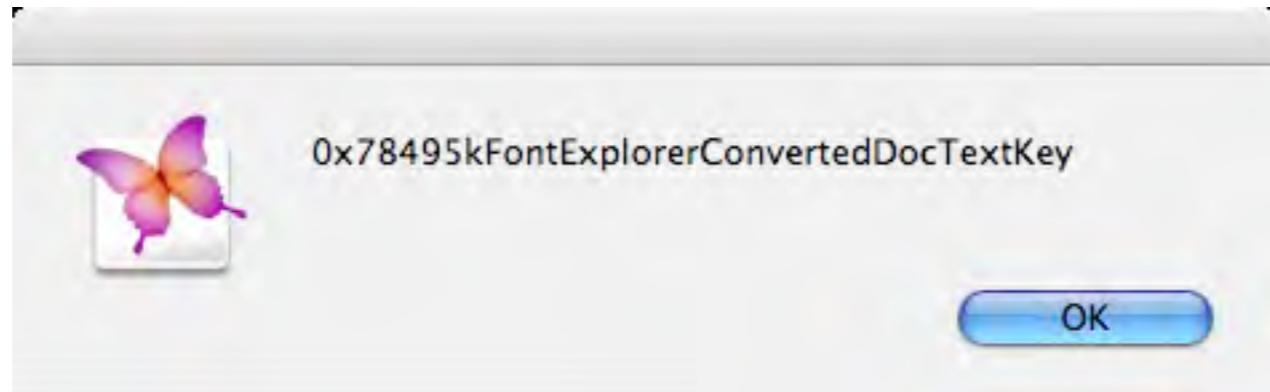
User scenarios help us
empathize in a **productive** way





