



# **Designing for Empathy & Compassionate Worldviews Through Museums**

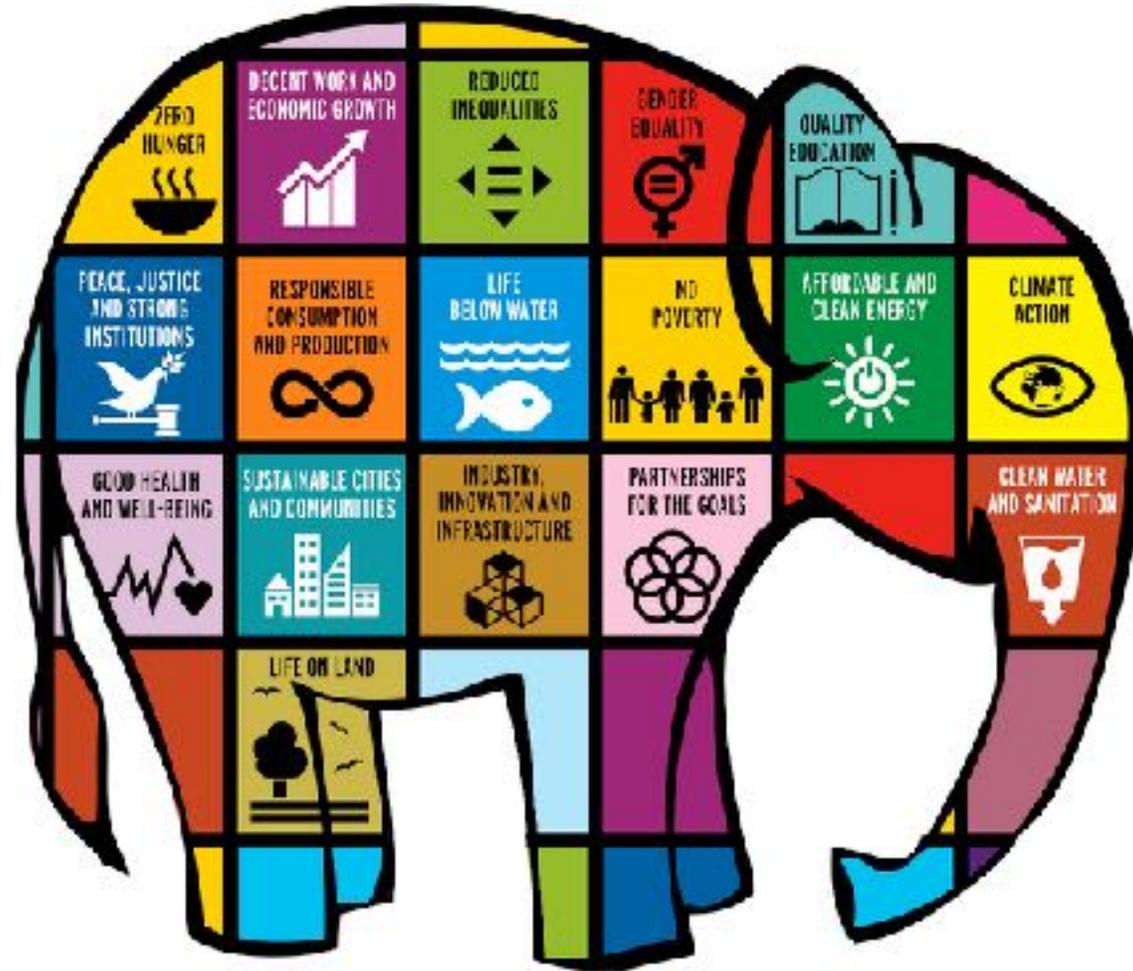
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**“Creating Change Symposium: How Empathy Can Advance Your Mission”**

Woodland Park Zoo

Seattle, WA - January 2019

# “Behavior Change”



# Empathy-Building & The Oneness Mindset

How do we get people to care, show compassion,  
and take action?

Through a realization of our interconnectedness,  
we find meaning, hope, and purpose in life,  
and act with compassion and altruism towards  
the Whole -all of humanity and the planet.

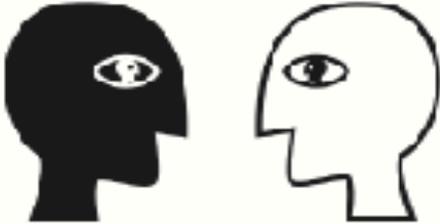
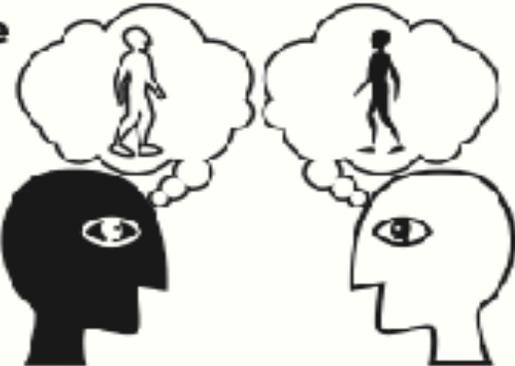
I | Whole  
Knowledge | Wisdom  
Not Caring | Compassionate Actions

