



The rationale for this method is that, according to **Gauntlett**, putting feelings, emotions and beliefs into words is often difficult for people; visualisations, on the other hand, make it easier for both respondent and researcher because a drawing, series of photographs or a video is something concrete on which to base further analysis (which may involve using more traditional research techniques such as questionnaires or interviews).



### Growing it yourself: picturing reality

The best way to understand this idea is to actually do something.

Draw a picture of a celebrity you admire or would like to be. Artistic skill is not important – just include anything you think represents that person (and, by extension, you). Once you've drawn your picture:

List three words that both describe the person you've drawn and how you would like people to think of you.

In pairs, exchange drawings. Each of you should make brief notes (without showing them to your partner) identifying:

1. what you think your drawing says about you
2. what you think your partner's drawing says about them.

Compare notes – look for points of convergence (where you agree) and divergence (where you disagree) – and discuss what this exercise says about the relationship between how we see ourselves and how others see us.



### Digging deeper

If you have tried the previous exercise (you should, it is great fun) I trust you'll agree this is a different – and dare I say it, interesting? – research method. We can examine some of its *advantages* in the following terms.

- **Involvement:** The respondent is an active participant (rather than just a passive audience) in the research process. This method – unlike many others – involves the researcher and the researched working (creatively) together to produce data.
- **Agenda-setting:** Visual methods, whether they be drawing, creating videos or whatever, allow respondents to set their own agenda, in the sense respondents create whatever they want to create – whatever they believe best represents their ideas.
- **Process:** Creating research data in this way gives researchers first-hand experience of the process by which people make sense of their lives – in terms, for example, of how they see themselves (their identity) and their relationship to others.
- **Reflective:** These methods encourage (demand?) respondents reflect on the 'questions' they are being asked. In other words, they avoid the problem – prevalent in methods like questionnaires or interviews – of respondents having to *reconstruct* answers to questions.

All good things, however, have their *disadvantages*.

- **Organisation:** Visual methods require a great deal of organisation – and time – on