



Building Empathy with Analogies

An analogy is a comparison between two things—for example, a comparison of a heart to a pump. We communicate in analogies as they allow us to express our ideas or to explain complex matters in an understandable and motivating way. Analogies are a great way for us to build empathy towards users and for generating new ideas around a problem. Use analogies to gain a fresh way of looking at an environment, and in instances where direct observation is hard to achieve.

- 1** | Start by identifying the aspects of a situation that are most important, interesting, or problematic. For instance, if you are working on improving a supermarket experience, some of the key aspects might be containing and separating different goods in the shopping cart, making a decision when presented with many options, and handling long waiting lines.
- 2** | Find other experiences that contain some of these aspects — it will help you gain a better understanding of your users' problems, and it will also spark new ideas to improve their experiences. Long waiting lines, for example, are also present in airports, hospital A&E departments, and even in Apple Stores after the launch of a new product.
- 3** | Create an inspiration space for analogies. You can do so by pinning photos and anecdotes of the analogous experiences you have found. This helps your team spark inspiration and create insights.

