

Well-being: the North Star for social development and social entrepreneurship

Perspectives from the Lifestyle by Design, Virtual Living Lab 2019-2024

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Abstract

In the latter part of the twentieth century there was, in some developed markets, a reevaluation of the basic definition of healthcare. This led to a fundamental shift from a treatment orientation to a prophylactic stance and expanding self-medication. Social cost drivers were part of this transformation as well as an increasing recognition of the impact and importance of lifestyle-related disease. This led to a broader and more dynamic view of health that needed improved health literacy so that individuals could make informed lifestyle choices.

Social media and social sharing have enabled narratives to readily spread and influence people's attitudes and behaviour. We leverage Big Data and AI technology to identify specific content (topics, triggers, media channel) that drive past and future outcomes. With trust in traditional institutions at an all-time low, the ability to connect and communicate new ways of healthy living, by understanding what is important to people is critical to bring about behavioral change, at scale. Attitude naturally drives behavior. Social media, and social sharing of healthy lifestyle can act as both a catalyst for, and an accelerator to, the take-up of new such choices. Understanding what is important to people enables policy makers and educators to engage with communities in a relevant meaningful and effective manner. The narratives that are shaping our digital lives can be the basis of behavioral shifts that can enhance people's life satisfaction and well-being.

During a period of unprecedented and rapid changes in people lives, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this unique research, in Japan and the UK, tracks some of the narratives that can enhance lifestyle. To 'engage with engagement' it is not simply having the appropriate content, but it is also critical to recognise the appropriate context. Our approach has broad implications especially as timely messaging is critical for any institution. This is dramatically illustrated by the emotional dynamics at a time of perceived vulnerability / uncertainty during a global pandemic, when much of what had been viewed as timeless was rapidly upended as daily living changed. Our analyses benchmarked before COVID-19 shows the critical importance of the well-being narrative as society regenerates.

Keywords: Narratives, Engagement, Timeless, Transformational, Utility, Mess-Age, Social Implementation, Strategic Leadership Narrative, Being Intentional, Positive, Volatility, Multi-Disciplinary, Multi-Objectives, Well-being, Policy

1. Introduction.

Context is everything! It is crucial for several reasons, influencing how we understand and interpret information, make decisions, and interact with the world around us. The COVID-19 pandemic drastically reshaped our understanding of context. Physical touch, once warm, became suspect. "Going out" evolved from leisure to a risk assessment. Smiles, hidden by masks, lost their universal meaning. Virtual spaces became our new "normal," blurring the lines between work, life, and even continents. This unique shift forced us to constantly adapt, hyper-aware of the ever-changing context that dictated every interaction and decision.

We live in an Accelerating Age of change where it is not only the rate of change that is new but that the nature of change itself is changing. No category is immune to transformational change and no leading institution or corporation is too big to fail. Healthcare is increasingly a focus of multiple new players as aging demographics and technology are demanding/ creating new possible solutions. Whatever the label e-health, m-health it is clear that 'smart health' solutions will be multi-disciplinary, involving different constituencies with multiple objectives. To engage people and accelerate the diffusion of new ideas there will be a need to incorporate left-and right-brain thinking in balance (high-tech; high-touch). The diffusion of new ideas is greatly enhanced by the almost ubiquitous participation in social. Indeed, narratives and social media are integral parts of today's connected world. Social sharing of new health ideas can create new and improved lifestyle behaviors. What has remained true around the world during this period of increasing flux is the increasing importance of healthcare, for peoples of the world. Aging demographics and the stress they pose on existing social welfare systems will affect mature and emerging economies, alike. None more so than Japan where its super-aging society is looking for new holistic social solutions that could be the model around the world.

Our interconnected world amplifies the significance of context, with social networks serving as integral parts of daily life. They offer a wealth of data illuminating human interactions, evolving behaviors, and the formation of social structures based on values and interests. The authenticity inherent in social sharing renders it a more credible means of communication than traditional mass media, reflecting genuine concerns. Yet, effective, and empathetic communication in diverse contexts demands adept utilization of communication science methodologies. Despite the wealth of information, individuals often feel less informed due to challenges in discerning trustworthy sources. Employing online content for behavioral analysis provides a more authentic representation compared to surveys or interviews. This approach captures genuine sentiments and opinions, presenting an opportunity to comprehend, influence, and steer behavior by identifying pivotal social and linguistic signals. Leveraging AI to analyze openly shared online content enables an understanding of its impact on behavior. This methodology unveils the pivotal topics, triggers, and media channels influencing diverse outcomes and their evolution over time. Additionally, it extends beyond sentiment analysis, measuring the emotional impact of content, culminating in the creation of a Virtual Living Lab (VLL) mirroring genuine societal behaviors.

A core tenet of The University of Tokyo's LifeStyle *by* Design research initiative was the increasing need to empower the individual to make an informed choice about their own healthy life options. To execute this policy demands greater health literacy amongst the

population. As self-medication and healthy lifestyle choices become increasingly important social sharing of new ideas and practices can readily go viral. This will have the potential to drive major attitudinal and behavioral shifts that enhance *'healthspan'*, rather than just longevity. Taking a LifeStyle *by* Design stance will improve an individual's QOL and potentially transformative and pervasive for public and private sector stakeholders, alike. It is widely accepted that roughly sixty percent of mortality and eighty percent of the global disease burden are a function of just four LifeStyle choices- lack of exercise; poor nutrition; smoking and alcohol abuse. As countries try to balance their social health costs, especially in ageing demography's, the increasing need for self-medication necessitates that policy align with the attitudinal shift from a treatment to a prophylactic priority in healthcare. As such, the longstanding (from 1948;) World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of healthcare:

'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'

is at odds with empowering the individual to make personal and potentially ambiguous choices regarding their own health.

Human choice is a basic freedom and philosophically can have several dimensions including ethical considerations. Specifically, LifeStyle *by* Design promotes and delivers healthier lifestyle bringing a new balance to the physical, nutritional and social needs to bring an individual's balance to enhance their QOL. It is widely accepted that roughly 60percent of mortality and 80percent of the global disease burden are a function of just four lifestyle choices- lack of exercise; poor nutrition; smoking and alcohol abuse. People who stay active tend to be happier, but too much exercise can be detrimental to your mental health. Design Thinkers are leaders who the skills of a designer with conventional corporate strategy to drive the open and unashamed innovation that revolutionizes everything from products to processes (Clark & Yamazaki, 2020).

Design Thinking the process essentially condenses to a concentration on experiential (sensory), emotional and integral (cross-sector) intelligence. Thus, in a period of renewal, the character of any LifeStyle *by* Design would need to be:

- ✓ progressive (a questioning disruptive innovator);
- ✓ collaborative (brings multidisciplinary skills and melds a team to holistically explore *'what can be'*)
- ✓ authoritative (focused with access to execute material change).

Moreover, as change is unpredictable, then leadership characteristics must be radically different and dynamic with an ability to encourage experimentation and willingness to adapt. With the stated increasing importance of social sharing, it becomes an imperative to be able to craft and execute the strategic leadership narratives.

Thus, LifeStyle *by* Design supports scientific and social research, education, new partnerships, and deregulation to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions focused on holistic well-being for the individual and community to enhance QOL. Since the scope of potential collaborators is broad it is imperative to establish early on a construct that helps focus the design thinkers and ensure all the necessary competencies are brought to bear to develop new solutions; to move with convergent and divergent thinking and assess new alternate

outcome states to move from 'what is' to 'what can be'. Going forward the personal and proactive changes now needed can lead to tangible improvements in Life Satisfaction / QOL, but it demands improved clarity and depth of communications to empower individuals to take more personal responsibility; to make informed choices. Without the communication system, in extreme, any invention will remain in a vacuum and have no in market impact that an innovation, by definition, demands.

2. Narrative Economics

At the outset we should stress that these analyses are not just identifying some interesting things but things that are important to people now! So, from a corporate or policy perspective aligning with stories that the people feel are driving their current feelings is important allows one to go beyond Thought Leadership pieces to creating strategic leadership narratives than effect change.

People have always been attuned to narratives, factual or not, to validate their behaviour. The work of Nobel laureate Shiller in *Narrative Economics* (2019) is particularly relevant. "*When we are asleep at night,*" he suggests, "*narratives appear to us in the form of dreams. We do not dream of equations or geometric figures without some human element.*" He has studied the epidemiology of narratives and revealed how when contagious narratives go viral, they can create major economic impact. He has shown how the popular narratives of their times drove the 1920-1921 Depression, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Recession of 2007-2009 and fuel today's socio-economic-political opinions. Further discussion is provided in Glossary A.

3. Narrative Analyses

In the commercial world, research is not conducted out of curiosity or for academic purposes. We conduct research to help organisations make better (evidence-based) decisions. The right story, told the right way, makes it more likely that right action will happen. Measuring and interpreting social and linguistic signals by accessing openly available online content is naturally more directly reflective of human behavior, than traditional qualitative or quantitative survey methodologies. It can provide real-time insight to facilitate better decisions. The Significance Systems axiom is to "deliver utility from the world's narratives", by measuring long-term engagement. The platform earth.ai, analyses millions of behavioural interactions with content, to model human interaction, and to provide an objective read on engagement, media power, and the authentic, emotional drivers of (new) behaviour. This enables one to 'engage with engagement' and thus be part of the on-going story rather than to try to dominate it from outside, which has been the traditional mass communication norm of intrusion.

The ubiquity of the internet and mobility have enhanced the importance of social media [first coined in 1994 by the founders of Significance Systems, Darrell Berry and John Ricketts (Forbes, 2010)], and social sharing in effecting change. While witnessing the economic successes from readily scalable platform businesses and digital ecosystems across the world, people have benefited from a new standard of utility in service.

However, traditional consumer / market research is by its' very nature akin to looking in the rear-view mirror while driving. It has leveraged technology to develop faster and cheaper

research approaches, obviating the need for a field-force of interviewers. One might argue it simply provides similar wrong answers quicker. For example, social listening, provides volumetric measures of comments. Citations of a topic are categorised and counted, then averaged and subtracted for sentiment. However, frequency is not uniformly significant, especially in the digital context where personalization is the key characteristic of engagement. This is analogous to wrongly adopting the notion of reach and frequency, popularized for mass-media, to the digital context. In this approach, the signal of ‘what is important’ is not isolated from the noise of ‘what is not’.

While such platforms can provide quick measures of the penetration of topics, they are poor in predicting future behaviour. Berry and Ricketts, founding Significance Systems, wanted something better and developed earth.ai; a platform for strategic understanding and forward-looking decision-making. Significance System’s adopts a different approach by to explicitly extracting insights from on-going global narratives. Their proven and proprietary platform earth.ai (Figure 1), which analyses millions of behavioural interactions with content, to model human interaction, and to provide an objective read on engagement, media power, and the authentic, emotional drivers of (new) behaviour. It can sense and quantify over 400 named emotional states, in response to any story. The process considers all open data online as contending for consideration. By analogy with the human vision system, in accord with the foundational computational neuroscience Marr (1982, 2010), it pursues a computational-reductionist approach applying multiple layers of processing to identify and extract human-meaningful social-signaling structure within the petabytes of raw topical data available to the first stages of our process. This approach dramatically reduces the volume of data to which they then apply computationally intensive processes such as detailed grammatical analysis. The textual content is interpreted within an affect model.

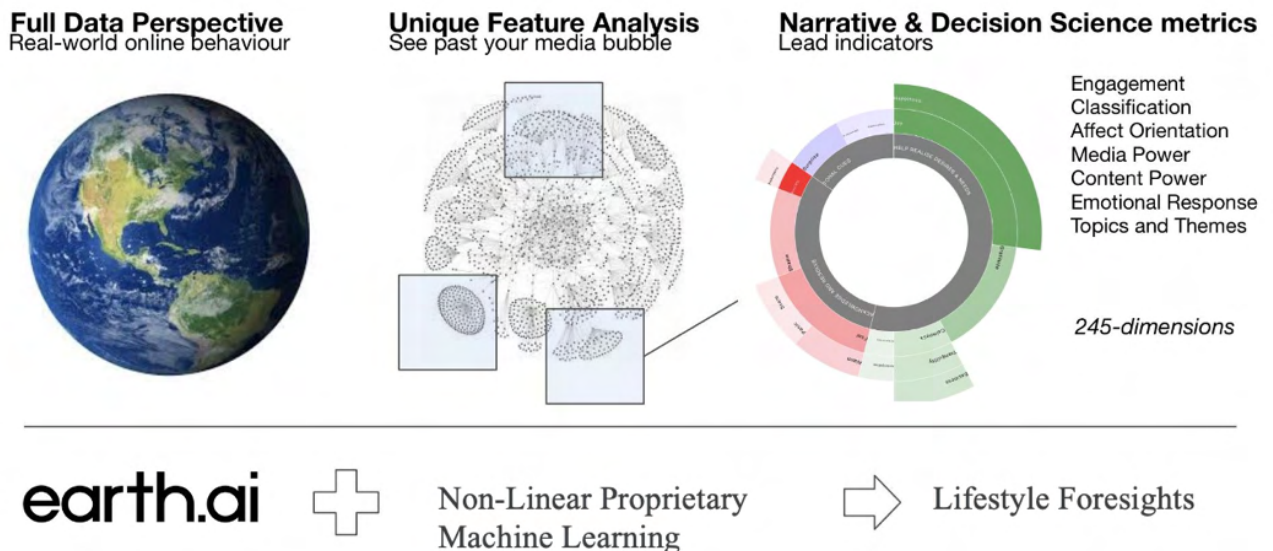


Figure 1. Significance Systems Narrative Analyses that drive Behaviour. [Significance Systems: “deliver utility from the world’s narratives”. They leverage their proprietary platform earth.ai, which analyses millions of behavioural interactions with content, to model human interaction, and to provide an objective read on engagement, media power, and the authentic, emotional drivers of (new) behaviour.]

First, vision would be cleaved into separable 'computational theories', in which the visual system is characterized in terms of its computational goals and the strategies by which they are carried out. Each such computational theory could then be investigated in increasingly

concrete terms, from symbols and measurements to representations and algorithms, to processes and neural implementations. This paradigm rests on some general expectations of a symbolic information processing system, including Marr's stated principles of explicit naming, modular design, least commitment, and graceful degradation. In retrospect, the computational framework also tacitly rests on additional assumptions about the nature of biological information processing. These include, (a) the separability of computational strategies, (b) the separability of representation, (c) a pipeline nature of information processing, and (d) that the representations employ primitives of low dimensionality. Moreover, Marr believes that viewing "our brains as information-processing devices is not demeaning and does not negate human values. If anything, it tends to support them and may in the end help us understand what from an information-processing view human values are, why they have selective value, and how they are knitted into the capacity for social mores and organization with which our genes have endowed us" (Marr, 1982, 2010).

As such the understanding of the emotional depth of the narrative, allows for better understanding and connection with people. It is important to be able to understand how the expression changes to remain relevant. Leveraging Big Data and AI to identify specific content (topics, triggers, media channels...) that drive past and future outcomes. The ability, promptly, to go beyond volumetric measure of a topic and understand what is significant, has never been more important to help improve decision-making with a better strategic understanding and ability to connect with your audience. Recognizing that social sharing is more authentic, and trustable than traditional forms of mass communications it is now possible, with data-based communications insights (Figure 1), to

- ✓ objectively explore these narratives to understand the drivers and dynamics of changing behavior and consensus;
- ✓ probe what people value and feel are more important; and
- ✓ establish how new solutions can be effectively introduced to create new and better behaviours.

