

The [2015 Interaction Design \(IxD\) conference](#) organizers have made my 11-Feb-2015 presentation available, [Make a Case for Empathy](#) (48:15). **Transcript below.**

## Transcript: Make a Case for Empathy

How many of you use empathy regularly in your work, and have bosses who see the value and encourage you? Just a few? Okay, how many of you have bosses who don't really get empathy, and you've been trying to convince them to include it in your process? A whole lot more of you. I thought so. The bosses need to be persuaded. Generally, though, most of the people that I work with, they embrace it. But they're embracing it at a certain level, and at higher levels it's a little bit more of a push. So this is what this whole talk is about: it's to sort of help you explain empathy and the workings of it to the decision makers. Because they're sort of in--at least the ones that I run across at a really high level--they're sort of in that state of mind that they were in 10 or 20 years ago with respect to design.

Of course ... there's always this guy. I think you have to change his mindset. "The user is an idiot." This is not erased from the face of the earth yet. This still happens today.

What I wanted to do is give you a framework for maybe being able to sow the seeds of this internally at your own organization or helping people that you know at other organizations who are having trouble with it.

There are a couple of things I want to talk about. First of all, I want to define "empathy," and I want to state its purpose in your work. Those are two of the most important ways to get started, because "empathy" can mean a lot of things; right?

Empathy, big old heart; right? Lots of hearts. Yay, hearts. What the hell? What's with all the hearts? This is the announcement for the talk I'm giving tomorrow at the Design Writers Conference. Lots of hearts; right? Oh, even hearts in my own book. Brad Colbow has drawn all the cartoons in the book, and he even put hearts in it. I was like, "What's with all the hearts?" Hearts are about emotion. At least in the English language, when you draw a heart you mean emotion, and generally that means sensitivity or warmth. It's just in general emotion. In general it will be more positive. Sure, there's tons of negative emotions, but the thing is that, when you talk about emotion within your work, people are like, "Hehh." Right? "Not so much." You use the word "feelings," and they're like, "Oh, yeah, I guess you're a therapist." Fuzzy bunnies. Too much. Seriously, these are the words I hear.

So we've started talking about it as "delight" instead of emotion. It's kind of like this embracement of the meaning of something. Christian talked about this. This was one of his slides on the first day. He talked about it. It's all about the meaning and being intersected with the purpose and the use that you're trying to achieve. It's delight, though, on the part of the user. And that's a small subset of what we're talking about when we're talking about empathy or emotional empathy.

Now, emotional empathy is a thing. In psychology literature there's, I don't know, six different kinds of empathy that people talk about, one of which is emotional empathy. Emotional

empathy, when you say the word, oftentimes--just on the street, not within our serious discussions--just on the street people will think, "Oh, hey, it's 'offering sympathy.'" Brene Brown has a great talk that she gave that somebody...I forget the name of the group...did an animation to, where they have a goat at the top of the ... yeah, okay, many of you have seen it. If you haven't seen it, you've got to see the goat offer the dude who's depressed a sandwich. And he was offering sympathy; right? That's the meaning on the street. Maybe excusing that person or excusing that person's behavior or that person's emotional reaction or even forgiving that person. This is like, "Oh, yeah, that's what emotional empathy is kind of all about."

The thing is, that's not the definition. The definition of "emotional empathy" is simply having another person's emotion infect you. You're walking down the street. You see somebody smile. You suddenly find yourself smiling. Your best friend calls you, "I got the job! I got the job!" You're suddenly happy; right? You see your friend being depressed and you're like, "Oh, God, I can totally feel why you're so depressed." This is infection, and this is how books and movies work. This is how the characters in books and movies work is that they infect us with their emotions so we can understand them.

It's really powerful, super powerful, like a flash of lightening. But like a flash of lightening, it's gone. It's not harnessable. You can't use it in your work very well. It's not reliable. You can't make it happen when you want it to happen. It's great stuff. You can feel what the person you're trying to work for is feeling. But it's not what I'm talking about in terms of empathy. The kind of empathy I'm talking about is cognitive empathy. This is the stuff that you can harness. This is the stuff that you can reliably make happen, and this is the stuff that you can make happen in a lot of different scenarios within your work. Not only for the customer but also for the people that you're working with or working for.

