HOWTO EMPATHY

Emma Jane Hogbin Westby
@emmajanehw
#humanops
A primer on how I taught myself to be more empathetic.
MY AGENDA

I want to help you to:

Improve your team’s cohesion.

Design interactions to get outcomes you need.

Diversify how you think.

Solve hard problems.
THE BASICS

Sympathy, Empathy, and Normal People
DEFINE: SYMPATHY

The feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.
DEFINE: EMPATHY

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
Normal people have an incredible lack of empathy.

Temple Grandin
6 Understanding Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Analytical Thinking</th>
<th>Compassion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scan</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tune-in</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICING EMPATHY

Level 1: Care just enough to learn more about a person’s life.

Level 2: Use thinking strategies to structure interactions.

Level 3: Engage with the world from another’s perspective.
LEVEL 1.
CARING JUST ENOUGH
Difficulty – Beginner
Caring just enough

Rewards & Risks

Improves team cohesion.

Requires a time investment.
ASK QUESTIONS.

Talk to people and collect their stories.
CARING JUST ENOUGH

GIVE ATTENTION.
If you are thinking about your response, you are not truly listening.
REFER BACK.

Ask about stories you've previously collected.
LEVEL 2.
THINKING STRATEGIES
Difficulty — Intermediate
THINKING STRATEGIES

REWARDS & RISKS

Able to engineer successful outcomes.

Improves capacity for diverse thinking.

Perceived as manipulative.
THINKING STRATEGIES
UNCOVER MOTIVATORS.

Unpack why a person behaves the way they do.
THINKING STRATEGIES

Creativity: challenge, envision, brainstorm, reframe, flash of insight, flow

Understanding: scan, structure, clarify, empathise, express, tune-in

Decision-Making: crux, validate, experience, conclude, trust your heart, values-driven
THINKING STRATEGIES

Creativity
- challenge
- envision
- brainstorm
- reframe
- flash of insight
- flow

Understanding
- scan
- structure
- clarify
- empathise
- tune-in
- express

Decision-Making
- crux
- validate
- experience
- conclude
- trust your heart
- values-driven
CREATIVE THINKING

challenge
envision
brainstorm
reframe
flash of insight
flow
RECOGNISE
CREATIVE LANGUAGE

Can we try ...
I know we’re done, but what about ...
OMG! I just had this great idea ...
Why do you think ...
Is this the best we can do ...
UNDERSTANDING THINKING

- scan
- structure
- empathise
- express
- clarify
- tune-in
So what you’re saying is ...

Just to clarify ...

I think this is related to ...

So I made this spreadsheet ...

That must feel horrible!
DECISION THINKING

crux
validate
experience
conclude
gut instinct
values-driven
I’m ready to move on to ...

I don’t know *why* I think this, but ...

Last time we tried this ...

The real problem is ...

My gut tells me ...
ORGANISE MEETINGS ACCORDING TO THINKING STRATEGIES NOT TOPICS TO GET THE OUTCOMES YOU NEED.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENDA ITEM</th>
<th>ITEM OWNER</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ADVICE NEEDED ON MANAGEMENT ISSUE #1</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>BRAINSTORM IDEAS</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAKE DECISION</td>
<td>3min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INITIATIVES Ideas</td>
<td>2min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 NEED TEAM HELP REFRAMING PROBLEM TO SOLUTION</td>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>DESCRIBE SITUATION</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>REFRAME &amp; BRAINSTORM IDEAS</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 QUICK PLAN FOR NEXT WEEKS EVENT</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Information &amp; Clarification</td>
<td>ENVISION POSSIBILITIES</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SCAN THE SITUATION</td>
<td>3min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUDE</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PLAN &amp; ORGANIZE</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 WINTER CAMPAIGN – NEED DECISIONS + INITIATIVE</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Critical Assessment</td>
<td>BRAINSTORM IDEAS</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAKE DECISION</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INITIATIVES Ideas</td>
<td>5min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEVEL 3.
IMAGINATION

Difficulty — Advanced
Truly creative problem solving.

Potentially overwhelming

Cause doubt for self-worth.
SEEK TO UNDERSTAND.

Complain about yourself from the other's perspective.
SEEK TO EXPERIENCE.

Live your day through the other's constraints.
IN SUMMARY

• Level 1: Care just enough to improve team cohesion.

• Level 2: Structure interactions to get outcomes you need, and diversify how you think.

• Level 3: Use another’s perspective to overcome hard problems.
EMPATHY PRACTITIONERS

Thinking is a skill to be practiced.
I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.

Maya Angelou
CULTIVATE EMPATHY

follow-up:

#humanops

@emmajanehw
emma @ gitforteams.com

http://gitforteams.com/resources/cultivating-empathy.html