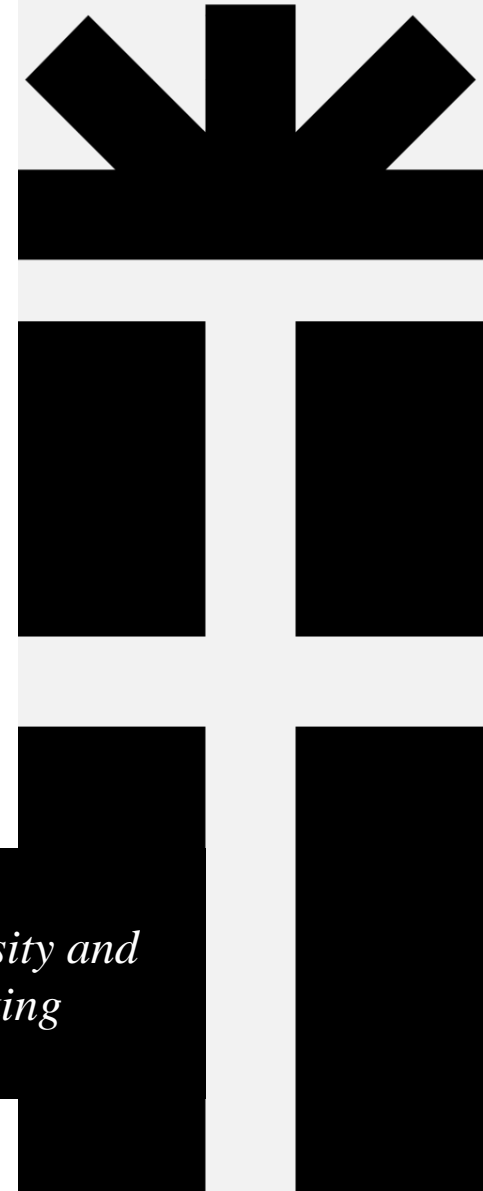


The Perfect Gift

*An Introduction to Curiosity and
Empathy in Design Thinking*

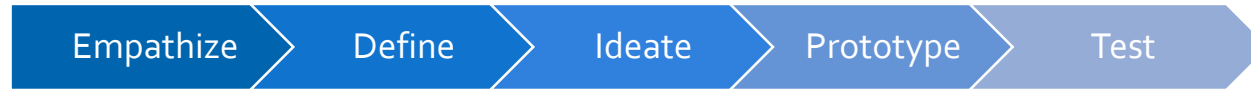
An adaptation of the Wallet Project:

<https://hci.stanford.edu/dschool/resources/wallet/Wallet%20Facilitators%20Guide.pdf>



Introduction and General Instructions

This is an adaption of the Wallet Project developed by the Institute of Design at Stanford University (<https://hci.stanford.edu/dschool/resources/wallet/Wallet%20Facilitators%20Guide.pdf>). The Wallet Project is meant to introduce participants to the cycle of design thinking and basic principles of human-centered design in a short time. The exercise uses the process below.

