



OPEN EXPECTATIONS

Finding Resolution
Through Remix
in Family Communication

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary family is estranged from within. Traditional family values are said to be losing importance, while the more distancing values of online anonymity seem to be flourishing. The myriad possibilities to connect with people online teach new values that are at once individualizing and uniting. Meanwhile, traditional family activities have lost the instructional purpose they once had.

Each generation instills different values in its members, although it is expected that family members will all share the same values. In this era of individuality, it is important to understand what the differences in values are. More traditional values are dualistic and hierarchical, creating a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic, right and wrong, the philosophical and the material. The values of the Information Age do away with hierarchy, instead promoting egalitarian ethics. The key is not in forcing one set of values on the other, but in creating an awareness of where the differences are. Doing so will enable all parties to discuss and explore values with one another. By increasing new media literacy between family members it will be possible to bridge different sets of values by remixing expectations. This thesis highlights the changes happening within the contemporary family, differing sets of values, and proposes an innovative planning/reflection tool to help family members understand one another's expectations more clearly.

INTRODUCTION

CONNECTIONS

I began this project with a very broad question: What are the current points of connection between people? In other words, my interest was in how people relate to one another these days. Although an expansive and rather ambiguous query, it is one that is relevant especially as a society transitions from one period into another. Our lives have begun to straddle two worlds: offline - a physical community based mostly on local relationships, and online - a virtual community of millions, distant yet often more accessible than the offline world.

VALUES

Different sets of values and expectations are implicit in online and offline networks¹. The more traditional offline values have to do with hierarchies - family, schools, offices, and government, for example. Because of this hierarchy, one constantly reinterprets one's identity based on the people one is around. There is a sense of intimacy, of privacy, that comes with these types of proximity-based hierarchical relationships. The connection is direct, yet unequal in that both parties may have a different understanding of what that connection really is. The expectation a parent has with his/her child, for instance, can contrast the expectations that a child has of his/her parent. Expectations in these cases can be based as much on roles as the individuals who fill the roles.

In contrast, online anonymity and public interactions present a more egalitarian ethos². One interacts with others using a constructed identity - avatars, screen names, profiles, ect. The identity of each individual is crafted rather than a given. Identity is created using one's ideas or world view, rather than social status, in the online world. The public nature of online social interactions also share these outlooks and interests with others. Although removed from the tangible world, perhaps because it is removed from the tangible world, everyone can be said to be equal online. Expectations are less status-based and more based on individual interests.

This is not to say that everything offline is status-based, and everything online is about equality. Some social media (like Facebook) mirrors physical social networks - they are heavily based on the local contacts that one already has. These networks simply

Our lives have begun to straddle two worlds: offline - a physical community of local relationships, and online - a virtual community of millions, distant yet often more accessible than the offline world.

place one's known contacts into a digital continuity of offline life. Unless there is a physical distance between contacts, very little difference exists between these online and offline networks. Other social media give the possibility

to connect with complete strangers. Sites like YouTube give content creators and consumers the possibility to interact through digital objects - videos, in the case of YouTube - anonymously. The connection that one builds with another, while lacking in any trustable sense of identity, can be one based on equality. Power hierarchies, especially between strangers, don't exist as readily online as they do in the physical world. It is easier to understand online people as peers than it is offline people.

FAMILY

The gap between generations seems to be widening because of what different age groups use the internet for, and what their fundamental understanding of its possibilities are³. The variety in media fluency creates a barrier between grandparent, parent and child⁴. Each successive generation now speaks a different language - as well as at a different speed. This gap separates the adventurous young from the wiser old, making it more difficult for a useful point of connection to exist multigenerationally. The intergenerational point of connection in society is generally one in which important values are transferred.

This thesis focuses on the most important intergenerational institution in Western society: the family. It is here that children learn skill sets which they will reimagine for use with friends, acquaintances, and peers later in life⁵. Skills are learned during shared family activities, and are strengthened intimacy and positive expectations within the family. My aim is to refine methods for transmission of values in a contemporary context. I believe the promotion of healthy discussion between family members is key to bridging understanding between generations. It is discussion that allows parents to adapt to changes in culture, and their children to better navigate the challenges they face in life. However, discussion is fading from the daily face of the family unit. Traditional activities such as the family dinner are losing their effectiveness for transmission of social skill sets.

As each generation in a society achieves adulthood within shifting cultural contexts, their cultural expectations are often different. My goal in this project is to level the intergenerational connection between parent and child by allowing each side to understand the expectations of the other. This will be done by using remixing social media within a commonly understood framework: the family calendar. A shared calendar of family activities, and later reflection on those activities, can be used to map misunderstandings in the family and lead to mutual understanding through family cohesion.

GOALS

As a designer, I create what people surround themselves with on a daily basis. However, I believe that design objects can be and should be about more than just form and utility. Design is capable of guiding users towards thoughts and actions. Design objects are an everyday vehicle to explore existential questions of everyday life. So what role does the designer play in questioning values within a family, rather than just leaving it to the family to navigate? Furthermore, how can humanistic values, which are generally abstract and intangible, be promoted through sensual design?

I approach this topic with Western culture in mind. The rise in materialistic values in society is a Western phenomenon. My literature-based research is based on American studies, which represents the most materialistic culture in the West⁶. I conducted interviews with Dutch teens to better understand another side of Western culture, which is more focused on intergenerational value transmission than the United States. The research in the design section is centered on objects and visualizations which transmit expectations.

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VALUES

INTRO

Values act as a frame of reference for how we see the world. They shape the way we act, perceive, and reflect on what goes on around us. Each individual has his/her own personal values, some of which are shared generationally. These values are based on the “defining” events in which a person comes of age. For example, the oldest living generation in the U.S., the Interbellum generation, are known for their communal ideology and frugal spending¹. They came of age during the Great Depression, a time in which thrift and sharing were necessary values to embrace. The pragmatic, communal ethics of the Interbellums still have a strong influence on our values today.

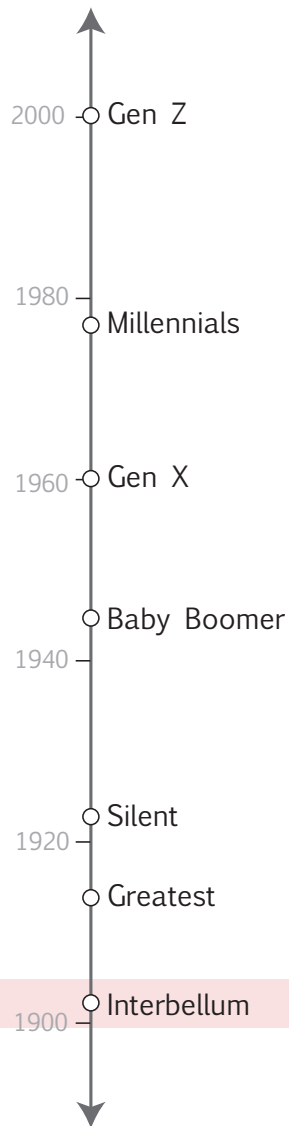


Figure 1. The Seven Generations of the American Family

THE DREAM

The United States of America represents a country of excessive consumption: quantity over quality. 24 hour shopping, seven days a week. People buy new electronics while the factory smell still graces the older “obsolete” ones. Within this materialistic whirlwind of goods lies a Dream. It is now understood as a promise of economic liberty, the standard of such a materialistic culture. In the past, the American Dream was more than a promise of prosperity. It exhibited the ideal that one could achieve one’s goals, and in doing so, become a better person. The Dream promoted hard work and determination, both humanistic aspirations. These qualities would then foster material success.