It's all about understanding another person's thinking and their reactions. And note that I use the word "reactions" instead of "feelings" or "emotions." I've found that that goes over much better within organizations, because the whole "fuzzy bunny" comment and "therapist" comment goes away. Because it's valid to have "reactions." And quite literally, most of the reactions are like, "I'm frustrated" or "I distrust" or something like that. Those are reactions. Those are emotions.

It's all about understanding what went through somebody's mind as they were trying to achieve a certain purpose or intent, as they were trying to get through some part of their day, as they made a decision. All of this sort of thing. It's what's going on in the neurons, between the synapses, in the heart. That's what it's all about. Cognitive empathy is very different than emotional empathy. It includes emotions, but it's not infecting you with the emotions, necessarily. It's you understanding what those emotions are.

And quite typically, when we talk about that, we talk about walking in someone's shoes; right? Very typically. Walking in someone's shoes is what we strive to do, especially when we are creating something for someone else. We want to be able to understand what it's like. We do experience maps and journey maps and user scenarios and all that to try to understand what it is like to be in that person's place and think that person's thoughts.

But the problem is--as you can tell, because there's a big blank space on the side of the screen--is that we're missing something. That's *applying* empathy. We're not taking the time to *develop* empathy.

Developing empathy is all about listening. It's about taking the time to actually hear what another person has to say, not just at the high level--not just at the level that we're so used to in our media in terms of opinions and preferences and explanations of how something works. We need to get deeper than that. So I'm going to talk a little about that.

First, I also want to take another view at this. It's that oftentimes ... you guys ought to be familiar with the process. The process goes spinning out of control or goes plodding along much slower and then dies or whatever. But it's a process. The process is all about thinking, making, checking. Or whatever other words you want to use for it; right? Learn, build, measure. There's a thousand different ways to say this, and maybe a couple of different bits to the arrows. But basically this is it. You have these things spinning over every little project that you're working on. Here's user research, when you're doing your check stage; right?

This is how empathy fits in. (Again, a big blank space. You can tell something is coming.) Empathy is spinning around people. The cycle that you're used to is spinning around the idea or the solution or the thing that you're trying to make or the prototype or the back-of-the-napkin sketch. Or even just talking to people about stuff. It's all about you being an employee of an organization or you starting up some sort of a startup. It's all about a *thing*; right? That's what we mostly spend our time thinking about. So, if you can have a separate cycle that's just about a person, not trying to act as if that person's going to use something that you've created--but just understanding that person as a person and as they're thinking--then you're going to get some depth.

This also has three sections to it. And the interesting thing is that the "Apply" section where you're walking in someone's shoes. *That* is what feeds into brainstorming. This is how these two things connect. And if you can have a cycle like that running in the background, maybe guerrilla style, maybe you're only doing it every six months or once a year ... Maybe you're just doing it every ... one Friday a month or something. But you've got something going on where you're checking out people just from a people point of view. Take off your hat in terms of the creator and just be a humble human with the other people and understand them. That's what I'm after.

Another way of looking at it is that there's a lot of different research that businesses go pursuing; right? We've got market research. We've got competitive research. We've got user research. When we're doing user research, there's all sorts of things, techniques, methods. We sometimes have debates about which method is better than the other method, but it's *really* important to understand which method to use in which situation. This is our toolbox for user research. How do you use these things? When do you use these things? Be really specific about, "Well, this, in this case is evaluative. This is about a solution that we have and we're going to evaluate how well it's working." That's our check phase; right? Or maybe this is generative. Generative is all about creating the nutrients, making that soup from which your ideas will arise in the shower or on the trail or wherever it is that you are creative.

(There's a G there and an E that are all cut off on the screen, generative and evaluative.)

Good to know. They're symbiotic. And you're constantly doing both of them. One is not better than the other. You're constantly doing both of them, and you want a balance. You want to choose which one is the right thing to do for the current situation that you're in. And then you can switch back and forth.