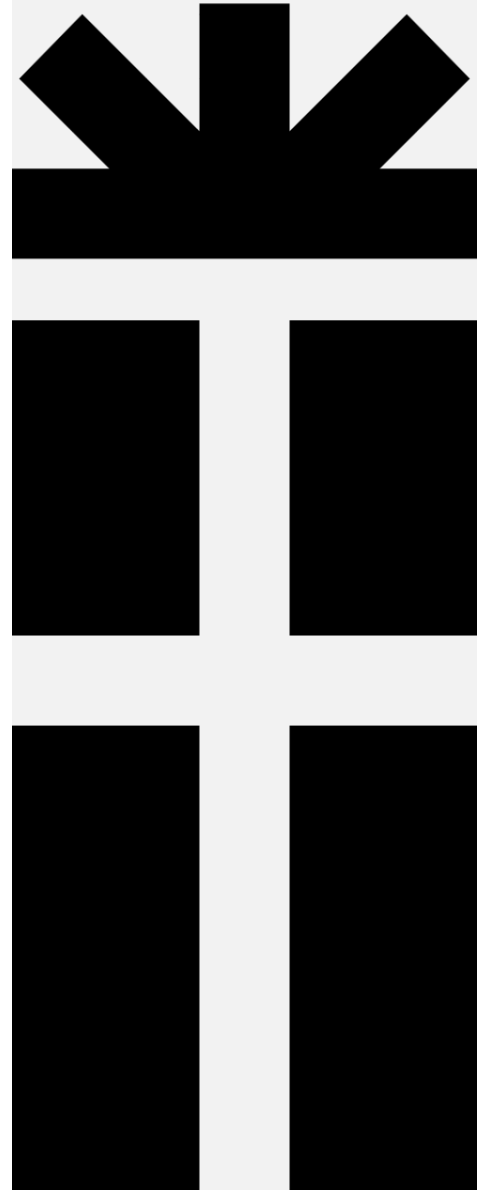


This adaptation seeks for participants to explore how focusing on their view of the “**perfect**” gift might be tinted by their own wishes and biases (*self-awareness*), and by exercising *curiosity*, they may gain insight that could be used to build *empathy* with their partner to design a more meaningful gift for that partner.

The activity uses a “**perfect**” gift rather than a wallet to emphasize that the concept of an ideal gift is as unique as the partners or individuals themselves. Therefore, curiosity and empathy are necessary in making the best effort to define and design what the partner would want and wish.

Space, grouping, aids, and materials considerations

- Space should allow participants to pair up and have close conversation. Tables or surfaces for taking notes are needed, but participants may stand. Promote movement. Use music (as needed) to keep participants active.
- Have construction supplies available for prototyping (e.g., construction paper, pens or markers, popsicle sticks or toothpicks, pipe cleaners or paper clips, scissors, masking tape, etc...)
- Have enough copies of the “student handout” for each participant. Single-sided, 11”x17” paper is recommended.
- Stick to the time table defined in the exercise; bring enough help to facilitate and support the time schedule according. Have a reliable way to keep the time and announce when the time is up.
- **Don’t forget to bring this guide with you!**
- Feel free to check the Wallet Project facilitator’s guide (link above) for additional input and ideas.



Design the Perfect Gift

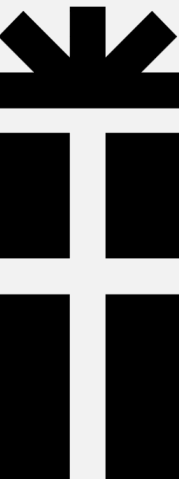
For this first step, participants are still working individually. **This is a false start**, but do not let the participants know. Instead, you can start by telling them: “We are about to experience the design process in one hour”, you can distribute the handouts, and ask them: “Let’s begin by coming up with ideas for the ‘perfect’ gift.”

- The point is to focus in the item (the gift) and what each participant believes would be ‘perfect’.
- It is normal for participants to feel stuck. Tell them it is ok to feel rushed or pressured.
- Remind them they are just starting with some ideas, and remind them about the time left.

At the end of the step, you can ask them about how it felt, assess the room based on body language (do not spend time briefing), and move to the next step. You can tell them: “That was a typical problem-solving approach, in which we focus on a thing or problem, working based on our own opinions and experiences. Let’s try something else; let’s try focusing on the receiver, our partner.”

Design the Perfect Gift *(Draw, sketch, describe ... in 3min)*

Show your idea here...



Start with curiosity to gain empathy

1 Interview your partner (8 min – 2 sessions x 4 min)

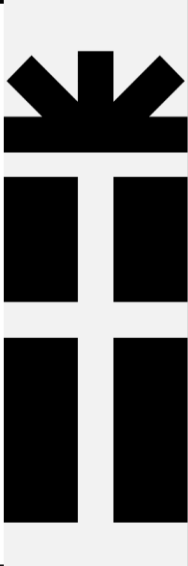
- Ask participants to group themselves in pairs. If possible, ask them to look for someone they don't know or know the least.
- Tell them their challenge is to design something useful and meaningful to their partners. Ask them to have a good conversation about their likes and dislikes, and ask questions to gain empathy for their partners.
- Explain the logistics; it may help referring to partners '1' and '2' or 'A' and 'B': **“Partner A will have four minutes to interview partner B, then we will tell you to switch. As a starting point, ask your partner to tell you what they like to do, how they like to spend their time, things they would like to learn, or places they would like to visit, why...”**
- Ask them to take notes along the way.
- **“Let's begin.”** Keep an upbeat atmosphere, and tell them when to switch and stop.