First popularized in 1931, during the Great Depression, “The American Dream” had been an anonymous ambition since the inception of the country². The Dream gave hope to natives and immigrants alike, offering a haven of tolerance and economic promise. Upward economic mobility for the working class could be achieved with the freedom to practice one’s beliefs. The result would not be fabulous wealth, but the achievement of a level of comfort not requiring harsh struggle any longer. The Dream was the belief that all of a person’s hard work, ambition, and mental keenness would pay off in the end. The author Horatio Alger, Jr. popularized these ethics in stories such as *Ragged Dick*, a rags to riches tale about a shoe shine boy who gains fortune by relying on his humanistic values. Dick even goes to the lengths to save a stranger from drowning, which results in his rise through the economic ranks³. Protagonists such as Dick became emblematic of the ideal role model for growing young men.

James Truslow Adams, who originally coined the term “the American Dream,” wrote of two “educations” that an American should undertake⁴. The first, the skills one needs to enter a trade or profession, would provide for the material needs of a family. The second, a “liberal education as human beings,” was comprised of the intrinsic values which would improve the value of life for one and one’s community. In essence, the Dream was about the possibility for anyone to “attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position”⁵. Adams claim is that intrinsic values were necessary to overcome materialistic class hierarchies. The American Dream symbolized an individual freedom, while promoting a cooperative social agenda.



Figure 2. *Ragged Dick*

The American Dream symbolised an individual freedom, while pushing a cooperative agenda.



Figure 3. *A Soup Kitchen During the Great Depression*

DUALISTIC VALUES

The values presented in the American Dream create a hierarchy of values. It is intrinsic and extrinsic values which are used to judge good and bad. The moralistic attitude that the American Dream embedded in intrinsic and extrinsic values can be understood through the ideals of affiliation, competence, autonomy, and their opposites, status, looks, and money.

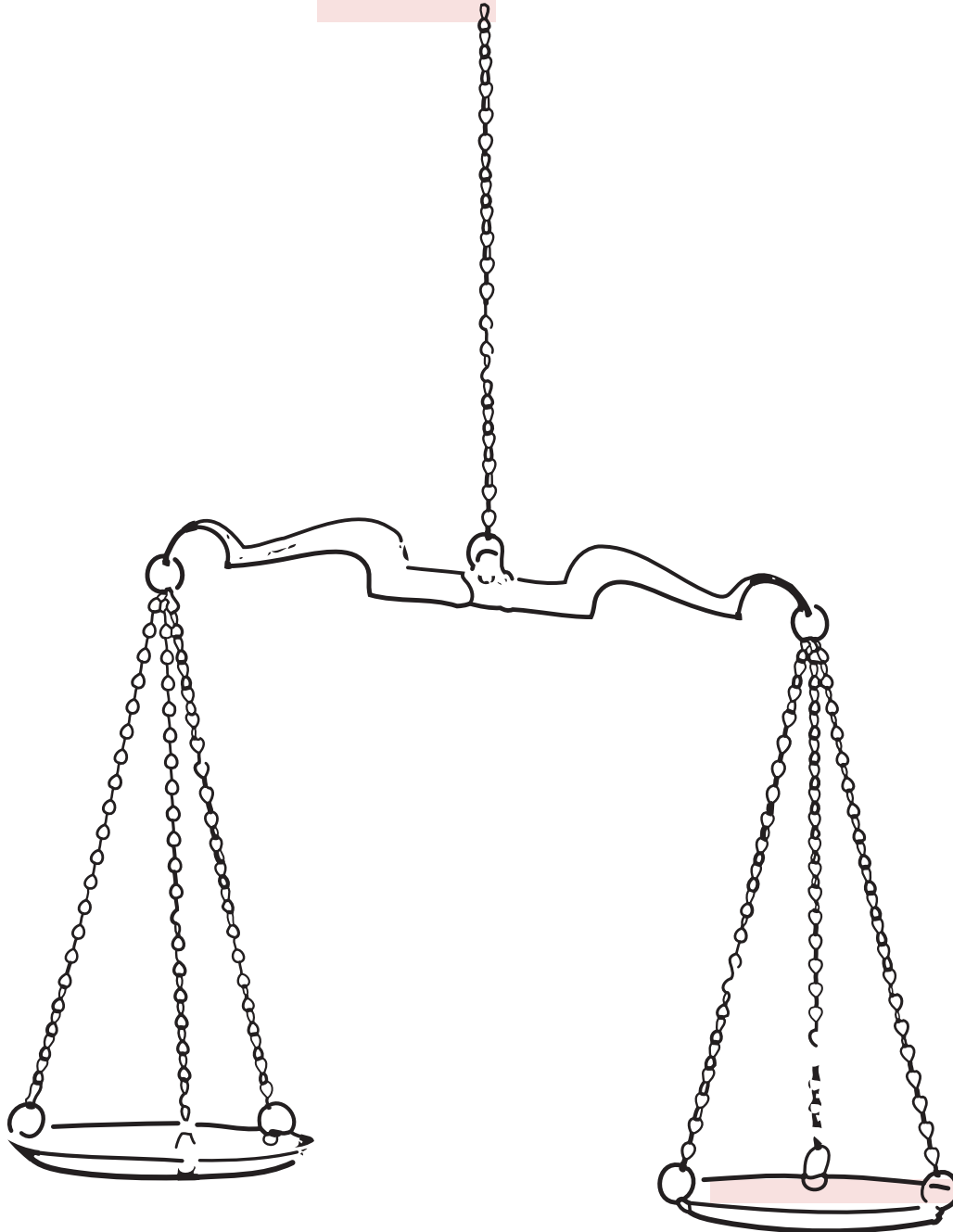


Figure 4. One Is Always Measured Against the Other

INTRINSIC VALUES

Intrinsic values represent fundamental aspects of individual consciousness. As this life outlook exists within the individual, it is generally assessed only through one's actions, intrinsically. One of the few ways that levels of intrinsic values are assessed is by the prevalence of psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety⁶. As the lack of intrinsic values that signify greater risk of problems, it is not the values that are being assessed but the dearth of values. There are very few ways to measure a humanistic philosophy save to reflect on one's actions. How one consistently treats others indicates the nature of one's intrinsic values. One's ethics, or code of conduct, may be considered a fundamental tenet of intrinsic values. Although this code is personal, it is inclusive of other people. It is one's philosophy of how to treat other people.

