The rigorous practice of Equity-centered Design guides behavior to allow for your own authentic design practice, redefining design norms and inherent “norming” outcomes of design gone unchecked. This practices aims to develop better designers. These designers co-design + construct meaning, experiences, and outcomes with their team, users and environment.

This shared creative practice builds an emergent eco-system with mindsets that:

+ Seek and include radical collaboration
+ Look within, honestly
+ Focus on human values as an act of love
+ Build emotional trust
+ Bias toward experimentation
+ Shar, don’t s/tell
+ Navigate ambiguity

The creative potential of equity-centered design thinking is immeasurable and radically equitable and transformative for all engaged.

Equity-centered design allows a designer to develop a self-awareness of identity, diversity, beliefs and values, and begin to make connections between who they are as a designer and how that role impacts design mindsets, decisions, and actions; all of which impact their users and
The **NOTICE** phase helps designers develop self and social-emotional awareness before entering any context or practice of empathy. This phase focuses on you, the designer, in order to build a practice of self-awareness of your own identity, values, emotions, biases, assumptions and situatedness in order to reveal your authentic self; accept and build from what you don’t know so that you, as designer, can empathize with humility, curiosity and courage.

Noticing what one brings to any person and context allows for authentic human centered design, not “you” centered design.

Try practicing noticing identity, diversity, beliefs and values using the Paseo Protocol (Found at the core of the graphic on the cover. This visual and activity was adapted from the K12 Lab’s collaboration with the National Equity Project who adapted it from the National School Reform Faculty, nsrfharmony.org). The Paseo Protocol can be a tool for initiating this self-awareness toward authentic empathy interviews and design work. It is essentially a two step process, which begins with individual reflection and then moves in personal storytelling.

**Instructions:**
1. Write your name in the center circle
2. In the surrounding circles, write a work or phrase that captures some element of your identity (you can add more circles or use less circles). For example, one circle might contain the word “woman”, another circle “Latina”, and a third circle “mother”
3. Alone or with a co-designer, reflect on and respond to these prompts:
   - With which descriptors do you identify most strongly? Why is that?
   - With which descriptors do others identify you most strongly? How do you feel about that?
   - Describe a time when one element of your identity worked to your advantage, either in your educational experience or other areas of your life?
   - Describe a time when one element of your identity worked to your disadvantage, either in your educational experience or other areas of your life?

**Debrief:**
1. How did this protocol feel?
2. What did you notice?
3. What differences do you notice about how you felt being in this group before this activity and how you feel after this activity?
4. What do you feel you need to be more aware of before designing with/in a context/community?

The **REFLECT** phase of the process is ongoing and transparent throughout the design thinking process. It allows you and your team the time to notice, focus and reflect on your actions, emotions, insights and impact as designer(s) and human(s) on/with your users/context. It is what is called an Equity Pause by EquityXDesign. During this pause questions to consider are:

What evidence do I have that I am becoming more self aware and self correcting as an equity-centered designer?
What would my users say?

The REFLECT phase is also a time to share our learning across the process and see what we can do better next time. *More inclusive, equitable, authentic and aesthetic.*