

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/how-ideas-take-flight-entire-talk>

Stanford Graduate School of Business professor Jennifer Aaker shares the power behind creating ideas that can build momentum. Through her research on the perception of happiness and meaning, Aaker describes how these concepts relate to a successful and powerful social media campaign. A well-planned effort catches audience attention and offers them an engaging story. Aaker, co-author of *The Dragonfly Effect*, also offers several personal and corporate examples of effective viral campaigns that garnered real world, and even life-saving, results.



## Transcript

It is my great pleasure to introduce our guest today.. Jennifer Aaker is a professor at the Business School and it's completely fitting that I met her on Twitter.. We both love using Twitter, and we found that we were following each other and we're tweeting all the same stories and found that we were almost thinking in sync.. And so I sent her a message.. I said, "I think we actually need to meet in person." And I got to meet Jennifer and found that I had discovered one of the true gems on campus.. And I think you will agree at the end of this talk.. Jennifer is an award-winning professor focusing on marketing, social networks and happiness.. And I think you'll be as delighted as I've been when I've seen her speak before.. Thank you, Tina.. So Tina is right..

I kind of feel like there is some weird, odd soulmateness.. I know that's not a word, but go with me for a second.. So, oddly enough, Tina names her courses the same thing I name my courses even though we don't even know each other.. We find each other's research so interesting, and so it's really such a pleasure to be here, partly because of Tina and partly because I'm such a fan of what we've created here, what you've created with DFJ.. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about how ideas build momentum and take off.. And that topic is particularly, I don't know, personally meaningful for me right now because my husband and I, Andy Smith, my co-author, created a book recently that helps unpackage some of our research on happiness and how ideas spread and how to create infectious action particularly by harnessing social media.. So it was really a perfect moment for me to be able to come over here and meet you.. So thank you for having me.. I wanted to start off by mentioning the dragonfly is the only insect that can fly in any direction when all four wings are operating in sync.. So it can go any direction..

I believe it's 50 times faster than a butterfly or any other similarly-sized insect.. It's a symbol of happiness in transition.. And we refer to the 'dragonfly effect' as this idea that small acts can create big change and create momentum, infectious action, when the meaning of that small act or the body of the dragonfly is incredibly important to you that the mere thought of what that small act might be would bring happiness at some level.. And I'll unpack some of these ideas and a few examples, but let me first start with a few of our studies on happiness.. We've been doing research in the area of what drives happiness versus what people think drives happiness for about, I don't know, five, 10 years now, and this is with a host of collaborators at the GSB and other schools.. And I wanted to foreshadow some of the stories that I'll be telling you about today with this research.. If you remember anything about this talk and why some ideas can build momentum and why other ideas don't ever build momentum, it would be these three things: happiness, meaning, and stories.. So let me try and back that up.. So, first, the research on happiness.. Happiness drives many of us and yet oftentimes down the wrong road, and it's not until later on in our life or an experience that we realize how misdirected we actually were based on our own true beliefs..

So let me give you a couple of examples.. There's three happiness paradoxes that I want to just seed with you.. The first most commonly held belief is that happiness is a single construct.. So if I ask you, Jeff, "Jeff, are you happy?" and you say...? Good! And then I ask you--what's your name? Eva? Are you happy? And what would you say? Oh.. I think so.. You think so? A more contemplative person.. I'm not saying that you are not, Jeff.. You seem like a very contemplative person.. But the idea there is that when you're thinking of happiness and you're saying 'maybe yes' versus 'definitely yes', that at some level we think we're kind of talking the same language, that I know what you mean and it's probably something similar, comparable to what Jeff means.. And yet we find in some recent research with Sep Kamvar and Cassie Mogilner, and there's work by Jeanne Tsai and others, that have focused on these two types..

There's really two types of happiness.. And one is this happiness where if you ask people what are the first associations that come to mind with 'happy' you might say 'excited' and 'pleasurable' and 'it feels good' and 'I want something desirable', 'it's energizing'.. So let's call that 'exciting happiness' for a second.. The second type of happiness is associated with a very different set of associations.. Let's say I ask Jeff, "What's happiness?" and he says, "It's actually meaningful and peaceful and content, fulfilling, it's simple, maybe even small, but fundamental." And let's call that 'peaceful happiness' for a second.. And our contention is that, depending on the gender, depending on the age, depending on the culture, when you ask, "Are you happy?" people are fundamentally giving you the same response--"yes" and "yes"--but having two very different conceptions in their heads.. Now, the second paradox is that we often assume happiness to be stable.. So you're making a decision--what's your name? Yeah, you.. Comprano.. Comprano? Yes..

And how old are you? Go for it.. We won't tell anyone.. And this is not at all on video.. Go ahead.. Go ahead.. Twenty-seven.. Twenty-seven.. All right.. And you're making decisions, right? You're thinking about jobs or grad schools or houses you might live in, who you might marry or not.. And it's based on--this is a little too personal, right? Is this too personal? We'll move away from you shortly..