Ideals such as affiliation, competence, and autonomy characterize intrinsic values⁷. Affiliation speaks of a sense of community, how one is connected with others. It is not about hierarchy, rather it is about a group identity one shares with others.

Competence is skills-based, having to do with tools, technology, and technique. The skill sets that parents teach their children fall under this category.

Autonomy, or self-governance, is the liberty to act on one's own. It is different from selfishness in that it does not preclude caring about others. It is about being independent or self-reliant.

EXTRINSIC VALUES

Materialistic, or extrinsic, values mostly deal with stimuli external to the subject, such as material possessions or hierarchical status within a group. The substance of an extrinsic value is normally exterior to a person, physically relating to other people, objects, or environs⁸. As a result, one's materialistic values and aspirations are much easier to quantify than humanistic values. These ideals are normally understood through cultural artifacts, specifically how they relate when compared to another social member. Extrinsic values are generally exclusive of other people, as a comparison creates a boundary between subject and "other". These values are how one treats or regards oneself in relation to other people. The worth of each extrinsic value is appraised when one compares oneself to others, so they are dependent on other people to have any worth.

Examples of extrinsic values are status, looks, and money⁹. These are direct opposites of affiliation, competence and autonomy, respectively. Status is where one stands in a vertical hierarchy, be it within a small group or an entire society. Deciding on one's status is the act of constantly negotiating one's position.

Looks are also in flux, as they are a mutable outer appearance. Looks are generally compared to other people to decide on the quality.

Although money is a socially sanctioned form of power, the freedom it gives is not independence. By valuing the quantity of money that one has, one becomes dependent on the quantity of money that others have.

The moralism that the American Dream embedded in intrinsic and extrinsic values can be understood through the ideals of affiliation, competence, autonomy, and their opposites, status, looks, and money.

CONFLICTING VALUES

Over time, the intrinsic aspects of the American Dream have been overshadowed by individualistic attitudes tempered by materialism. Personal attainment is now synonymous only with upward economic mobility, not with values such as competence, autonomy and affiliation. Instead, achievement means a focus on extrinsic values such as money, looks and status¹⁰. High school and college students agree that “having a lot of money” is more important than in the past¹¹. But are Americans getting more materialistic, or has the context changed? In contrast to the 1930’s, where the majority of families aspired to become middle class, the majority of American families are now middle class. The material aspirations of these groups now look higher and further than ever before, because groups have inherited a higher status from previous generations. Within the context of the American Dream, the extrinsic values of today may mirror the extrinsic values of 80 years past. The environment surrounding those values is what has changed.

Intrinsic goals in teens have been proven to have atrophied since the 1970’s¹². Teens these days may be less competent, less involved within the community, and more concerned with excessive material gain than ever before. The number of close relationships that teens have are dwindling¹³. Perhaps most importantly, fewer students now agree that it is important to “develop a meaningful philosophy of life,” which is at the core of humanistic values¹⁴. However, many teens are now involved in online content creation, measuring their competency by making their work accessible to millions of viewers. In addition, involvement in online peer communities is overwhelming when compared to those offline. When confronted with both viewpoints, is it more probable to say that values have shifted drastically, or that social context is changing faster than our expectations? It may be that Western cultural expectations are relying too much on past ideals.

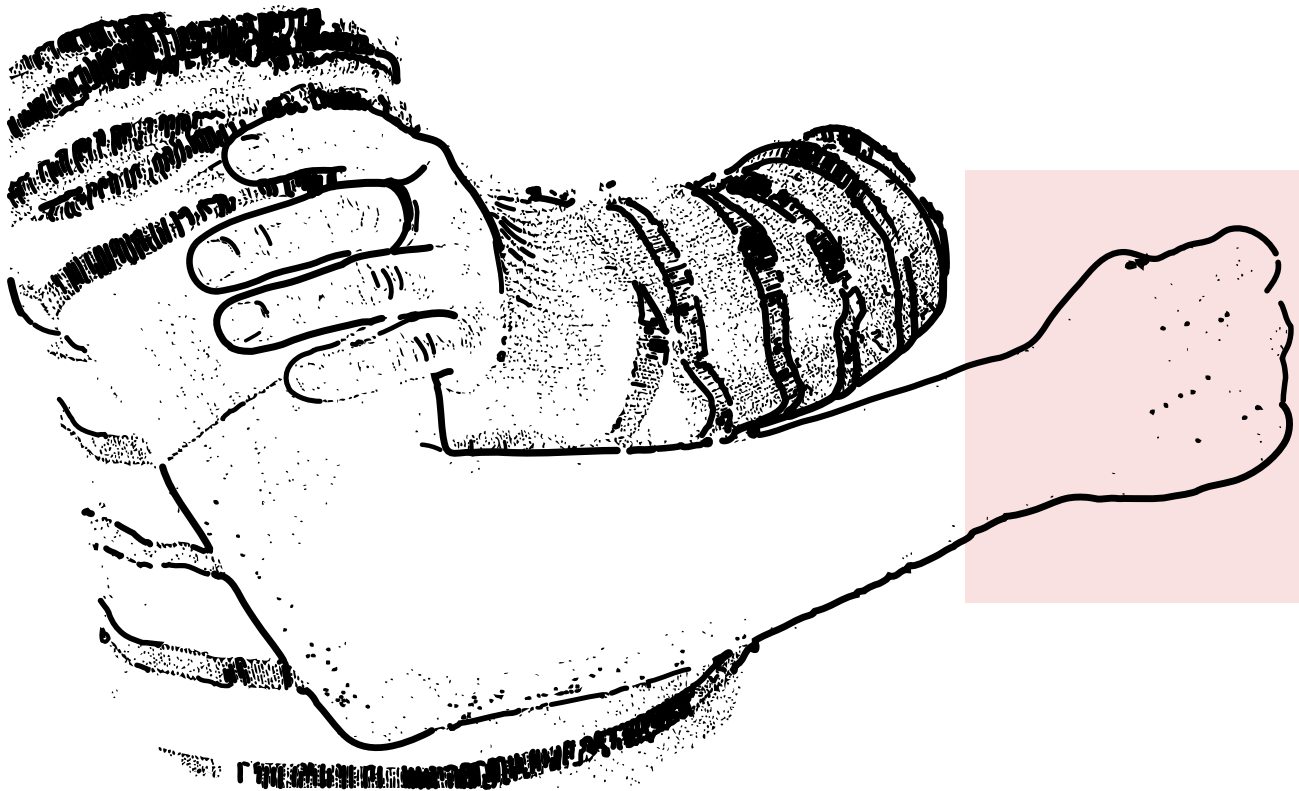


Figure 5. The Strength of Traditional American Values

Millennials are proponents of both intrinsic and extrinsic values, just like any other generation. However, they lack the dualistic morality of previous generations. The good and the bad are inexorably linked. Coming of age in a world of online possibilities, they prefer ethics of egalitarianism and anonymity over more formal hierarchies. The prolific adaptation of the internet in society has created a situation where common cultural values and expectations are challenged.

