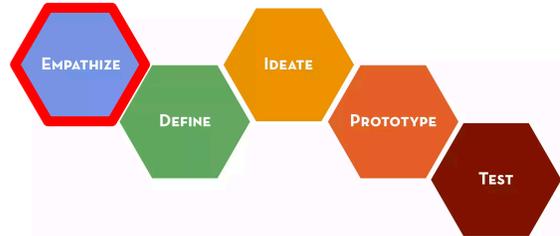


# Empathy and Needfinding

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@jstanford1000

CS377E  
Spring 2017  
April 10, 2017

## Design Thinking Process

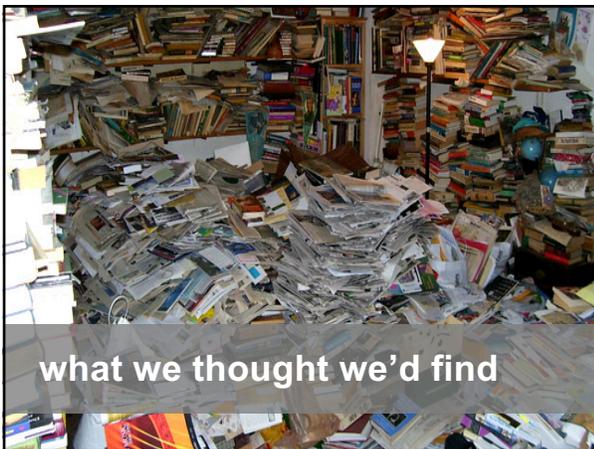


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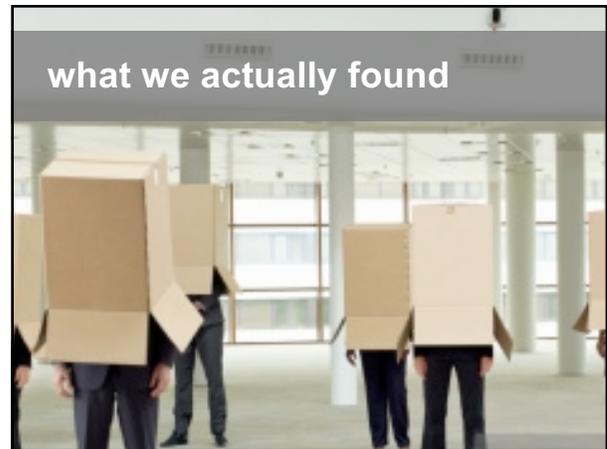
## In a large company in Silicon Valley...



- **Low satisfaction among product developers (-41 NPS)**
- Repeated mention of problems finding information
- Proposal to hire a Knowledge Management specialist
- Sliced Bread Design tasked with understanding how to approach the problem



what we thought we'd find



what we actually found

“Most of the pain is just finding the right people.”

Everyone

## Mystery names



Jennifer  
Offerings: CBO  
Banking

“I want to talk to the shell team but they're called Judge Dredd. They're all like superhero names. I don't know why we're stuck with them.

I don't know what Green Lantern, Godzilla, Gladiators are.



## HMW connect people?

How might we...

- help developers get questions answered by the right people quickly?
- connect developers with relevant teams and their docs more effectively?
- keep people feeling connected through times of organizational change?

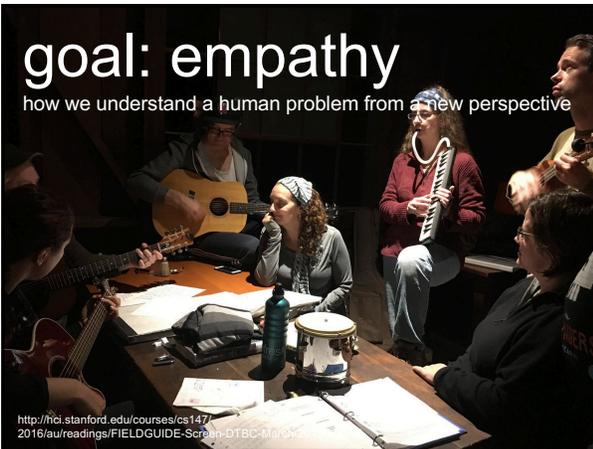
## You Are Not the Customer



- Seems obvious, but...
  - different experiences
  - different terminology
  - different ways of looking at the world
- Easy to think of self as typical customer