Set a **performance budget**





Author **appropriate** content

Consider physical limitations





Facilitate **satisfaction**

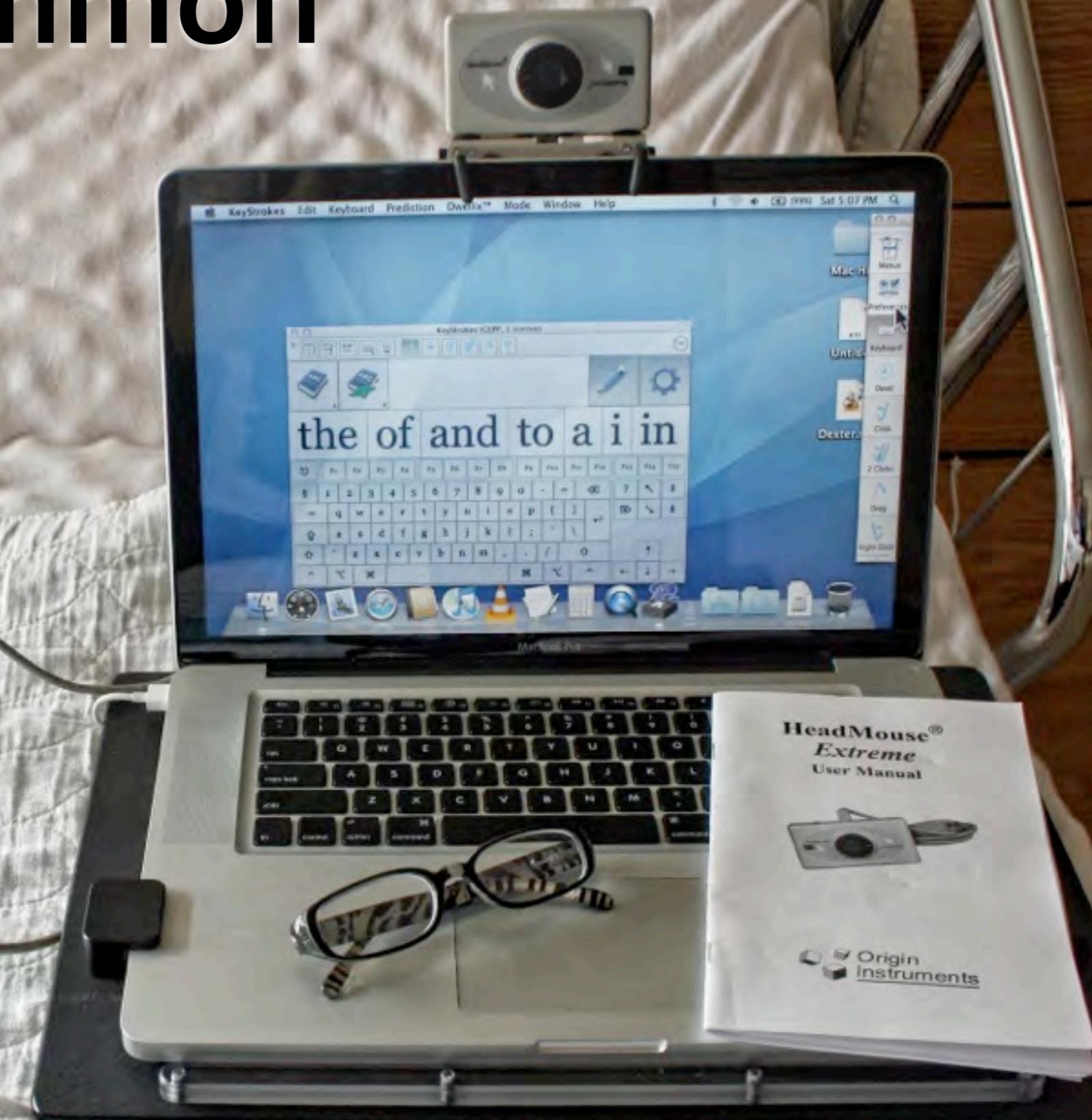
Don't create unnecessary barriers