The foundational premise of the Virtual Living Lab, (VLL), established within iFi's Life Style *by* Design unit, at The University of Tokyo, is that any societal innovation to have impact must be embraced and diffused so communications / engagement is pivotal. As is the empowerment of individual which connotes a sense of 'informed choice'. The timeliness of our research cannot be overstated beginning in June 2019 (BC- Before COVID-19) and so far, consistently tracking key lifestyle narratives over 14 waves of research through to June 2024 (See Tables 2 & 3). Lifestyle VLL is not a futuristic concept; it's woven into the very fabric of our present lives. Moreover, we find ourselves at the tail end of a unique period in lifestyle research. The pre-pandemic landscape offered a precious window of normalcy, allowing us to track narratives and establish baselines. This unique perspective, coupled with our comparative analysis between Japan and the UK, has provided invaluable insights into how different cultures approach and adapt to increasing societal uncertainty and volatility.

A key requirement to improve the dispersion of new lifestyle behaviors will be to leverage social media in a consistent and coherent manner, that is explicitly transparent and positive, and people feel empowered by being enabled to make informed choices. As a basis for investigating a broad sense of LifeStyle *by* Design, some potentially rich narratives (Table 1) were qualified by PreSearch. These form the objective basis for the empirical comparison

between Japan and the UK, which, over time, were tracked to monitor and assess best practices.

English	Japanese
well-being	ウェルビーイング
wellness	健康
personal happiness	個人的な幸せ
personal satisfaction	個人的な満足
leisure time	余暇
personal employment	個人雇用
personal life balance	私生活バランス
personal friendship	個人的な友情
my family	私の家族
personal nutrition balance	個人の栄養バランス
personal activity	個人的な活動
my free time	私の自由な時間
motivation	動機
my community	私のコミュニティ
personal bonding	個人的な絆
being employed	雇用されている
personal wealth	個人の富
personal relationships	個人的な関係
my resilience	私の回復力
personal confidence	個人的な自信
personal optimism	個人楽観主義
personal pessimism	個人的な悲観主義
social stability	社会的安定
economic growth	経済成長

Table 1. VLL Lifestyle Narratives tracked in the UK and Japan

A significant majority of narratives are Transient (82%). Such narratives will fall away without significant investment. These are poor choices for communications, since as issues, they are not expected to persist or grow. Strategically, such narratives are often easy to 'own', but they must be driven, or connected to greater relevance and/or differentiation, to have any long-term value. Tribal (11%) narratives are characterised by intense debate, being driven by personal experiences or commercial perspectives, bringing divergent POVs. The vast majority of this debate, therefore has no impact. Although it is easy to be a participant, it is far more difficult to be a player or leader in such narratives. Those narratives that have the greatest potential utility (Table 2) are Transformational and Timeless. Transformational (2%) narratives are characterised by intensely, engaged experiences with strong timeless themes. These narratives are fast-changing, yet potentially result in lasting transformation of the world. Timeless (5%) narratives are expected to persist or grow. They are characterised by long-term, deep engagement. These narratives are good choices for communication activities. If one considers the narratives of the top 100 brands / companies then their effective communications strategies are focused. One sees Timeless engagement representing at least 90 percent of the narratives.

In tracking narratives that can shape our world, we recognize explicitly that:

- ✓ popular stories affect individual and community behavior.
- ✓ improve decision-making comes by knowing and addressing what people feel is important.

- ✓ relevant and timely communications, in context, can stimulate change in perception and behaviour.
- ✓ not just content but tone is important has been exemplified by changing affect during COVID-19 (Figure 2).

TRANSFORMATIONAL

- ✓ A very small number of narratives, campaigns or, indeed, brands characterised by intense, engaged individual experience with strong timeless themes.
- ✓ Fast changing, yet potentially resulting in lasting transformation of the world.
- ✓ A volatile environment for the positioning of brands or themes for communications.
- ✓ Strong opportunity if there is positive alignment, or great threat if it is an opposed issue.
- ✓ Communication Power comes from detailed understanding of, and alignment with, both the timeless drivers and the in-the moment significant experiences of those connected to the narrative.

TIMELESS

- ✓ A small number of narratives, campaigns, or brands.
- ✓ Characterised by long-term, deep engagement, driven by a small number of key players who are often experts and authorities.
- ✓ These are authentic. They matter to people.
- ✓ They are long-lived. They are good choices for the positioning of brands or themes for communications
- ✓ As issues they are expected to persist or grow.
- ✓ They are high value but difficult to own. Focus is key.
- ✓ Communication Power comes from the understanding of what has long-term significance, and alliance-building with the existing players.

TRIBAL

- A small number of narratives, campaigns or, indeed, brands.
- Characterised by intense debate.
- Personal experience often drives engagement. Commercial perspectives often drive divergent POVs.
- We see that most of this debate, this flow, has no impact: Indeed <<1% of content over any given period will have any significance.
- So, although it's easy to be a participant, it is far more difficult to be a player or leader, in this space.
- Leverage the power of authentic individual experience via sharing or aggregation/curation.
- Communication Power comes from an understanding of what is significant in the moment.

TRANSIENT

- Most narratives, campaigns, or brands.
- They are narratives which will fall away without investment of time or resources.
- Strategically, these are often easy to 'own': but they must be driven (or connected) to greater relevance and/or differentiation to have long-term value.
- As existing campaigns or issues, they are worthy of tracking.
- Communication Power comes from building stronger connections to more engaging narratives.

Table 2. Narrative Classification: Utility.

To leverage the strong story, it is now possible to go beyond traditional media planning considerations and focus on the strong narrative. Simply

- ✓ Know what to say;
- ✓ How to say it;
- ✓ Who to say it to;
- ✓ Where to say it.

With the pandemic there is a new urgency for public and private institutions to reset and communicate their orientation so that people can make sense and engage with new paths forward. There is a greater imperative to facilitate entrepreneurship so that current peripheral initiatives can become the focus of more lives. Purpose can bring focus but the passion it also reflects needs to accept risk and focus on what works and why. Big Data and AI can help create new, currently unimagined, solutions but a critical element of a development narrative is that

it is evidence-based. Our modern lives are increasingly complex with many things happening outside ones' influence. Leaders will need to be able to simplify the complex, facilitate a learning journey by developing Strategic Leadership Narrative that has a clarity and can inspire commercial and societal regeneration and entrepreneurship. Such clarity is fundamental to stimulating creativity and transformation.

The Strategic Leadership Narrative (see Glossary C for further discussion) demands that there is a competence (O'Hara, & Leicester, 2012) in complexity, that can simplify providing a culture for growth, change and social innovation. The pandemic has brought to the fore the need to go beyond traditional job descriptions and stable institutions to create a comfort with, and embrace change, if we are to meet today's complex dynamics. A core component of societal development will be improvement in health and well-being, which will demand greater health literacy as people need to be empowered to make informed choices. This was a central motivation for creating the Virtual Living Lab that is outlined in the next section, and which forms the focus of this paper. (Lifestyle) Purpose can help people embrace change. A current notable example is that of Patagonia who have the mission statement "*we're in business to save our home planet.*" Their enlightened founder and leader Yvon Chouinard recently transferred ownership to a Trust, because as the founder said instead of an IPO ("going public"), they were "going purpose."

To develop the narrative Landscapes, we look at all online sources, in Japan and the UK respectively, up to the date of the research wave. There is no time window. So, depending on the specific narrative, which self organises, it could be dominated by recent content ... or not. Most existing AI initiatives focus on content devoid of context or emotion. Our methodology entails examining all online sources in Japan and the UK up to the research date, devoid of temporal constraints. The period of study, June 2019 to June 2024, saw unprecedented and dramatic changes in people's behaviour, with COVID-19 becoming a social media virus as well as a biospheric virus. Already social and political commentators are referring to the tectonic shift created by the pandemic in terms of different era BC, DC, and AC [Before- During- and After Covid-19] (Nelms, 2020). During this tumultuous period, with minds altered, opinions changed, and attitudes adjusted, it is not surprising that some of the narratives themselves took on different characteristics.

4. Engaging with engagement

Prior to the wide availability of the internet communications in the late 1990's, the twentieth century communications were dominated by multiple broadcast mass media channels. Marshall McLuhan's seminal media treatise, *The Medium is the Massage* (McLuhan & Foire, 1967), evaluates the top down, western-led broadcast, mass media and its global impact.

While western values were spread around the world by mass media, the internet completely changed that dynamic since it provided open access to a flat network, in which anyone, anywhere, can participate in an apparently fragmented world (Riley, 2017). It may appear messy, but it facilitates direct messaging for everyone, anywhere, anytime to like-minded communities; the Mess-Age. This dramatic shift in orientation necessitates a deeper understanding of, and willingness to, embrace different cultures (Hofstede, 2001), or not, if one wishes to remain disconnected.

The internet serves as a hub for human interaction and reactions, reshaping our online world. Stories and social media significantly influence societal values and actions. Embedding ourselves within these narratives enhances the clarity and impact of our messages while allowing us to manage our image effectively. Identifying and characterizing these influential stories across various platforms enables a comprehensive understanding of public sentiment and engagement. Shiller (2019) underlines the profound effect of self-told stories on behavior and their potential to instigate global change.

Our analyses allow one to identify, at any time, what is important to people, so that one can readily participate with topical conversations in a relevant and credible manner; to ‘engage with engagement’. It is more effective and efficient to be part of the on-going story rather than to try to intrude from outside, which has historically been the traditional mass communication norm. By understanding societal sentiments, this research aids policy formulation and evaluation, empowering leaders amid volatile times. Our VLL contextualizes ongoing narratives, facilitating informed engagement for leaders. Focusing on existing robust narratives and user experiences has proven instrumental (Table 3).

Analysis	Rationale
1: Engagement Classification	✓ Assessing opportunities to embrace Timeless and Transformative narratives
2: Affect Orientation	✓ Understanding emotional responses of the narratives
3: Media Power	✓ Identifying and ranking influential media
4: Content Power	✓ Assessing the potency of individual content pieces
5: Emotional Response	✓ Grasping market sentiment / emotional tone of the significant content
6: Relationships	✓ Leveraging interconnectivity of topics and emergent themes for credibility and relevance

Table 3. User Experience

5. New Ways of Thinking and Communicating

To reiterate the premise of being able to realise social innovation is the need for adoption of new ideas. Social media provides a new way of taking multiple messages to the market to affect change in attitude, and behaviour.

Many if not most industries are undergoing unparalleled change not just the speed of change, but the nature of change is itself changing. Some industries are having more fundamental transformations with the change in landscapes bringing in new competitors. This is especially true where the transformation is driven by the significant impact of digital empowerment. The seminal work of Castells’ (1996, 1997, 1998), The Information Age trilogy provides the broad foundation with the accelerating rate and nature of innovation in our networked and interconnected society, as well as the evolving nature of communications power (Castell, 2009), empowering the individual (Carpentier, 2011). During COVID-19 the future has in fact been brought forward and we see examples of personal precision and improved prediction driven by increasing use of big data and analytics. That said, for a long-time marketing theory and practice have been disconnected (Lehmann, 2014), and with an industry in transition it is timely to redress this disconnect. Part of the problem is an incremental evolution of practice, constrained by legacy thinking and structures. A holistic approach is needed to ensure coherence, appropriate prioritization, and focus, at a time when issues of governance,

sustainability demand a greater level of granularity is needed. Specific issues to address and solve, include:

- a. Today's marketing has the same goal but operate in a new world.
- b. Marketing theory though static, is useful if understood.
- c. Digital channels are broken, and their role(s) are mis-understood.
- d. Social matters as it transcends hierarchy with purpose.
- e. People trust people.
- f. People are empowered by feeling better informed.
- g. Marketing logic is a failed narrative; differentiation under performs.
- h. People-centricity drives engagement.
- i. Brand values have passed their sell-by date; ethics trump marketing speak.

The purpose of marketing has not changed; to move markets, to move people, in such a way that products and services are brought into the home (B2C) or enterprise (B2B). However, we have witnessed transformational changes in how a brand's message can be communicated in a more relevant and credible manner to drive marketing effectiveness. This paper shows a coherent approach to understanding what is significant from a market perspective. It is also demonstrating how you can control and nurture your brand, grow your franchise in our contemporary, digital world. Today's digital realities and market dynamics demand marketers can embrace a new level of granularity to ensure communications remain relevant and credible.

The opportunities of the Industrial Age that led to mass marketing, benefited from mass-media, have been usurped by social media and social sharing where the Mess-Age democratizes access (Riley, 2017). Ideas can come from anywhere, and like-minded communities are not constrained by geography. The complexity and level of interconnectedness in today's world has been materially witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, in today's Sustainable Age (_2025, 2021), the only hierarchy is that of imagination. People are now more interconnected than ever before and how they buy, and research their purchase priorities have been transformed to make consumers ever more powerful. Being able to understand what people believe is important, at any time, has never been more important (Beaumont & Ricketts, 2020). Understanding what people think and how they feel enables one to be relevant and engage credibly. With a focus on communications, it has also never been more important to have a common mindset or attitude and a common language so that any organisation can speak with a shared voice.

Part of the disconnect between theory and practice is marketing's overpromise and under delivery. It is timely to consider a reset. Management guru, Peter Drucker (2001) has never been more relevant: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." Here is the challenge: marketing is management not leadership. Too often the challenge of leadership falls to marketers. Like bad politicians, marketers can be fixated in giving their customers what they want even when what they want is not what they need. The most successful companies have moved beyond the limitations of marketing thinking and into the realm of creative thinking, coupled with design thinking. Those who deploy the 'triple growth play' of creativity, analytics, and purpose, realize dramatically higher average growth rates (Cvetanovski et al., 2021). With such purpose they can do the right thing in the right way.

That said, many firms are constrained since it is widely thought that marketers are not equipped (Ratchford, 2020) to deploy marketing analytics, and that only data professionals are adequately trained to handle Big Data issues of targeting, measuring consumer opinion, and understanding social behaviour (Olenski, 2018; Roubaud, 2018). This situation will materially impact marketing research going forward, since today's capabilities can deliver real-time behavioural insights, much cheaper and better, than traditional survey methodologies. Self-evidently, the answer is not to simply leverage web access, for cheaper (panel) recruitment. Such analogue thinking simply gets the same wrong answer more quickly, with the limited scope of on-line focus groups / panels.

However, the basic conceptual framework and techniques for empirical analysis used in marketing that were developed in the 1960s (Levitt, 1960; McCarthy, 1960; Kotler 1964) and 1970's (Little 1970) remain in use today, albeit in refined versions that take advantage of improved data, analytics, and dashboards (Powell, 2022). There are also numerous broad summaries of trends in marketing issues (Mela et al., 2013; Huber et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2017), as well as those specifically looking at quantitative marketing (Beaumont et al., 1989; Winer & Neslin, 2014), and marketing strategy (Kerin, 1996; Kumar, 2015).

The pioneering theoretical and empirical work on Buying Behaviour by Ehrenberg (1988; 1975; et al., 2004; Mittelstaedt, 1969; Sharp & Sharp, 1997) during his tenure at London Business School that culminated in the globally renowned, Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science remains relevant as it enables a focus on brand growth. The likelihood of selling to an existing customer is between 60% and 70%, while only between 5% and 20% for a new prospect, depending on the category. Brands grow (Sharp, 2010) by focusing on winning new customers, driven by increasing mental and physical availability, resulting in behaviorally loyal buyers. Existing customers already know you, and their memory structures are refreshed when they buy you again. A key finding from this seminal research was the notion of light / low-value buyers and a few heavy / high-value buyers. The graph of value against the number of customers is the Negative Binomial Distribution. The NBD is a general finding for any brand or category, and the shape remains constant as a brand grows. Thus, growth, is driven across all buyers to some extent. This critical insight is consistent across the IPA database (Field & Binet, 2018); campaigns targeted at all customers are more effective than campaigns targeted at new or existing customers. Success comes from engaging the market more than the perceived white space, and / or loyalists.