## goal: empathy

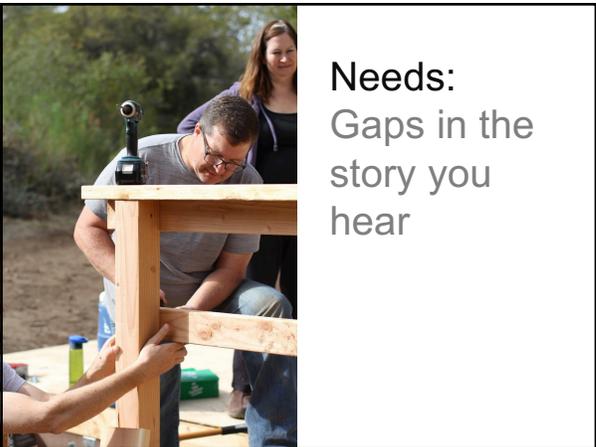
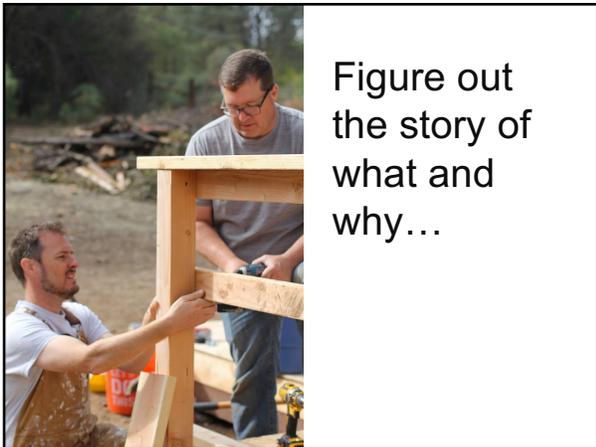
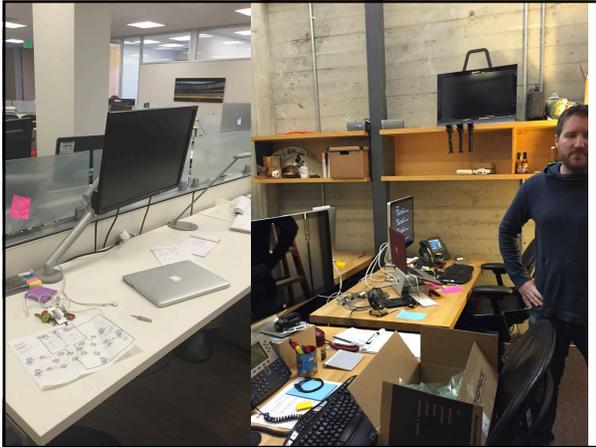
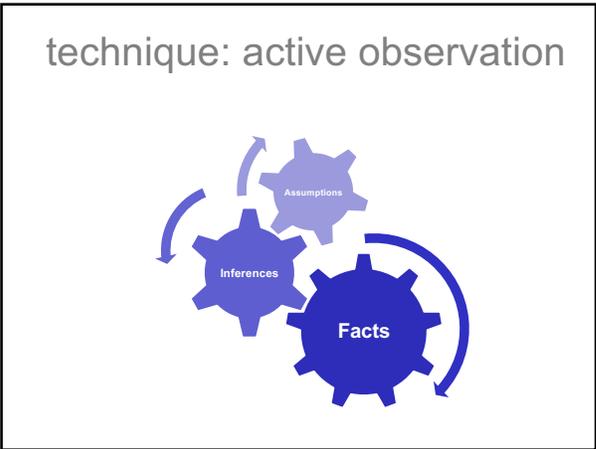
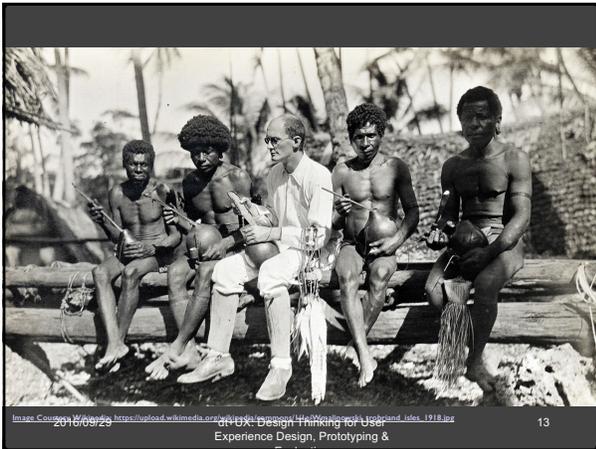
how we understand a human problem from a new perspective



<http://hci.stanford.edu/courses/cs147/2016/au/readings/FIELDGUIDE-Scratch-DTBC-MaJor>