Online social media builds off of rising cultural individualism begun in the 1960's¹⁶. That decade saw a growing sense of social individuality in society, combined with the growth of excessive individualistic consumerism championed by corporations¹⁶. The intrinsic values inherent in the idea of an open source platform like the internet have commingled with previous extrinsic values, further blurring the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values in the Millennial generation. These days, the equality promoted by online social media cannot exist without accessing the internet with materialistic electronics. One is dependent on the other. While this may be understood with many Millennials, what about other generations that see intrinsic and extrinsic values as more separate entities? An intergenerational conflict of expectations exists between Millennials and their parents, complicating the role of the family in contemporary society.



Figure 6. *The Strength of Millennial Values*

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FAMILY

INTRO

The family exists for many people as the foundation of security and emotional support. It is the place returned to when in need, a group membership that can be counted on without compromise. As such, one also inherits values and skill sets from one's family. These come from other members in the family, especially parents and older siblings. Family roles and hierarchies tend to be based on age, as well as gender. However, what is the role of the family, with its traditional hierarchical structure, in the Information Age? Family activities no longer serve to transmit values like they once did, as technology and personal electronics individualize shared time. If the family is to keep its role as chief intergenerational value transmitter, can the different understandings of communication technology be bridged in a cohesive way? Ideally, the link would be based on mutual support and discussion within the family.



Figure 1. Time Once Shared is Now Individualized

INTIMACY + EXPECTATIONS

Regardless of family structure or hierarchy, family members generally talk about activities with one another¹. Although speaking about people and their activities has different purposes, the progression in conversation is fundamentally linked to intimacy. Even among family, intimacy is difficult to achieve in the beginning of a conversation. It is something that must be eased into, an affinity that asks for reciprocal time and trust. Ask a teen how (s)he is, and the answer will most probably fall between “fine,” “good,” and “y’know...” When a teen asks a parent how work was, the answer may be so removed from adolescent reality that it is emotionally inaccessible. Making the conversation more accessible is about making the conversation more intimate, allowing all parties to trust one another by understanding the position of the other.

Intimacy within the family begins with understanding who all family members are. a Marieke Staam, a child social worker in Eindhoven, explained that there are two stages to her job. The first is speaking with the child and his or her family. This is the most important stage, where she tries to assess what the issues are within the family, and how to allow all family members to come to some sort of mutual understanding. She says, “I try to value every person in the family in their own way first, that’s the starting point. Whatever the problems are, there is always a positive” to each person. When problems are approached in this way, it opens the possibility for dialogue to occur within the family. In this stage, her role is to be a supporter of the student and at the same time support the parents. When this stage is successful each family member places trust in the others by knowing and accepting their viewpoints. Intimacy can be developed from the family cohesion brought about by accepting divergent viewpoints.

When different understandings of the same event are rejected within the family, individuals must learn to cope. Coping is the second stage of Staam’s work. When the family is unable to come to an understanding, she must teach her clients to find others sources for emotional support and understanding. “Sometimes I choose to work only with the student, how they can deal with the situation they are in and how they can make it better.” Such an approach, while sometimes necessary, is less favorable than encouraging mutual understanding. When family members seek to understand one another, regardless of whether they agree, there is space for discussion. The chance for discussion comes to an end when individuals must get by without family support. In addition, problems are not fully addressed if one person is forced to cope with it rather than several people compromising. It is imperative for families to solve problems through mutual understanding, rather than requiring family members to individually develop coping methods for unbalanced relationships. Intimacy within the family will build upon positive expectations rather than reinforce negative ones.

The expectations people have of other family members often support a healthy relationship. In surveys conducted by the author on what was expected from the members of one’s family, everyone answered with very concrete, mostly positive, expectations. In general, the family was written of as a place of safety. Gerald wrote, “My family is like a cocoon out of time and trouble. They are my confidants, and the reflection of who I am.” Beyond the view of the family as a whole, each family member took on different roles. The father was generally a strong symbol of stability, while the mother would always be available to offer unconditional encouragement. It didn’t seem like people expected the same kind of support from children. Children were seen as what held families together, as a family source of energy and life. Older people tended to feel a responsibility for the younger, while the young felt a reverence for the old. What the survey responses suggest is that expectations are used to define the roles of different family members in a mutually agreeable way.

Expectations are created by learning from repetitive actions. They are a way to assume how one will be treated by another person. When these expectations are negative it may be that the individual must cope by finding support outside of the family. However, when intimacy is involved in family communication, expectations are positive and supportive. The roles of family members seem to be highly valued and accepted when the role of individual is supported. The importance is in knowing what one can count on family members for when in need. The expectation of unconditional support from other family members is what the definition of family is.

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SUPPORT

Support within the family is a significant factor in how the expectations of each family member are shaped. However, support is about more than expectations on how one will be treated. Support involves the transmission of skill sets and values. Family members further develop these skills with others both inside and outside the family. An example is one of the girls who I interviewed, Kaatje. When I asked Kaatje what her special interests were, she answered horse riding and motocross. These both seemed unconnected, until she elaborated. Her mother, an equestrian, had introduced her to and guided her in horse riding. It was an activity that they both could do together, and served to develop the relationship between mother and daughter. Kaatje then picked up motocross with her friends, and she used it to bond with her friends in much the same way that she bonded with her mother over horse riding. By guiding her daughter through an activity, Kaatje's mother had given her skills to evolve it on her own. In this context, motocross can be seen as a newer, more adventurous form of horse riding, a recontextualized skill set learned within the family and practiced with others. Kaatje's recognition of motocross may not have occurred had her mother not supported her when she began horse riding. To Kaatje, horse riding has given her a competence, belief in herself, and a fearlessness not so typical for girls. She described her willingness to "go into the woods with friends, get on the bikes, and just go..." These values are essential in life, and may not have happened without the support of Kaatje's mother.