Now, the interesting thing is that person focus. That spinning cycle over here, is not really a part of our methodology yet. If you look at this list, you will see person-focused stuff, purely person-focused stuff, and generally these things are not done purely. Very few and far between. I've added to it something called "Listening sessions." The listening sessions are what I talk about deeply in both of my books, and it's all about discovering how people are thinking and how people are reacting, and that's what feeds into the development of your empathy. It is generative by definition.

All right. I want to give you a couple of examples about what I mean when you say something like, "Let's do an A-B test to see which approach is better." An approach is a solution. It's an idea. That's what I mean. It's in that other space. "I want to get continuous feedback about the home page." Well, clearly the home page is a thing. That's solution-based, so that's the circle over here. "We're doing user interviews." Now you say the word "interviewing," and you say "user," you're like, "Ah, this is getting person-focused," but typically, and actually Steve Portigal's book is a very good example of it, it is mostly about a solution. That word "user." The user is using something. It is about some *thing*. Our experience strategy map, the experience is about some *thing* that you've created.

So you get down to something like, "Oh, let's find out how people decide what to eat for lunch." I did this one for McDonald's, and it's just about how people decide what to eat for lunch when they need lunch quick. It doesn't have anything to do with McDonald's. We were listening to people who were going to the farmer's market or who were going to, God forbid, Peet's or Starbucks for something for lunch. Anyway, it doesn't have anything to do with the product. It doesn't have anything to do with the idea, just the thinking.

So that's the idea, but what's the use of empathy at work? This is the second half of that framework that I want to lay out for you. Empathy is all about generating better support. Quite simply. Interestingly enough, when I was doing the research for my book, most of the literature out there is about persuading: using empathy to understand someone well enough that you can convince them to change their mind or change their behavior. Hah! There's our dark patterns again. Political. I talked to all sorts of people. They were doing work for the Obama campaign. And it was talked about ... empathy: "Let's go door to door, empathize with people, understand what their thinking is ... so that we can convince them."? It's like, okay, all right. It's a use. It's how empathy is used. I call it a dark pattern.

The one that was more encouraging was that second one there: education. Huge use of empathy and discussion of empathy, because they want to teach kids that there's other perspectives out there to respect. And that they need to be able to accept that. That was all very positive.

For me, what I'm focused on, and what I think you guys can use at your work, is the simple "support someone better." If you can understand someone, you can support them better. Let's take a look at that.

There's two things, collaboration with the people that you work with and creating things. Let's look at collaboration pretty quickly. The definition of "teams," I got this from a novel. I just love this. "Teams are people who can almost read each other's minds in hazardous situations." Hazardous situations like soldiers or something. That's kind of where it came from, but ... hazardous situations at work. Do you feel stressed at work ever? We're in hazardous situations. It would be great if you could read your team's mind. How many people can read the minds of at least two other people on your team? A smattering, yeah. It's possible to be able to do it. It's possible to be able to generate it, and you do it by listening.

I put this thing in here. I can't remember her name. Theresa was talking about chemistry yesterday, team chemistry. And this is how you create it. It's the listening. It's sitting down one-to-one with another person, just one other person. Saying, "Hey, what went through your mind as we were doing that? Let me understand." Or "What's this concern that you brought up in this meeting? Let me understand." Or, even as a manager of a creative team, being able to help those people grow on your team: check in with them once a month, once a quarter, once every six months, exactly this way. "Hey, what's on your mind? What are you concerned about with your career, with the work that you're doing, with the team?" And just track it. Track it and watch it.

As you learn more about how people reason, what their motivations are and their decision-making processes, how people react to things, and what their guiding principles are--those things that you learn when you're a kid from your teachers and your parents, like always give way to the other person or something. There's all sorts of little guiding principles that come out, and that help you make your decisions in your everyday work. The more you understand that of your team that you're managing or the team that you're working with, or those guys off in marketing, the better you're going to be able to support them. The better you're going to be able to speak their language and establish a rapport.