2 Dig deeper (8 min – 2 sessions x 4 min)

- After their interview, ask them to follow up on things that intrigued them.
- Ask them to dig for details, anecdotes, feelings, emotions... and to ask **“WHY?”** often.
- Ask them to forget about the gift and find out what is important to the partner.
- Ask them to take notes along the way and capture quotes when possible.
- As in the previous step, keep a positive mood, and tell them when to switch and stop.

Now Design something useful and meaningful for your partner.
Start with **curiosity** to gain **empathy**...

1 Interview (8min – 2 sessions x 4 min each) <i>Notes from your 1st interview</i>	2 Dig deeper (8min – 2 sessions x 4 min each) <i>Notes from your 2nd interview</i>
<i>Switch roles and repeat interview</i>	<i>Switch roles and repeat interview</i>



Redefine what your partner would like

3 Capture findings (3 min)

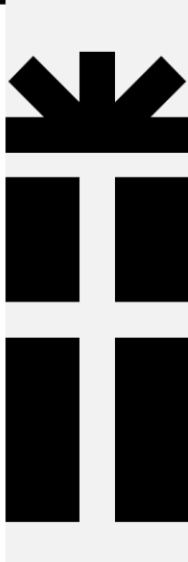
- Ask them to **individually** take a few minutes to collect their thoughts and reflect on what they learned about the partner.
- Ask them to summarize what they learned into a few needs or wishes the partner may have.
- Those needs and wishes may be expressed in verbs.
- Ask them to focus on the needs or wishes to be fulfilled, not the things that may help fulfilling them.
- Ask them to list any insights / discoveries that they can use to help creating better solutions.
- Tell them when to stop and move to the next step.

4 Define the problem statement (3 min)

- Now ask them to select the most captivating need or wish and the most fascinating insight or discovery to formulate a problem statement.
- Tell them **this is the statement that they will address** with their design.
- It should feel like a problem worth tackling for the partner.

Redefine what your partner would like

3 Capture findings (3min)	4 Define a problem statement (3min)
<p>NEED: Identify your partner's needs and wants</p> <p>INSIGHT: What new did you learn about your partner's feelings and worldview to be considered in your design?</p>	<p>(Partner's name or description:)</p> <p>_____ would like a way to</p> <p>(mention the need:) _____</p> <p>(expand on attributes, feelings, reasons... based on the insight:)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>



Generate options to meet your partner's need

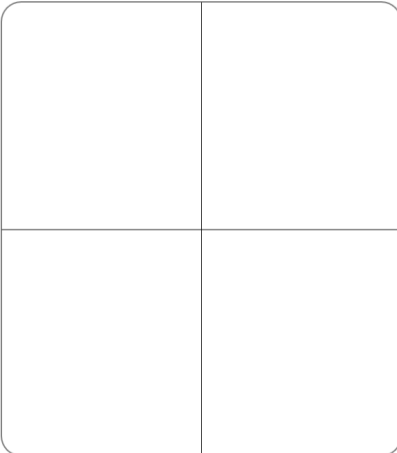
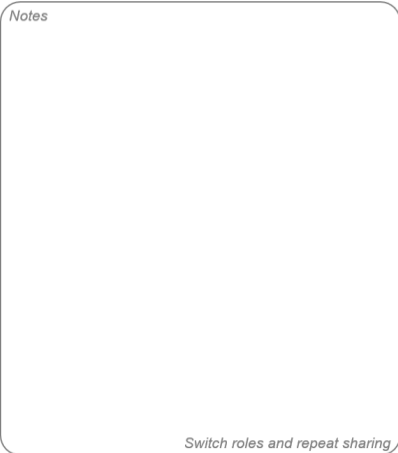
5 Sketch ideas (5 min)

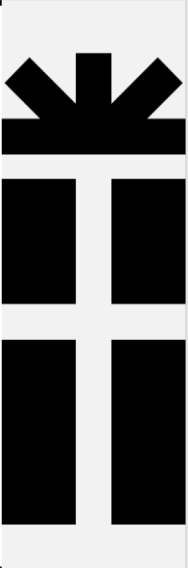
- Remind them they are now generating solutions to the challenge they have defined.
- Ask them to keep the problem statement in mind.
- Ask them to sketch a lot of ideas; go for volume.
- Tell them that the more different the ideas are, the better; go for variety.
- This is not a time to judge the ideas; explore all angles.
- Ask them to be visual; use words just when necessary.
- Remind them about the time left, and push them to use the back of their handouts for more ideas!