Don't force
your agenda
on your
customers



Support common assistive technology



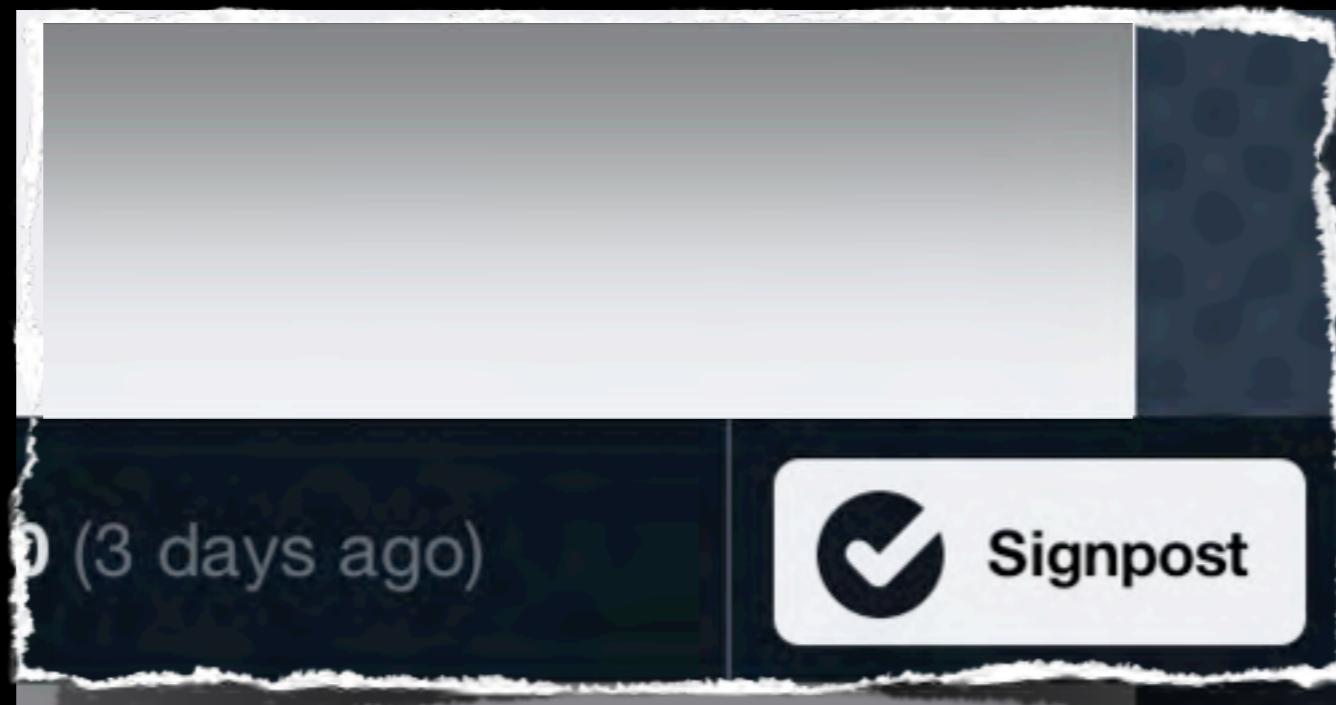
Help users learn to
accomplish complex
tasks and