# Individual Behavior Change ↔ Systems Change



**Empathy:** The feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions; the ability to share someone else's feelings.\*

\*Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of empathy

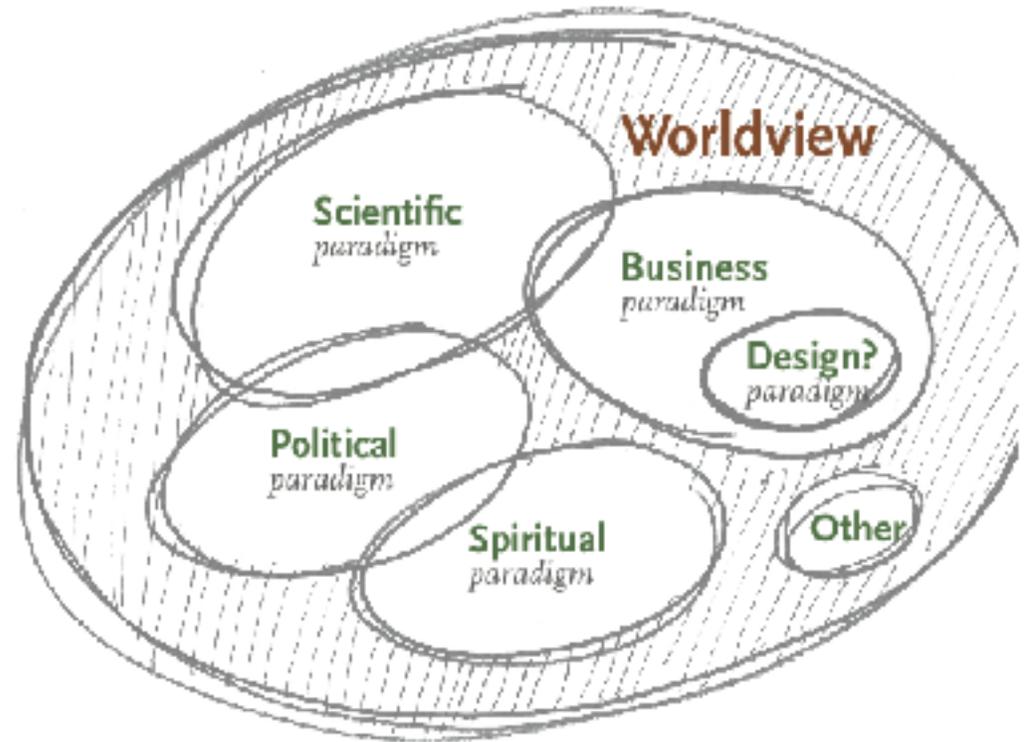
Types	Attributes & Levels	Skills	Outcomes	Pitfalls
<p><b>Emotional</b></p> 	<p><b>Reactive:</b> Connecting with the other automatically; feeling another's emotions, experiencing their feelings.</p>	<p><b>Instinctive:</b> Takes place instantaneously.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social awareness</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research suggests some people are unable to make such connections due to brain structure</li> <li>• Manipulation</li> <li>• In-group bias</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cognitive</b></p> 	<p><b>Reflective:</b> Connecting with the other through emotional literacy, awe, wonder, and contemplation.</p>	<p><b>Requires effortful thinking:</b> Perspective taking, introspection, and reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional literacy</li> <li>• Management of emotions</li> <li>• Positive behavior change: Opting for kindness, compassion, tolerance, and equality; responsible decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanitization</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compassionate</b></p> 	<p><b>Pragmatic perspective shifts:</b> Connecting with the other as parts of a greater Whole.</p>	<p><b>Deep contemplations:</b> A cultivated respect and appreciation for the Whole and all of its parts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-disciplinary, multi-dimensional thinking</li> <li>• A strong sense of justice and equality for all</li> <li>• Humbleness, selflessness, inner peace</li> <li>• Social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Compassionate action &amp; a truism</li> </ul>	

# Worldviews & Paradigms\*

\*Credit: Prof. Terry Irwin's "The Anatomy of a Worldview"

**A worldview** is a vantage point that conditions our experience of the world. A master-perspective usually involving multiple paradigms from different disciplines.

**Paradigms** are frameworks which unify a range of experiences. Paradigms prescribe behavior and guide what questions can and cannot be asked.



