

Name_____

Date_____

DESIGN PROCESS STEP 1: EMPATHIZE

Introduction

Now that you've learned about a Nobel Laureate and the importance of their work in the world, it's time for *you* to take action to create the change in the world you wish to see.

You'll use the design process to complete your design challenge. Use this worksheet as a guide for the first stage in the design process: empathize. You may attach additional paper to this worksheet or use a notebook if you need more room for this step.

Step 1 of the Design Process: EMPATHIZE

What does it mean to empathize?

To empathize is to imagine or try to deeply understand what they are feeling or what it's like to be in their situation. Empathy is different from sympathy. Sympathy is to feel sad for someone's misfortunes or difficult experience. Empathy requires action and imagination. To empathize you must listen closely and observe to learn. You must remain curious, and leave behind "what you think you know" to better understand others' experiences.

What actions can you take to empathize with the people or communities you wish to help?

1. **Listen:** Get as close to the people or community you wish to empathize with and listen to what they have to say. You can listen with your ears to what people share with you, but there are also other ways to listen.
 - Examples of ways to "listen:"
 - You can "listen" with your eyes by stopping to observe and note down what you see.
 - You can "listen" with your heart to imagine what they feel.
 - If you cannot directly interact with the people or community you wish to help, you can "listen" by doing research and trying to get as close as possible to the stories shared directly by people in that community. For example, instead of a book about a community or social cause, explore social media to see what these communities are actually saying. Look for photographs, videos, podcasts, created by those living the experience.
2. **Ask:** If you have the opportunity, ask questions that will help you empathize with others. Remember that you are asking questions only to listen and learn, and that it is important to ask well thought out questions, and to make sure you are being sensitive in the questions you ask and how you ask them.

Here are a few tips for asking questions directly to those you wish to empathize with:

- **Be respectful:** First and foremost, let the person(s) you are talking to know that they do not have to respond to any question they don't feel comfortable with. Sometimes it helps to let them know what they can say if they don't want to reply.
 - Example: *"I'd like to ask you some questions, but you do not have to answer anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. If there is something you do not want to respond to, feel free to say 'I'll pass on that one' or 'I'm not comfortable talking about that.'"*
 - **Be thoughtful:** Develop your questions ahead of time, and get feedback from a peer or teacher to make sure your questions are thoughtful, purposeful, sensitive, and open-ended.
 - Tip: Less is more. Focus on developing a few thoughtful, impactful questions rather than a long list.
 - Tip: Consider sharing your questions ahead of time. This can help the person(s) you are talking to prepare and feel more comfortable sharing.
 - **Ask "why?"** If people share information with you, ask "why?" Keep it open-ended and give them room to share more if they feel comfortable.
 - Example: If someone shares, *"it was hard for me to explain to my peers why I wore a hijab,"* ask them *"why?"*
 - **Stay neutral:** Ask questions that stem from curiosity, but be careful not to let your own thoughts or beliefs interfere.
 - Example: Do not reply with your own interpretation, such as *"Oh I can understand that. That's because most people think..."*
 - **Ask for stories:** Ask people to share stories, but keep the question big enough so they have options of what to share.
 - Example: *"Tell me a story about a time when you felt..."*
3. **Observe:** Watch as if you were "listening with your eyes." Follow the same rules about observation as you would if you were talking to someone. This means watching from a place of curiosity, leaving behind your opinions or the "things you think you know," and respecting whom and how you are watching something or someone.
- Examples:
 - Sit in a public park and observe the way the animals are interacting with the environment. Observe the way the environment is impacted by humans, animals, weather, etc. Observe temperatures, textures, sounds, colors. Use a sketchbook to draw what you see, or use a notebook to write down the things you notice.
 - Walk through a new part of town (safely with the permission and accompaniment of a trusted adult.) Stop throughout your walk to jot down your observations and your questions. Try to observe everything, rather than having "tunnel vision" and looking to see only the things you think you are looking for.
 - Explore social media from the people or places you are trying to empathize with. Read or look at what they share, but also note down what they do not share, or what they might not be saying. Note your observations and write down any questions you have.

4. **Participate:** When possible and within reason and safety, try to immerse yourself in the environment or experience of those with whom you wish to empathize.
 - Examples:
 - If you are walking through a new part of town, stop in a local cafe, restaurant, or supermarket. Have a meal or grab a snack.
 - With permission, attend a cultural event or visit a place that is important to this community. When you are there, listen and observe.
 - Use social medium to interact with this community. You can reply to a post, or share your own post to ask a question.
5. **Document:** Throughout this stage of the design process, document everything. You can document using notes, by taking pictures (with permission), using video or audio recordings (with permission), sketching, or journaling. Everything you document in the “Empathize” step of the design process will affect the following stages of the design process and your design challenge.
 - Optional:
 - Use the graphic organizer on the next page to record your observations during this “Empathize” stage of the design process. Feel free to add to it, or use only the parts that work best for you. You can also document in another format, in a notebook or digitally.

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DESIGN PROCESS STEP 1: EMPATHIZE

Use this worksheet to document your observations and experiences during the Empathize step in the design process.

Focus: My Design Challenge

What is my design challenge (quick summary)?

What are the goals or outcomes I wish to achieve?

Documentation: Empathize

Date	What I did (action)	What I observed	Questions I have