The thing is that when there is someone there actually asking you these questions and listening deeply, it's ... this doesn't happen! Even with your significant other, it doesn't happen. You get home. "Oh, hi, honey, how was your day? Okay, great. Yeah, bye." You tune out. You're back to doing whatever you were doing. You don't really get in that deeply. Like, "Oh, so you were doing the ELISA assay for this thing ... why did you decide that? What was your thinking process you were going through?" This kind of stuff, where you're getting deep into it, isn't normal conversation. And when you get someone listening to you like that, oh, my God, it feels good. It feels great. You start to open up. And that's where this rapport starts to build. Trust, understanding, looking deeper than preferences and opinions. Recognizing when somebody's just telling you statements of facts or generalities or passive things that happened to them, and not their thinking.

Okay. Another thing about collaboration is with the people above you who tell you what to do. When they give you a request, in general, I like to ask that person questions. "How is it that you came up with this so that I can support this request better? I need to understand your thinking

process, how you guys all discussed it, whatever all went into it." This kind of push-back is not rebellion. This kind of push-back *is* collaboration. It's understanding their thinking so that you can support them. But this is so rare. It does not happen that often because: hierarchy. I'm told to do this. "He wants a newsletter. Whatever. I'll make a newsletter."

The push-back is not perceived as rebellion by the person doing it if you present it as, "Hey, I need to support you better. To support you better, I need to better understand your thinking. How did this happen? How did it all come up?" Along the way something different than a newsletter might come out of this. Or it might not. But you'll understand it so much better. It's a very important step. That's collaboration: generating respect for another's perspective.

It also works with creation. Here's my little story. This gal is renovating her kitchen and she's talking to her friend about the faucets. And she couldn't decide between satin nickel finish or this new trend to have unlacquered brass and let it do ... patina on it. He's like, "What do you mean?" He's looking it up on his phone, and he's trying to visualize what she's talking about. They're just having a chat. Well then, forevermore, he's single-mindedly pursued by ads for faucets. Even though it was not him--he's not renovating his house. He's not about to buy a faucet. There's a whole different thing going on, a whole different exchange. But ads ... ads only assume one thing: that you are a consumer, that you are a buyer ... that you want to purchase this thing. I've heard stories about people looking up stuff because a child has an allergy and then they're pursued by, "Buy this. Buy this." "No, I was just trying to figure out the allergy thing." There's so much more to it.

Now, ads, I'm picking on ads because they're easy to pick on. But this understanding of different perspectives that are out there, and the different kinds of thinking that's going on, is *so* powerful. Because now you can start developing new ideas, generating new ideas in the shower; right? That's all about generating respect, and it's all about that reasoning; right? The neurons firing. It's all about the reactions and it's all about the guiding principles. I'm going to repeat those three things because it's what's deeper underneath. That's what we're after.

The interesting thing is that these things, when you're talking to somebody about it, are neutral. You're not asking them to judge how well something works. In evaluative, you're always asking them that. You're not asking them for an opinion about things. In some cultures you don't talk about opinion. It's not considered very polite. In our culture, "Woo-hoo, opinions!" Right? Anyway, the lovely thing about this is that it's very neutral, and it's very much about somebody's own internal landscape. And as they see your interest, they start to open up.

Here's an example of it in use. We have, Healthwise. They create apps and all of the content for WebMD and your healthcare provider online stuff. They looked into people trying to lose weight, and they found three different kinds of people. Three different patterns of thinking as you're trying to lose weight, and they came up with *three different sets* of apps. You see the apps here for the fellow who's feeling resigned, "Never going to be able to lose this weight." The person who's sidetracked, like, "My mom got sick and went in the hospital. I can't be on a diet right now. It's crazy." And the inconsistent, "Sounds like a good idea, but it's not working in my life." Three different sets of apps. This is what I'm talking about. They, by the way, did this kind of listening sessions as their research.

So, you want to customize what you're creating to all these different kinds of thinking. Now, I know that there are lots of very successful companies out there who think that there's one way and everyone shall follow it because it's good enough. We can go beyond that now.

