



*Realizing*  
***empathy***

Through talks, workshops, and his award-winning book, *Realizing Empathy: An Inquiry Into the Meaning of Making*, Seung Chan Lim (Slim) tells the story of how and why realizing empathy is the heart of how we learn, create, and innovate.

Empathy is often thought of as being emotionally affected by, feeling sorry for, or behaving nicely toward other people. As a result, it is often viewed as warm, fuzzy, or incompatible with reason and logic. *Realizing Empathy* challenges such conventional understanding of empathy by providing insights into its lesser known aspect. Specifically, how and why it can both fuel and facilitate the creative process found in art, craft,

PREVIOUS VENUES INCLUDE: Ashoka Washington, Creative Mornings Ottawa, SAP TechEd Las Vegas & Bangalore, World Makerfaire NY, Brown University, Case Western Reserve Weatherhead School of Management, Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University Johnson School of Management, Framingham State University Art and Music, FUSE Brand Strategy & Design, Harvard Business School, International School of Beijing, James Madison University

design, and science. The insights are informed by the author's 15 year long experience crossing such creative fields as computer science, art, and design. Drawing from the latest research in neuroscience, cognitive science, social science, and developmental psychology, *Realizing Empathy* also suggests how we can develop our ability to be creative and innovative by practicing empathy both in our personal and professional lives.

School of Art/Design/History, Kohl's, Kwangwoon University, McGill University Desautels Faculty of Management, Princeton University, Rhode Island School of Design, TEDxPSU, TEDxWellesleyCollege, University of Toronto Rotman School of Management, United Nations International School, Western Michigan University Frostic School of Art, North Carolina State University School of Computer Science, and Yonsei University School of Business.

## About the Speaker/Author

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Seung Chan (Slim) Lim was first trained as a computer scientist, but spent nearly 10 years of his career at MAYA Design practicing design. There, he split his time between conducting basic research into the future of human-computer interaction and helping fortune 500 companies innovate through the human-centered design process. Most recently, he spent nearly 5 years conducting research into the disciplines of craft

and visual/performing arts from which **he developed a new approach to learning and engaging in the creative process through the lens of empathy.** Integrating together his 15 years of cross-disciplinary experiences, he writes, consults, speaks, and runs workshops globally focusing on interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, organizational change, continuous learning, and personal/relational growth.

**GREG CHASE** (SR. MARKETING DIRECTOR SAP CLOUD SOLUTIONS)



Slim was the keynote speaker for the role of empathy in design thinking event at SAP TechEd 2012. His talk was one of the greatest talks I saw at a conference. In recounting several stories about his journey from engineer to designer to artist, he illustrated the importance of empathy—truly understanding those you are trying to serve—in developing truly innovative designs. If you get a chance to experience his workshops, not only will you learn a new perspective, you'll enjoy his speaking and story telling style. I highly recommend him!

**ROBERT ST. AMANT** (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE)



I recently invited Slim to give a guest lecture for one of my classes in human-computer interaction. He was a wonderful speaker. We have a good number of academics and industry professionals come through our computer science department, but Slim was the best I've seen in years. His talk dealt with the creative process, a topic that

should be of interest to computer scientists but is typically only talked about in passing—we might create an algorithm, or an analysis, or a program, but the process itself can be mysterious. Drawing on his experience, both personal and professional, Slim told a series of interrelated stories to convey the importance of empathy when we create something new. I'd recommend Slim to any group who might be thinking of inviting him to speak, not just computer scientists or engineers.

**STEPHANIE GREY** (ASST. PROFESSOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN)



I invited Slim to speak to our design and illustration students. Not only was the lecture thoughtful and engaging with excellent visuals to match, but he also led the audience in a 2 hour impromptu discussion involving stories of making art, computer science, difficulties of empathy, teaching design, and resonance. He helped create a space where voices could be heard. The feedback from students and faculties was overwhelmingly positive. His point of view on design is unique and brave, as he not only challenges us to remain connected to a purpose, but reveals his own experiences of humility and insight as well.

## About the Book

<http://books.realizingempathy.com/>

*Realizing Empathy: An Inquiry Into the Meaning of Making* is an award-winning<sup>†</sup> book that analyzes and reflects on the author's exploration into the disciplines of craft and the visual/performing arts, to tell the story of **how and why realizing empathy is the heart of the creative process.**

Reflecting on this exploration, the author also blends together his past experiences in com-

puter science and human-centered design to investigate both the ethics of our relationship to computer technology as well as the necessary and sufficient conditions required for facilitating empathic conversations in our human-to-human as well as human-to-machine interactions.

REVIEW BY DR. ERNESTO SIROLLI (CEO & FOUNDER OF SIROLLI INSTITUTE / TEDX SPEAKER OF "WANT TO HELP SOMEONE? SHUT UP AND LISTEN!")



This is a beautiful book. It honestly describes a journey into difficult territory. The same territory that sent Robert Pirsig, of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* fame, mad. The maddening territory of the space between us

and the object or subject of our attention: the world of relationship and interaction.

For Slim, empathy is the key to creativity and it requires both humility and courage. Humility in front of people, but also wood, glass, and metal. He tells the story of why we cannot treat wood like glass or metal like wood, that you need to respect and approach them ready to be awed and taught their secrets. And that the same is true with people. That instead of making assumptions about people or approaching them with the preconceived idea that you may help them, that we should approach if we love them enough to listen and learn from them.

The book resonated with me profoundly. It reminded me that the starting point in any relationship has to be the understanding that nothing of beauty will be

born unless there is a profound respect for the 'other,' whether person or object. That, as simple as it may sound, how we interact with others is the very difference between creating beauty or not.

REVIEW BY DR. FRANS DE WAAL (PRIMATOLOGIST & ETHOLOGIST / AUTHOR OF *THE BONOBO AND THE ATHEIST* & *THE AGE OF EMPATHY*)



This is not your typical read. It is more like absorbing, contemplating. Many powerful passages, sensitive and touching observations. The book is very unusual as it is no treatise, more like impressions, fragments of life, but as

I said, I felt moved by this poetic view of what empathy means in modern life, in a technological world, in practice as well as theory. It is a book written with a great deal of empathy.



<sup>†</sup> Winner of the 43rd Creativity International Platinum Award (Best in Printed Book Design), 2014 Communication Arts Award of Excellence in Typography, National Indie Excellence Book Awards (Best in New Non-Fiction)