

D(f)H Refresher | 2013

DESIGNING
for
HAPPINESS
JENNIFER AAKER • SPRING 2013

DESIGN FOR HAPPINESS. BASED ON MOMENTS. THAT CREATE STORIES. THAT FORM CHAPTERS. THAT DEFINE LIFE.

Focus on defining specific meanings of happiness for different demographics: employees, peers, customers, and self. First, design for small-scale moments of delight and joy. Then, think bigger by designing in terms of stories, which are created based on experiences. Realize that life is defined in chapters. Your meaning of happiness will shift in systematic ways across the course of your life. These meanings of happiness are not only different within an individual over time, but also vary between each person. Therefore craft a personal definition of meaningfulness and work towards applying that in life. Aim for meaningfulness; it is a better compass for determining your goals. To figure out what is meaningful: (1) Define happiness (regularly). Your meaning of happiness will change. Be open to that change. (2) Write down a set of beliefs. A list of 20. (3) Create a process by which you can constantly renew that list. So as to stay focused on what is meaningful.

HERE IS ONE LIST:

1. **Seek joy.** Where you do what you love, what you are great at, what the world will pay for and what the world needs.
2. **Early on, create some option value.** Most great careers are discovered, not planned.
3. **Get into a fast growth environment.** Build where there is momentum.
4. **Create a board of advisors. And know your tribe.** Although some will change; most should remain.
5. **Do what you love - every day.** If you aren't having fun for too many months in a row, something is wrong.
6. **Reinvent yourself constantly.** Move around; don't get too conformable. Change jobs every 3-5 years.
7. **Tackle big problems when you are thriving.** Tackling hard problems is most easily when you and your friends, family are thriving. Your less distracted team will then be able to thrive and you can bring your whole self to work.
8. **What you put into the world, you get back.** Businesses are opportunities to scale. Your role as a business leaders is especially important as your emotions disproportionately impact others
9. **Dream big. But keep needs small.** This mindset allows you to keep a feeling of gratefulness, but also excel.
10. **Expectations often conflate with needs; don't let them.** Know when your expectations are working against you or for you.
11. **Be authentic.** It's not about what you do, but why you do it.

12. **Design for experience and memories.** When those experiences are high points, make time for anticipation and savoring.
13. **Feeling good in the moment is different than feeling good in life.** Look to people who have a good life. Remember, the best designers steal from good examples.
14. **Lead with respect, follow with warmth.** When you have power, realize people look at you differently (even if you don't feel you have changed). Then, be even more aware of warmth.
15. **Develop and define your core competence and passion.** Though money matters fundamentally, it is not likely to be the thing written about in your obituary or graduation speech.
16. **Have a vision of what you want your relationships to look like at age 70.** Create habits that will build toward that vision.
17. **One small act can make a difference.** It doesn't matter if you see the difference now.
18. **Stop to savor small wins, good tries and sometimes even epic fails.** People don't celebrate enough.
19. **Create something permanent every day.** Something that lasts beyond the single day.
20. **Keep asking yourself these questions:** What is my company's higher purpose and do our employees care about it? Do our customers know our higher purpose, and is it relevant to them? What is my higher purpose, and what is my legacy?

D(F)H SUMMARY

With a different way of thinking about happiness and approaching happiness a, few tenets become clear:

Happiness is liquid. Happiness is hard to define. And once you define it, it's hard to reach it. Further, when you think you should have reached it, you realize the definition has changed over time. We cannot help being fickle, emotional human beings with unreliable memories, misaligned priorities and complicated lives. It should come as no surprise that as we wind our way over the arch of our lives, our meanings of happiness will change. Over time the meaning of happiness moves in the following trend: What starts as Discovery soon becomes Pursuit, then shifts to finding Balance, to wanting to make an Impact, and finally to Savoring – as we cherish small moments and the relationships that define our lives.

The 'happiness-as-a-goal' fallacy. Chasing happiness as a concrete, reachable goal is akin to a dog chasing its own tail. If anything, it will make you frustrated and unhappy. Why? First, we don't really know what makes us happy (but we think we do). We may push hard and sacrifice for certain things (money, status) yet find ourselves feeling empty or 'cheated' because we didn't really find happiness after reaching our material goals. Second, happiness itself is not a stable state one can reach. It's ever changing for each individual. Rethink certain goals and motivators you may not have questioned before (like money, status, professional achievement, maximizing the productivity of your time), and put them in perspective with the things you are sacrificing to reach those goals, and what truly makes you feel that you are leading a life of significance.

When designing culture: happiness as a byproduct, not an objective. Perhaps a direct announcement that you are striving to make your employees (or customers) happy can be counterproductive. A more effective way of going about it would be to figure out what

moves them, what their deepest values are, and perhaps what their dreams are. Designing processes and environments (in the case of employees) or products (in the case of customers) that enable them to reach those dreams while staying true to their values will have a much deeper effect on them.