Here's an example also what I mean by buying segments. Those are your marketing segments. That's the decision-to-purchase. These happen to be the buying segments for a higher ed university here in the Bay Area. These are segments that are for an airline, not for making the purchase, but for making the flight. There's all sorts of other behaviors, like for the airline, you could have a whole different set about packing for a trip. There's more than just buying segments. And they mesh together, too. It's not like one replaces the other. There's always a buying decision--not always a buying decision per se, but a use decision. And so you can do all sorts of them. It's really good to be aware of the fact that there *are different sets* of behavioral audience segments. The whole idea is just to make this nutrient-full soup, and let it sit there in your brain. And as you're creating things in your normal way, better, broader, stronger ideas are going to come out. That's all about defining which kind of empathy and stating its purpose in your work.

Now I want to talk a little bit about broadening your perspective. Dave Gray was at a conference up in Seattle about addressing ethnicity and the whole Ferguson problem. And they were doing all sorts of discussions. One of the guys up there, Dr. Gerald Early, had this quote, which I thought was really perfect. Dave Gray did the sketch here, but he's saying, "We have to play the long game, and you don't want to underestimate the things that are seemingly trivial and the impact that they can have long-term." I think that's really important to us, and here's why.

Small or trivial; right? These are the words. Our media is *full* of praise about the disruptive app. Our media is all about this. Our media, our culture, is all about, "I want to be a game-changer. I want to shake up the market." Even Gentry, yesterday he was talking about, "I'm going to put a dent in the universe. We're going to leave our awesome jobs and go do a startup." This is like ... it's the myth that we have right now; right? We get it all over the place. We are bombarded by it. But interestingly enough, there are writers out there talking about the idea that maybe this isn't the right thing. It's like, hey, these investors are changing the way a whole generation is thinking and trying to make them more profit-driven or more remorseless. Interesting, right?

If we take that long vision, we can sort of look back in history, *way* back in history, and see how human thinking really doesn't change even though we're going faster. Here's my nod to the BBC Sherlock series. I got interested. I read the original of Sherlock, and his thinking is exactly the same as our thinking now. His approach to finding out who did what when, and how are they maybe talking about it or communicating with each other, they use the agony column, which is printed in the newspaper three times a day. Today we use Twitter or Facebook or whatever, right? We're doing the same thing. The same thing here with our steamships. The idea was to go someplace to meet people, explore, do business, learn new things. We do that now with jets. Same thing with our old Christmas letters. My mom was just bemoaning the fact that people don't send Christmas letters. I'm like, "We're still doing it. We're just doing it every day on Facebook."

Disruptive is all about speed; faster, faster, faster. We can do things faster, more often. Reach: I can reach farther. I can reach more people. I can reach more locations. And access: things are maybe cheaper, and more people can do it. Which is beautiful, right?

But we're adding to it. Hey, we don't use this remorselessness. We maybe need some sensitivity. And we need the individuality or the human dimension is what I like to call it. This is what I've been talking about with this empathy.

This idea that you're on Netflix and you're rating things and you can either say you liked it or you hated it or farther on either extreme, right? You can't say the things that you would say to your friend when you saw a movie. It's like, "Great acting." "The cinematography sucked," or "These certain scenes seemed sort of shaken up, and why did they do it that way?" You have these different kinds of discussions, and your discussions are not like, "Hated it. Leave it."

Interestingly, the smaller, trivial ... again ... is that one size does not fit all. And indeed it can cause a negative reaction. I went and spent an hour rating things when I first got on Netflix, and I get this message...I rated like a hundred things. It's like, "Okay, I feel like you don't want to talk to me because I'm a total loser. Okay, fine. Ouch."

Anyway, the idea also that I want to bring up is that when you're creating something, you're not just creating digital things. You are creating policies. You're creating processes. You're creating written content, and on the written content side, I always look forward to this message once a quarter from mint. Yes? For those of you who can't see it, my "purchase from the IRS." I guess I have purchased something, haven't I?