The relationship created by Kaatje and her mother is representative of the contextual approach to psychology. This is the idea that the well-being of a person is connected to the people around him or her. In the case of a child, it is the family who offers the most benefit or harm. For example, parents who are emotionally supportive of their children tend to weaken teen dependency on material goods. Intergenerational support of this type is a key aspect of the contextual approach to psychological treatment². The contextual approach was pioneered by Iván Böszörményi-Nagy in the 1970's, and focused on solving intergenerational family conflict as a key to effective treatment³. The "context" would be the other family members and environment in which the subject lived. Böszörményi-Nagy wrote that by examining humanistic dimensions of family interaction, such as trust, loyalty, and fairness, he could help patients to navigate and uncover their issues. Healing was achieved by the patient, but it was also critical for the rest of the family to be accountable for their actions⁴. By attempting to reconnect generations within a troubled family, Böszörményi-Nagy showed that the family environment taught children skill sets and strategies. Children depend upon these skills and strategies for the rest of their lives.

Despite an emphasis on materialistic values in current families, parents now support their children with time. Beginning in the 1960's American parents spent increasingly less time with their children on childraising activities. However, that trend peaked in the 1990's, and has reversed in the last decade⁵.

These days, parents spend as much or more time with their children than in 1965⁶. Although family members may be spending time together, the perception of what it means to "spend time together" may have changed.

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Figure 2. An Inherited Skill Set: From Horse-Riding to Motocross

FAMILY DINNER

The notion of the family dinner as vehicle for humanistic value generation has been a Western ideal since 1950's America⁷. It was in this decade when complete families were envisioned sitting at the dinner table almost every night, with no distractions to interrupt the ritual. Meals were shared, with everyone eating the same food during the same time. Other than the meal, the family dinner consisted of conversation, the teaching of rules and social mores. The family meal was the time for sharing values.

For many families today the the ideal family dinner is not realistic. This can be attributed to a lack of togetherness and meaningful discussion, and a general rise in individualism, in the household. Individualization of culinary preferences and a rise in food allergies makes eating the same food difficult⁸. Simultaneous eating is worn down by conflicting family schedules, so that family members end up eating dinner at different times. For those who can eat together, there are distractions such as television and personal electronics like mobile phones. In 2005, 37% of American households surveyed were found to eat dinner with the television on⁹. The family meal now favors individual values to family values, or else individualism may have become a family value. As other activities intrude upon the once sacrosanct tradition of the family meal, a lack of meaningful conversation follows¹⁰.

Almost half of American teens and parents believe that dinnertime is the best time to speak about important subjects¹¹. Making time for dinner is making time to have an uninterrupted conversation with the entire family. Conversation is the most important aspect of dinner, as it is the most straightforward method of considering humanistic values together. It seems that dinner time is no longer a viable time to discuss these philosophies. But is there a better time to do so? Is there a time when the obstructions of busy schedules, individualism, and technological distractions will have a lesser impact on the family? Any activity that creates a safe opportunity for discussion is viable, even those that don't include the entire family. As old ideals become more impractical for current families, now is a great time to reconsider methods of intrafamily communication. New technologies and media literacies can be co-opted for use in building family cohesion. The Western family must adapt to take advantage of new possibilities, and develop new expectations for shared family time, instead of focusing on past ideals that may be obsolete.

INDIVIDUALISTIC ATTITUDES

Multitasking is understood as a timesaving function that is more prevalent these days than in the past. Families used to gather and listen to family history. Now, a teen may be sending text messages to friends while listening to past tales. Parents watching their children play sports used to be an afternoon of full support. It may be more common for today's parents to read reports or review work during their children's events. About half of a parent's waking hours are now spent doing more than one activity in tandem¹². The average American teen spends 6.5 hours a day using media, which grows to 8.5 when multitasking is factored in¹³. There is an emphasis on the individualism in society that seems to be a common understanding that demands time be spent on oneself, regardless of the situation.



Figure 3. The State of the Family Dinner

The anthropologist Elinor Ochs lead a four year study on modern family life, studying 32 Los Angeles families during that time. She found that the technology use in these households tended to be disruptive, especially if family members were technically capable. Georgina, a busy mother, describes her two children as technically proficient. "They both make these fancy PowerPoint presentations about what they want for Christmas¹⁴." Her husband Stephen concedes that, owing to the heavy technology use in the home, "We rarely have dinner together anymore... everyone is in their own little world." Ochs' study observed that when a father walked in the front door in the evening, he was only greeted about a third of the time, and completely ignored half of the time. This was because the kids were paying attention to various electronic devices, often multitasking with several at once.

The level of intimacy within the family has dropped from the intrusion of personal electronics into the household. The individualistic nature of personal electronics challenges cultural notions of spending time as a family. In contrast, online media platforms create opportunities for dialogue.

MEDIA LITERACIES WITHIN THE FAMILY

Mizuko Ito, the head researcher of a 3 year Macarthur Foundation study on teenage online media use, noted the transforming role that the internet has in society. She writes that the internet espouses an “ethic of reciprocity” in it’s “public, persistent, searchable, and spreadable nature¹⁵.” New media and technology have created unique avenues for mutually supportive interaction. Unfortunately, these opportunities tend to exist outside of the family unit. Families are often divided by technology, as different members experience media with varying expertise and expectations. If the gap can be narrowed by increasing new media literacy, there is the possibility of using new media for family cohesion.

Mobile phones are an example of social technology that is accessible to most generations. Parents and teens both use them for real-time communication, although teens may be more literate in the various forms of mobile communication (calls, SMS, pictures and video). However, older generations have begun to send text messages as normal practice. Karl Gude, a university instructor, wakes his sons up with text messages when he is not home in the morning. The Gudes also circumvent the issue of yelling throughout the house by using SMS as “an in-house intercom¹⁶.” Another parent, Geena, described how she prefers to text her son in some situations, as it, “takes the emotion out of” checking up on him¹⁷. Both she and her son reduce arguments when they use written text, a less emotional exchange. Karl and Geena have both adapted to texting their children, and as a result have defined a new literacy for themselves. The reciprocity is that their children share mobile phone proficiency. They understand new possibilities for its use, and solve family communication issues as a result. Unfortunately, these are exceptional cases of how personal electronics can be used - the typical family still uses personal electronics as a divisive technology.



Figure 4. Personal Electronics Emphasize Personal Over Shared Time

REMixING

Millennials have used a technology gap to cut themselves off from other generations more so than even the anti-establishment Boomers did¹⁸. As a result, they have come to represent a cultural language all their own - a remix language. The concept of the remix is based on a known original, which is then built upon and individualized. A good example of this would be any YouTube meme, where a viral video is “remixed” over and over again. Each new video is perceived as original content, even though it is framed concretely within the scope of the initial video. The “language” of the remix is built upon a shared understanding. It is based on the previous video; the framework is in place and content is easy to find. Teens hold a copy-paste-recontextualize role, where the originality of media such as MySpace profiles and YouTube videos are based on how well one mixes content and contexts. Each video on its own has very little significance - the meaning is found when all of the videos are assembled. Remixing builds off of postmodern pastiche with the endless reproducibility of digital media. Thus, the remix may be the shared literacy of the Millennials.