reward

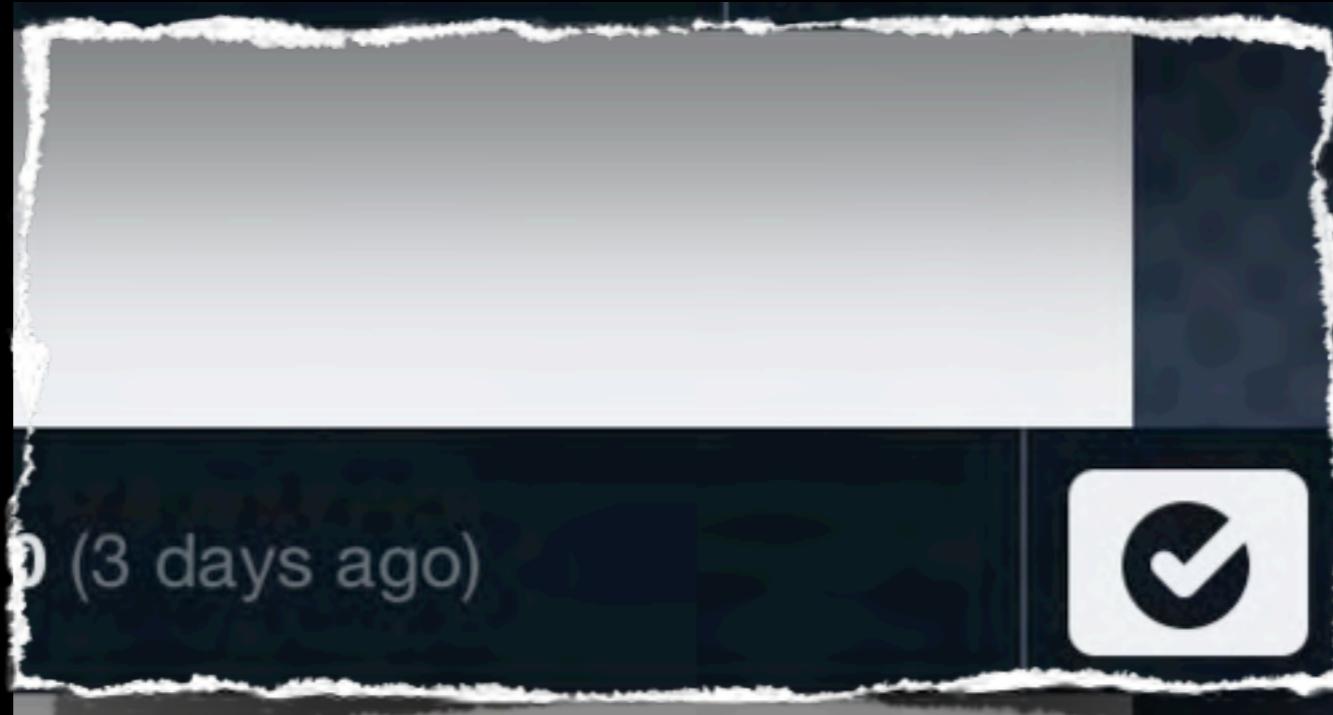
them for
doing so.