“You Can Observe a Lot Just by Watching”

—Yogi Berra





Needfinding  
discovering  
opportunities  
by noticing  
those gaps



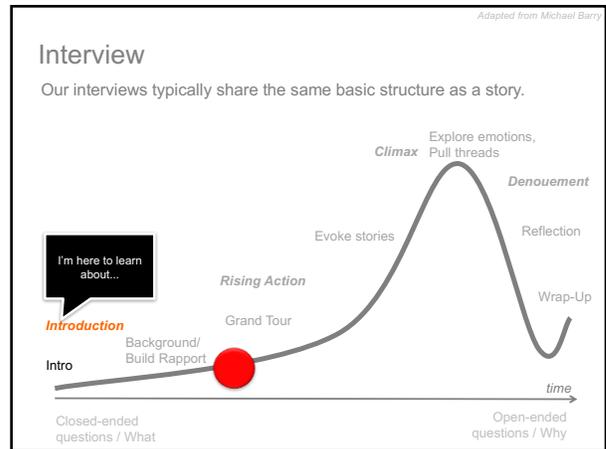
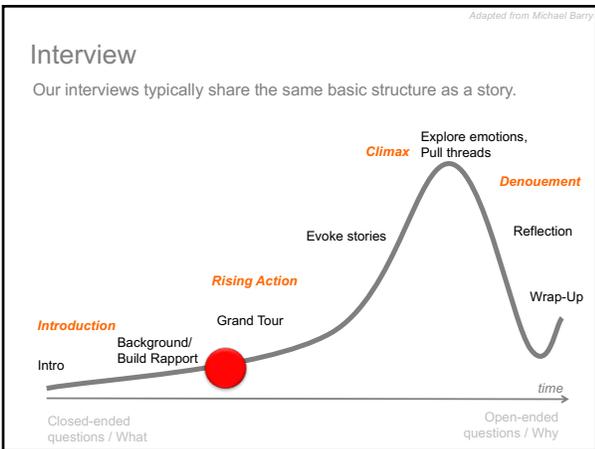
Understand  
the current  
story  
and then...

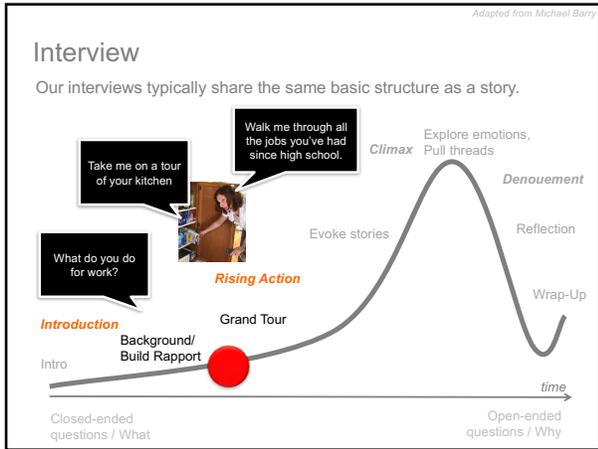
Tell a new one

Let's watch an interview

Take notes on what you notice  
the interviewer doing

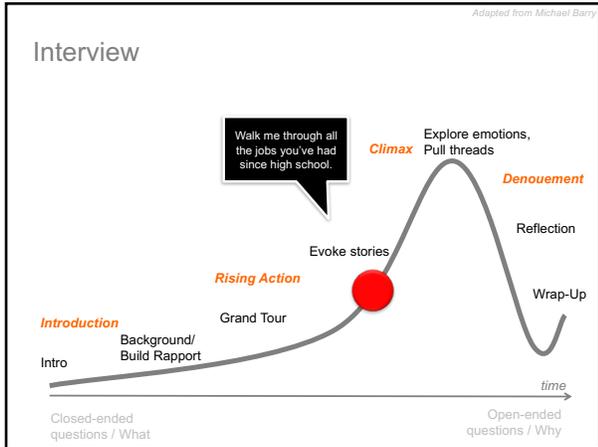
What did you notice?