You can hang on.. You can do this.. So the basic idea there is that you're making decisions based on your current definition of happiness.. So if that's excitement happiness, you're going to make decisions based on that; if it's peaceful happiness, you're going to make decisions based on that.. And they are very different decisions.. What's important in this research, though, is that happiness is moving.. So what you're feeling right now at age 27, even though you presume that's the same type of happiness you'll feel at age 35 and 40, we show that it systematically changes.. And there's more nuanced ways to think about it.. It doesn't just move from 'excitement' at age 20 or 15 or 17 to 'peaceful' which is age 50 or 60.. It's also more nuanced..

And there's this research by Sep Kamvar and Jonathan Harris in their "We Feel Fine" dataset, which is a gorgeous dataset.. I highly recommend you get it at [wefeelfine.org](http://wefeelfine.org) or check out their book.. It's just an amazing, amazing dataset around the world of blogs.. What they've done is they've combed the blogosphere and grabbed all mentions of "I feel" and "I am feeling" in the blogosphere.. So we have 12 million data points to play with: what you're feeling, when you're feeling it, how it changes.. And incoming data is coming in every 10 minutes, so the crawler updates the blogosphere.. So now what we can do is we can start to see, when you are 27 versus 14 versus 50, what are you saying you feel.. And as you correlate the "I feel happy" or "I am feeling happy" with the other kinds of words, what are those other kinds of words? What are the other kinds of words that co-vary with 'happiness' over the course of time? So the first big finding is that for teenagers and young 20-year-olds, happiness really does mean 'excited', and for 40-year-olds, 50-year-olds, happy really means 'peaceful'.. And it's not 'peaceful' like a boring way.. We've got a lot to look forward to..

There's a lot of exciting things.. But it does mean something fundamentally different.. No, it's not stable.. It does change over the life course.. What this is is a depiction of five-year increments over the course of time that shed light on the emotional landscape of 14- to 17-year-olds.. What are these people blogging about? And when they say they are happy, what do they mean? These 14- to 17-year-olds start out simple.. So this is your 14-year-old.. You say, "How are you feeling?" and he says, "Fine." And "What did you do today?" "Nothing." There's not a rich emotional vocabulary behind there.. And then you start to creep up into the 15- to 18-year-olds, and then the amount of angst: "I feel unloved" "I'm not understood." "Alone." "Angsty." Just a tremendous amount of angst perpetuates the blogosphere in that age frame.. By the time you hit 23 to 26, 27, you want to conquer the world..

So there's a lot of mentions of feeling powerful or where money or the possibility of getting money actually does co-vary with happiness.. So you will hear that money doesn't always co-vary with happiness; that's not true.. For a certain time of life, money or status or possibilities of those things as you move on the trajectory very much do co-vary with happiness.. The problem is, you make your decisions around who you might marry or the house you might have or the job you might have, and then, boom, your meaning of happiness and your emotional state changes where you start valuing balance.. And then people start blogging about their bodies in their young 30s, perhaps because it's the first time that they've gone downhill in a big way-- --and then talking about children and family and connectiveness and great fullness, and then happy and calm.. One thing we find to be very robust, echoing Laura Carstensen's work and others, is that in general there is a decrease in angst and unhappiness and therefore an increase in happiness as one ages.. And some of you might know that research done here out of Stanford.. But the meaning of happiness does fundamentally change.. But it's not just sort of a path along the life cycle.. We also show that these types of happiness change across conditions..

So I'm just going to ask you guys to breathe normally.. You're off the hook.. Just breathe normally.. Keep breathing.. So that's what you're going to do.. For you, I'd like you to start, and ideally for the rest of this presentation, breathe incredibly deeply.. So let's all do it together.. I'm not even good at this.. I'm actually a quick breather.. It's not healthy..

So you guys keep deep-breathing as long as you can, ideally through this entire presentation.. Deep breathing.. Now what we do in this particular study is we give those two conditions to two discreet experimental groups, and what we find is the young individuals that were in the control group, we asked, "What are the first words that come to mind when you think of happiness?" or "How do you define happiness?" and they will, again, say, "It's excitement." That's what it means.. It's exciting and energizing and fun.. For you, even though you are the same age as these individuals, we say, "What is happiness for you?"

and you define happiness like an older person.. You believe happiness is peaceful, contentment, meaning something grounded.. So controlling for age, these individuals start to look at life in a very different lens or different way.. Not only that, but they start to make decisions in very different ways.. So we'll give you guys a choice of two teas.. Both are herbal teas, keeping that control, but yours is a chamomile that is going to be relaxing and yours is a peppermint that is going to be refreshing..

And we'll say, "Which one do you want?" and you consistently ask for the refreshing peppermint tea and you consistently ask for the peaceful chamomile tea that's relaxing.. So it has a fundamental impact on the music you pick or the teas you choose or how you make decisions in life.. The third paradox is that we think we can build meaning through short-term happiness.. We need a mix of short- and long-term happiness.. And so one thing I often do is I'll run surveys based on the data that comes in from my audience.. So I didn't have an opportunity to ask you: what is one thing you could do to improve your happiness? But this is a very representative, qualitative state of the answers that you tend to get.. So I'm just going to let you read it for a few minutes.. This is one single thing people could do to improve their happiness.. Now, there's two things I'd like to draw your attention to.. You're on the last one which I love..