ALTRUISM → COMPASSION → EMPATHY → SENSE OF PURPOSE → FULFILLMENT OF HUMAN POTENTIAL

# Empathy-Building: What is it like to be You?



- A pragmatic perspective shift & an awareness of multiple perspectives
- Visitor is the “subject” and the “object” of the exhibition
- Faced with a real-life, real-time “disorienting dilemma”
- A real-time choice and an action is expected/experienced to resolve the situation
- Paradigm shift: A new set of meanings and priorities are momentarily set to cope with “uncertainty”
- Facing the “self”: Learning something new about “myself and my choices and actions” during this time of uncertainty
- An “observer” and the “observed”
- Dialogue & Contemplation
- An awareness of “the multiple ways of experiencing the universe”

# Fostering Empathy Through Museums

(Rowman & Littlefield, 2016)

## Empathy as:

- an educational tool
- an institutional value  
“Empathetic Museum”
- a human phenomenon & an intentional outcome of a museum experience

## Five Ways Museums Can Increase Empathy:

- Museums Hold a Mirror to Society - A Place for Encountering “the Other”
- Storytelling & Creating New Narratives
- Experiential Learning
- Awe & Wonder
- Contemplation

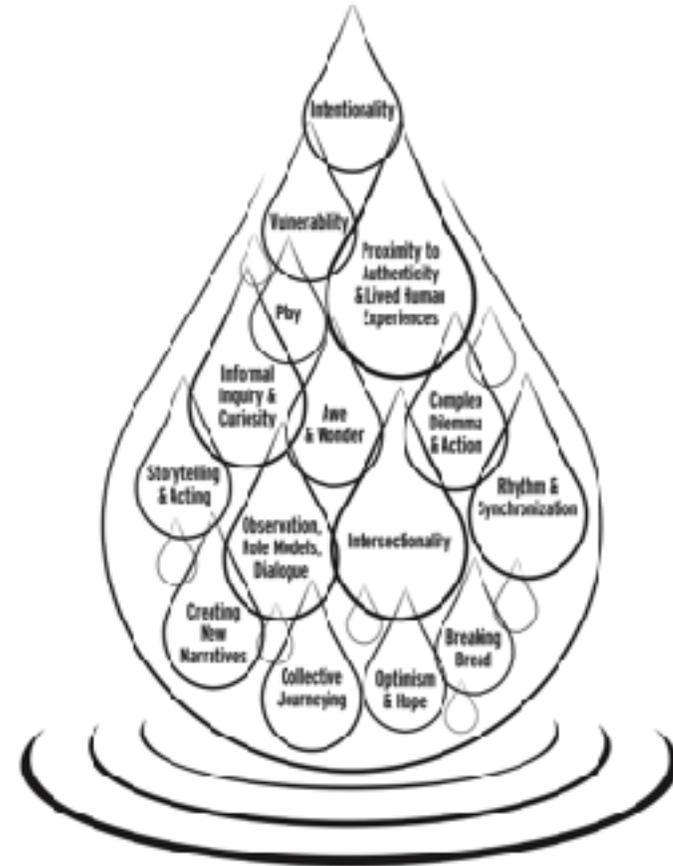
# **Designing for Empathy: Perspectives on the Museum Experience**

(forthcoming, AAM 2019)

- **What is the “Object” of our empathy?**
  - How do we define and perceive the “Other”?
- **The Alchemy of Empathy: “Ingredients”**
  - What makes empathy a state of transformation that can lead to a pragmatic perspective shift, and positive behavior change?
- **The Scope & the Spectrum of Empathy**
  - Empathy as a cross-industrial shared value, and its importance for people and the planet

# The Alchemy of Empathy

- Intentionality
- Intersectionality
- Proximity • Curiosity • Play
- Vulnerability • Awe & Wonder
- Contemplation & Nuance
- Storytelling • Synchronicity
- Collective Journeying
- Breaking Bread
- Optimism & Hope





*You are not a drop in the ocean.  
You are the entire ocean within a drop. - Rumi*

# Resources & Credits

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- **All illustrations** (except Slide 5) by Fatih M. Durmus. Credit: *Courtesy of Empathy-Building Through Museums*
- **Slide 5: “Worldviews & Paradigms”**: Adapted from Professor Terry Irwin’s “The Anatomy of a Worldview” presentation/ concept diagram (Accessed April 22, 2018): [https://www.academia.edu/6086202/Anatomy\\_of\\_a\\_Worldview\\_Concept\\_Diagrams](https://www.academia.edu/6086202/Anatomy_of_a_Worldview_Concept_Diagrams)

# **Creative Tensions\***

**\*Credit: Courtesy of Fred Dust, (formerly) IDEO & Philip Himberg, Sundance Theater**

**PAPER**

**PLASTIC**

**THE  
SHARK  
WEEK**

**THE BLUE  
PLANET**

**CORAL  
REEF**

**SUNBURN**

**EDDIE**

**DEEP BLUE**

**WILD**

**DOMESTIC**

**HAPPY**

**HEALTHY**

**FAMISHED  
POLAR  
BEAR**

**KNUT**

**WILDLIFE**

**LIVESTOCK**

**OCEAN**

**OCEANS**

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**THANK YOU!**