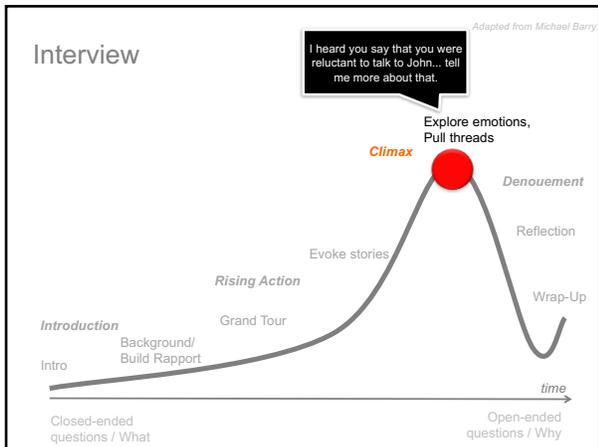
## Background & Grand Tour

- **Background** — “Tell me about what you do here.”
- **Sequence** — “Walk me through your day yesterday...then what do you do next?”
- **Physical tour** — Take me on a tour of how you build the panels...”
- **Virtual tour** — Walk me through your sales process from the beginning...”
- **Participation** — “Can you show me exactly how you prepare a bid for a customer?”
- **Exhaustive List** — “What are all the different municipalities where you sell?”
- **Tasks and organizational structures** — “Can you draw me a diagram of the organizational chart of your company?”



## Evoke Stories

- **Naive Outsider Perspective** — “I’m not from Southern California, tell me how the housing market works here.”
- **Changes Over Time** — “How are things different than they were a year ago?”
- **Native Language** — “Why do you call your office ‘the command post’?”
- **Topics/Scenarios** — “Tell me about the last time someone asked you to do something you didn’t know how to do...” / “Tell me about the last time you bought a new hat...”
- **Reflecting Back** - “So, what I hear you saying is..... is that right?”



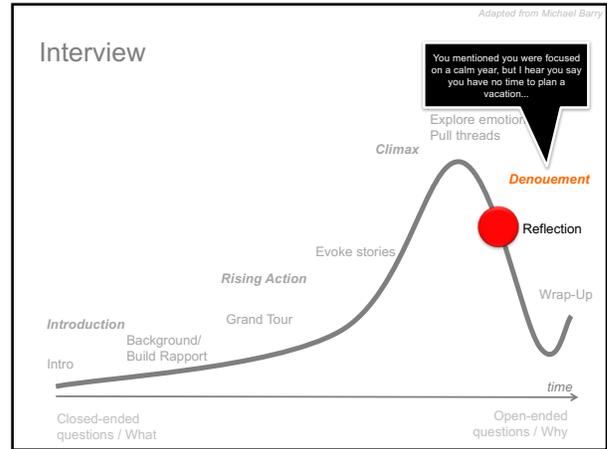
## Interview Questions – Emotions

- **Peer Comparison** - “Do your colleagues share your sales techniques? Why?”
- **Other Viewpoint Comparison** - “What would other solar owners think about that?”
- **Clarification** - “...and when you say ‘I’m a closer,’ what do you mean exactly?”
- **Characterization and Comparison** - “Could you characterize your sales style and compare it to Mike’s?”
- **Success and Failure** - “Describe your most successful sales call. Now tell me about a sales call that was an absolute disaster.”
- **Self-Description** — “How would you describe your style?” “How do you decide what you are going to show your manager?”

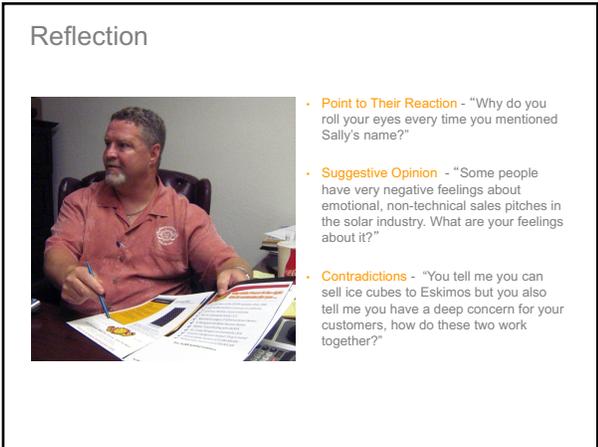
## Follow up and pull that thread



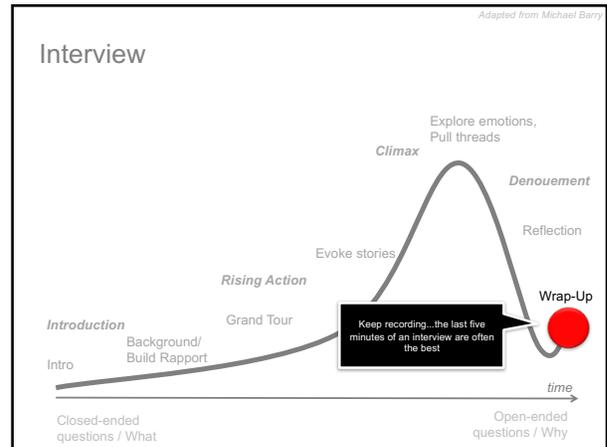
- Adjust your questions to pull on their previous answers
- Ask questions in their own words / understandings
- Pick up on & ask for examples
- Be flexible