One is that they're actually all kind of untenable, right? I mean, to some degree, right? "I'm going to fix my employer." "I'm going to increase free time and rest time." "I'm going to spend more time at Sedona." "I'm going to spend more time with good friends." No one says, "I'm going to spend less time..." They're just going to shove more stuff into their life.. So there's not a very realistic sense of how they might potentially get happier.. But the second thing I wanted to draw your attention to is that in some ways these small sort of pleasures are populated--just having a little bit more free time or a little bit more time at Sedona--and other times these more deeply meaningful 'long, hard slogs', we call them, tend to be co-varied with happiness, like actually get a new job that would do something.. So the answer isn't always that it's something that's a short-term fix or a long-term fix.. It's really having a sense of both of those things and knowing when to pursue one versus the other.. So this is work by Leaf Van Boven and Gilovich.. It's a framework that they pulled together--I believe it's Leaf Van Boven and his colleagues--that pulls apart the shallow type of meaning that's fleeting, like for chocolates, versus that's long-lasting, like a nice house, with happiness that has deep meaning, such as giving to a charity or meditation, versus happiness that's both deep meaning and is long-lasting, potentially having a family or even self-improvement or education.. So the answer there is not, again, that one type is necessarily always better than the other; it's that you need a mix between these.. But you need to be aware of what things you're chasing are deeply meaningful versus short-term meaningful.. So based on these three paradox, I wanted to argue, how might we rethink happiness? And the idea I'd like to put forth is, rather than finding happiness, could we create environments that enable that happiness? And what would that look like? And there's a lot of research that starts to show that if we unplug from this goal of finding happiness to what is an environment that would allow for happiness, not only do you become self-oriented but that you actually make decisions and create environments that do correlate with sustainable happiness for you as well as others..

So what would that environment look like? There is significant amount of research to show that finding a way to enable people in that environment to find meaning is incredibly important, to fundamentally find connections, and to feel that they are a part of something bigger.. There's other factors as well, but these three are sometimes lacking in the environments in which we're trying to find jobs right now or even the start-ups that you're trying to build here at Stanford and outside of Stanford.. Now the question is, is this really possible when this is what we're finding ourselves working in? You see the technology, you see the computer, you see the two cell phones, you see the headphones, and here I'm telling you, "Go find meaning and be connected and be a part of something bigger," and this is the environment you find yourself.. And in fact, ironically, there's evidence to suggest that we're even further apart than ever before even though we have technology to bring us closer.. Indeed, the paradox of technology is that Twitter and Facebook, even though we had this lovely story about how I now know Tina because of Twitter, enhanced by Twitter, and made possible by Twitter, at an aggregate level we're also seeing a lot of findings that suggest that the more time we spend on technology, even though it was created to connect us, that we're feeling even less connected to especially close others that we're feeling not in the here and now.. So are you guys still deep-breathing? Yeah? So what you guys are feeling right now--and one reason I like to do this experiment is that this group is always enraptured by the talk.. Not to say that you guys aren't.. You love the talk too.. I'm sure you like it very much.. But these guys are really liking it..

So I like doing the experiment with my audience.. And you're present in the here and now, and yet ironically, we're giving all of this technology to all of us and we're less in the here and now at an aggregate level.. Is technology making us less communal, less patient, less connected? And there is some evidence to suggest that there are conditions under which these terms are, indeed, happening.. Our connections are more electronic, but they need not be less human.. We used to communicate by post, and we can still communicate by post, but something seems lacking.. The question I'd like to pose today, and then build on these ideas to talk about ideas that have momentum, that create infectious action, that you can take for your own companies or for your own ideas, is this simple question: can we build meaning, connections, and being a part of something bigger through technology? So I'd like you to sit with that question for a few minutes while I tell you a story about my own self.. This was when before Tina said we both love Twitter.. One year before that, I hated Twitter.. I thought it was a ridiculous waste of time.. My husband, who loves technology, would spend time on Twitter or blogging or playing around with video or trying to understand Google Analytics..

And we would have this very perplexing conversation at family dinners: "What did you do today?" "Well, I tweeted and I

played around a little bit with some blogs." And then I'd be like, "You're kidding me! Really? Honestly?" And he would similarly be perplexed by me.. "You're a marketing professor.. What did you do today?" "Well, I taught marketing." "Do you know anything about social media?" "No! Why would I need to know something about technology?" And he would go, "You're a marketing professor! Really? Honestly? You have to learn something." And so these were the kinds of conversations we were having.. And I would tell him, "Listen.. This is what I see as being the reality of social media." I think the more time you spend on these things, the more egocentric you are, the more we get crazy stalkers hunting us down, and the more that we're experiencing ADHD.. And it all changed for me two and a half years ago, right before I met Tina.. I was actually at Berkeley teaching a creativity and innovation course.. This is the same one that you teach, right? It's crazy.. And what I learned over the course of now 15 years of teaching is that no one remembers my lectures.. And I have empirical data to support the fact that people don't remember my content..