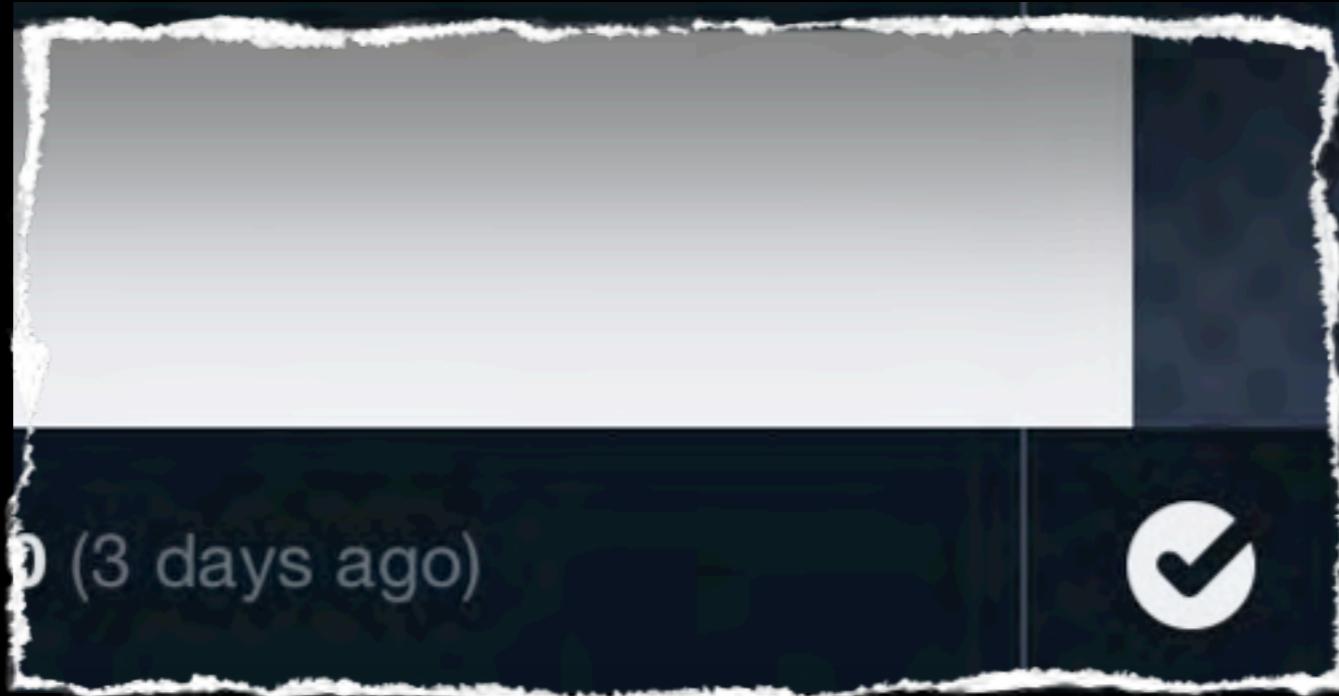
Progressive Reduction



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

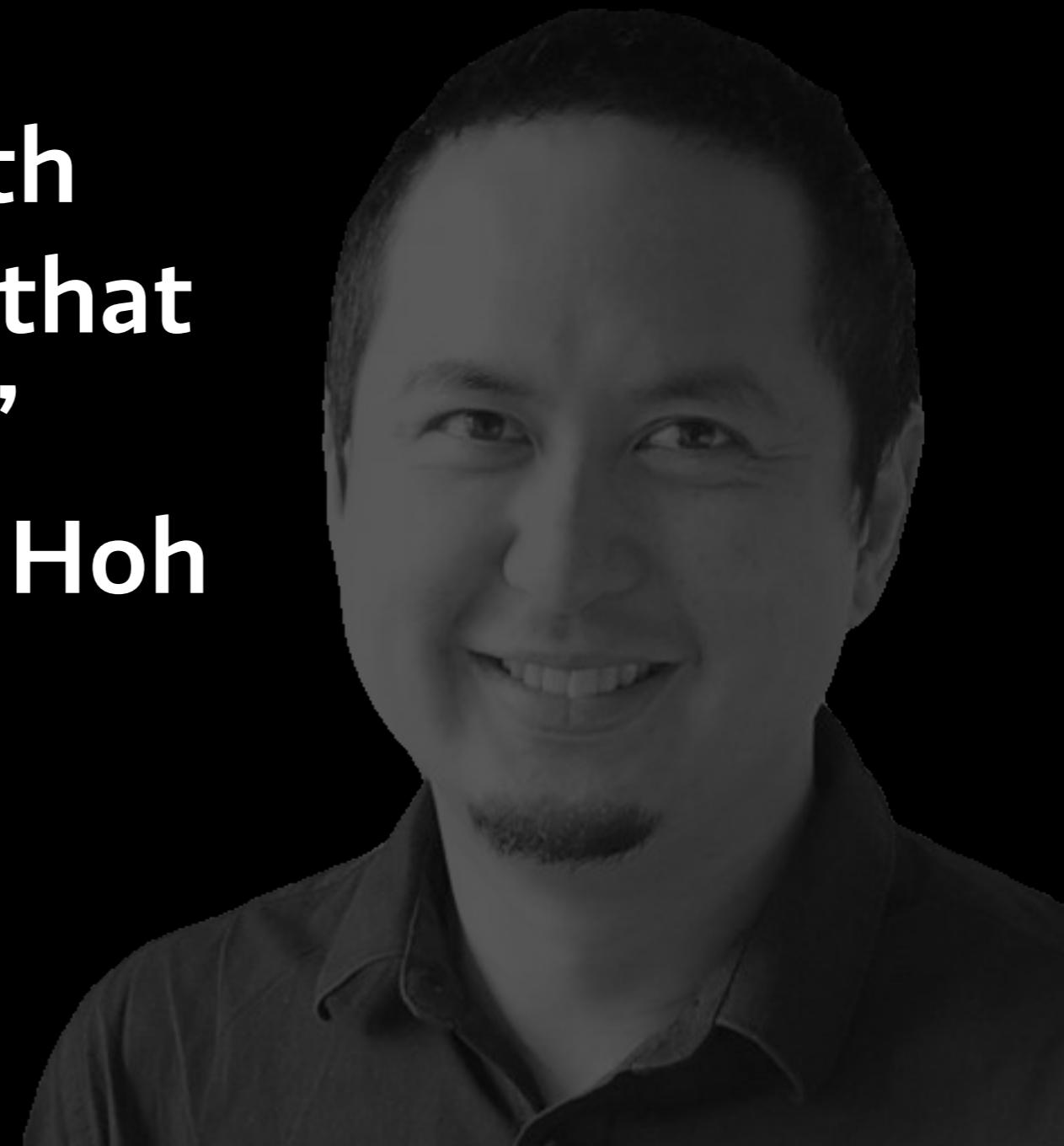
What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary.

-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

Thank you

Designing with Empathy

by Aaron Gustafson
@AaronGustafson

Further reading:

<http://readlists.com/820c6ff1>
<http://adaptivewebdesign.info>
<http://blog.easy-designs.net>

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

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