More significantly, the authors believe that while the marketing concept and marketing mix remain useful introductory frameworks, there is a need for transformative marketing thinking with a singularity regarding people centricity; People 3.0 (Beaumont, 2006). Barwise and Meehan (2004) had noted that marketing practice had taken theory too far and become disconnected from their customers, by focusing on trivial differences rather than value for money, and quality products and services. They were in "Simply Better" suggesting a back to basics would lead to greater success. In the same vein, Ambler (2003) focuses on the bottom-line. Unfortunately, the academic literature has relatively few marketing cases when compared to other management area and thus despite claims to the contrary do not reach marketing practitioners (Hughes et al., 2018).

The rapid access to Big Data, analytics, and AI (Leung et al., 2018) reinforces the demand for a people-centric orientation since social media, social sharing (Ansari et al., 2018) and social business are fundamentally re-orientating marketplace control and nature and extent of the

influences on the customer journey. Social media fuels the imagination, impacts attitudes and behaviour (Beaumont & Ricketts, 2020) and facilitates the marketing of products and services (Barwise et al., 2002; Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010; Anker et al., 2022). The customer purchase intention and buying decision-making has been materially impacted by social media and e-commerce / m-commerce and should be reflected in mobile advertising (Martins et al., 2019). For example, Dehghani et al., (2016) identified four dimensions that have an influence on YouTube advertising—entertainment, informativeness, customization, and irritation which influenced brand awareness, and purchase intention. As the customer journey has changed, so the nature of consumer brand connections has also changed materially. The implication for brands is the need to be strategically much clearer.

Digital is therefore playing a significant disruptive role in content analysis (Kietzmann & Pitt, 2020), and media with new media channels. As with past innovation in media new channels they do not replace old channels, but the relative importance is shifting dramatically. This means that there is unfortunately some legacy structure and legacy thinking and the necessary shake up will perhaps be accelerated by the pandemic as retailing / social distancing in traditional formats are replaced by e-commerce. Programmatic buying and selling leverages a software platform for real-time decisions, rather than weeks or months in advance with traditional media. Conceptually, one can more readily purchase targeted audiences, measure a campaign's impact, and improve ROMI (Return on Marketing Investment). However, as this new approach has been embraced and even though it is projected to dominate, there is in fact little governance. As case in point, the ISBA Programmatic Supply Chain Transparency Study (2020), found that 15% of advertiser spend, or one third of supply chain costs, could not be attributed. Indeed, they found on average that publishers only received 51% of advertiser spend. Programmatic has only recently reached the inflection point to get the attention of the C-suite, and powerful procurement executives. It is the fastest growing advertising channel already accounting for 20% of total advertising spend today and will grow to 30% by 2023. Yet, it is the least efficient in delivering working media?!

The industry had been called to account by P&G's Chief Brand Officer, industry thought leader, and campaigner for change, Marc Pritchard (2017), at the Internet Advertising Bureau's annual meeting: "We serve ads to consumers through a non-transparent media supply chain with spotty compliance to common standards, unreliable measurement, hidden rebates, and new inventions like bot and 'methbot' fraud, ...". It should have led to transparency and improved governance since Pritchard was unequivocal in his criticism: "There is no sustainable advantage in a complicated, non-transparent, inefficient and fraudulent supply chain." At the same time, he also questioned the closed measurement systems of Google and Facebook. Self-evidently, media buying processes and digital supply chain are not built for purpose in the digital era. That said, opportunities exist to effectively and efficiently 'engage with engagement' (Section 3), that demand a new way of thinking and communicating beyond the traditional mindset and practice that is rooted in traditional advertising.

Content creation and amplification is an important issue. So, while social media readily allows for the diffusion of ideas / innovation, we need to be rigorous in how we use it as well as the nature of the narratives we develop to help shape policy. Indeed, there are an increasing number of cases of 'bad' narratives that fuel a prejudice (Moskovitch, 2005; Burgers & Beukeboom, 2020). For example, poverty (O'Hara, 2020). Moreover, multiple audiences will likely not have multiple interests, distinct prior knowledge, and their own agendas.

Understanding what people think is important and what it takes to change behaviour is critical (Section 2). High affect content generates clicks and sharing. This is the thrust of our narrative analyses in Section 3. Naturally, it is also becoming more important to understand our context across broad perspectives to understand the influences more deeply on change and uncertainty.

A special set of editorials recently published in the journal *Science* argue that social media in its current form may well be fundamentally broken for the purposes of presenting and disseminating facts and reason. The algorithms are running the show now, and the systems priorities are unfortunately backwards. They believe “the same profit-driven algorithmic tools that bring science-friendly and curious followers to scientists’ Twitter feeds and YouTube channels will increasingly disconnect scientists from the audiences that they need to connect with most urgently” (Brossard & Scheufele, 2022). The *Social Dilemma* (2020) is a ‘docu-drama’ that explores the potentially dangerous advances in social networking, partially narrated by technology experts. The biggest issue surrounding the regulation of social media is the restriction of free speech and freedom of expression. Attempts to put some controls around this have been received as a penalty rather than a privilege.

Governance has become of broader relevance to marketeers in relation to their brand and corporate stance, as they seek sustainable transitions (Davies et al., 2020), evolving the nature and scope of Corporate Social Responsibility (Latapí Agudelo, 2019). This has led to much discussion around brand purpose driving growth and the role of sustainability (Polman & Winston, 2021) has moved to the marketing centre stage as the importance of ESG regarding corporate governance has increased. In late March 2022, the SEC opened its new sustainability reporting rules for public comment. If approved, the rules will require all public companies to report their emissions and sustainable investments. If the new requirements are enacted into law, it could lead to the creation of a new industry to oversee the truthfulness of sustainability reports. When emission statistics become public, greenwashing will become more difficult. However, some may use their competitors’ sustainability records against them for marketing advantage. That said, in the Sustainable Age (_2025, 2021), ethics will be far more important than brand values. Sustainable businesses will recognize the strategic nature of their sustainability stance.

People in developed economies are pessimistic about the near future (Edelman, 2022). Economic prospects are at an all-time low in nine countries, including the U.S., Canada, Germany, Japan, and China. China and the U.S. experienced the biggest year-over-year drops. In times of crisis and uncertainty people often turn to brands and businesses they trust. The COVID pandemic and war in Ukraine have both magnified and accelerated this trend, and the expectations for businesses and brands will change as new demands are made by shareholders, business, and society. Although greater data and information is readily available, people do not feel better informed, rather there is an increasing concern about what information is correct. Edelman’s annual monitor refers to an infodemic, during the pandemic, being characterised by an “epidemic of misinformation..... in an environment of information bankruptcy” (Edelman 2021). That said, people now expect businesses to play a bigger role to help society, communities, environments in dire need of support, and rebuilding. Generally, how they can make a material difference to their communities, and how their products and services can have a less detrimental effect on the world. With ever increasing global interconnectedness (Riley, 2017), in the Mess-Age, it is increasingly imperative that institutions, across both the private and public sector, understand what is important to people (Handy, 2015; 2019) at any point in time. Human choice is a basic

freedom and philosophically can have several dimensions, increasingly including ethical and cultural considerations.

6. Virtual Living Lab

LifeStyle *by* Design proposes to leverage social media to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the appropriate narratives, in context, to different constituencies. It is anticipated that this will help create community capital (Parsfield et al., eds., 2015). We began in mid-2019 to benchmark twenty key narratives (Table 1) in the UK and Japan, to draw scalable communication implications for policymakers and public and private institutions, alike. At different times additional narratives were included. These reflected specific topics that other researchers in the LifeStyle *by* Design unit were focused on (cf. food sustainability) and issues that were becoming globally more topical such as ESG and DEI.

The original premise was to understand what people wanted and that would enable innovation to magnify and annex on-going trends. Beyond creating a benchmark of attitudes and behavior, to monitor the mood of society, it was also intended to be comparative in nature focusing on both Japan and the UK, to help affect policy or monitor any subsequent action plan. As Geert Hofstede's (2001) seminal work, which made him the most-cited European social scientist, demonstrated at the early stages of globalization; "National Culture cannot be changed, but you should understand and respect it." Naturally one can hypothesise material differences in the nature of the narratives associated with LifeStyle health choices and self-medication due to differences in primary healthcare provision between the two countries. For example, the primacy of the General Practitioner as the interface for the patient / family in the UK (Pike et al., 1981).

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the importance of science and technology innovation to create a new and sustainable society. It has also illustrated that any communications must be inclusive and understood and embraced by multiple constituencies to have a coherent effect. The diffusion of new ideas is greatly enhanced by the almost ubiquitous participation in social. Indeed, narratives and social media are integral parts of today's connected world. Critically, trust is paramount as it is amplified in a social setting and more than ever people find trusted voices in their networks.

The core VLL premise, explore LifeStyle *by* Design innovation opportunities, is that social sharing can be more authentic, and trustable than traditional forms of mass communications and can drive real world outcomes, it is now possible, with big-data based communications insight, to;

- objectively explore these narratives to understand the drivers and dynamics of changing behavior and consensus;
- probe what people value and feel are more important;
- establish how new solutions can be effectively introduced to create new and better behaviours.

To 'engage with engagement' it is not simply having the appropriate content, but it is also critical to convey the appropriate tone. This is dramatically illustrated by the emotional dynamics at a time of perceived vulnerability / uncertainty during 2020 global pandemic,

when it is evident that, with conflicting policy options, unclear and sometimes contradictory messages only exacerbated the difficult situation. As illustration, to track the COVID-19 narrative we looked at all open online sources, in the UK, every day, from the start of the national emergency in March 2020, through to its end in May 2023 (Figure 2).

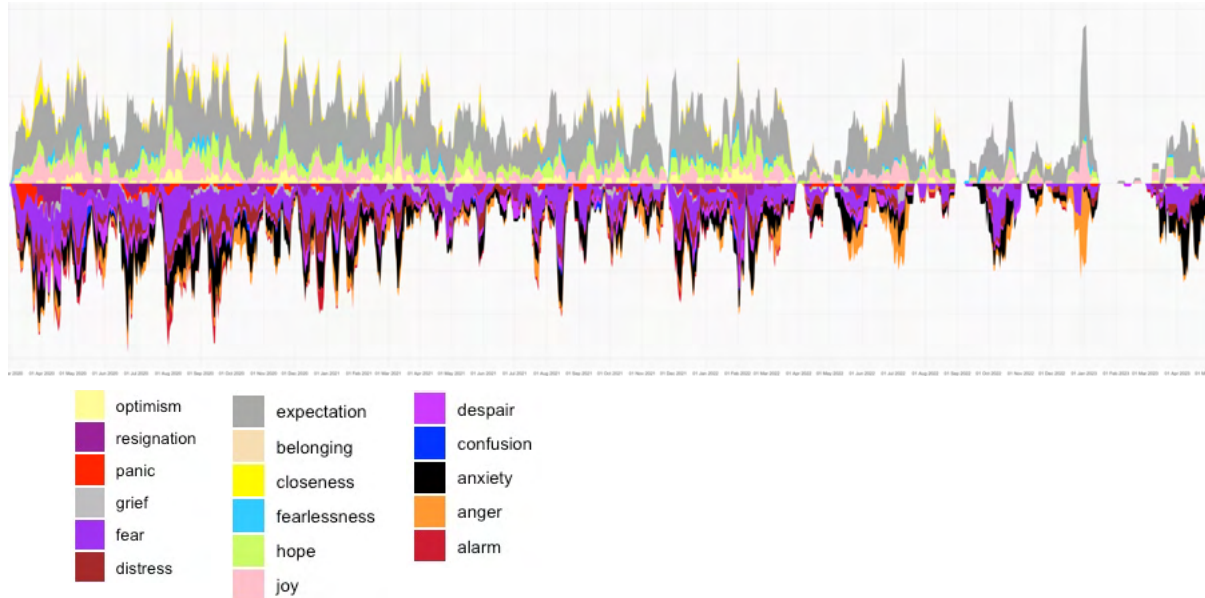
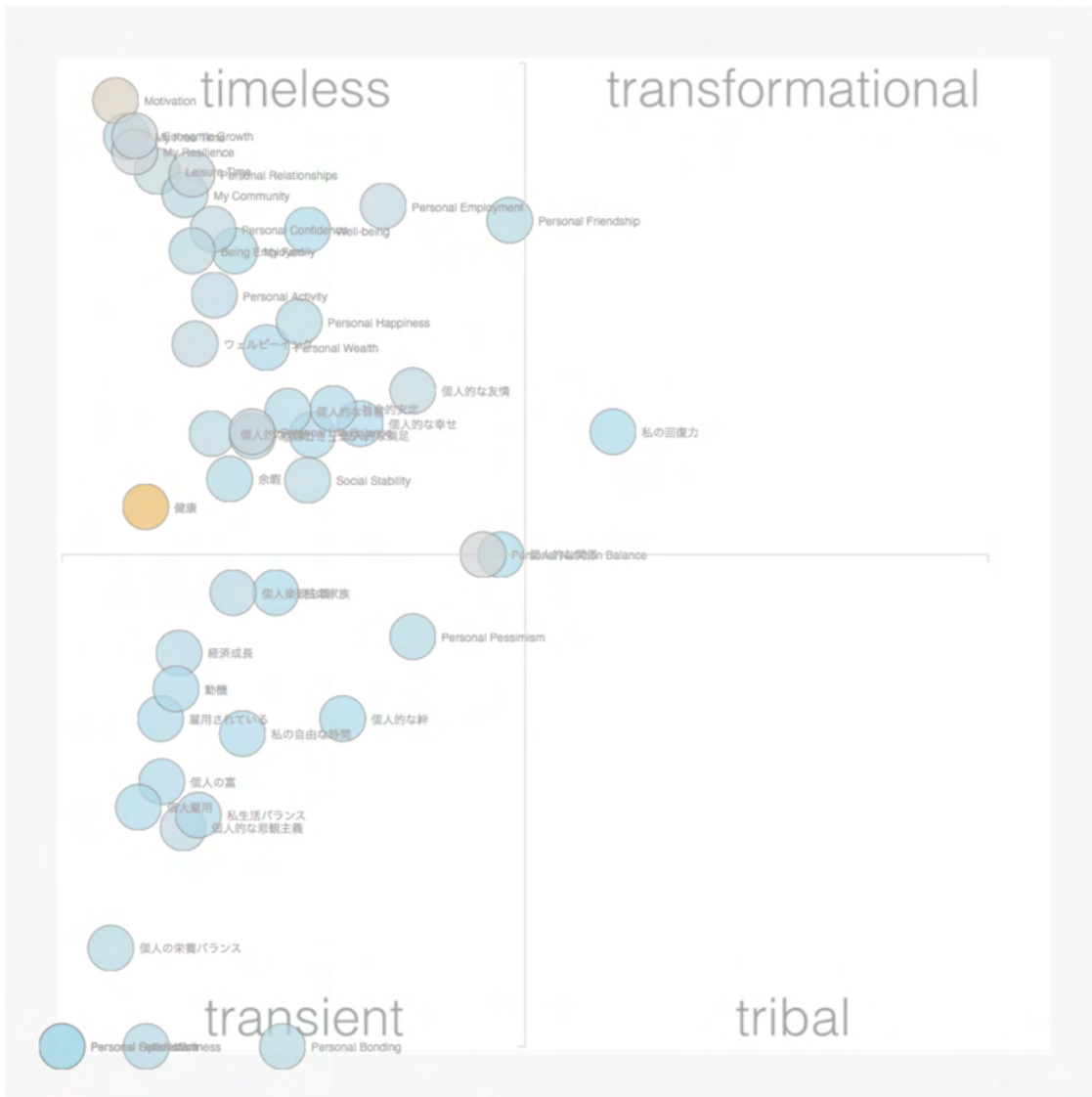


Figure2. Daily COVID-19 Narrative Affect in UK during National Emergency (March 2020-May 2023).