6 Share solutions and get feedback (10 min – 2 sessions x 5 min)

- Now ask them to share their sketches and ideas with their partners.
- Explain that during the first 5 minutes, partner A shares the ideas with partner B, and partner B provides feedback.
- Explain this is another opportunity to learn about the partner's wishes, feelings, and worldview, so participants can recalibrate the problem and improve their solutions.
- Ask them to avoid defending their solutions, but to spend the time listening to partner's comments, reactions, and questions.
- Remind them the time left, and ask them to switch when the first 5 minutes are up.

Generate options to meet the partner's need

5 Sketch 3-4 ways to explore & test (5 min)	6 Share your solutions & get feedback (10 min – 2 sessions x 5 min)
	<i>Notes</i> 
<i>Switch roles and repeat sharing</i>	



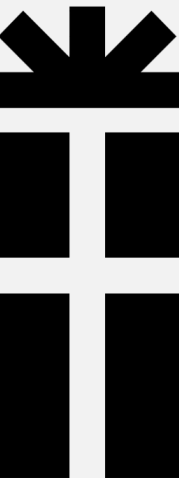
Iterate based on feedback

7 Reflect & generate a new or revised solution (3 min)

- Now that they have had a chance to share their ideas and receive feedback, ask them to consider what they have learned about the partner and the ideas they generated.
- Ask them to sketch a new idea consider the new understanding of the partners and their needs.
- The idea can be a variation of a previous idea, a combination of two or more, or something completely new.
- Remind them they are still addressing the problem they articulated, but the statement may be revised based on the new findings.
- Ask them to provide as much detail as possible to describe the solution and consider how the solution fits into the partner's life and interests (e.g., "When, where, and how would the partner use the solution?")
- While the participants work on this step, make sure the prototyping materials are available for next step.

7 Reflect & generate a new or revised solution

(Draw, sketch, describe your GREAT idea ... 3min)



Build and test

8 Build (7 min)


- Ask the participants to use the idea they just sketched to build a representation of the solution.
- This is not about building a perfect, detailed model, but building the experience the partner should have with the solution.
- For practical purposes, they can focus on building and testing only one aspect or feature of the gift (product, service, or system).
- They should build something the partner can interact with; it can be building a scenario to experience the proposed solution.
- Given time constraints, they should prefer working quickly over working neatly.

9 Share solution and get feedback (8 min – 2 sessions x 4 min)

- Now ask them to share their prototypes with their partners.
- Explain that during the first 4 minutes, partner 'A' share the ideas to partner 'B', and partner B provides feedback.
- Explain this is not to validate the solution; your partner's feedback and how the partner uses and misuses the solution are the focus.
- Ask them to avoid defending their solutions, but spend time observing your partner's reactions and how interacts with the solution.
- Take notes about what the partner liked and didn't, as well as questions and improvement ideas that surfaced.
- Remind them the time left, and ask them to switch when the first 4 minutes are up.

Build and test

8 Build your solution (7 min)	9 Share your solution & get feedback (8 min – 2 sessions x 4 min each)	
<i>Go and make something your partner can interact with...</i>	+ What worked...	- What could improve...
	? Questions...	! Ideas...



Reflections and takeaways

Gather and debrief

- This step may convert the activity from a fun exercise to a learning opportunity.
- Ask participants to bring their prototypes and set them in the middle of the group.
- Ask for volunteers to talk (for instance) about a solution (built for them) that they really liked.
- Ask for those who created the solutions and engage them in the conversation.
 - *How did the process help you designing the solution?*
 - *What was the most challenging aspect of the process?*
 - *What do you think was the most insightful step?*
- Lead the conversation to relate the activity to the attitude of **curiosity** and the skill of **empathy**, and how they can be useful in developing solutions for stakeholders with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Depending on the feedback and the diversity in the participating group, there might be opportunities to make connections to:
 - How people may communicate their needs and wishes directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. How understanding those difference in communications might help identifying a more complete set of needs and wants in a given problem.
 - How differences in culture may have an effect in the quality of solutions, and how being more receptive to recognize and interact might improve the quality of design.
 - How knowledge of self-awareness and worldview frameworks may also have an effect in how we may seek and welcome feedback, and in consequence generate new ideas to address complex products, services, or systems.