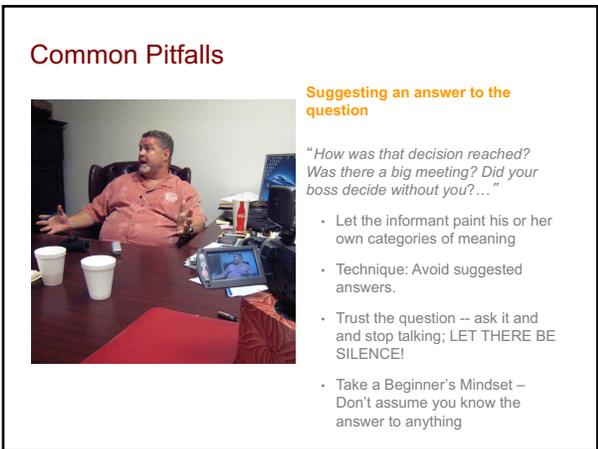
## Reflection



- **Point to Their Reaction** - "Why do you roll your eyes every time you mentioned Sally's name?"
- **Suggestive Opinion** - "Some people have very negative feelings about emotional, non-technical sales pitches in the solar industry. What are your feelings about it?"
- **Contradictions** - "You tell me you can sell ice cubes to Eskimos but you also tell me you have a deep concern for your customers, how do these two work together?"



## Common Pitfalls

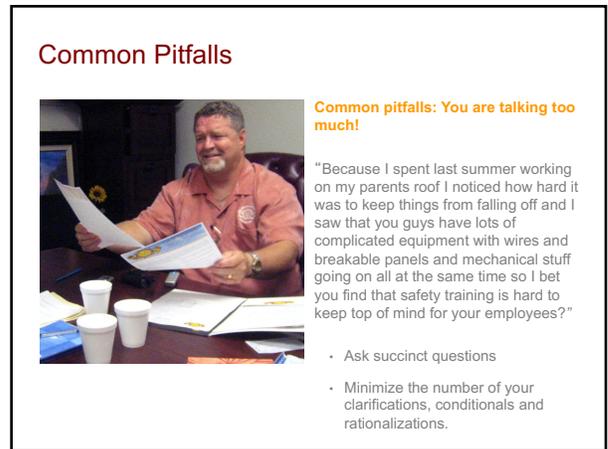


**Suggesting an answer to the question**

"How was that decision reached? Was there a big meeting? Did your boss decide without you?..."

- Let the informant paint his or her own categories of meaning
- Technique: Avoid suggested answers.
- Trust the question -- ask it and and stop talking; LET THERE BE SILENCE!
- Take a Beginner's Mindset -- Don't assume you know the answer to anything

## Common Pitfalls



**Common pitfalls: You are talking too much!**

"Because I spent last summer working on my parents roof I noticed how hard it was to keep things from falling off and I saw that you guys have lots of complicated equipment with wires and breakable panels and mechanical stuff going on all at the same time so I bet you find that safety training is hard to keep top of mind for your employees?"

- Ask succinct questions
- Minimize the number of your clarifications, conditionals and rationalizations.

## Common Pitfalls



### Common pitfalls: Hypothetical Situations

"What if I designed something that wasn't as round and soft and annoying as your current thing and instead bounced up and down. Would that work for you?"

"What about your friends? What would they do?"

"When do you typically visit the grocery store?"

- Ask about events and things that actually happened/exist
- Focus on getting the user's point of view, not someone else's
- Don't ask about typical, ask about specific

## There is more than one way to say WHY



- Tell me more about that
- Tell me what you mean when you say XXX
- ...[last phrase the person said]?

## A few last tips



- Remember that people make sense (at least to themselves)
- Your job is to be able to explain how they make sense to someone at the end of your interview – **Get to the bottom of things and understand what and why something is happening!**
- Beginner's mindset – don't assume you know about anything
- Create a discussion guide with lots of questions, but be ready to veer to pull threads (you will never cover it all)
- Prepare to be changed by what you hear...this is about human connection

## Choosing participants

- Representative of target users
- May be current users of a similar system or with similar problems
- Might be the non-users – but they could be in the future
- Interview people on both sides of an interaction
- Experts are good for background but are not a substitute for users
- Consider interviewing extreme users
- **Typically interview 6-12 people individually for 30-90 min**

Now you try it...