Affect is a rich measure of the emotional tone of the narrative. It is felt emotion which is a powerful descriptor of future behaviour. Below the horizontal we see negative emotions dominating the positive senses (above the vertical). Initial panic (red) was replaced by fear, grief, despair and resignation, and material periods of confusion and anger. People's resilience (above the vertical) came through with a greater sense of belonging helping to maintain hope and create optimism. One clear learning in coping with the pandemic has been the need to have a positive outlook, to obviate the heightened negativity. Anxiety and anger have been exacerbated by confusing, contradictory messages from local and central government officials. The Guardian (Jan. 2021) links this confusion, with lockdown rules changing on average less than every 5 days on average, for the 10 months since March 2020. One clear learning in coping with the pandemic has been the need to be positive. Anxiety, indeed, anger, was magnified by confusing, contradictory messages from so-called UK leaders. In these unusual times with heightened uncertainty, it becomes more of an imperative for leaders to be able to communicate and connect in a relevant and credible way.

7. Key Findings

COVID-19 moved health / well-being, in the broadest sense to the top of the agenda. At a time of unprecedented change globally, the distorted and biased views that some mass media and social media platforms provide can hinder rather than enhance decision-making. Too much disinformation, too much misinformation and information poorly organized is causing confusion, and pessimism. Entropy is increasing at a time when clarity, optimism and conviction are demanded. Critical to have a positive and empowering attitude.



Content Efficiency is a measure of the extent to which the existing narrative content is significant. High content efficiency means that much existing content is significant, whereas a low score means there is a gap between the needs of the narrative, and the currently-created content.



Figure 3. VLL Narrative Landscape June 2019, Japan and UK

DC- during Covid- everything was questioned. The pandemic became a stark reminder that context is not just a backdrop, but a living, breathing force shaping our perception of the world. Timeless societal norms were rapidly upended. Handshakes morphed to air hugs, commutes vanished, and home blurred with work. Covid shattered norms, questioning everything from personal space to work-life balance. From sourdough starters to mask debates, the "normal" we knew became a fluid concept, forcing us to redefine what truly mattered in a world turned upside down.

TRANSFORMATIONAL NARRATIVES		
Wave	Japan	UK
19-Jun	My Resilience	
19-Dec	Personal Friendship	Personal Wealth, Personal Satisfaction
20-Apr	Personal Friendship (&Timeless)	Personal Friendship
20-Jun	Personal Friendship, Personal Bonding	Being Employed (&Timeless)
20-Dec	Personal Confidence, Personal Wealth	Personal Friendship, Personal Bonding, Personal Satisfaction
21-Jun	none	none
21-Aug	none	none
21-Dec	none	none
22-Jun	Personal Bonding, Personal Life Balance	none
22-Sep	Personal Friendship, Personal Bonding, My Family, Personal Confidence, Healthy Food, Personal Pessimism, Personal Activity, Individual Nutritional Balance, Social Stability, Personal Relationships, Personal Wealth (&Tribal)	Personal Satisfaction, Personal Wealth, Personal Employment, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Social Stability, Environmentally Friendly Food, Personal Life Balance, Animal based Food (& Tribal)
22-Dec	Healthy Food, Personal Wealth, Personal Nutritional Balance, Personal Friendships, Personal Activism, Personal Bonding, My Resilience, My Family, Personal Life Balance	Personal Confidence, Personal Employment, Personal Friendship, Personal Happiness, Personal Satisfaction
23-Jun	Leisure, Personal Relationships, Health, My Community, My Family, Personal Employment	Being Employed, Leisure Time, My Community, My Family, My Free Time, Personal Activity, Personal Bonding, Personal Confidence, Personal Friendship, Personal Happiness, Personal Life Balance, Personal Satisfaction, Social Stability
23-Dec	My Family	
24-Jun	Motivation	Personal Employment

Table 4 VLL Transformational Narratives June 2019-2024

We witnessed rapid cultural shifts which left fewer stories universal, as classics struggle to keep pace with a world in flux. Traditions were uprooted, norms rewritten, and new realities surge forth, demanding we cling tight or be swept away in the maelstrom of change. Amidst the churning tides of change, one anchor remained. It is a lifeline, securing us to values, identities, and connections that offer stability in the storm. As old narratives fray and norms shift, the anchor holds fast, offering a grounding point of meaning and purpose, reminding us of who we are even as the world transforms around us.

TIMELESS		NARRATIVES	
Wave		Japan	UK
19-Jun		Well-Being, Leisure Time, Personal Friendship, Personal Happiness, Personal Activities, Personal Satisfaction, Personal Confidence, Personal Confidence, Wellness, Social Stability, My Community	Being Employed, Economic Growth, Leisure Time, Motivation, My Community, My Family, My Free Time, My Resilience, Personal activity, Personal Confidence, Personal Employment, Personal Friendship, Personal Happiness, Personal Life Balance, Personal Relationships, Personal Wealth, Social Stability, Well-Being
19-Dec		My Community, Personal Satisfaction, Wellness, My Family, Personal Activity, Social Stability, Leisure Time, Well-Being, Personal Happiness, Personal Relationships	Motivation, Wellness, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Relationships, Being Employed, Social Stability, Economic Growth, Well-being, Personal Activity, My Resilience, My Family, Personal Confidence, My Free Time, Personal Happiness
20-Apr		Well-Being, Personal Satisfaction, Leisure Time, Personal Activities, Personal Confidence, Personal Relationships, Wellness, Personal Happiness, Being Employed, Personal friendship, My Family, Social Stability	Motivation, Wellness, Personal Employment, My Free Time, Leisure Time, Personal Relationships, My Community, My Family, Being Employed, My Resilience, Personal Wealth, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Activity, Well-Being, Personal Happiness, Social Stability, Personal Optimism
20-Jun		My Family, Personal Relationships, My Free Time, Wellness, Well-Being, Leisure Time, My Community	Motivation, My Free Time, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Employment, Being Employed, Well-Being, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Wealth, Personal Activity, Personal Relationships, Personal Satisfaction
20-Dec		Personal Bonding, My Community, Well-Being, Personal Activity, Personal Relationship, Leisure Time, Personal Satisfaction, Wellness	Motivation, Wellness, My Community, Leisure Time, Being Employed, My Free Time, Personal Relationships, Economic Growth, Personal Activity, Personal Wealth, My Family, Well-Being, Personal Happiness, Personal Confidence, My Resilience, Personal Life Balance
21-Jun		Economic Growth, Well-Being, Personal Satisfaction, Motivation, Health, Leisure Time, My Community, Personal employment	Motivation, My Free Time, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Employment, Being Employed, Well-Being, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Wealth, Personal Activity, Personal Relationships, Personal Friendship
21-Aug		Personal Satisfaction, Personal confidence, Personal Wealth, Healthy Food, Leisure Time, Well-Being, Health, Plant Based Food, My Community, Personal Employment, Personal Bonding (& Transient), Personal Happiness, Personal Employment, Animal Based Foods,	Motivation, ESG, My Free Time, Healthy Food, Food Sustainability, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Employment, Being Employed, Well-Being, Plant Based Food, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Wealth, Personal Activity, Personal Relationships, Personal Friendship, Personal Optimism
21-Dec		My Community, My Resilience, Well-Being, ESG, Personal Life Balance, Healthy Food, Personal Relationships, Personal Happiness, Personal Satisfaction, My Family, My Free Time, Personal Wealth, Social Stability, Health, Motivation, Leisure Time, Personal Wealth	Motivation, ESG, My Free Time, Healthy Food, Food Sustainability, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Being Employed, Well-Being, Plant Based Food, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Wealth, Personal Activity, Personal Relationships, Personal Friendship

Tracking Narratives that can change our World.

22-Jun	My Community, Personal Satisfaction, ESG, Environmentally Friendly Food, Well-Being, Health, Healthy Food, Motivation, Free Time (& Transient), My Family (& Transient)	Motivation, ESG, My Free Time, Healthy Food, Food Sustainability, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Employment, Being Employed, Well-Being, Plant Based Food, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Wealth, Personal Relationships, Carbon Efficient Foods
22-Sep	Personal Happiness, Personal Satisfaction, Free Time, Health, Well-Being, ESG, Plant Based Food, My Community	Motivation, ESG, My Free Time, Healthy Food, Food Sustainability, Wellness, My Resilience, My Community, Leisure Time, Personal Employment, Being Employed, Well-Being, Plant Based Food, My Family, Economic Growth, Personal Activity
22-Dec	ESG, Well-Being, Leisure, Personal Happiness, Personal Satisfaction, Personal Relationships, Health, Motivation, Plant Foods, Social Stability, My Community	Animal based foods, Being Employed, ESG, Food Sustainability, Healthy Food, Leisure Time, Motivation, My Community, My Family, My Free Time, My Resilience, Personal Relationships, Personal Wealth, Plant Based Food, Well-Being, Wellness
23-Jun	Well-Being	Economic Growth, ESG, Food Sustainability, Motivation, My Resilience, Personal Employment, Personal Optimism, Personal Relationships, Personal Wealth, Well-Being, Wellness
23-Dec	DEI, ESG, Well-Being, Leisure, Health, Being Employed	Being Employed. DEI, Economic Growth, ESG, Food Sustainability, Motivation, My Community, My Family, My Free Time, My Resilience, Personal Bonding, Personal Confidence, Personal Employment, Personal Friendship, Personal Happiness, Personal Life Balance, Personal Nutrition Balance, Personal Optimism, Personal Relationships, Personal Satisfaction, Personal Wealth, Social Stability, Well-Being, Wellness
24-Jun	DEI, ESG, Well-Being, Leisure, My Community	Being Employed, Economic Growth, ESG, Food Sustainability, Leisure Time, Motivation, My Community, My Family, My Resilience, Personal Bonding, Personal Confidence, Personal Happiness, Personal Life Balance, Personal Optimism, Personal Relationships, Personal Satisfaction, Personal Wealth, Social Stability, Well-Being, Wellness

Table 5 VLL Timeless Narratives June 2019-2024

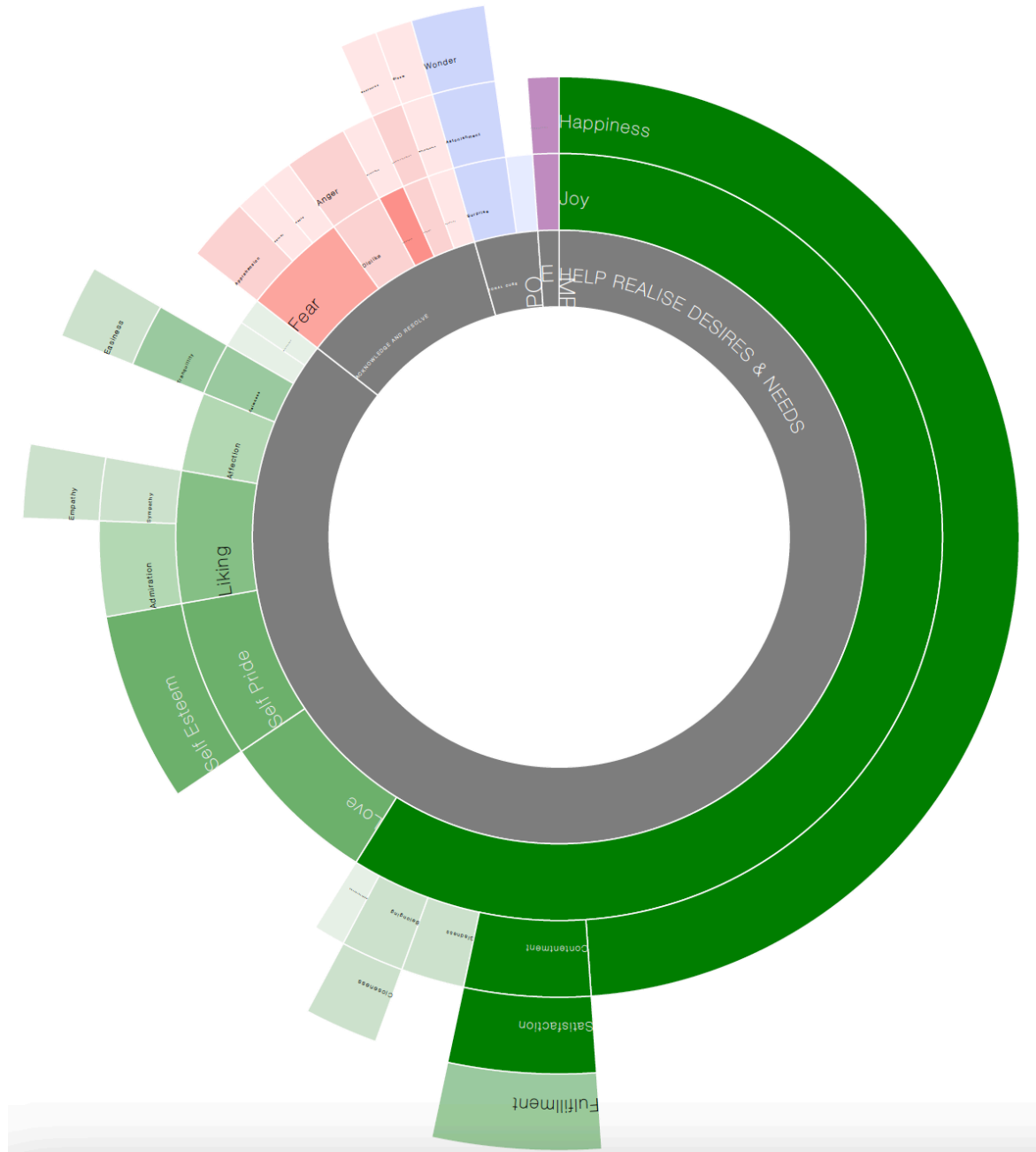


Figure 4. Emotional Response Well-Being, Japan, June 2019

Despite the upheaval of COVID, the desire for well-being transcended cultures and time. In both UK and Japan, it remained a constant timeless narrative, a universal anchor amidst shifting sands, reminding us of our core human pursuit: happiness and a fulfilling life. In any context this can be a critical element of dialogue to effect sustainable change. In June 2019, BC, the emotional response for well-being in Japan (Figure 4) is skewed heavily positive and optimistic (cf. Happiness; joy), so if appropriated it would empower people.

