EMPATHIC DESIGN

The Storyboard — The Heart of the Story

As you complete your Interview Summary Placemat, you will want to consider what you heard, felt, and understood about your interviewee's story. You listened and asked questions to establish greater empathy for the person's life and story. Now is the time to use storytelling to share this person's experience, values, and challenges with others. Stories use verbal and visual means to communicate your ideas.

After your interview, you may be struck by the absence of a well-formed problem. There may be many problems or issues that are tightly packed in other, more obvious problems. Take time to unwind an essential challenge. On that challenge, focus your story. You are now going to take one small part of the longer life narrative, unbind it from the rest of the larger story, and feature that vignette to inspire empathy for a particular problem or challenge.

Consider what part of the story resonated with you the most. Which part of the interview made you vulnerable? Your story will define the premise of the problem you are going to solve using empathic design.

As you write your story, think about the following elements:

1. **What is the heart of the person's narrative?** What problem(s) does the person encounter?

2. **How does the person interact with this problem?** Is the person frustrated, fearful, hopeless, hopeful…?

3. **Tell the story within a specific context.** Avoid relaying so much information that you lose the emotional point of the story.

4. **What is the emotion you want to share?** Don't be afraid of the story's emotion. Frame the point of your story with real emotion.

5. **Use the voice and words of the person in the story.**

6. **End the story with insight.** For example, "Everything in Pete's life was complicated by his love for his dog, Jago. Until Pete got help taking care of his dog, it was clear that his life was tightly tethered to the streets of DC. Shelters rejected him and job hunting was impossible. Even though a small minority of homeless people in DC have pets, for both the animal and the person's sake, a solution must be found…"

7. **Organize your story using the storyboard template.**