

goto;

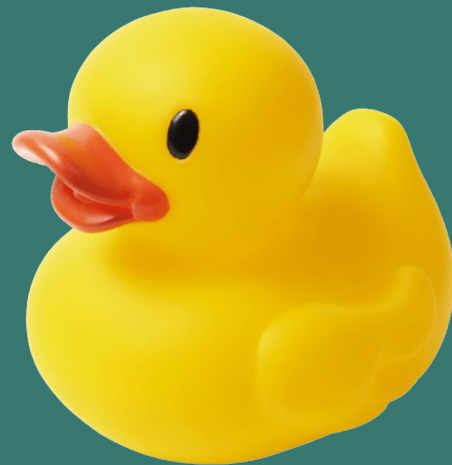
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#GOTOaar



How to Talk So People Will Talk

Michele Hansen



This is not a talk about code

This is a talk about *why*

Building the wrong thing *hurts*

So how do we avoid that?

**Before you deploy code,
deploy empathy.**

cognitive empathy

=

**the ability to understand
someone else's perspective**

Empathy is a learnable skill

The beauty of empathy is that it
doesn't demand you agree
with the other person.

former FBI Chief Hostage Negotiator Chris Voss in Never Split the Difference

Empathy can help you across your work—and your life



Customers/Clients



Coworkers



Friends



Family



Children

A quick tour through Jobs to Be Done

People hire and fire products to get a job done.

Everything is a process.

People and organizations have reasons—functional, social, and emotional—for why they do things.

Further reading: Part 2 of *Deploy Empathy*

When you're trying to find the underlying context, look for:

- The process they're going through and the steps
- The functional, social, and emotional components

This will give you the *why* so you can build
the right *what*.

How you say something

=

the quality and quantity of
information you get back

How to talk so people will talk

Use a gentle
tone of voice

Imagine you're talking
to a treasured
grandparent about a
photo of themselves as
a child

Use validating statements

That makes sense.

That sounds time consuming.

It sounds like a lot goes into that.

Mirror and summarize

“It sounds like...”

“I feel like I hear you
saying...”



**Leave pauses
for them to fill**

Wait longer than is
comfortable, and let
them fill the awkward
silence

Don't interrupt

One of the most important things you can do to build rapport and safety

Use simple wording

Minimize use of jargon

Rephrase “why”
questions as “what”
questions

Simple wording often means more words

“What are your objectives?”



“Could you give me some context on the big picture here—what are you trying to do overall?”

Further reading: Chapter 30 of *Deploy Empathy*

Ask for
clarification, even
when you don't
need it

Clarification prompts
elaboration

Level up: clarify slightly
incorrectly

Don't explain
anything or get
defensive

This is a hard instinct
to squash when you've
built something

Use these when your product gets accused of “not working” when it was designed that way

Can you tell me how you expected it to work?

I’m curious, can you walk me through what you expected to happen?

What were you hoping to use [product] for?

Further reading: Chapter 32 of *Deploy Empathy*

Build on what
they say

Interviews are more like
improv than a conversation



Let them be
the expert

One of the most
effective ways of
influencing someone

Use their words
and pronunciation

Even when it differs from
your own

Ask about past
or current
behavior

Real behavior >
predicting the future

What to ask instead of “How are you struggling?”

How long does it take to do [X]?

Can you tell me more about the people you need to work with to get [X] done?

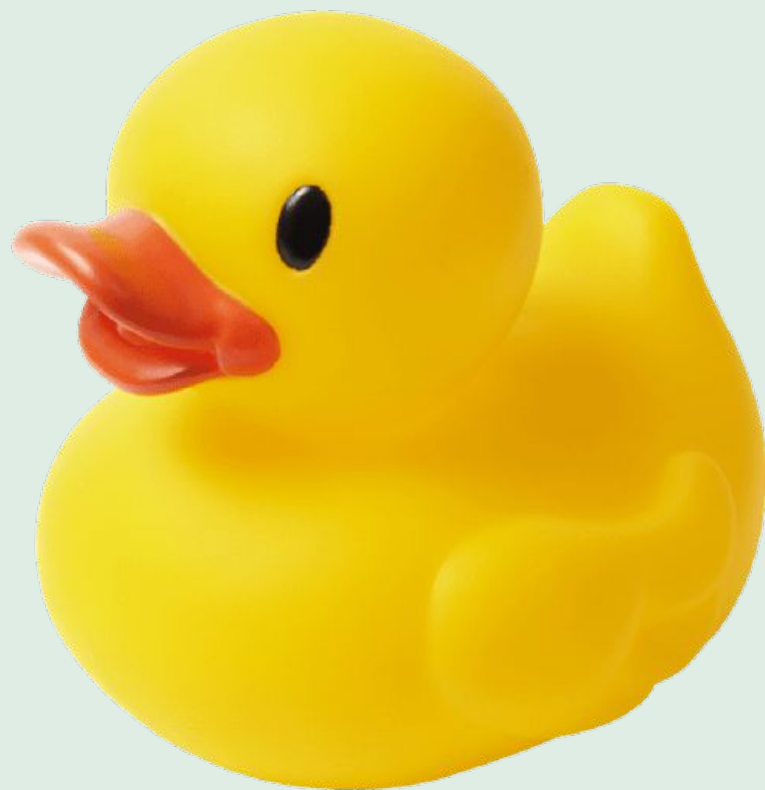
What do you have to do before [and after] you do [thing with your product]?

Thinking about the whole process to do [X] you've told me about, what takes the most time?

Further reading: Chapter 36 of *Deploy Empathy*

Be a rubber duck

Absorb, reflect, encourage



Want to practice?

Find a friend and interview them
about the last product they bought

Then switch!

Scripts available at deployempathy.com/scripts

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deployempathy.com

DON'T FORGET TO **RATE THE SESSIONS**

#GOTOaar

Rate a minimum of **5 sessions** and
claim your **reward** at the
Registration Desk at the Trifork Hall