The media influence on well-being was dominated by wired.jp and to a lesser extent profile.ameba.jp. The analyses can identify the key topics driving the engagement with the well-being narrative (Figure 5). In April 2020 (Figure 6) there is more negativity associated with the narrative, but by June 2021 (Figure 7) the well-being narrative was much stronger. Significantly, topics during covid that drove engagement on well-being narrative were much

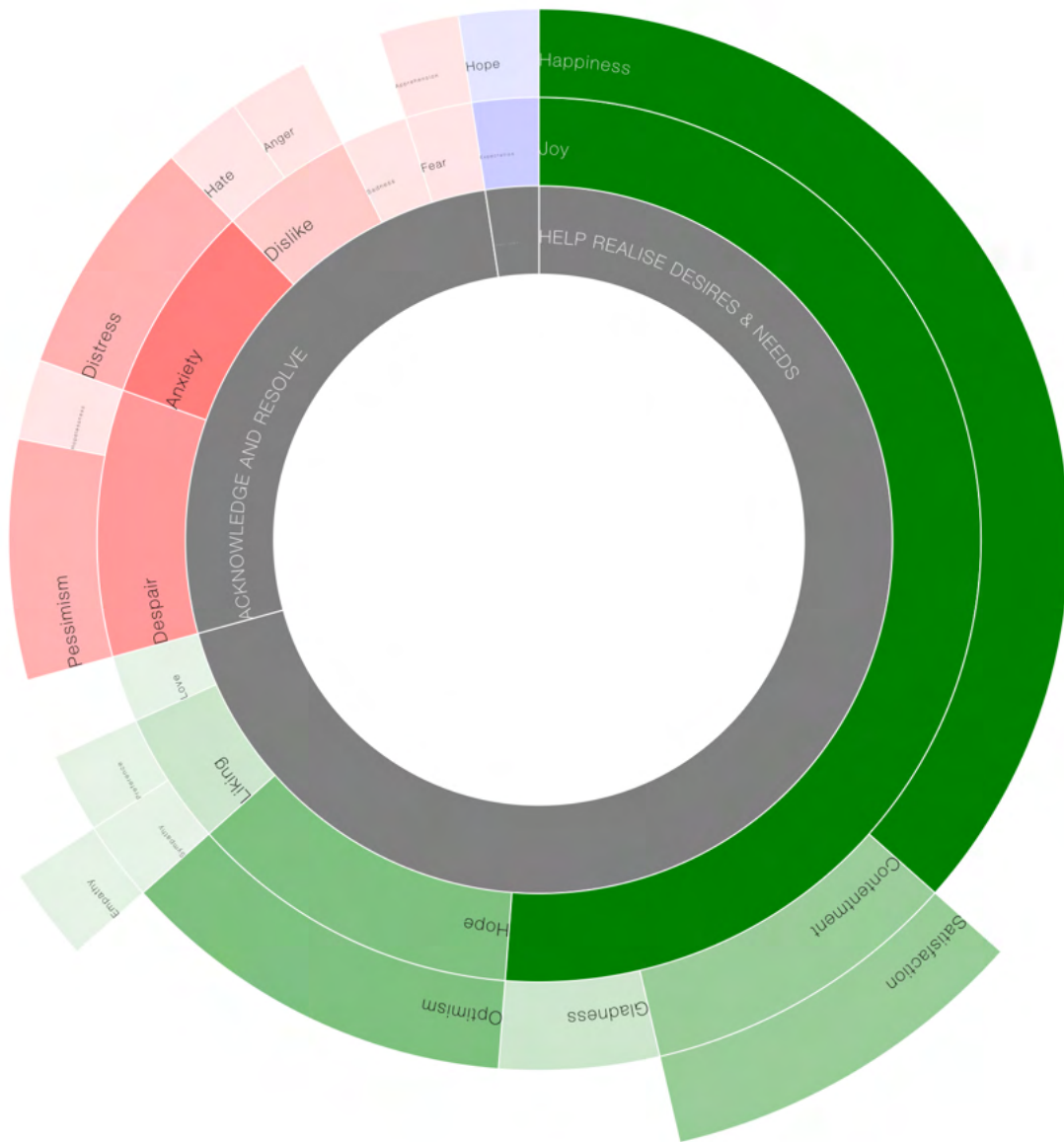


Figure 6. Emotional Response Well-Being, Japan, April 2020

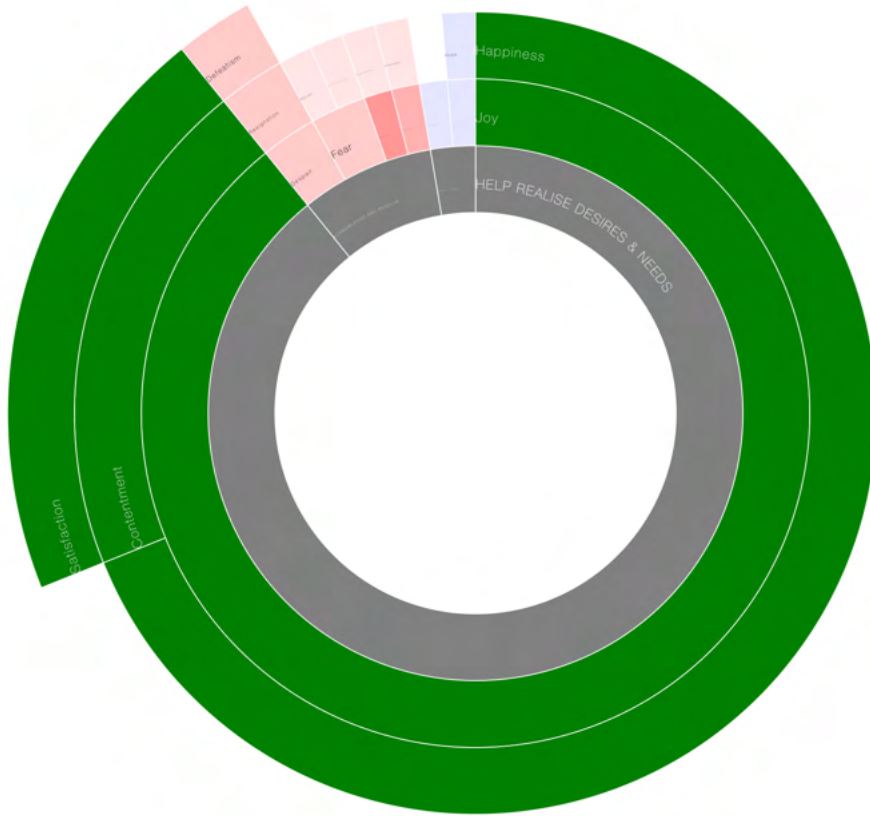


Figure 7. Emotional Response Well-Being, Japan, June 2021

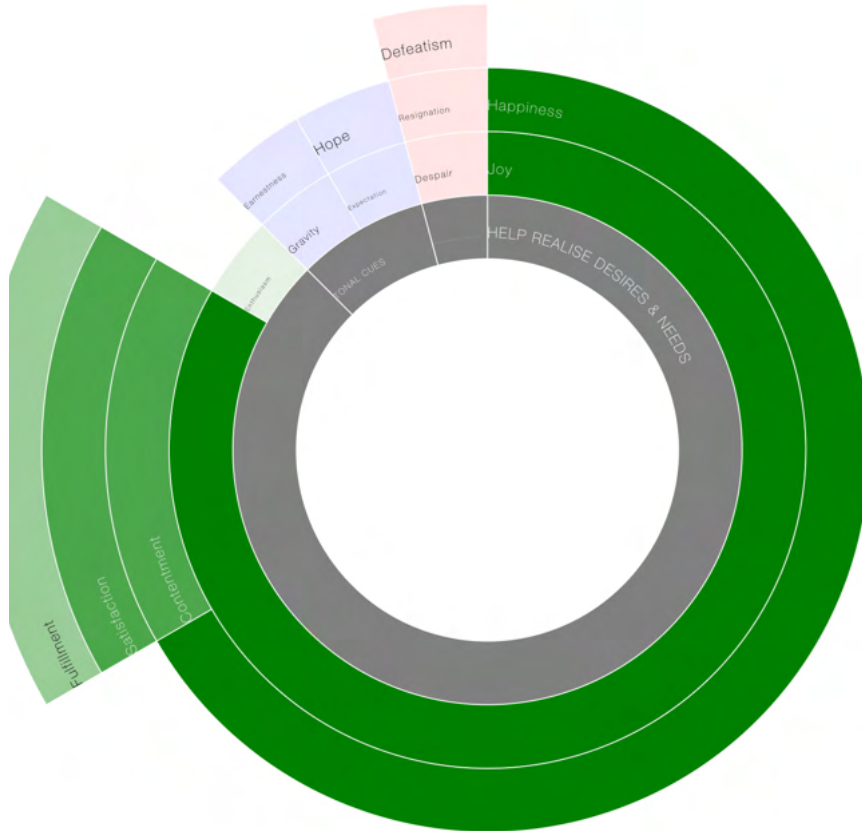


Figure 8. Emotional Response Well-Being, Japan, June 2023



Figure 9. Illustrative Content driving Engagement of Well-Being, Japan, June 2024

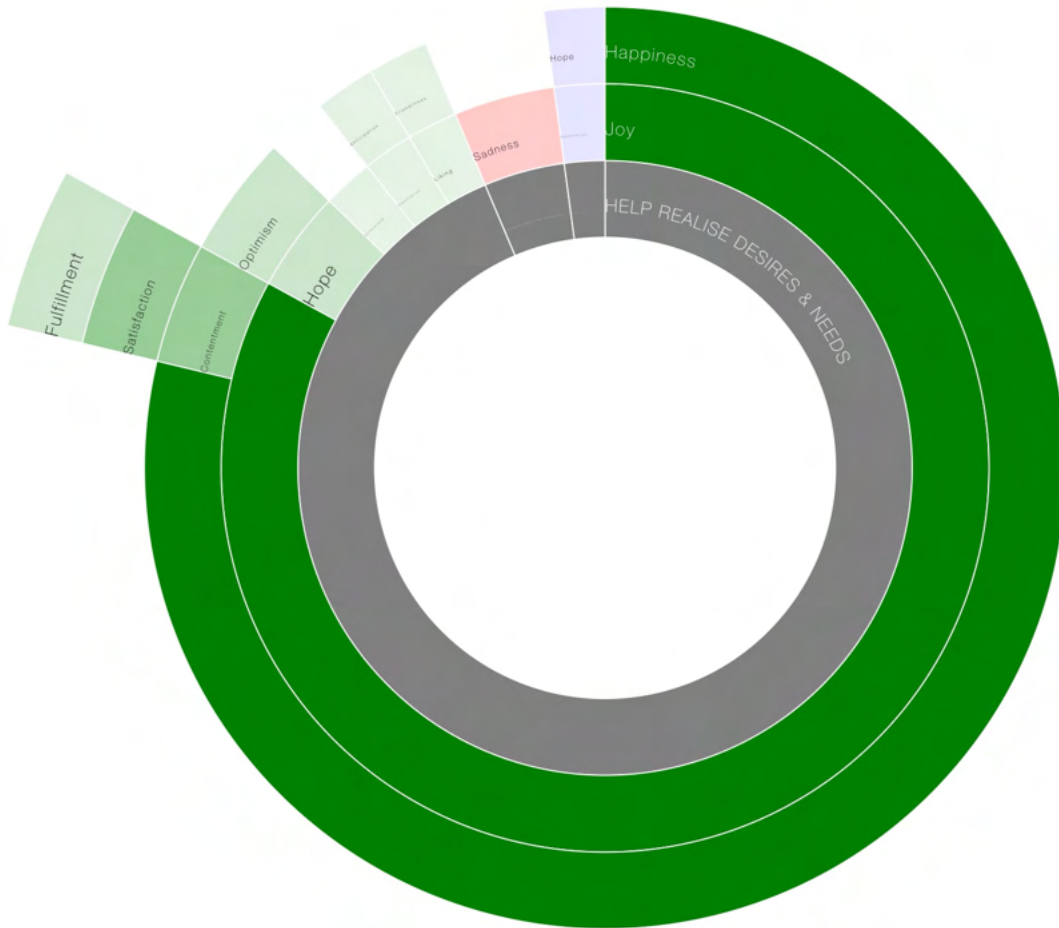


Figure 10. Emotional Response Well-Being, Japan, June 2024

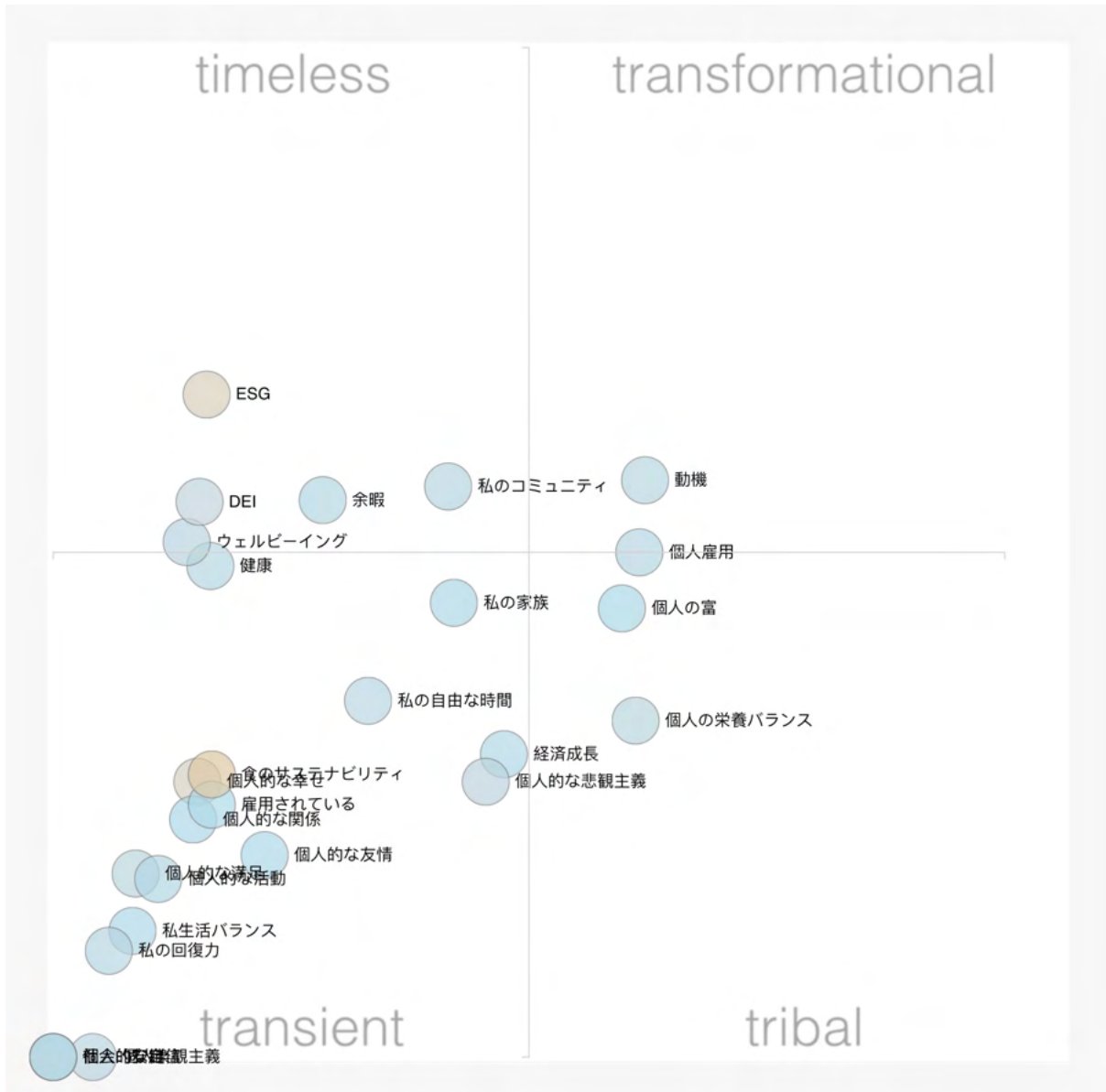


Figure 11. VLL Narrative Landscape JAPAN June 2024



Figure 12 Key Content Well-Being, Japan, June 2024



Figure 13. VLL Narrative Landscape UK June 2024

As in Japan, the well-being narrative in the UK, in June 2024, is timeless (Figure 13) with multiple positive emotions (Figure 14) and exhibiting so future expectations with positive hope. The powerful content driving engagement (Figures 15 & 16) has a strong public sector and pedagogic orientation, reaffirming the macro importance of the narrative.