Or when I'm setting up a Skype meeting and they're all like, "Oh, the location, where?" I'm like, "I've got to click on that map. Oh! It's their headquarters." Fine. Or this one. I used to donate to Radio Lab but last year and the year before I was writing the book. I was not earning a lot of income, so I'm like, "I can't donate this year, but I certainly will in the future." And you get this horrifying message, "Your subscription has expired. You are dead to us."

Speaker 2: It's from Jad.

Indi Young: I know! It's from Jad, yeah. Jad thinks I'm dead. I'm sure he doesn't. I've actually written to them about this a couple of times. [laughing]

Anyway, you can broaden this, and this is just the writing step, not even the policies and procedures. I also want to bring into this framework "understanding the reluctance." Those decision makers, maybe higher up--maybe not all of you have this problem--but they are looking at the organization as something they want to keep *alive* for the next 10, 20 years. For the next generation. For the next 100, 200 years. To do that they need to focus on the sustainability of the organization, not on supporting the customer. *His* job is looking at sustainability. *Your* job is all about the customer.

You'll get quotes like this, "You know, this new idea, I'm not so sure about. It feels risky to the sustainability of this organization. Give me proof." And proof right now is numbers. When they



want to measure something that's risky, they tend to measure it the same way that they measure management change. Numbers. Words?! Scary things! Words are fuzzy things, things that you cannot quantify. So throw them all out, all of them. I don't want to hear the words. Just get me the numbers. Then you get a myth like this that qualitative is that fuzzy stuff and quantitative is the precise stuff. Of course, if I don't want risk, I want the precise proof. Well, this is a myth.

Patrick Whitney actually talked about this a little bit too. It's two different continuums. Being able to really be clear about that and that each continuum has a fuzzy end and a precise end ... is very helpful. The numbers come from a historic perspective, and that is manufacturing. Manufacturing objects, right? The numbers helped us understand the process better and speed up the process and make it cheaper and higher quality. That's what it's been about.

Let's take the music industry. They were making *things*, LPs and CDs and now LPs again, right? Anyway, we went to digital but we inherited just the physical evidence from those LPs and those CDs. The genre, the artist, the song titles, stuff like that. And we aren't getting the influences, the culture, the discussions he had with other band members, the arguments that he had on Twitter at the time. We're not getting that, but it's all there. Why can't we have that? This is the stuff that we would read about if we're interested in an artist in particular.

So digital is very different than industrial design. Even though we keep pointing out to industrial design, it's still there very much in our minds because that's where we've come from. Digital is very different. We can go broader.

The other thing is that digital is not a frontier. It's no longer the new stuff where you can put a stake in the ground, do the minimum around it and then everybody will flock to you. You need to do lots of different things, which are customized or very specific to specific behavioral audiences, and incorporate the perspectives and the worlds that people live in. There are also larger relationships and interconnections, just like when you have a village on the prairie versus a city like San Francisco. And now we have just about every kind of beer and bread maker and chocolate maker in town, right? Good.

The numbers are only half of the picture. The words are the other half. And oftentimes organizations will run out and try to get the words but convert them to numbers. Can't resist. You do a quick survey. You get the numbers. The numbers become your proof, blah, blah, blah. You lose the words. You lose the perspectives and you lose that variety and the patterns that you're seeing in there.

Unfortunately, people are using these words to persuade--or the numbers...sorry. The numbers are used to persuade. "I want you to believe me now so you will feel like going forward with this project." You also get it in politics. In advertising. You've got numbers here and here and they're saying, "We divert this many million acre feet of water but we only received this many." It's designed to make you go, "Hah, that's impossible," or, "That's awful!"

There was a guy, Paul Piff, in Berkeley who did something called "The science of greed," and he concluded that money makes you mean--by doing a series of experiments, one of which was standing somebody at a crosswalk and watching to see which makes of cars stopped for the

pedestrian and which didn't. Not knowing who driving the car or actually owned it ... maybe it was the nanny. Or not talking to those people at all and finding out what was going through their mind. Silliness like this happens.