Remixing media has a great effect on how teens explore their identity. The researcher Anne Haas Dyson argues that “commercial media provide the ‘common story material’ for contemporary childhood¹⁹.” As commercial media is easy to find and popularly known, each remix made is in some sense compared to all of society. As a result, teens begin each remix already immersed in cultural content. Dyson’s research supports the idea that teens tend to learn a “great deal more from reworking forms with which they have greater familiarity and a personal engagement already.” As such, remixing shared cultural or commercial material gives teens an outlet to explore their boundaries.

Sherry Turkle, who researches the psychology of computer culture, says “Online life is like an identity workshop... and that’s the job of adolescents--to experiment with identity²⁰.” Creating a safe environment to explore values and identity is the traditional role of the family. One builds off of skills inherited from family, and makes them one’s own. The act of the remix has the possibility to address family communication issues, and create deeper levels of intimacy. What is important is that shared understandings within the family are remixed, so that there is a balanced literacy between all involved.

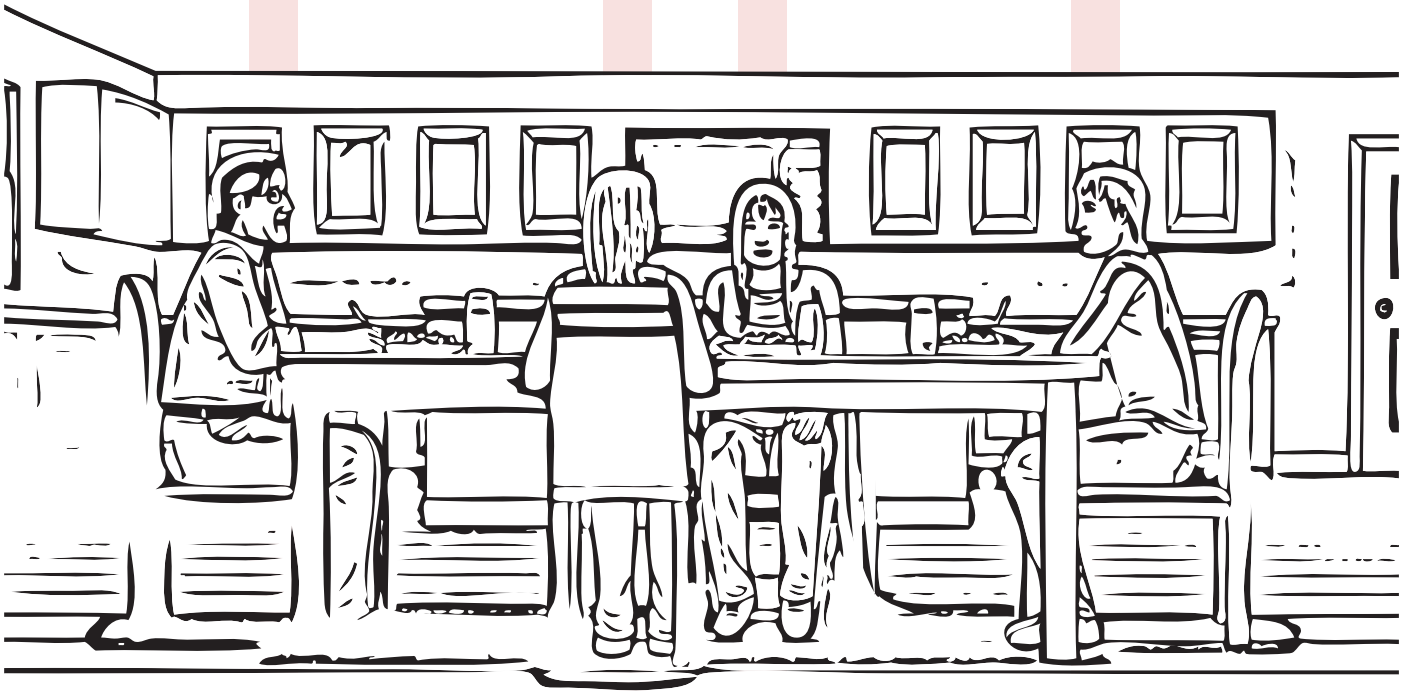
CONCLUSION

When interacting with others anonymously online, it makes sense to use commercial media as a shared visual language. However, what of interaction within a family? If the remix were to find its way into the family as a shared language it could lead to new shared activities, building off of the “ethic of reciprocity” that the internet promotes. It could offer new possibilities for family communication, new opportunities to resolve conflicting expectations. Both parents and teens would be able to further develop their sense of self by developing their familial relationships. It is necessary that relationships be reciprocal, especially in a family comprised of different values. Teens normally gain skills from their parents, which they will later develop into methods more suitable for the period in which they grow up. In many ways, the transmission of skill sets is a remix of values.

The writer Margaret Visser professed, “Time in this culture is always a principle of measurement in the distribution of social commitments²¹.” The time one commits to oneself versus the time one commits to others is always in flux, always negotiable. If it is impossible to share time in a traditional sense, then utilizing the lessons of the remix using new media can address the problem.

I intend to create an awareness of the different expectations within a family. As a series of memories and assumptions about a person, expectations are an essential part to family cohesion. However, unfounded expectations, resulting from changing and challenged roles of different family members, lead to dissonance. As intergenerational dialogue is strained by divergent values and cultural individualism, using new media literacies developed by the Millennials may offer a resolution. If the language of the remix is inserted into the family in an inclusive way, new avenues for intimacy can be explored. Achieving this will bring two generations closer to understanding the point of connection between each other. As a result, family members will be able to intimately develop expectations anchored by support rather than division.

Using new media literacies developed by the Millennials may offer a resolution. If the language of the remix is inserted into the family in an inclusive way, new avenues for intimacy can be explored.



SCENARIOS: RESOLVE

INTRO

I developed a family of personas to illustrate the problems that different members of the family face in conversation. They are based on families discussed in the research of Ito, Sillars, Ochs, and the interviews and surveys that I held. Above all, they represent typical family issues regarding expectations, support. They center on what new media can do to help family members understand one another.