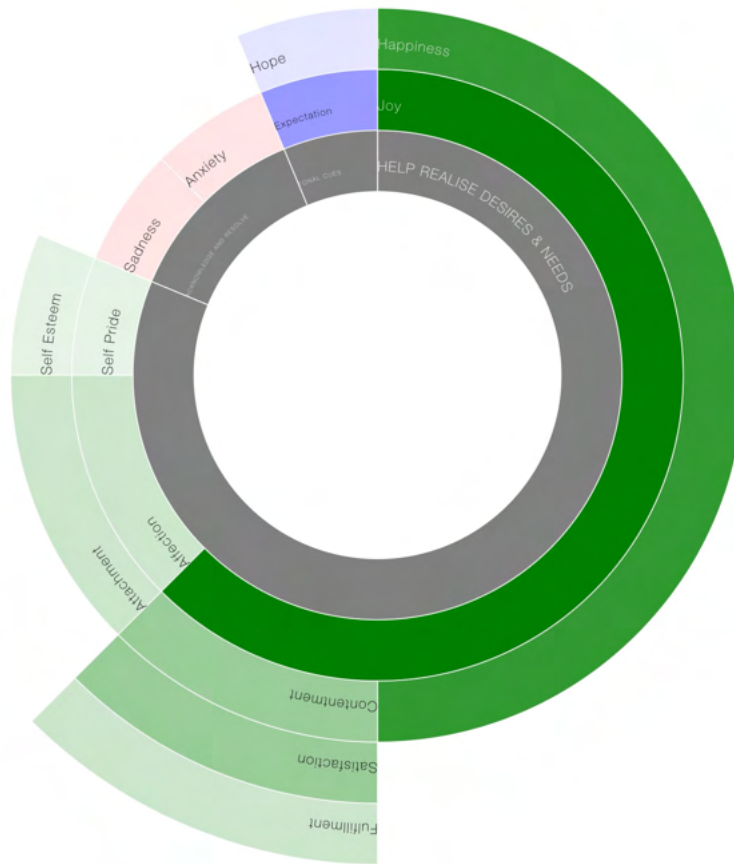


Figure 14. Emotional Response Well-Being, UK, June 2024

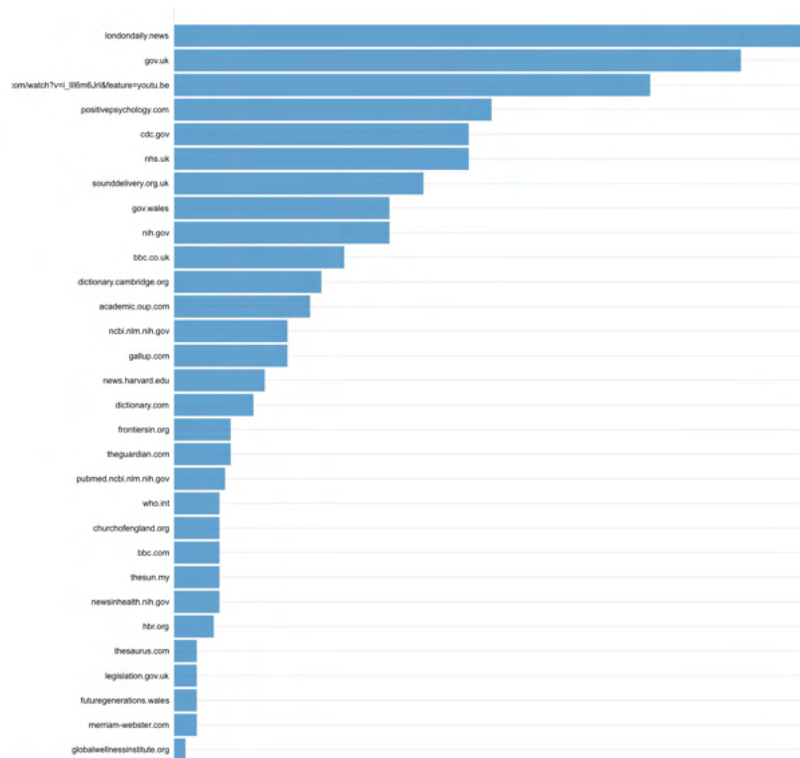


Figure 15 Powerful Content Well-Being, UK, June 2024

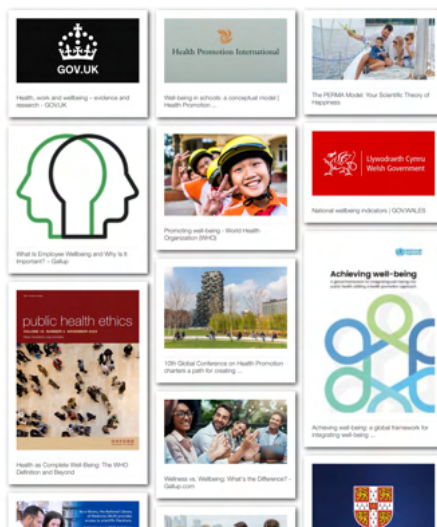


Figure 16. Key Content Well-Being, UK, June 2024

That said, to deal effectively with the future, we must absolutely learn how to manage two equally inevitable conditions: uncertainty and risk. Complexity of change is increased by the growing interdependence of our world, and demands we continue to track what people feel is important to them. Moreover, as change is unpredictable, then leadership characteristics must be radically different and dynamic with an ability to encourage experimentation and willingness to adapt. The pandemic has heightened the importance of health, in the broadest sense, to the top of the agenda as people, at all levels, re-evaluate what is important.

8. Well-Being; the North Star.

50 years ahead we will have succeeded if we have a more caring society with pillars Health, Food and Well-being. Most people now realise that economic growth, however desirable, cannot solve all our problems. Instead, we need philosophy and science that encompass a broader range of human needs and experiences.

The pursuit of well-being is smart policy for several fundamental reasons. It is not only the right thing to do philosophically but, empirical evidence indicates it is, also economically and politically the smart thing to do, as well:

- ✓ Philosophical rationale: wellbeing is what citizens ultimately care about
- ✓ Political rationale: raises government approval
- ✓ Economic rationale: demonstrable objective benefits of subjective wellbeing

Well-being can be the North Star for coherent societal development that helps simplify the complex and empowers multiple constituencies to diffuse new ideas and behaviours that improve people's quality of life (QOL). As a foundation of a more 'thrivable' society is critical to ensure that well-being is presented in a holistic manner. Well-being, which includes physical, mental, and social health, is not only an individual goal, but also a social asset. Some benefits that can be envisaged include:

1. **Higher Productivity and Innovation:** Well-being boosts performance, creativity, and attendance. A well-being-rich workforce leads to economic and social progress.

2. **Lower Social Costs:** Well-being reduces the burden of health problems on society and healthcare systems. Investing in well-being initiatives, such as preventive care and mental health support, saves resources for other needs.
3. **Greater Social Cohesion:** Well-being strengthens community and connection. People with strong social ties are more likely to participate in civic activities, volunteer, and help others. This creates a more cooperative and supportive society.
4. **Increased Resilience:** Well-being helps individuals and communities overcome adversity. Whether facing disasters, downturns, or challenges, well-being fosters resilience and effective coping.
5. **Greener Future:** Well-being aligns with environmental care. People who value well-being are more likely to adopt sustainable practices, leading to a healthier planet and a safer future.

Promoting well-being requires a comprehensive approach. Governments can ensure access to healthcare, education, and social support. Businesses can create positive work environments that enhance employee well-being. Individuals can invest in their physical, mental, and social health through self-care and strong relationships. Investing in well-being is not just about feeling good; it's about building a stronger, more resilient, and prosperous society for all. By prioritising well-being, we create a brighter future where individuals and communities can flourish.

9. Implications

The pandemic, a global crisis unlike any other, laid bare our deepest values and anxieties. Tracking what people felt important exposed their shifting priorities, from the immediate need for health and security to the rediscovery of human connection and the yearning for normalcy. By understanding what mattered most during such upheaval, we gain valuable insights into human nature and societal needs. This knowledge equips us to navigate future challenges, prioritize effectively, and build a more resilient world that reflects our shared values. Tracking sentiments during the pandemic acts as a historical record, capturing the emotional zeitgeist of a transformative era. This snapshot can inform future generations, guide policymakers, and remind us of the enduring human spirit in the face of immense adversity.

Health has moved to the top of everyone's agenda as the pandemic has fundamentally, and permanently, changed how people live, work and what is important to them. In terms of technology transformation, COVID-19 has in many regards fast-forwarded our futures. Digitisation, data analytics will increase predictive analysis to be used to personalize healthcare and there will be greater consumerisation of the (contactless) patient experience, only further heightening healthy lifestyle choices.

This reframing of healthcare for society demands an improved level of health literacy amongst the population and this can be assisted by, as well as personal adoption of 'Positive Health' tracking help behavioural shifts towards, and maintenance of, health lifestyle behaviour. covid-19 has been attitudinal transformational, an equaliser, in that people are now talking more about mental health and seeking treatment when they would not have done before. There is need to create a momentum, and public and private institutions will need to

accelerate digital investments and participation in ecosystems, where aligning with Lifestyle narratives is likely to become more influential and impactful.

The imperative to communicate and really connect is to ensure that the complex is simplified. Since most narratives are Transient this is also indicative that not all screen time / social media is productive time. Creating healthy, productive social media user experiences has become topical given the increasing reliance of social media and social sharing due to social distancing. It is driving start-up investment (Ref 16) and generating dialogue between entrepreneurs and social media specialists who believe they can create better media options, that clarify content. Some recent, social issue research (Ref 17) has identified latent desires and conflicts, through data mining, in a way that can provide greater societal understanding of subcultures, current issues and potential avenues to better governance. That said, our approach of engaging with engagement is more singular and focuses to help attitudinal and behavioral Lifestyle change. Empowering the individual through stories that go viral will have the impact outlined in Narrative Economics (Ref 18).

As people evolve from DC to AC, they are looking forward to experimenting with newer activities (Ref 18). The pandemic has brought forward people's expectations in technology and innovation, as well as a desire to streamline their lives. Companies that recognize the new nature of convenience and community will embrace mobility, contactless experiences, and social sharing to create dynamic, future-forward behaviours.

With many different people / institutions naturally trying to provide help and advice; the imperative is to focus on what is important to people, now. Their health literacy is inadequate for the demands of self-medication, never mind in the new reality created by covid-19. Trust is an imperative but that can be gained by talking and fueling the stories that are important. The pandemic has sparked innovation, whether a start-up or an established cross-border, MNC, today's digital ecosystems enable you to focus the right message, to the right people, and in the right context. Listening is so underrated, but with a focus on objectively understanding and leveraging important stories, public policy and commercial enterprise, leaders, alike can affect change for the good. Engaging with engagement can move people, and can move markets, that will enhance people's health and QOL. The critical characteristic to enhance QOL is a positive attitude and a sense of personal empowerment.

The global shift in priorities toward health, well-being, and redefining personal values has surged despite mounting inequality, mental health concerns, and economic strains. Numerous texts, rooted in scientific principles, offer practical guidance for individuals to craft a balanced life. "Build the Life You Want" (Winfrey & Brooks, 2023) by Arthur C. Brooks stands out, emphasizing pillars like family, friendships, work, and faith for achieving happiness. It amalgamates academic rigor with everyday lifestyle suggestions, resonating with Oprah Winfrey's podcast, reflecting a shared aim to enhance lives.

Similar texts align with this focus, offering accessible daily guidelines without institutional support. For instance, Rubin's(2020) year-long happiness experiment, Peale's (2020) classic on cultivating positivity, Ruiz and Mills' (2020) wisdom from the Toltec people, Achor's (2020) research on positive psychology, and Brown's(2020) guide to embracing authenticity all

contribute to this narrative. Unlike seminal scientific treatises on concepts like 'ikigai' (Miralles & Garcia, 2016) and 'positive health,'(Huber, 2016) these texts deliver tangible, relatable insights into well-being and happiness (Clark et al., 2018; Helliwell et al., 2023).

Of these texts, "The 5L's" (LaGreca & Mannix, 2022) stands out for its practical framework, offering daily questions that facilitate balanced living. The pursuit of balance can become habitual, significantly improving one's quality of life and potentially employing gamification principles to positively influence behavior.

However, in the contemporary landscape, social media's potential to amplify distrust is noteworthy, particularly amid political populism. A lack of decisive leadership and short-term thinking during uncertain times exacerbates societal challenges. The pandemic has spurred a yearning for well-being, mental health support, and a search for new ways of life, all while highlighting the importance of genuine care and personalized engagement. As technology reshapes work environments, the divide between in-demand jobs and obsolete roles widens, elevating secondary jobs or "side hustles" from experiences to economic necessities. Sadly, progress on diversity seems to regress, with resistance to the financial implications of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals observed in many developed countries. Support rendered during these upheavals often falls short, intensifying feelings of isolation, particularly in the age of omnipresent social media. This neglect is deemed unacceptable; personalized care and connection are easily accessible. Engaging with like-minded communities can enhance credibility and influence behaviors significantly. It's crucial to monitor and prioritize what individuals value the most.

Strategic leadership narratives that bridge large-scale initiatives with grassroots efforts are pivotal. Addressing negative emotional states through economic and political means remains challenging but essential. Alternate potential strategies include:

Mitigation Strategies

- ✓ **Mental Health Funding:** Allocate public funding for mental health services and programs.
- ✓ **Healthcare Reform:** Implement policies ensuring better access to mental health care.
- ✓ **Mental Health Parity Laws:** Enact laws treating mental health services equally with physical health services.
- ✓ **Workplace Mental Health Initiatives:** Encourage workplaces to adopt mental health programs.
- ✓ **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Support campaigns to reduce stigma and promote mental health education.
- ✓ **Poverty Alleviation:** Implement economic policies to reduce poverty and income inequality.
- ✓ **Social Services:** Fund services supporting vulnerable populations struggling with various issues.

Adaptation Strategies

- ✓ **Resilience and Coping Training:** Develop programs teaching resilience and coping skills.
- ✓ **Crisis Response Services:** Invest in emergency response services for emotional distress.
- ✓ **Community Support:** Create networks providing resources to those in need.

- ✓ **Counseling Services in Schools:** Ensure schools have mental health professionals available.
- ✓ **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaborations to address mental health challenges.
- ✓ **Mental Health Legislation:** Develop laws that protect individuals' rights and dignity.
- ✓ **Data-Driven Approaches:** Use data to inform policies and interventions.

Combining economic and political strategies, supported by evidence-based practices, can foster a healthier society. Reducing stigma associated with mental health issues is integral to these efforts.

Effective leadership involves not only having the right answers but also asking the right questions of the right people. Rather than relying solely on monologues, the best leaders stimulate conversations and prioritize key narratives by tracking societal sentiment. In the wake of the pandemic, leaders must ask themselves authentic questions to demonstrate leadership during a time of unprecedented change and transformation. The pandemic caused people and institutions to question everything as the virus dramatized that many things were broken, and for many leaders were found to be lacking. It exacerbated inequalities, heightened mental health concerns, and daily lives have recently become worse for many because of rising costs; thus, societal and living transformations continue almost unabated. With such volatility and uncertainty creating greater personal concerns, for some, the military acronym VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) has taken on a broader relevance.