Karl Fast gave me a quote once that I thought was really worth repeating. And that is that we're still trying to use the vocabulary of natural science to do persuasion. Now, natural science is all about the things that would exist in the universe if humans weren't around. His example: ducks, rocks and sunlight would still exist if we disappeared. Artificial science is the science of things that humans are involved in: engineering projects, governments, libraries, design. Humans are involved in it. This is artificial science. We shouldn't be using the vocabulary from natural science. Creating things is a human endeavor and what we want to do is use the artificial science.

Brene Brown--this is just background--go see some of her talks because she talks a lot about how to use words in a believable way. Also, Julian Treasure talks about listening. He's very good at giving talks, and these would be proof to people in your organization.

Now I want to go through last little bit for the framework: five tactics that I use. These are not the only five. There are several more probably, but I need to fit this in.

One of the very first ones is a startling one. Go talk to those marketing people. Rather than talk to them, listen to them. One at a time. Go listen to your product managers, one at a time. Find out how that person makes their way through decisions. Find out how that person reacts to different things. Find out their guiding principles and the history of where those come from. That's going to form a much better understanding of how that person thinks so that you can support them better and form a rapport with them.

Another is ask your colleague, when your colleague is saying something they want done, say, "Well, what went through that person's mind?" Oftentimes we'll get people ... big data. "We have 10,000 data points that say they do this." "Okay, what went through those 10,000 people's minds?" "Oh, they think this." "Oh, really? You know that?" "No, I'm making it up." They're never going to say that, but they *are* making it up.

If you can ask them this question, "What went through their minds," enough times that they get to the point where they say, "Okay, I don't know what went through their minds," then you have a choice. You can say, "Okay, that's fine." We can accept the risk of not knowing and go forward, but we're clear about it. We're clear that we don't know, or we can go find out if it's important to mitigate that risk about a decision that we're about to make.

The other thing: make it valid. Don't dream it up. Make this stuff believable. Just like there are faux science using the natural science vocabulary, make something that is actually based on real data. Here's an example from Adaptive Path of an experience map, based on real data, real people listening. Kim Goodwin talks about this as well. The interesting thing is ... the more formidable it looks, sometimes the more believable it is. Doing that same persuasion game that they're doing with the numbers. But here you're using words.

The other thing is if you want to use something like an experience map to map out or discover the gaps in your knowledge, the places you don't know about, don't start at the top with the touch-points. Don't start with solutions. Turn it on its head. Take the thinking and the feeling and the guiding principles from listening sessions. This is what I do with mental model diagrams. This happens to be the dog mental model diagram. If anybody has dogs that's out there, it's very fun. But it has nothing to do with this particular experience, but the idea is to take those. Those are inductive. You don't come up with the boxes first. You go and listen to a whole bunch of people and you look for patterns and look for affinities, and let those affinities build up into those boxes. *Then* you can map your touch-points to it. Then you'll find places where your touch-points don't map, and those are the gaps.

Then finally another little tactic is to constantly release little stories that you heard people say. These are not made up. Don't dream it up. These are things that people actually said, and release these all the time. Some of them will go viral. Some of them will stick in people's heads. This was about attending performances, trying to understand why people attend performances, and here the lady is talking about kids. Taking kids to a symphonic performance, like, "Whoa, okay" and leaving at intermission because the kids will be squirmy. That's an interesting story. This person, again, performances, was talking about going to see this sort of edgy documentary about some people with a lot of guns, who thought the end of the world was coming. But he went because he was interested in watching the reactions of the other people in the audience, and enjoyed the fact that the audience was really diverse. This is how he's picking the performances he goes to.

These little stories are just examples of things. Just tell a story, it takes 30 seconds to tell. Even if it takes 15 seconds, some part of it will go out into your organization and have a longer life. And people will become more aware of how people are thinking.

Here is, if you want to take a picture of the whole thing, all five of the little tactics. I'll give you a second. I think we're posting these online too--the whole presentation. Then this is how the framework goes for making a case for empathy in your organization and in your work.

