

Get inside one person's head before you design for them.

## Background

*Dave Gray · XPLANE · updated 2017*

An Empathy Map forces you to map what a specific person says, thinks, does, and feels — and find the gaps. The contradiction between what people say and what they do is where your best insights live. Always map one person, not a persona.

## How to Run This

- 1 Name the person — a real individual, not a persona.
- 2 Fill Says and Does first — what you can observe or hear directly.
- 3 Infer Thinks and Feels from what you know, not what you hope.
- 4 Look for contradictions between Say/Do and Think/Feel.
- 5 Translate contradictions into Gains and Pains — that gap is your insight.

## Facilitator Tips

### Common mistake

Filling in what you wish they thought or felt. This is a research tool, not a wishful-thinking exercise.

### What good looks like

One sharp contradiction — something they say that contradicts what they do. That gap is the insight.

### When to move on

When you have at least one validated pain that your idea could address.

## About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform — making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

## Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will guide you through mapping a real person — asking the questions that expose the gaps between what they say and what they actually do. You'll leave with a completed map and a session report.

[studio.wadeinstitute.org.au](https://studio.wadeinstitute.org.au) →

**THE PERSON**

*Who is this? Name, role, situation, and what they are trying to do.*

**SAYS**

*What do they say out loud? Capture direct quotes.*

**THINKS**

*What might they be thinking but not saying? Worries, hopes, doubts.*

**DOES**

*What actions and behaviours do you observe?*

**FEELS**

*What emotions come through? Frustrated? Excited? Anxious?*

**PAINS**

*What frustrates them? What obstacles or risks do they face?*

**GAINS**

*What do they want to achieve? What does success look like for them?*