The pandemic also accelerated digitalization, something that has been both magnified and taken centre stage since the ChatGPT prototype launch at end of November 2022, with the broader access to generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is having an intense impact on the way we live and work. While more innovative breakthrough to benefit people and society are highly anticipated, we must also acknowledge the risks and limitations, of mis- disinformation / dis-information, especially in open societies. The increase in data is not making people feel more informed. People want to use data to improve decision-making, but don't know how and where to begin, and this the overload creates stress (Decision Dilemma, 2023). In the absence of knowledge and clarity, fear (of the unknown) of the unknown machines well beyond the Cambridge Analytica data scandal, is increased. Our emotional readiness should not be to compete against the machines but learn to cooperate with them. Social media has become central to our daily lives and the stories we share have the potential to change how we think and behave. We established, before the pandemic, our VLL to track key lifestyle narratives in Japan and the UK. We believed that interconnectivity was greater than globalization, and the imperative was to be able to understand the evolving and important role culture would play in facilitating sustainable transformation. Moreover, with so much change taking place simultaneously the increasing imperative was for leaders to be able to simplify the complex and provide clear strategic leadership narratives. The societal sentiment, in our VLL, helps leaders prioritise and lead during a period of unprecedented volatility. Moreover, our VLL, significantly provides context to the on-going narratives which can empower leaders to engage, while current AI initiatives focus on content, without context, or emotion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented societal transformation. Leaders must adapt to these changes and ask questions that are sensitive to the context and audience. In doing so, they can address the implications of the pandemic on well-being, inequality, and engagement. One of the main implications of the pandemic is that what was once fixed is now a variable. Individuals are testing lifestyle and societal fundamentals, and poor messaging has compounded isolation. Leaders must ask themselves the same questions to be seen as authentic. Maxwell (2014) stresses the importance of asking questions for self-discovery, leading people, and leading a team. Furthermore, the pandemic has magnified inequalities, with some individuals in high-demand jobs while others need reskilling.

Moreover, well-being and mental health are becoming increasingly important, as people desire new ways of living and feel unheard. Leaders must monitor and focus on what people feel is important to them to ensure engagement and relevance.

Another important implication is the need to engage with like-minded communities with existing narratives in the wild. Doing so enhances credibility, fuels relevance, and can change behavior. Leaders must monitor and prioritize what people feel is important to them to lead effectively.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound societal transformation and has magnified inequalities while highlighting the importance of well-being and mental health. It is no surprise that the CWO (Chief Well-Being Officer) is getting more traction; becoming an increasingly important role as many companies try to create a more human focused workplace. HR (Bratton & Gold, 2017) is being transformed by a more human capital stance. Leaders must adapt to these changes and ask questions that are sensitive to the context and audience. By doing so, they can address the implications of the pandemic on well-being, inequality, and engagement. Monitoring and prioritizing what people feel is important is crucial to leading effectively. For leaders the best way to imagine the future is to have a clear Strategic Leadership Narrative and help create it, Imagineering!

This reframing of healthcare for society demands an improved level of health literacy amongst the population and this can be assisted by a focus on engaging with engagement over traditional messaging. COVID -19 has been attitudinal transformational, an equaliser, in that people are now talking more about mental health and seeking treatment when they would not have done before. While attitudes and behaviour have been changed by the pandemic, beyond our ability to communicate what people find important, it is also necessary to recognize that the vernacular has also been disrupted (Katermina & Yachenko, 2020). There is need to create a momentum, and public and private institutions will need to accelerate digital investments and participation in ecosystems, where aligning with Lifestyle narratives is likely to become more influential and impactful.

The imperative to communicate and really connect is to ensure that the complex is simplified. Traditional, mass media approaches are no longer fit for purpose. That said, since most narratives are Transient this is also indicative that not all screen time / social media is productive time. Creating healthy, productive social media user experiences has become topical given the increasing reliance of social media and social sharing due to social distancing. As people evolve from DC to AC, they are looking forward to experimenting with newer

activities. The pandemic has brought forward people's expectations in technology and innovation, as well as a desire to streamline their lives. Companies that recognize the new nature of convenience and community will embrace mobility, contactless experiences, and social sharing to create dynamic, future-forward behaviours.

With many different people / institutions naturally trying to provide help and advice; the imperative is to focus on what is important to people, now. Their health literacy is inadequate for the demands of self-medication, never mind in the new reality created by covid-19. Trust is an imperative but that can be gained by talking and fueling the stories that are important. The pandemic has sparked innovation, whether a start-up or an established cross-border, MNC, today's digital ecosystems enable you to focus the right message, to the right people, and in the right context. Listening is so underrated, but with a focus on objectively understanding and leveraging important stories, public policy and commercial enterprise, leaders, alike can affect change for the good. Engaging with engagement can move people, and can move markets, that will enhance people's health and QOL. The critical characteristic to enhance QOL is presenting a positive attitude and a sense of personal empowerment, in context, with a relevant and authentic narrative that heightens engagement. This should be basis of creating strategic leadership narratives.

Happiness is not about reaching your goals. It's about aligning your goals with your values. Progress without purpose is empty. Achievement without impact is fleeting. Success is most rewarding when it serves the people and principles that matter to you. Promoting well-being requires a comprehensive approach. Governments can ensure access to healthcare, education, and social support. Businesses can create positive work environments that enhance employee well-being. Individuals can invest in their physical, mental, and social health through self-care and strong relationships and living a balanced life. Investing in well-being is not just about feeling good; it's about building a stronger, more resilient, and prosperous society for all. By prioritising well-being, we create a brighter future where individuals and communities can flourish. There has never been a greater need to help create social innovation, creating sustainable value for all stakeholders, a 'thrivable' society, and heightening the relevant impact of the University on society! We also readily have the means to communicate our Strategic Leadership Narrative and understand it has never been more critical to track what people feel is important.

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Glossaries.

A. Narrative Economics: the power of stories

Traditional economics often portrays people as rational actors making calculated decisions based on cold, hard facts. However, Nobel laureate Robert Shiller challenges this view with Narrative Economics. This field proposes that the stories we tell ourselves, both individually and collectively, play a significant role in shaping economic behavior. Shiller argues that contagious narratives, like viruses, spread through society and influence how people perceive the economic landscape. These narratives can be optimistic tales of a booming market or fearful warnings of an impending crash. Regardless of their content, they have the power to alter investment decisions, consumer spending, and ultimately, economic outcomes.

Narrative Economics importance lies in:

- **Explaining Bubbles and Crashes:** Traditional models struggle to explain how seemingly rational markets can become irrationally exuberant, leading to bubbles. Narrative Economics suggests that infectious stories of easy money can fuel these bubbles. Conversely, narratives of fear and pessimism can contribute to market crashes.
- **Understanding Long-Term Trends:** Economic narratives can shape long-term economic trends. For example, a narrative of technological progress can drive investment and innovation, while a narrative of stagnation can lead to a lack of confidence and hinder growth.
- **Improving Economic Policy:** By recognizing the influence of narratives, policymakers can craft interventions that address them directly. For instance, combating a narrative of pessimism during a recession might require addressing public anxieties alongside traditional economic stimulus measures.
- **Promoting Financial Literacy:** Narrative Economics empowers individuals to be more critical of the stories they encounter. By understanding how narratives can influence behavior, people can make more informed financial decisions and avoid being swept away by contagious hype or fear.

Narrative Economics is not without its critics. Some argue it lacks a rigorous analytical framework compared to traditional models. Additionally, disentangling the impact of narratives from other economic factors can be challenging. However, the field offers valuable insights. By acknowledging the power of stories, Narrative Economics provides a richer understanding of human behavior in the economic sphere. This knowledge can equip policymakers, investors, and individuals alike to navigate the complexities of the market and make sound economic decisions.

B. Virtual Living Lab

Our presentations and publications (below) reinforce key messages from the VLL – the strategic desire is to create proprietary language (see Glossary D). The VLL during this dynamic research period has enabled a broad array of peer reviewed publications across several distinct fields. Some 13 distinct papers and one special issue with 6 mini e reports. This reflects a deliberate strategy that was founded on having the methodology and key outputs accepted. Getting a clear message out quickly is increasingly important since acceleration is apparently a sign of our times. Those theories can still be applied in contexts of limited turbulence, but if the rate of change keeps accelerating, there will be unexpected consequences for society and organizations. To deal effectively with the future, we must absolutely learn how to manage two equally inevitable conditions: uncertainty and risk. Complexity of change is increased by the growing interdependence of our world. More recently we have focused on governance consideration, both ESG and DEI, and consideration of the strategic issues when aligning on policy amongst multiple constituencies,..., as well as well-being.

As we conclude this research chapter, it's natural to look back and celebrate the milestones we've achieved. However, the true spirit of innovation lies in looking forward. While acknowledging the valuable insights gleaned from the past, we want to turn our collective gaze towards the future of VLL. This future, we believe, holds immense potential, not just for technological advancement, but also for shaping our individual and collective experiences in the years to come.

Dr John Ricketts and Darrell Berry are the originators of the term 'social media' and founders of Significance Systems that developed earth.ai which is the platform chosen to undertake the narrative analyses of the lifestyle VLL.

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C. Strategic Leadership Narrative

The importance of the Strategic Leadership Narratives in today's dynamic business environment cannot be overstated. There is an urgency and simply having a strategic plan is not enough. Leaders need to be able to communicate their strategic intent in a way that inspires and motivates employees. The core idea behind Strategic Leadership Narratives is that strategy is more than just a technical document. It's a story about the organization's future, its purpose, and how it will create value for its stakeholders. This story needs to be effectively communicated to employees at all levels in a way that resonates with them.

The Strategic Leadership Narratives provides an organization with:

- **Clarity and Focus:** A well-crafted narrative can help to simplify complex strategies and provide a clear direction for the organization. It can help everyone understand the "why" behind the strategic goals.
- **Motivation and Engagement:** A compelling narrative can inspire and motivate employees to take ownership of the strategy. It can make employees feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves.
- **Alignment and Consistency:** A clear narrative can help to ensure that everyone in the organization is working towards the same goals. It can promote collaboration and consistency in decision-making.
- **Attracting and Retaining Talent:** A strong narrative can help to attract and retain top talent. People want to work for organizations with a clear purpose and a bright future.

Successful leadership must not be left to marketing. While marketing is focused on giving customers what they want, strategic leadership involves a more nuanced approach. It's about understanding the needs of the customers and stakeholders, but also about shaping those needs and creating a vision for the future. A Strategic Leadership Narrative should be focused on the long game, not just short-term gains. This focus on the future can help to create a more stable and motivated organization.

The concept of Strategic Leadership Narratives is a valuable one. In today's complex and fast-paced business environment, it's more important than ever for leaders to be able to communicate effectively. A Strategic Leadership Narrative can be a powerful tool for doing just that.

In practice, to cultivate and execute a Strategic Leadership Narrative it is essential to address:

- a. **Developing a Strategic Leadership Narrative:** Crafting a strong Strategic Leadership Narrative takes time and effort. Leaders need to consider the organization's history, values, and goals. They also need to be able to communicate the narrative in a way that is authentic and engaging.
- b. **The Role of Storytelling:** Storytelling is a powerful communication tool that can be used to effectively convey a Strategic Leadership Narrative. Leaders can use stories to illustrate the organization's purpose, values, and goals.
- c. **The Importance of Authenticity:** A Strategic Leadership Narrative needs to be authentic to be effective. Employees will see through any attempt to manipulate them with a story that doesn't ring true.
- d. **The Need for Action:** A Strategic Leadership Narrative is not enough on its own. Leaders also need to take action to implement the strategy. This means having a clear plan for execution and holding people accountable for results.

Overall, Strategic Leadership Narratives can be a powerful tool for leaders who want to inspire and motivate their employees. By effectively communicating the organisation's story, leaders can create a more focused, engaged, and successful organisation.

D. Proprietary Language of the VLL

During this unique period of lifestyle research, our presentations and publication reinforce key messages from the VLL – the strategic desire is to create proprietary language. It is important to have consistency and clarity in any thought leadership. If you create proprietary language, everyone knows with crystal clear accuracy exactly what is being talked about. When you reinforce consistent language with your audience you remove ambiguity and build understanding and infrastructure faster. The following have been recurring themes and messages:

- ✓ Tracking Narratives that can shape our world
- ✓ Sustainable Age
- ✓ Engaging with Engagement
- ✓ Classification: Timeless, Transformational
- ✓ Narrative utility
- ✓ Strategic Leadership Narrative
- ✓ Better Decisions
- ✓ Risk and Uncertainty
- ✓ Social entrepreneurship
- ✓ Mess-Age
- ✓ Augmented Humanity
- ✓ Thrivability

E. The Enduring Power of Stories: From Cave Walls to Chatrooms

Storytelling is as fundamental to the human experience as language itself. It predates written communication, stretching back to the flickering firelight of our earliest ancestors. Around those fires, stories were not just entertainment; they were classrooms, history books, and moral compasses, all rolled into one. This rich history reveals the enduring power of stories in shaping societies, and today social media has reshaped this ancient art form.

Our earliest stories were not told with words, but with images. The iconic cave paintings of Lascaux and Chauvet, estimated to be over 30,000 years old, depict animals and hunting scenes. These were not mere decorations; they were likely used to teach younger generations vital hunting skills and transmit cultural knowledge. As language developed, so did oral storytelling. Epic poems like the Sumerian "Epic of Gilgamesh" and the Ancient Greek "Odyssey" were passed down through generations, serving as repositories of history, mythology, and social values. These stories were not static; they were constantly evolving, reflecting the changing needs and experiences of the community.

The invention of the printing press in the 15th century marked a turning point. Stories that were once the exclusive domain of oral tradition could now be preserved and disseminated on a wider scale. The rise of the novel in the 18th century further revolutionized storytelling, allowing for a deeper exploration of the human experience and the creation of fictional worlds.

The 20th century witnessed an explosion of storytelling mediums. Film, radio, and television emerged, captivating audiences with moving images and powerful narratives. These new forms allowed for a more immersive and emotional connection with stories, further solidifying their place in society.

The rise of the internet and social media in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has fundamentally changed the landscape of storytelling. Social media platforms have democratized the art form, giving anyone with a device the power to create and share stories, removing the hierarchy of traditional mass media, to what we have referred to as the Mess-Age. This transformational shift has had several significant impacts:

- **Accessibility:** Anyone with a smartphone can now be a storyteller. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok create opportunities for voices that may have been unheard of in traditional media.
- **Fragmentation:** The traditional, linear narrative is being challenged. Social media thrives on short, attention-grabbing snippets, creating a more fragmented and non-linear storytelling experience.
- **Interactivity:** Social media fosters a sense of community around stories. Readers can comment, share, and participate in discussions, blurring the lines between storyteller and audience.
- **Ephemerality:** The ephemeral nature of some social media platforms, where content disappears quickly, creates a sense of urgency and a focus on the present moment. This contrasts with traditional narratives that are meant to be revisited and pondered over time.

While social media has undoubtedly democratized storytelling and opened up new avenues for expression, its impact is not purely positive, and the importance of trust is heightened. To this end, it is important to consider:

- ✓ **Spread of misinformation:** The ease of sharing information on social media can also be a breeding ground for misinformation and "fake news." Without the gatekeeping mechanisms of traditional media, it can be difficult to discern truth from fiction.
- ✓ **Echo chambers and confirmation bias:** Social media algorithms tend to show users content they are likely to agree with, creating echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs and limit exposure to diverse perspectives.
- ✓ **Attention spans and the decline of long-form storytelling:** The constant influx of short, bite-sized content on social media may be impacting our ability to focus on longer, more complex narratives. This could have a detrimental effect on critical thinking and empathy.

Despite the challenges posed by social media, the core power of storytelling remains. Stories allow us to connect with each other, understand different cultures, and explore the depths of the human experience. As we navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape, it is crucial to be mindful of the ways social media shapes our consumption

of stories. One must also accept that some existing narratives do not engage in a manner that is desired because they use the wrong language and project a biased perspective. For example, the discussion of poverty in some developed economies.

To ensure stories continue to play a positive role in our lives:

- √ Critically evaluate information encountered on social media.
- √ Seek out diverse voices and stories that challenge our existing perspectives.
- √ Support traditional forms of storytelling like novels, films, and long-form journalism.
- √ Use social media platforms as a springboard for deeper exploration of stories that resonate with us; 'engage with engagement'.

F. From the mass 'media is the message' to the Mess-Age

The 20th century witnessed the reign of traditional, hierarchical mass media – a one-way street where information flowed from a select few to the masses. Today, the 21st century pulsates with the energy of social media, a dynamic web where anyone can be a content creator and information travels in all directions. As the world becomes more interconnected, this shift in communication has profound effects on how we consume information, build communities, and participate in global discourse.