I email my students one to two years after my classes and I say, "What do you remember from my classes?" and they'll email me back and say, "Nothing." "You're a very nice person, and I remember enjoying your classes.. They were great.. Don't remember anything." And then I go, "Really? Honestly? Nothing?" And they'll say, "Oh, I remember.. You made us turn on our cell phones and then work it in the learning into the phone conversation' when people would embarrassingly leave on their cell phones." If you think you're embarrassed now, you should see how embarrassed my students get when I make them pick up the cell phone.. It's horrible.. Or, "Oh, I remember chickens don't have lenses and you taught a case that said chickens do have lenses.. Who knew that chicken and--" this ridiculous, innocuous stuff.. And so during this class, I said, "Instead of me trying to think what should you remember from my class, let me crowd-source this and say, 'What do you remember from my class?'" And most people sent me one or two bullets.. Robert Chatwani sent me a PowerPoint deck, and I just wanted to share with you the deck.. One of the basic premises of the course is this idea of reversing the rules..

So if you are in a brainstorming session and you guys all brainstorm an idea, what you'll get is a bell-shaped curve of ideas, right? So some of them are really crappy, some of them are really good, and most of them are mediocre.. And if you simply reverse the rules, take every idea that's populated out in the brainstorm session and just reverse it--so let's say you're doing a brainstorm for Coke, and someone says, "Let's come up with a giant red Coke can," and you say, "Let's make it blue and shrink it." You just take every idea and you literally just reverse it without even thinking.. What ends up happening is now you've expanded the bell-shaped curve.. Now you have a whole lot of really crappy, crappy ideas, a lot of bad, bad ideas, but so do you have a lot more excellent ideas.. And if the idea of brainstorming is to defer judgment and slice off at a later point in time excellent ideas, now you've got a larger sample size of excellent ideas.. And he took this and he thought about how it integrated into his life.. Before my class, his best friend, Sameer, was diagnosed with leukemia.. Sameer, a Stanford undergraduate, started Dosti project here--for those of you who know Dosti, a social entrepreneurship-minded club here--and brilliant.. He was, I believe an engineer here studying at Stanford, went on to all these start-ups, Monkey Bin and others, and then he found someone he loved and he married.. Her name, Reena..

She's right there.. And he was diagnosed with leukemia about six months or so before my class in 2007.. When they found out that Sameer was diagnosed with leukemia, they reached around just to figure out what they could do, and they found out a friend of a friend of theirs, Vinay, was also diagnosed with leukemia.. So he was in East Bay, a bright individual who was a Boston doctor at the time, also incredibly young.. And this is the PowerPoint deck that Robert shared with me, and I'm just going to go through it silently with you.. This is Sameer on the lower left and that's Vinay on the upper left.. They built two essential organizations.. If you're going to reverse the rules and not find this to be an acceptable situation, instead say, we're going to treat this like any organizational endeavor.. One single goal, 20,000 individuals, and we'll run that instead of a revenue model.. With that being the goal, we'll have 20,000 individuals..

They had Team Vinay and Sameer.. They had marketing leads, they had operation leads, education, they had local leads, not dissimilar to the Obama campaign.. They built out instant brands.. And they didn't have the luxury that many of us do.. What is our brand and how are we going to distribute it? They had to put these up immediately and it was so clear what the call to action on these websites were.. And they executed like crazy.. Every single link here is live.. It's a strategy that they created.. So if you hear this story and you want to act and you feel like you could but you don't know how to make a video, you go over here and you click on "How do you make a video?" and you have a dummy's guide to video creation.. Or let's say you work at Cisco and you want to be able to run a drive in Cisco this Friday, but it seems hard and painful and you don't even know where to start..

Well, you go click on the "Donor Drives" and you find out the dummy's guide to holding a donor's drive.. And everything here is cut and paste.. So you replace the text in red and now you have your letter to John Chambers.. "Dean John Chambers, I want to run a drive this Friday.. This is what I need to do." Cut, paste, send.. "Thank you, John Chambers.. We ran a drive last Friday.. This is how many people we got.. This is what we need to do next." Yes, cut, paste, send.. 'Social change in a box'..

The ability to provide tools and templates for anyone who wants to act, making it abundantly clear and easy and even fun to be able to act.. People made widgets.. People that never even knew Sameer and Vinay made widgets.. People made videos of Indian celebrities that heard this story that wanted to do something with video, a clear call for action in funny and humorous ways.. Oftentimes they'll pop them up on YouTube.. The results? This is the United States.. Four hundred fifty people were emailed the single email from Robert, and it went out to all of these people who ended up forwarding that email on.. And all of these are bone marrow drives that happened in 11 short weeks.. Four hundred seventy of them sprang up..

24,611 individuals registered in the bone marrow registry in 11 short weeks..

A perfect match for Sameer was found in that time.. Vinay had a good match.. And Sameer shared his story from the hospital.. And he blogged prolifically: he felt so lucky he found his match, how to live life to the fullest, and he talked about happiness.. He talked about happiness both in terms of excitement but also in terms of meaning and great fullness and connectedness and being a part of something bigger.. And he showed his bone marrow transplant on YouTube so that anyone in the future who is scared of what a bone marrow transplant might actually look like could go and see on YouTube what does it look like.. And the lessons they learned were fundamental.. The power of a clear, specific, simple goal.. The power of the ability to reverse the rules, and instead of what I would have done, which is kind of, "Can I bring you a lasagna? Can I take care of your kids?" or something like that, they said, "No, we're running this like a corporation.. We're going to get 20,000 individuals in the bone marrow registry telling a good and truthful story." The power of stories is what makes people act..