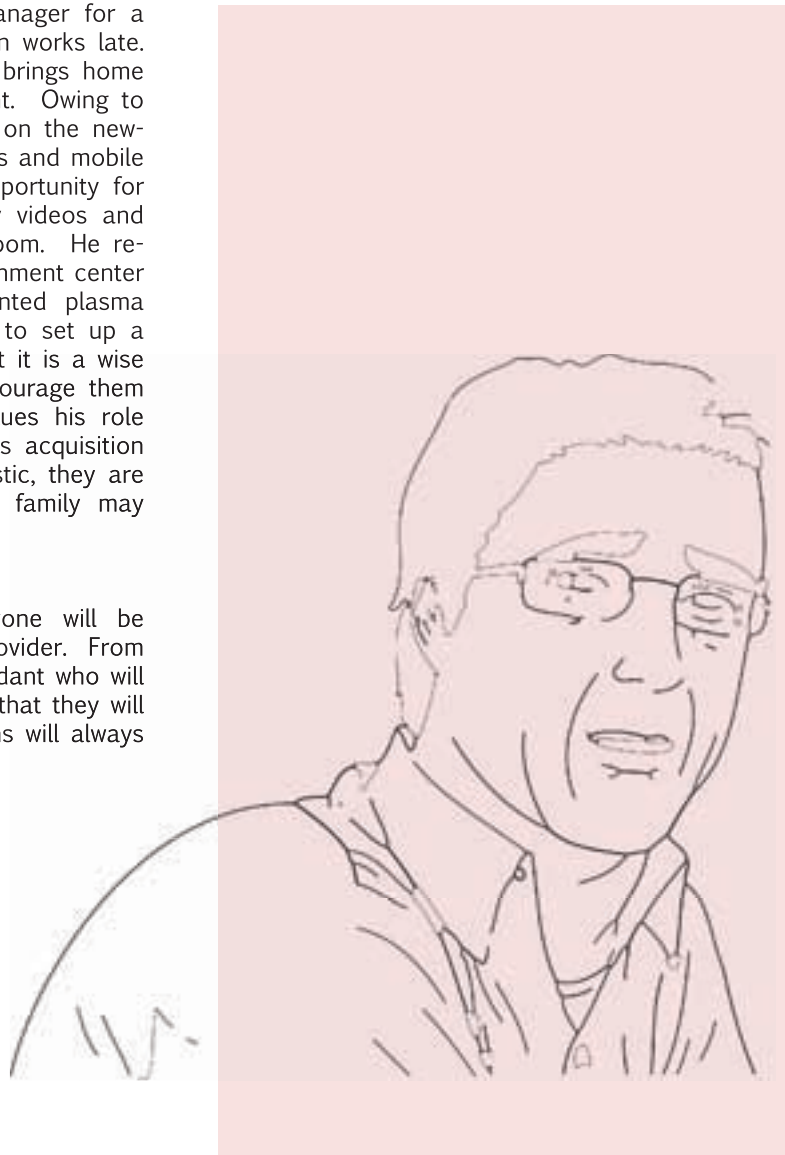
Name: Leroy Lamonte
Role: Father/Husband
Age: 45

Details: Leroy has a job as branch manager for a tech firm in the suburbs, where he often works late. The family is financially stable, and he brings home a paycheck that keeps everyone content. Owing to his role in a tech firm, he is educated on the newest gadgets, and will purchase computers and mobile phones for his family if he sees an opportunity for it. Leroy recently began editing family videos and photos on the computer in the living room. He recently bought the family a large entertainment center for the living room, with a wall mounted plasma flatscreen television. Although he had to set up a payment plan to afford it, he thinks that it is a wise investment for the family, as it will encourage them to spend more time together. He values his role as provider for the family. Although his acquisition of the newest gadgets is very materialistic, they are meant to help with any problems the family may have.

Expectations: He expects that everyone will be thankful for the good job he does as provider. From his wife Emma, he expects a close confidant who will support him. From the kids he expects that they will make the right choices, that their actions will always have consequences.

PERSONAS

In most respects, the Lamonte's are a typical American family. They are relatively considerate of one another's personal space, are rather traditional in their roles, and are quite comfortable in material terms. Each person thinks that their personal values reflect those of the family as a whole. They are all comfortable with new technology, with their own specializations. The family unit as a whole exhibits the effects of busy schedules, individualization, and technological distractions - lost opportunities for conversation. They find the time to eat dinner together three or four times a week. However, these meals tend to be cut short, so there aren't many opportunities to share time with each other.



Name: Emma Lamonte

Role: Mother/Wife

Age: 42

Details: Emma does a good job taking care of her kids, even taking a part-time job teaching dance lessons to help support them . Every night she makes sure that both Shannon and Lance have done their homework, so they can get good jobs later. She would feel happy if the children both ended up running households with only one working parent. Money was a constant worry in her house growing up, so she wants to make sure her children are provided for. She desires to be the traditional mother regardless of her additional responsibilities. Leroy and Shannon introduced her to the internet four years ago, and she has been sharing images and web links with her close friends ever since. She updates a family blog infrequently.

Expectations: She expects people to recognize and appreciate the things that she does for the family. From Leroy she expects emotional support, and wants him to agree with her when they talk about the children. Emma expects her daughter to be a strong lady, and her son to follow his dreams. In addition, she expects both of her children to share her core values, for that is her belief of what a mother's role should be. She expects some down time in the late evening, because her days are usually so busy. Above all, she expects the family to be a close-knit as possible, and keep in touch when Shannon and Lance leave home.



Name: Lance Lamonte
Role: Son/Brother
Age: 14

Details: Lance is in his first year of high school, and seems to be doing ok. He averages a B on his report card. After school, he enjoys hockey and soccer, depending on the season. Leroy is the one who introduced him hockey, when he was only 7 years old. Playing video games is an important activity to him. His friends are sometime over playing video games in his bedroom, but he often plays his friends online. He owns two video game consoles, the Wii and an Xbox 360. In addition, he plays video games on the computer in the living room. He has a Facebook account, and uses it to keep in contact with his friends from school and sports. The sense of affiliation he gets from playing video games with friends is an extremely important feeling for him. It mirrors the affiliation he feels with his sports teammates. The sense of accomplishment he gets from gaming also gives him pride in his competence. He feels that same sense of competence when he looks good after getting dressed in the morning.

Expectations: Lance doesn't expect much from his family at this point. He expects his mother and father to be there for him if he needs it, but other than that he'd like some autonomy. From Shannon he expects a bit of respect and privacy, which he doesn't feel he's been getting recently. But he expects her to be the one who supports him when he argues with his parents.