Traditional mass media, encompassing newspapers, television, and radio, functioned with a clear hierarchy. Powerful institutions like media corporations acted as gatekeepers, deciding what information reached the public and shaping public opinion. News was curated and filtered, ensuring a certain level of quality control and editorial consistency. National and international broadcasts reached vast audiences simultaneously, fostering a sense of shared experience and national identity. However, this control also had drawbacks. News sources were limited, and dissenting voices often struggled to be heard. Information was susceptible to manipulation by those in power, and confirmation bias could be easily instilled through a lack of diverse perspectives.

Social media platforms like Facebook, LINE, Twitter, and YouTube have ushered in a new era of communication. Information disseminates rapidly, often bypassing traditional gatekeepers. Anyone with an internet connection can be a publisher, sharing stories, opinions, and experiences. This democratization of information sharing has empowered individuals and marginalized voices, fostering a more diverse and inclusive media landscape. However, this freedom comes at a cost. The lack of editorial oversight can lead to the spread of misinformation and "fake news." Echo chambers form, where users are exposed only to information that confirms their existing beliefs. The constant influx of short-form content can shorten attention spans and hinder critical thinking.

The rise of social media coincides with an increasingly interconnected world. Social media platforms allow people across borders to connect, share experiences, and build communities based on shared interests. Global movements and social change can gain momentum rapidly through online mobilization. This interconnectedness fosters empathy, understanding, and cultural exchange. However, the same interconnectedness that facilitates these positive developments can also be exploited. Social media can be used to spread hate speech, incite violence, and manipulate public opinion. The anonymity provided by online platforms can embolden negativity and hinder productive dialogue.

NWOTAC: New Ways of Thinking and Communicating. As we navigate this new digital landscape, it's crucial to find a balance. Social media's democratization of information empowers individuals but necessitates media literacy skills to discern truth from falsehood. Traditional media's quality control offers a valuable counterpoint but might need to adapt to be more inclusive and responsive to diverse voices. Interconnectivity, fostered by social media, is more influential than globalization. This interconnectedness presents tremendous potential but requires safeguards against negativity and manipulation. Ultimately, a healthy future for communication in a connected world hinges on responsible use of both traditional and social media, critical thinking, and a commitment to open and inclusive dialogue.

G. Social media and narrative development

Social media has become a vibrant tapestry woven from countless narratives. Unlike traditional storytelling with its singular author, these narratives are born from a dynamic interplay between individuals and communities. They are constantly evolving, shaped by trends, virality, audience participation, and the very algorithms that curate our online experience. Understanding how narratives develop and evolve on these platforms is crucial for anyone who wants to navigate the ever-shifting digital landscape.

Traditionally, stories were told by a single author – a writer, filmmaker, or journalist. Social media disrupts this model by empowering users to become storytellers in their own right. Through text, images, and videos, individuals share their experiences, perspectives, and emotions and thus a shift from monologue to dialogue. This user-generated content (UGC) forms the foundation for social media narratives. The rise of UGC has fostered a sense of authenticity and relatability. People connect with stories that feel real and reflect their own lives. A single post about a personal triumph, a funny observation, or a heartwarming encounter can spark a conversation, with users commenting, sharing, and adding their own perspectives. This participatory nature allows narratives to branch out, taking on new dimensions and interpretations. Imagine a recipe shared on a cooking blog. It might inspire countless variations, each user adapting it to their own tastes and dietary needs. The original recipe becomes a springboard for a multitude of personal narratives.

Social media platforms utilize algorithms to curate content for individual users. These algorithms prioritize posts that generate engagement – likes, comments, and shares. This can create a feedback loop. Content that resonates with a particular audience gets amplified, shaping the narrative landscape. Imagine a social justice campaign. A single, powerful post might gain traction, inspiring users to share their own experiences and stories of struggle. The algorithm recognizes the engagement and prioritizes similar content, creating a wave of narratives that raise awareness and potentially lead to social change. Hashtags play a crucial role in this process. They allow users to categorize their content and discover narratives around shared interests. A trending hashtag can propel a story into the spotlight, fostering a sense of community and collective experience. For example, a hashtag challenge promoting environmental awareness might inspire users to share photos of their local clean-up efforts. The hashtag becomes a virtual space where individual narratives coalesce into a broader story about environmental stewardship.

Human connection thrives on emotions. Social media narratives that evoke strong feelings – joy, anger, sadness, or outrage – are more likely to be shared and discussed. This emotional pull keeps users engaged and invested in the story's development. Humour is a powerful tool for engagement. Memes, funny videos, and witty captions can spread quickly, creating a sense of shared amusement and fostering a sense of community. Remember the "Distracted Boyfriend" meme? It started as a single image but quickly evolved into countless variations, each poking fun at a different societal trope. The humor kept users engaged, ensuring the meme's virality and longevity. Conversely, social media can also be a platform for outrage and social movements. Stories that highlight injustices or inequalities can spark passionate discussions and collective action. The #BlackLivesMatter movement is a prime example. Personal stories of police brutality, coupled with powerful visuals, fueled a global conversation about race and social justice.

The impermanence of certain social media features has also impacted how narratives develop. Platforms like Snapchat Stories and Instagram Stories offer a glimpse into someone's life that disappears after a set time. This fleeting format encourages a more raw and unfiltered approach to storytelling. Imagine documenting a vacation through a series of stories. The focus is on capturing the present moment, offering a less polished but more authentic way to share experiences. Ephemeral content can also be used for serialized narratives, with users posting daily updates to keep their audience hooked. A beauty influencer might document her daily skincare routine through a series of stories, creating a sense of anticipation and encouraging viewers to tune in for the next installment. The disappearing nature of the content creates a sense of urgency and exclusivity, driving engagement.

Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping narratives. These individuals, with their established audience and perceived authority, can sway public opinion and promote specific viewpoints. Brands and organizations often partner with influencers to craft narratives that promote their products or ideas. A fashion influencer might share a photo wearing a new clothing line, sparking interest and potentially influencing viewers'

purchasing decisions. However, influencer marketing also faces challenges. Audiences are becoming increasingly skeptical of inauthentic content. Narratives that feel forced or promotional can backfire, leading to a loss of trust and engagement.

H. Health and Food Literacy; towards KSF of well-being initiatives

Improving health literacy is essential for empowering individuals to make informed health decisions, manage their health effectively, and navigate the complex healthcare system. Some Key Success Factors that need to be addressed to enhance health literacy include:

- a) **Education and Communication:** Education is the cornerstone of health literacy. It's crucial to ensure that health education starts early, integrating it into school curricula to instill a foundation of health knowledge. Additionally, healthcare providers must communicate clearly, using plain language and avoiding medical jargon when discussing health information with patients.
- b) **Accessible Information:** Health information should be easily accessible and available in various formats to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. This includes printed materials, websites, and multimedia resources that are culturally sensitive and available in multiple languages.
- c) **Patient Engagement:** Encouraging active patient participation in their healthcare can improve understanding and retention of health information. This involves creating opportunities for patients to ask questions, engage in discussions, and provide feedback on the information they receive.
- d) **Digital Literacy:** In the digital age, being able to find, evaluate, and use online health information is a critical component of health literacy. Programs that teach digital literacy skills, particularly to older adults and underserved populations, can help bridge the digital divide.
- e) **Healthcare System Navigation:** The healthcare system can be complex and confusing. Providing guidance on how to navigate insurance, appointments, and treatment options can demystify the process and make it more approachable for everyone.
- f) **Community Outreach:** Community-based programs can play a significant role in improving health literacy. These programs can reach people in their own environments, making health information more relatable and actionable.
- g) **Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** Collaboration among healthcare professionals, educators, and community leaders can lead to a more cohesive approach to health literacy. Sharing resources and expertise can enhance the quality and reach of health literacy initiatives.
- h) **Monitoring and Feedback:** Regular evaluation of health literacy programs and materials ensures that they are effective and meet the needs of the target audience. Soliciting feedback from participants can provide insights into areas for improvement.
- i) **Policy and Advocacy:** Advocating for policies that promote health literacy is vital. This includes funding for health literacy programs, research, and the integration of health literacy into public health initiatives.
- j) **Personalised Education:** Tailoring health education to individual needs, preferences, and cultural backgrounds can make it more relevant and impactful. Personalized education can address specific barriers to understanding and motivate individuals to take action.

By focusing on these KSF's, we can work towards a future where everyone has the knowledge and resources they need to make informed health decisions. Improving health literacy is not only beneficial for individuals but also for the healthcare system as a whole, leading to better health outcomes and more efficient use of resources. Improving health literacy is a global challenge, but the approach and effectiveness can vary significantly between countries, due to local market conditions and culture (Hofstede, 2011). In Japan and the UK, there are distinct differences in the strategies and outcomes associated with enhancing health literacy.

Cultural Context and Healthcare Systems: Japan's collectivist culture, which emphasizes harmony and group cohesion, contrasts with the UK's more individualistic society. This cultural difference impacts health communication strategies and the way health information is disseminated and received. The UK's National Health Service (NHS) provides centralized health information, which is readily accessible and standardized across the country. In contrast, Japan lacks a comprehensive national online platform for health information, which can make it difficult for individuals to access reliable and understandable health resources.

Language and Communication: The complexity of the Japanese language, with multiple reading levels and the use of Kanji characters, can pose a barrier to understanding health information. The UK, with a majority English-

speaking population, may have an advantage in this regard, as English is the primary language of medical research and international communication.

Health Literacy Levels: Studies have shown that comprehensive health literacy in Japan is lower than in Europe. Japanese respondents generally find it more difficult to judge and apply health information, indicating challenges in health decision-making. This may be partly due to inefficiencies in Japan's primary healthcare system and the lack of clear communication channels.

Education and Policy: The UK has implemented various policies and educational programs aimed at improving health literacy, integrating it into school curricula and public health initiatives. Japan, however, is still developing strategies to address the issue, focusing on building individual competencies and creating supportive environments for health literacy.

Technological Integration: The UK has been more proactive in integrating technology into health literacy improvement, utilizing digital platforms to provide health information and services. Japan, while technologically advanced, has not fully capitalized on this in the health sector, which could enhance the population's ability to access and use health information effectively.

Thus, while both Japan and the UK face the challenge of improving health literacy, the differences in their cultural context, language, healthcare systems, education, policy, and technological integration significantly influence their respective approaches and outcomes. Addressing these differences is crucial for developing effective health literacy strategies tailored to each country's unique needs.

Improving food literacy also demands a multifaceted approach that can yield significant benefits for both individual health and the sustainability of our food systems. Benefits should encompass:

Enhanced Individual Health Outcomes: Food literacy empowers individuals with the knowledge to make healthier food choices. Understanding the nutritional value of different foods and how to incorporate them into a balanced diet can lead to improved health outcomes. People with higher food literacy are more likely to consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, which are essential for maintaining good health and preventing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Reduction in Non-Communicable Diseases: A diet high in processed foods and low in nutrients is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases. By improving food literacy, individuals can learn to identify and reduce the intake of ultra-processed foods, which often contain high levels of sugar, fat, and sodium. This shift in dietary habits can decrease the prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases, easing the burden on healthcare systems.

Promotion of Sustainable Eating Habits: Food literacy includes an understanding of the environmental impact of food production and consumption. Educated consumers are more likely to make sustainable choices, such as opting for locally sourced, seasonal produce, which has a lower carbon footprint compared to imported goods. This can significantly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with food transport.

Reduction of Food Waste: A key component of food literacy is the ability to plan meals, shop effectively, and store food properly to minimize waste. Food waste is a major issue, with significant portions of produced food never being consumed. Improved food literacy can lead to better food management at the household level, reducing the amount of food that ends up in landfills, where it contributes to methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas.

Support for Local Economies: Food-literate individuals are more likely to support local farmers and producers, which helps to sustain local economies. Buying locally not only reduces the environmental impact of food transport but also ensures that money spent on food stays within the community, supporting local jobs and businesses.

Encouragement of Biodiversity: Understanding the importance of biodiversity in food systems is an aspect of food literacy. Diverse diets encourage the cultivation of a variety of crops, which can help maintain soil health

and reduce the reliance on monoculture farming practices that can deplete soil nutrients and lead to increased use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Improved Social Equity: Food literacy can also address social equity issues by highlighting the importance of food access for all. Knowledgeable consumers can advocate for policies that ensure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

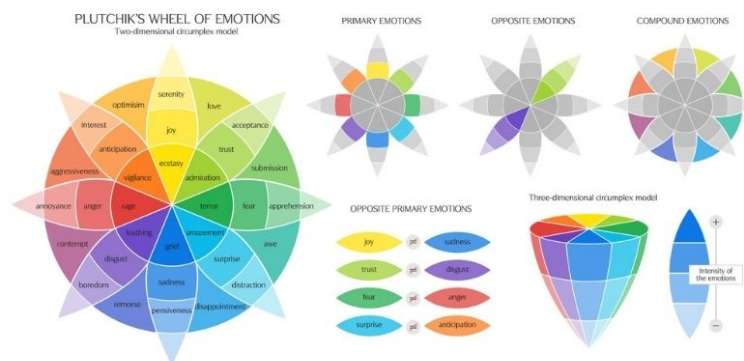
Cultural Preservation: Food literacy encompasses the cultural aspects of food, including traditional cooking methods and recipes. This can lead to the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity in diets, which is important for maintaining a rich tapestry of food traditions around the world.

Improving food literacy has the potential to transform individual health and contribute to the sustainability of our planet. It is a critical step towards a future where people are not only healthier but also live in harmony with the environment, supporting a food system that is equitable, diverse, and sustainable. The ripple effects of food literacy extend far beyond the dinner plate, influencing global health, environmental conservation, and social well-being.

I. Plutchik's Wheel

Understanding our emotions can feel like navigating a labyrinth. Psychologist Robert Plutchik sought to shed light on this complexity with his "Wheel of Emotions." Developed in 1980, this visual tool offers a framework for categorizing and understanding our emotional experiences. Plutchik's wheel features eight primary emotions arranged around a central hub. These emotions are considered the building blocks of our emotional repertoire:

- Joy (opposite: Sadness): Feelings of happiness, contentment, and fulfillment.
- Anger (opposite: Fear): Feelings of irritation, frustration, and hostility.
- Trust (opposite: Disgust): Feelings of acceptance, safety, and security.
- Surprise (opposite: Anticipation): Feelings of astonishment, wonder, or being startled.



The wheel does not just categorize emotions; it also depicts their intensity. Emotions closer to the center are more intense, while those towards the periphery are milder variations. For example, irritation is a less intense form of anger, while delight is a milder form of joy. But emotions are not always clear-cut. Plutchik suggests that primary emotions can combine to create complex blends. For instance, a combination of anger and fear might result in frustration, while sadness and disgust might lead to shame. These secondary emotions occupy the spaces between the primary ones on the wheel.

Plutchik's wheel serves several purposes. It helps us:

- ✓ Identify our emotions: By recognizing the core emotions and their variations, we can better understand what we're feeling.
- ✓ Navigate emotional complexity: The wheel acknowledges that emotions can be mixed and can vary in intensity.
- ✓ Improve communication: By having a common language for emotions, we can communicate our feelings more effectively to others.

While Plutchik's wheel provides a valuable framework, it's important to acknowledge its limitations. The eight primary emotions might not capture the full spectrum of human experience. Additionally, cultural and individual differences can influence how emotions are expressed and experienced. Despite its limitations, Plutchik's wheel remains a powerful tool for understanding the complex world of emotions. By using it as a guide, we can navigate our emotional landscape with greater awareness and empathy.