Even well-argued arguments are not nearly as persuasive.. And the opportunity to design for collaboration, enabling others to take on this goal--Robert and Sameer's friends and family couldn't have gotten 24,611 individuals in the bone marrow registry themselves.. You have to design campaigns so your single-focused goals connect it to the story which resounds and resonates with others that hear this.. Within three short months of his bone transplant, though, Sameer passed on.. He fought hard but sadly passed away.. And that's a picture of Sameer and Reena.. And they celebrated his life by sharing his memorial service with the world.. And 6,000 people saw his memorial.. And Vinay had a successful transplant that relapsed, and he went through alternative treatment and passed away a few months after Sameer.. The reason I'm telling you this story and the reason why I was so fundamentally impacted by this story is that the purpose revealed from the 24,611 donors that were registered, 266 people were matched just in one year based on the 24,611 registered..

That's 266 people who had hoped that had an immediate match.. As many of you know, the power of a match is not so much just whether it's a perfect match; it also depends very much on how quickly you get the match, and that will also have a significant impact on whether you survive.. The chances go up to 75% survival rates on average if you can get an immediate perfect match versus you have to take a long period of time.. It can drop to 40% to 50%.. So it's a world of difference if you can get it immediately.. And as I was listening to this presentation, all I could think about was, 'What do I do now? Could I water this? Would this story grow? And how would that make me feel?' And all I could think about was, 'Happy.' And so we took that story, and when we came back to Stanford we wrote a case on it.. So anyone can download it freely and figure out how they can do social change in a box.. And then we taught a class where we teach MBAs and design students and non-GSB students how to use this type of model to grow their own ideas.. And we encourage these ideas to be not based just on profit models but based on social good in the world, in part because it's Sameer and Vinay.. And the first words out of Sameer and Vinay's mouth, actually, after they got the 25,000, was, "Let's get another 25,000." And you can imagine Robert going, "You're kidding me..

We just got 25,000 people and a perfect match for you, and you're saying, 'Go get another 25,000 to save other lives?'" So what we did with that legacy of both of them is double it and say, "Can we get 100,000 cheek swabs in the next year?" And students here at Stanford and corporations are participating in it.. And I think it's just incredibly powerful to think about how you take legacy, something that will truly make someone happy, and how do you design for the ripple effect.. I wanted to back up the four wings of this dragonfly model which came from this core story, which I think shed light on what ideas build and have momentum and which ideas don't.. The first is focus.. Team Sameer did not try and get everyone in the registry.. What they did was they took 20,000 South Asians.. They focused on well-connected families, people that were parents, those who could easily relate to the story.. I mentioned to you that Robert sent out a well-crafted email telling the story, and what people could do to help, to 450 people.. Just 450 people.. And that is the email that when extended to other people who were connected to these original 450 people could spread it..

The design principles associated with focus is, it has to be humanistic.. So these people that are focused on brand or product or competitor, that's where the goal doesn't get as much traction.. But when you have a human-centered goal like, "What would Sameer want? What would be good for Sameer?" that's when goals actually create life.. It has to be actionable and testable and clear and happy.. The mere thought of achieving that goal would bring you a peaceful kind of happiness is incredibly powerful.. There is a lot of research on emotional contagion.. So if you're chasing a goal that you believe would make you fundamentally happy, there's actual energy not dissimilar to time and money as a resource.. The mere thought of actually achieving that goal that would bring you happiness or meaning is a resource that's oftentimes not unleashed in many campaigns.. The second wing is, you have to grab attention.. This is designed to get someone's attention..

It's essentially a hammer.. In the case of Sameer and Vinay, they made it so that people turned and looked because they felt like they might know Vinay.. This is Vinay's wife, and these are Vinay's friends, and you could see, if you are a Stanford social entrepreneur, you could see yourself in these pictures.. And Robert gave Sameer a baby at the moment and said here, "Hold the baby.. I'm going to take a picture." That's the only not truthful part of this story.. But the idea is that you can see yourself in every one of these pictures so it makes you look.. And the design principle here is that it has to be personal and makes you feel like it's speaking to you, and unexpected, and visceral--it makes you feel something--and visual--it makes you look.. Lance Armstrong owns yellow and Coke owns red and breast cancer owns pink.. And these colors aren't just simple branding campaigns that are throwaway; they make people look.. And then after people look, then they decide, "Do I want to get engaged?" And that is the third wing..

Engagement.. Humans are not set up to understand logic.. They are set up to understand stories.. In the case of Sameer and Vinay, the stories were told not just on the website, which is less emotional, but through video and through word of mouth.. The design principles here are, what are the stories that why you created your idea, why you are here at Stanford, why are you building up the start-up.. What are those stories, and those stories as assets is an under-leveraged tool.. Authenticity, this idea of empathizing and being authentic, is increasingly important.. You're seeing people's distrust for profits.. They're distrusting non-profits.. They're distrusting corporations and governments right now..

