2.009 “hello”
tips and techniques for practicing empathy

meena kothandaraman
@meena_ko
empathy

the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's shoes
qualitative research

the practice
of empathy
create engagement to anchor your designs in human stories
preparation
define the approach

who? (define the people)
how? (individuals, groups)
how long? (set a time, stick to it)
how much? (informal intercept, dedicated discussion, longitudinal)
where? (in-person, in-context, remote)
establish the roles

observer
• know the guide
• take notes, pictures, video

moderator
• practice the guide
• probe into why
• be neutral

participant
• articulate realities
engagement
direct the engagement arc

people

describe behaviors, aptitudes, attitudes and emotions

product

describe human attributes as it relates to an experience

people \neq product
helpful starters

tell me about...
I’d like to learn about...
describe for me...
help me understand...
can you share...
how do you consider...
tenets

avoid ... 😞
- resulting in a yes/no
  (open up a story!)
- asking participants to design –
  that is your job
- critiquing their approach

prepare to ... 😊
- repeat back (and use their words)
- embrace pauses (let them think)
- learn about people (and the gap in
  their experience)
capture your data

- video
- artifacts
- notebook

stories
example engagement arc

tell me about your morning activities

tell me about beverages you drink in the morning

what role does your morning beverage play in your day

describe what you drink your morning beverage in

why that beverage-holder?
practice
write down 5 questions on Post-its

- people
  - describe behaviors, aptitudes, attitudes, and emotions

- product
  - describe human attributes as it relates to an experience

one question per Post It
organize your Post-its

people
describe behaviors, aptitudes, attitudes and emotions

product
describe human attributes as it relates to an experience
take turns, try your questions

describe behaviors, aptitudes, attitudes and emotions

describe human attributes as it relates to an experience

assign a moderator, participant and note taker
tap into your creativity and generate excitement to get human data
have fun!

meena@twigandfish.com  |  @meena_ko

www.twigandfish.com