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Using Emotional Design To Make Memories And Enhance Relationships

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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School of Design | College of Art and Design

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Abstract

We have all experienced this. When we see a thing, the memory of it will come back in our minds no matter how many years have passed. This is the power of memory. What follows is our feelings and emotional reaction to this memory. Reminders of happy memories can bring back pleasant feelings tied to the original experience, regulate positive emotion and promote better well-being. This paper will focus on using emotional design to generate and recall positive memories in order to develop healthy relationships.

Keywords:

Emotional design, memories, good relationship.

Introduction

We live in a complex reality, convoluted by more streams of information than we may ever have collectively imagined possible. We have a lot of memories, but there are few memories that we can remember and bring us positive energy. How do we make memories “effect” and play a positive role in our intimate relationships? This paper describes how designers can combine emotional design and memory to facilitate successful relationships.

1.1 Emotional Design (what is emotional design & why it matters?)

Don Norman examines three different levels of design in his book Emotional Design captures people's emotional responses to visual experiences: visceral, behavioral, and reflective. (Donald A, 2005)

In other words, successful products can trigger positive emotions on these three levels. “Beautiful items are better to use” and “the more pleasant the users are, the better the products are.” Once the positive and emotional interaction between the user and the product is established, the user will become more abundant in the process of use. How we emotionally connect to objects are depended by these experiences.

1.1.1 Delight

Delight (enduring pleasure) is at the intersection of visceral, behavioral, and reflective, emotional design. It is essential that designers understand that these emotional responses are not occasional—they can be cultivated and crafted with a people-oriented design approach that truly delivers enduring and impressionable value. Finally, if the experience evokes positive behavioral, visceral, and reflective, emotional reactions, people will love the product.

1.1.2 Emotional Design Elements

Emotional design can convert functional products into memorable and lasting experiences. This usually reveals through 4 aspects :

- a. The link between Emotion and Memory—emotionally charged events persist in our memories beyond the product’s base practical value. We remember things that make us feel a particular way.
- b. Aesthetic-Usability Effect—aesthetically pleasing experiences enable usability and increase the user’s willingness to learn and adapt.
- c. Persuasive Emotion (Gut Feeling)—emotions empower users to make gut and quick determination. We use insight to understand and explain our world, but our emotions catalyze decision-making.

d. Ownership Effect—users place more value in experiences where they feel a sense of personalized ownership as if the experience/product is an extension of themselves. (Justin, 2019)

1.2 Key point To Relationship Success

1.2.1 Short-Term Plan for Future—Look Ahead to Strengthen Your Relationship

The truth is that futurizing with your partner is a healthy activity that will make both of you happier because you'll be creating things to look forward to as you look at the future, and that's where happiness comes from. One thing that strong relationships all have in common is that couples make plans for the future, both short and long term. Making plans creates a stronger sense of security and a bond in our hearts. We all have desires and dreams that we want to share with the people we love, but if you don't create a way make them happen and talk about them, you will only live life in your head. Making short-term plans allows us to see the picture of completing them, and to feel the joy of achieving them in advance. One benefit of this process is that they will enable us to establish a path in the right direction, and when something in life changes the way you live, you can get back on track much more easily.

Therefore, it is a real gift for a good relationship that being able to talk about your future together and share your hopes and dreams for the rest of your life.

1.2.2 The reason for Short-term goals

Achieving short-term goals is like driving in the dark with your headlights on. As long as you can see what is in front of you, you can drive and get to your destination safely. Here are the advantages of short-term goals:

- a. Better focus
- b. Gives you Clarity
- c. Identify your actions
- d. Instant feedback
- e. Stop procrastination

1.2.3 Communication

If there is good communication between each other, then the relationship is not difficult to maintain. When each one knows what the other person thinks and feels about something, there will be more freedom and openness in the relationship, hence making it easier to maintain it. Communication is the only way that you know about the person you loved. When you see your way he is, it's easier to build healthy relationships with him.

Communication is all about trust, support, and love. Therefore, it is crucial to create a space where you can talk, so that your partners can share their feelings with ease and freedom. During the process of communicating, the more open people speak to one other, the closer they will be, and more likely they tend to share the good and bad things in life with their mate.

1.2.4 Reminders of happy memories

In this way, the recall of positive recollections may be intrinsically valuable to people by maintaining or increasing positive feelings that contribute to people's general well-being.

Memory & Link between memory and emotion (The reason why: Reminders of happy memories can bring back pleasant feelings tied to the original experience, and regulate positive emotion and promoting better well-being (Speer, Jamil, and Mauricio, 2014))

Savoring is about being mindful and lingering on the positive experience in people's life. The experience of life can tell us, the benefits of savoring events that elicit positive emotions to one's well-being and underscore the importance of understanding the neural mechanisms underlying changes in positive emotion.

So why do not people spend more time with their happy memories from things which can bring them happy? If these things bring them so much pleasure, don't they appreciate their past more often? The truth is: People are not wired to recall happy memories naturally.

"A new research by the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business shows that we tend to overestimate how often we will re-examine happy memories - and the daily distractions in life make us forget to remember." Past experiences have become less important. Time, as a result, people easily forget to remember, "Assistant Professor of Marketing at the University of Southern California Marshall, Stephen Tully, the co-author of the study, told USC News (Speer, Jamil, and Mauricio, 2014)). When we are distracted by what is happening around us, there is not much space left for nostalgia.

2 How designers can combine emotional design and memory to facilitate successful relationships?

2.1 Visceral—Visualization plans (Create memory)

At first, it is essential that couples have common goals of the future; in other words, looking ahead can strengthen the relationships. It is not necessary to have a very long-term goal, because long-term goals can be vague. Long-term goals require you have to imagine the things that you want years into the future. And this creates vagueness. Long-term goals cannot be specific because anything can happen or

change as time progresses forward. You can never guarantee what your future could be like. (Shawn, 2018) In this way, two people can work together to accomplish the goal and have the same desire to overlap each other's lives.