I want to thank you very much. I want to give a couple of announcements. Tomorrow we're doing the Design Summit. Christina's here. She's organized it. If anybody's ever thought about writing for design, not necessarily a book even, just articles: come! It's going to be the most fabulous, amazing people teaching there, and I can't wait to be there because I want to listen to them and learn from them. Because I'm just a neophyte, right?

Also my book party, sort of a release party, I mentioned this, March 4th. Hopefully Brad Colbow and I are going to start releasing tee-shirts of the little designs in the book. So that should be fun. And also, apparently if you put a book on Amazon, the only way other people can find is if there is reviews. So if you have two minutes and want to write two sentences, that would be great.

Thank you guys.

Speaker 3: Five minutes?

Indi Young: Yeah, five minutes of questions. Oh, and I have a list of questions for you guys.

Speaker 4: This isn't a question. It's just a followup to what you said. Indi will be teaching how to understand your audience at Design Writing Summit and the way you find it is go to the Boxes And Arrows Twitter account. You'll see many cartoons of Indi and the other speakers, so go to the Boxes And Arrows, one word. In fact, there's one now. Steve is also speaking. Thank you.

Indi Young: Awesome. Generally, Q & A is all silent, so I made up a list of questions for you guys, and if you have an answer, raise your hand. For any one of these. Yes? Actually we need to get the mic first. Sorry, so we can record it for people who are not actually here in San Francisco.

Chris: Oh, sure. My name is Chris. I work at Cooper. We do the five tactics ... I'm sorry, we do the small stories all the time. So we'll rifle through our notes and we'll find the best one or two, and we intersperse them almost like interstitials over the course or like research findings. It provides a nice sort of sudden human break. And we have over the course of many projects, actually re-encountered those stories that new people we meet are telling us. We're like, "Yep, that worked."

Indi Young: Awesome.

Chris: Number one works or the kinds of stories.

Indi Young: Cool. Anybody? We've got one here. Yep.

Speaker 5: We've had success lately by doing two extremes and finding common ground in the middle basically. I work basically on a privatized version of Obamacare kind of stuff. That's built on a traditional kind of eCommerce platform that's built very heavily on quantitative data. But design has become more and more focused on that, with a different kind of customer. We do a huge amount of quantitative, but now we need to do user testing because we have a very different customer. The things that they won't let me redesign--now we use the stories from a lot of that user testing to kind of say, "Well, no, your quantitative data says this. We can fix that by using the qualitative data we've got here," and we use a little story to kind of sell that.

Indi Young: Got you, yeah. How is that working?

Speaker 5: Really, really well.

Indi Young: Oh, good. Yay. Cool. Excellent. Anyone else have an answer to any of these questions? Yep.

Speaker 6: Hi, I'm from Buenos Aires, working on a project for a big company that ... project for their review processes that no one actually liked. We did interviews with many managers, and those interviews were not about the tool that developed the whole process and what went

into their minds and how they manage people. Actually what was the things that were out of the tool, what the tool didn't actually take into account, and how many managers would take a lot of work into their home, because the tools were not supporting the actual processes. We managed to sell those interviews, to have the opportunity to do so, as well as just design the solution because since the process and the tools itself were very resisted, we saw an opportunity to actually sell the redesign to the users.

Indi Young:     Awesome. Cool.

Speaker 6:     Actually we were gathering information while the company actually thought that we were persuading people into buying the redesign.

Indi Young:     Very nice. Very guerrilla. Awesome. Is there anyone else? You want to? Okay, one more comment. This will be the last one.

Speaker 7:     I work at Adaptive Path. It's nice to see you. We've had amazing luck with speaking to customers and using that to really drive our design, but we've also learned that it's just as important to have that same empathy for the people that we're working with. In some cases we found that projects will succeed or fail based on the fact that we have stakeholder interviews in addition to customer interviews. So having that same empathy for everybody has been really important.

Indi Young:     Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. That was actually an interesting part when I was doing the book, because I thought it was only going to be all about creating, and the whole collaboration part just grew out of it and became so important. Very good point.

I want to thank you guys again. Enjoy.