What people trust right now are their friends, and that's one reason why social media has taken off so much.. So what is an authentic message? And the last wing is enable others to take action.. Here, this idea is, how are you designing campaigns so that others can act? In the case of Sameer, it was social change in a box.. It was tools and templates that made it so easy.. If you wanted to do something, you could.. A good litmus test of whether you nailed this is do other things that you don't expect but are absolutely helpful for you.. And the design principles are easy and it's fun and tailored and open.. The psychology behind ideas that create infectious action is two-fold.. One theory is the ripple effect, that small acts can create big change.. Malcolm Gladwell recently wrote that there's times in which social media is potentially a distraction, that actual revolutions and actual infectious action happen on the ground..

And that is absolutely true in this case.. People, Maj is in the back with a bone marrow cheek swab table, and she is on the ground rather than-- Oh, I'm going to have to do it.. I'm sorry.. Do you have to answer the phone? Work in some learning into the phone conversation.. You can do this.. You can totally do this.. It's just a notification.. Really? Yeah.. So close, and yet so far.. All right, you're off easy this time..

But the next time it rings, you're working it into learning.. One thing that's kind of interesting is that Anglo-Americans have an easier time of believing that something that you could have spread, and in fact they believe it should have spread, and other Asian countries, to a greater degree, they don't believe that as much, but they do believe that small acts right now might have a big impact later.. So if you recycle this water bottle right now, it might not improve the environment right now, but later it might.. And I think long-term decision-making and one reason why individuals, especially in individuals that cultures have a harder time, were thinking about that as basic ideas around what you believe is possible with small acts.. The second theoretical paradigm that helps underlie these infectious actions and movements is emotional contagion.. Fowler and Christakis and John Cacioppo and others talk a lot about emotional contagion.. It refers to the tendency to catch or feel emotions not dissimilar to viruses.. In fact, people who are happy boost the chances that someone they know will be happy.. Whether a friend's friend is happy has more influence than a \$5,000 raise.. One person's happiness could affect another's for as long as one year..

And by the way, negative emotions are also contagious.. And there's evidence to suggest they're even more viral, which has implications for cultures in which you're cultivating your start-up idea.. What kind of environment are you trying to enable? What environment are you allowing for happiness? So these are the four wings of the dragonfly.. Is that cute? There you go.. I wanted to share a story that's a little bit lighter than just Sameer.. And then I'm going to close with some thoughts around happiness and around technology and around stories.. This is Coca-Cola.. So let's say you're out there in the world and you say, "I get how this works for Sameer.. I get how it works for Robert.. I know where to go for resources..

But I've got a brand, or I've got an idea, and I want to spread it.. I want it to go viral." I just wanted to tell you a small case study about Coca-Cola which had an idea.. And they had a single-focused goal.. They really wanted to connect with teenagers globally with the flagship brand, with Coca-Cola.. And they wanted to do so through digital media.. That was their hypothesis is that 'we're not going to be able to connect with individuals globally unless we do it through digital media'.. Now most companies at this point would say, "OK, we've got our \$350,000 marketing budget.. Go give it to our marketing team.. Go make your viral campaign." But instead of doing that, what they did was they divided the world up into seven teams and they said, "We're giving you \$50,000 each.. And so you guys are all going to get the single-focused goal and try and make an authentic, an organic viral campaign..

You're not going to engineer it.. You're not going to SEO this thing.. You're going to have it authentic and organic." And what's interesting is that six out of the seven groups failed in a sense that nothing really took off.. And that's a very healthy, normal statistic.. That's why rapid prototyping and failing faster is oftentimes sort of an MO that many people here in the Valley and in other places are taking on because it allows you to start experimenting.. The winner, though, of this was the Coke Happiness Machine.. And I'm just going to show it to you.. Let's see.... So I tell you this story because.... Let's see....

Forrest, will you come put it up? Thanks.. I tell you this story because even though they only spent \$50,000 on that video, and they hid it in college campuses not dissimilar to Stanford at finals time and when people were really depressed, and they had these hidden cameras and everything came out and it was all very authentic.. It was authentic.. It was a surprise.. But they designed it with a large part of the dragonfly model in mind.. The result, in two weeks--and it was organic search.. Just one tweet out, "Share the happiness, spread the video." No engineering the virality.. It was all organic.. And they wanted that.. They know they can engineer it, they know that they can figure out how to push things out..

They wanted it to be natural.. And so it was two million views on YouTube in two weeks.. It was global.. Fifty percent of viewers were outside the U.S.. and 70% of the blogs were not English.. Ninety-five percent of the blog posts were positive

comments, which, as you know, is unheard of.. "I'm a Pepsi drinker.. I might make the switch." And there's some evidence to even suggest that it was tied to actual choice and preference.. What's so interesting, I think, about this story is that they had a lot of footage, like 12 hours of footage, and they sliced out the personal smiles.. Like, you smile and they would have cut that, right? They took it when the four of you were smiling together and that you were sharing the Coke..