2.1.1 Seeing Is Believing: The Power of Visualization

A study of the brain pattern of weightlifters noticed that when a weightlifter lifts hundreds of pounds, the activation mode is activated when they only imagined lifting. (Adams, 2009) In some cases, the study has shown that psychological practice is most useful as a practical physical practice, and both are more efficient than either alone.

For example, in his research on daily life, Guangyue, a sports psychologist from the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio, compared “people who go to the gym with those who exercise virtually in their minds.” He found that 30% of the muscle increase the group of people who are going to the gym.

However, the participant group of mental exercises for weight training increased almost half of the muscle strength (13.5%). After mental training, this average remains for three months. (Ranganathan, Vinoth K., Vlodek, Jing Z, Vinod, and Guang, 2004)

“Brain studies now reveal that thoughts produce the same mental instructions as actions.” (Ranganathan, Vinoth K., Vlodek, Jing Z, Vinod, and Guang, 2004)

Cognitive imagery affects many cognitive processes in the brain: attention, perception, motion control, memory, and planning. Therefore, during the visualization process, the brain is being training in actual performance. Mental exercises have been found to enhance motivation, increase self-efficacy and self-confidence, improve brain success, exercise performance, and increase mobility – all of which are relevant to achieving optimal life. Therefore, during the visualization process, the brain is undergoing training in actual performance.

2.1.2 Actively Practice Recalling the Good Times

People make conscious choices and intentionally schedule their lives when they want something. So why do not create a mindful practice to revisit their memories?

2.2 Behavioral — Meaningful Interaction

At this level—behavioral, we should pay more attention to the products themselves and how users feel when they use the product. "Behavioral, emotional design refers to the usability of the product, our assessment of how well it performs the desired functions, and how easily we can learn how to use it. (Donald A, 2005)"

The emotion at the behavioral level is the “availability” perceived and experienced when the user interacts with the product, as well as the pleasure and satisfaction during the process of using the product.

Meaningful interaction(MI) is a dialogical process of collaboration between people, contexts, and products. “The dialogical process” refers to the exchange of information as a stimulus between interactive elements. In this sense, products are two levels of information mediation: the information embodied by designers and the information collected by people themselves. The message that the designer embodies in the product attributes is intended to trigger a specific meaning. They are built “to present something,” and then to prompt calculated user reactions. (Wellington Gomes De, 2014)

It ascribes two dimensions for interactions—pragmatic and emotional. So how do we combine these two elements ideally?

2.2.1 Has long-term interaction with the product

Interaction with products can enhance the user's understanding of them, also increase the enjoyment of experiencing outcomes.

2.2.2 Increasing User Engagement with Rewarding Interactions

If people are getting rewarded from what they are doing, he will be more willing to continue to do it.

When we get a reward, specific pathways in our brain are activated. Not only does this feel good, but the activation also makes people seek out more beneficial stimuli. (Rachel, Emily, 2018)

Physiologically, The Brain Reward System (BRA) is a reward system consisting of a set of neural structures that are responsible for incentive salience (our craving and desire for a reward), positive emotions that involve pleasure and associative learning, such as joy, ecstasy, and euphoria. (Anna, 2019)

Psychologically, "Reinforcement" is an important concept of behaviorist psychology. Psychological research has found that humans or animals, to achieve a certain purpose, will take specific actions in their environment; when such actions or consequences are beneficial to him, such behavior will be repeated later. Appears, and the result is called “Reinforcement”

2.3 Reflective — Collect memory

In this level, products are no longer just a collection of functions that they have implemented in the research, but the need to satisfy people's emotional demands, build self-image and establish social status.

Good products can give us emotional satisfaction and meet our needs in the long run. Long-term relationships can satisfy the requirements of physiological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual.

2.3.1 Choose the memories which you want to keep

The key to a successful relationship is communication, so the design should be available to provide couples for long-term communication opportunities.

When the couples look at the plans they have completed, they can sit down and discuss which memories they want to put on their memory shelves. They will recall the pleasure, depression, sweetness, and sadness in the entire process. This conversation seems to bring them back through those experiences, and also provides infinite topics to communicate.

2.3.2 Collect happy memories

When people complete their plan or some beautiful things, they all hope that they can remember the feeling of happiness, and unfortunately, their memories rarely take them back.

Therefore, just as people will download the music they like and listen to it repeatedly, we can also collect the memories in order to recall the happiness at that time for the later life. It is also an excellent way to keep the memory alive and to create a reminder to revisit it regularly.

2.3.3 Savoring and Relationship

Savoring is linked to happiness, optimism, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Savoring does not just create positive feelings—it also amplified them and made them last longer. Moreover, when we share with a partner and they are enthusiastic, it is good for the relationship. It promotes trust and giving.

In general, the whole topic is about how to enhance good relationships, we need to find the most significant element in a relationship, and it can run through all the factors that can facilitate the relationship -- memories. Therefore, how to make memories play a positive, enduring, interactive role is crucial. Thus, in the process from generating memories to collecting memories, we will turn memories into recollections, and then can give you the motivation to make you more involved in the relationship, and finally, it is a reminder of happiness.

Conclusion

Based on the different dimensions of visceral, behavioral and reflective, this paper presents how to combine emotional design with design theme—memory to facilitate the relationship. Therefore, designers should be aware of the power of memories in a relationship and learn how to use it, and discover the relationship between memory and emotion: when emotions encounter memory, they work together — moreover spending time thinking about good stuff from memories which can come from past, present and future can facilitate the success of a relationship.

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