It's about the questions, not the steps. The way to approach happiness is through thoughtful questions, not a set of steps. It starts with 'what do you want?' What's meaningful for you now? What do 'purpose', 'autonomy', 'collaboration', and 'excellence' mean to you and to the group you are going to lead? How will these change over time? How can you design a culture that will allow for these concepts to be fluid? This humble approach may be more effective than hunting for happiness, as we've seen our 'gut' concepts of what makes us happy are not always accurate. Strive to always keep a mentality of re-discovery.

Meaning, then happiness. What most of us don't realize is that 'meaning' as a target (however anyone may define 'meaning') is much better than happiness. Craft a personal definition of meaningfulness and work towards that. As we've recorded our happy and sad moments through Instagram and completed the D(f)H workbook, you have identified moments when you've experienced meaning - e.g., being with my friends (family), reading a good book (hobby), solving an important problem (intellectual challenge). These are good clues of how you may want to define a meaningful state for yourself in the future.

D(F)H KEY CONCEPTS

What Makes Us Happy	Dancing, humor, social engagements, free time, volunteering: these "mundane" activities matter more than you think. Try them once a week.
Experiences Matter More than Objects	People are happier when they engage in experiences than interact with objects. Consider how you can shift an object to become part of a social experience.
Start, Peak, End	What do we remember? The first moment from an experience (primacy effect) and the peak and end of the experience (peak & end). Design for first impressions, the peaks, and endings.
The Happiness Ratio: 5:1	Pleasant interactions in a happy relationship outnumber unpleasant ones by the magic ratio. Remember to monitor this ratio, at work and home.
Happiness is Liquid	There are different meanings of happiness ranging from exciting and energized to peaceful and balanced, which shift across the life course. What makes us happy changes as we get older. But, importantly, our meaning of happiness can shift throughout the day as well. You can choose the happiness you want to feel, by doing something simple, like deep breathing focused on the present. Know that the happiness you feel impacts the choices you make.

Time > Money	Time is one of the most important resources we have, sometimes even more important than money. Know that you can become more time affluent - rich in time - by spending time with people and projects that energize you, and in ways that allow you to expand your time.
Be Fun	Being fun is easier than you think, and others like it more than you think (in most contexts). Consider using fun colors, surprising things on your wall or desk, when in doubt make something a game, take risks and be bold. And, sometimes, wear red shoes to meetings.
Where Do You Stand?	There is tension between warmth (being liked) and competence (being respected). Aim for both, but if you favor - start with respect.
Find Your Passion	If passion is found in work, pleasure is felt throughout the day through endorphin releases when getting into flow. When designing your work, keep an eye on what you are passionate about, what you are good at, what the world will pay for, and what the world needs.
Happiness is multi-dimensional	Strong brands are created by passionate employees and customers, but the meaning of happiness often diverges. Design to create pride in employees, and delight for customers.
Emotions are Contagious	Our behavior impacts those around us. And the happiness of a person up to three degrees removed from us can have an effect on our happiness. Do something daily that spreads a positive emotion to someone else. Aim to make someone smile or laugh.
Launch a Dragonfly Effect	Passionate people can make a positive impact in the world on a scale that is disproportionate to their resources by harnessing the power or networks, participation, and ripple effects - when they start with a single focused goal. Armed with a goal, determine how to grab attention, tell a story and enable others to act.
Yes, and....	Rather than starting a sentence with "no, but," consider starting the sentence with "yes, and." Notice the shift in the resulting conversation.
Cultivate PACE	Employees want to be valued members of a high performing team on an inspired mission. Design for a higher purpose, autonomy, strong collaborations, and excellence. Happiness is a by-product after these have been achieved.
Expectations-Reality = Happiness	Keep expectations (of self and others) high, but achievable. But when the expectation-reality gap is too large for too long, negative emotions often result. When that happens, manage expectations from the stretch "idealistic" expectations to realistic expectations to shrink the expectation-reality gap.

Sharpen Your Value Proposition	Customers want brands that improve their lives - helping them achieve their goals, cultivate positive emotions, and shape their stories (GES). To build strong brands, calibrate your Value Proposition (value = benefits to target market - cost to target market). To increase value, change any of these three concepts: benefits, cost and target market.
Anticipate, Experience, Remember	Anticipatory happiness and remembered happiness are often just as important as experienced happiness. Since how something is experienced often diverges from how it is remembered, design for sticky memories.
Know Six Selves	When you have limited time, how do you achieve all of your goals? Identify the multipliers - single activities that serve multiple goals - and spend time on those activities. When you do so, you are not multi-tasking; you can be fully present but achieve multiple goals at once.
Brands Have Personalities	Brands can be defined as sincere, exciting, competent, sophisticated, rugged, passionate, or peaceful. As a result, they can evoke different emotions in customers - ranging from excitement to peacefulness. Know what emotions are being evoked by your brand, and whether those emotions are evoked across its touchpoints.
Think Stories	Stories are what move people, and what they remember. The best stories are not always big and epic; they are often small. All that matters is that the story is authentic and evokes emotion. Remember the 3 act structure: conflict, development, resolution -- and transformation.
Meaning, then Happiness	Happiness is hard to define. And once you define it, it's hard to reach it. What most of us don't realize is that 'meaning' as a target is better than happiness. Craft a personal definition of meaningfulness, and work towards that.