And so this emotional contagion, the shared emotion that spreads--I mean, you guys should have seen your faces.. You were all laughing and you weren't even there.. And this idea, the single-focused goal, and being able to grab attention through unexpectedness and feeling like, "Oh, I could be there," and telling a story and enabling stories to be told, they didn't architect it for the last wing that well, which is enable action not as much as the Old Spice guy whatever it is--those of you who had answering machines or phonemates or whatever, voice messages with the Old Spice guy, you made it your own.. There's a lot of campaigns that allow you to make it--really? Honestly? All right.. I'm letting you off the hook this time.. But if I hear one ring, I'm diving in.. Somewhere over there.. You guys are unnoticed.. Are you still deep-breathing? Yeah? OK.. So this idea of how do you enable action, and it's led to a big campaign around Open Coke or Open Happiness, I believe..

And there's a lot of companies right now that are doing a great job in making things open, including OpenIDEO, which is I think a beautiful initiative.. So, what I wanted to do is just give you a few thoughts in closing.. Stories connect us, and if you remember one thing from this talk, it might very well be, ideas build momentum when you have a story and you share that story, and that story resonates with others, and then they come along for the ride, or they build their own stories on top of yours, often more than we expect.. Humans are not ideally set up to understand logic.. They are set up to understand stories.. But stories and connections are everywhere.. Even here.. But connections are often not made by maximizing profits.. And there's wonderful research by Kathleen Vohs and her colleagues to show that people, when primed to think about money, step away from others.. We need to foster environments that enable us to build meaning, to make connections, to be a part of something bigger by leveraging technology..

And I would argue, too, that your ideas that build momentum to the degree that they're technology-oriented or leveraging technology, if your core story and your single-focused goal has meaning, and that meaning resonates with others such that they can easily act with you, those are the conditions where social technology and media can, in fact, enhance meaning and connections and being a part of something bigger, and you're not tweeting about what you ate for breakfast in the morning but you're doing something that has meaning.. And even asking yourself right before you go tweet or you go use the cell phone or you go pop on email, "Does what I'm doing have meaning?" and that being a decision criterion before you choose the tea or what to do right now, I think, is very powerful because I do think, and I am a big fan, as Tina said, of social media.. And then the context in which these things can be used for cultivating meaning, our connections, and being part of something bigger, I am absolutely amazed by and I feel it enriches my mind.. I think all we need to do is design for these ripple effects, that one small meaningful act taken, when connected to others, can drive massive change.. I mentioned that we took the story of Robert's and made it into a class and a book.. And 100,000 cheek swabs in honor of both Sameer and Vinay, who wanted to double their 25,000, we said, "How beautiful would it be to get 100,000 people into the bone marrow registry and potentially even go to India in December and try and help the efforts?" They are to actually create a national bone marrow registry to build and design an effect that, perhaps, just perhaps, in even one or two years, could actually save the lives of potentially--or get more than a million people in that bone marrow registry.. So with that, I just wanted to conclude.. And if you are inspired, by the way, to do a quick cheek swab in true dragonfly and Sameer and Vinay fashion, we have a table outside.. It takes five minutes.. And if you're 18 to 50 or 60, you can do it..

And it gives hope, immediate hope.. And it's not just the possibility of saving a life and the technology to do bone marrow transfers--surprisingly, it's so much easier than we think--but it gives people the gift of time.. So on that note, I wanted to say happiness, and transition, and I hope that your ideas all have momentum.. Thank you very much.. That was terrific, Jennifer.. So we have time for about 10 minutes of questions.. Ready to do that? Great! Great.. So who has the first question? Over here.. While here this afternoon I received that forwarded email.. There's a woman Sanjana, an Indian looking for bone marrow..

Yes.. So Sanjana is a 41-year-old woman.. I'm about that age, too.. She has eight-year-old twins; I have eight-year-old twins.. And she has been trying to find a bone marrow match for two years.. And it's not good right now.. And so we've been working with Team Sanjana intensely the last two months.. And in fact that's one reason we're going to India, to find her a match.. She's on compassionate care treatment as of this week.. And we need to find a match in the next couple of months, if that..

So thank you for bringing that up.. It's a problem right now and we need to solve this problem.. It's not a hard problem to solve.. And we need to do it not just for her but for her eight-year-old twins.. Another question? Yes, over here.. I have a question.. When you talked about Coke, one of the things you said was they wanted it to go viral organically and simplistically.. And even though they could engineer it, they found that they wanted to do it the other way.. What was the reasoning behind that? Yeah, so when they had that \$350,000, they gave the team the 50 grand to go do something, they wanted to learn from it.. Even though they only spent \$50,000 for that video, they spent...I think it was a quarter million or a half million on the market research to understand why that went viral..

The irony, right? And you see this, too.. Google, Yahoo, everyone's trying to understand why, who were the influencers,

and what goes viral, and there's all these hypotheses.. And it's amazing how difficult it is to predict these things, but they wanted to understand what was organic for us.. And we can always amplify things, but what was organic to us, and that means.... And for those who are doing start-ups right now, what do you stand for? What resonates? What is going to both make people look but also potentially, in their case, spread happiness? And so they just really wanted to.... They didn't want to spend their money on something that they know--I don't want to say it's artificial, but it was engineered, and the money that they can make and the money that it could save by doing something that was totally organic, and then watching where it went and why it happened, was so much more powerful of an exercise for them.. By the way, I just want to P.S.. All of these individuals chasing the influencers, one thing you see in social psychology research is the people that persuade, it's not so much that you're sitting around like you send out one tweet and everyone listens, right? I mean, there is some heterogenating the individuals there, but it's that you have influence within a domain.. Let's say you're a cancer expert or--OK, no, a Coke expert, or an athlete.. Influencers are domain-specific, and I think individuals need to start thinking much more about the domains of influence and the power of potential weak ties, especially with these meaningful campaigns..

So you said we don't trust companies, we don't trust governments, and right now we trust our friends.. But then the way things are going is like, with companies trying to figure out who are the influencers, who are the friends who target who, are we going to be able to trust our friends? Yeah.. No.. No, you cannot.. [Laughter] There's a fewer and fewer number--I know.. So, yeah.. And that's another reason why they wanted to do something, Jeff, organically, because what's happening right now--and in fact I even think I have a graphic I'd just like to show you--is that.... Oh, by the way, this is kind of a fun research.. This is with Kathleen Vohs and Cassie Mogilner.. We show that if you tell people this is a messenger bag from Mozilla.org and I tell you it's from Mozilla.com, you think Mozilla is really competent, and you think it's warm and inspiring but completely incompetent and needy, and you think it's competent and effective, Mozilla.com, but greedy and not trustworthy..

So there's these incredible stereotypes that are coloring the ways where--and by the way, they only want to buy the bag from the competent company, but they've got this distrust toward the competent company, and the question is kind of, how do you bridge the gap? What you're seeing right now is more and more brands that have a strong brand, a strong idea for employees, so these companies are building brands inside out.. When the company's founding principle and believes in the story of why you exist is sound and employees are so excited about the brand, with social media, which makes it more and more transparent, how are you marketing this? What do you really stand for? As these things become easier to find out what the real goal is, you're finding that the stronger brands are those that are not just customer-facing and haven't just built up a brand identity and a set of assets and touched points with all their customers that are disengaged from their internal employees and why they were founded.. You're finding stronger brands are built inside out where the brand inside is so powerful, and then eventually that is disseminated to customers such that when customers hear about some brand action, it's easier to trust that brand.. So I didn't do a great job of head-on answering your question, but I will say that companies that have their head around this can start to cultivate trust, and when they do engage a potential friend or when a friend does potentially tell others, "I really believe in Levi's," or whatever it is, they're more likely to resound.. So it's kind of an indirect answer.. Another question? Well, let me ask you a question.. Yeah.. I always think of Twitter as a wonderful way to do lots of little experiments, right? Yes.. You put things out, and you quickly can see what things get picked up and propagated.. I'm going to guess you have the same experience..

What have you found in your experiments as you have been using Twitter and other social media over the last year? Yeah.. So we found that the brand--well, I don't do too much experimentation yet because of a lot of different reasons, but I follow brands that do like Dell or JetBlue or Starbucks.. And there's different reasons to be using it.. One is you got your discounts to Starbucks, right? And if you listen, you get cheaper Starbucks.. But then it's really interesting to see like Zappos start talking about interesting tidbits or kind of surprising insights or something that makes you laugh or something that brings happiness.. So Tony Hsieh has a very different philosophy.. 'I'm not going to just tell you you get 10% off at Zappos.. I'm going to create benefits that are not just price-focused.' And what I think you're seeing that's really fun is that companies that do allow experimentation by personal individuals, the personal brands are being built.. So people are having their own little brand following.. And then they tweet out and they have their own personality, and that kind of adds and amplifies and increases authenticity and trust..

And so I think that's so interesting is when companies allow personal individuals within the company or customers.. JetBlue let the terminal man--have you guys heard of this? JetBlue did a \$599 thing last year, and I guess again this year, "All You Can Jet".. You buy \$599, you can go anywhere.. So Terminal Man--he self-branded himself Terminal Man--bought this \$599 thing.. And he decided he was going to spend one month never leaving terminals.. So he flew all over the United States never leaving a terminal.. And he would blog and video and he became this celebrity.. Medias were following him.. Then he started commenting on JetBlue's service like, "Sitting in the first class right now.. Not too shabby." And then pilots would come talk to him..

And then JetBlue actually didn't just sort of try and silence him to some degree.. They talked to him.. Like, "You didn't like this? Why didn't you like this?" They brought him to this leadership conference, and he spoke and said, "You people are doing it all wrong.. Let me tell you what you should do." There are some companies that are hiring these types of people.. So I think that.... Honestly, it's crazy.. And so I think companies that experiment and allow personal voice to bubble up and experiment there are going to be so far ahead of companies that don't allow experimentation.. Fabulous.. Well, I want to end by saying, first of all, for anyone who's interested, the Stanford bookstore is outside with copies of your book.. And also, you can get your



cheek swabbed..

And I want to end by saying, you know what? This talk made me really happy.. Thank you so much.. Oh, thank you..  
Thanks...