Name: Shannon Lamonte

Role: Daughter/Sister

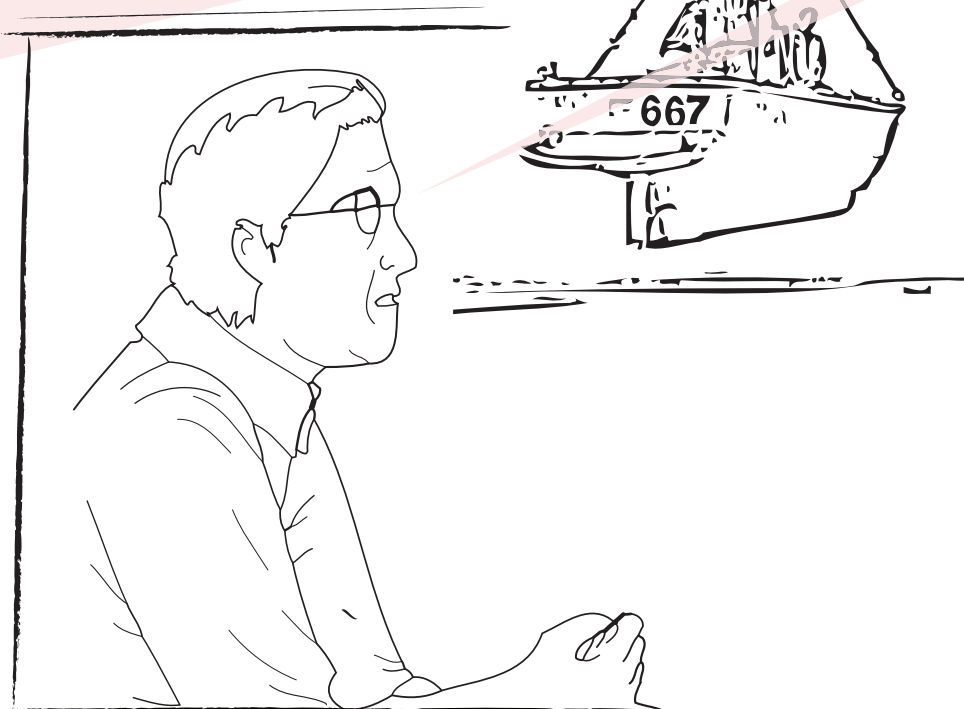
Age: 16

Details: Shannon is a very busy young woman. At only 16, she is the vice president of her high school, a position that many in their final year don't even try for. She takes weekly dance lessons, is an active member of the yearbook team, and is captain of the junior field hockey team. In addition, she is still a top student. Owing to her participation in many school activities, she is Facebook friends with quite a few people. She is a heavy user of the internet for research purposes, using the new laptop her parents bought her for her birthday. She plans to make it into a great university, doing something in the field of business. Accomplishment motivates Emma to do more things well. Her self-reliance and competence are what drive her in life. She is grateful for her loving family, and the groups she affiliates herself with. She is happiest at the top, in a position of power.

Expectations: Shannon expects Emma to always be there for her, and Leroy to always be the source of stability in the house. Although they sometimes argue, she expects Lance to understand her better than anyone.



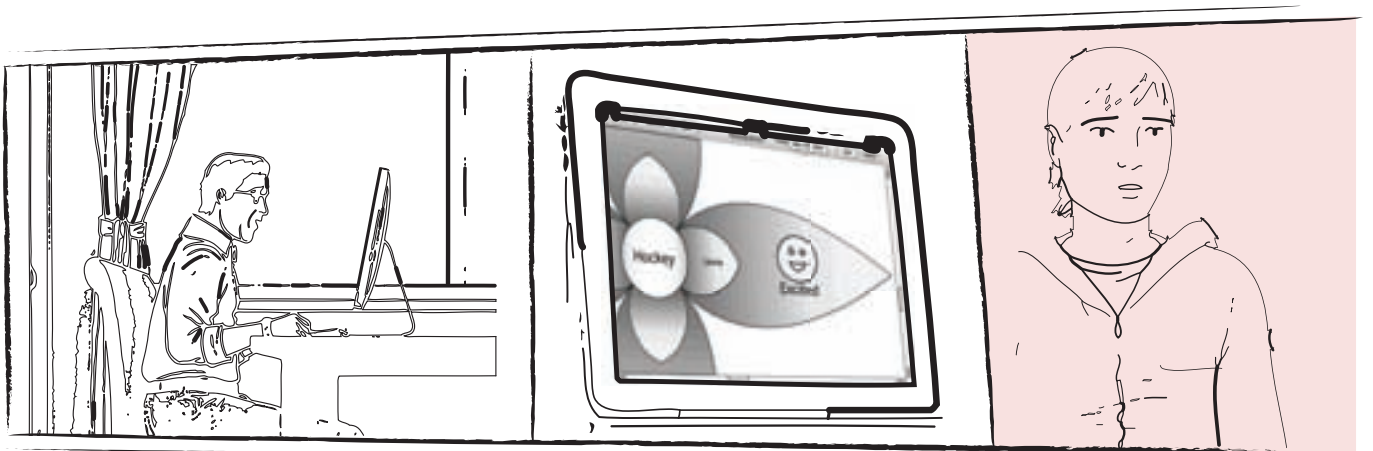
SCENARIO 1: EXPECTATIONS



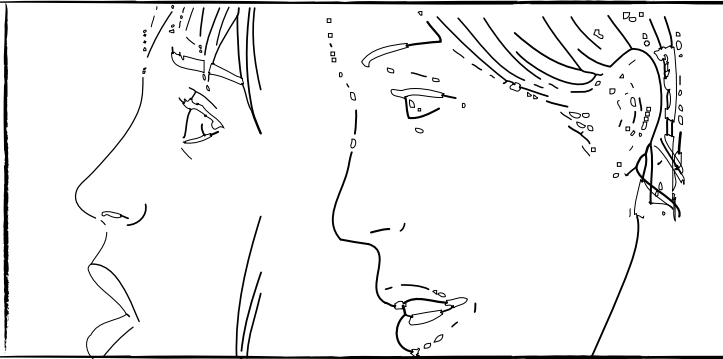
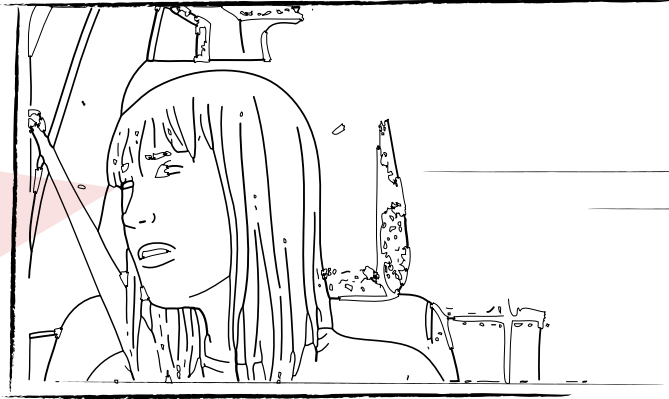
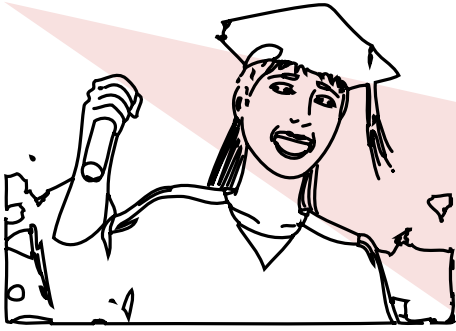
The role between provider and receiver is one of constant negotiation in the family, as each member ages and new expectations arise.

The family has just enjoyed the longest dinner together in a few months. Everyone had time to sit down together afterwards, and Leroy begins to reminisce about their last vacation to the Caribbean. He asks Lance how much fun he had down there, and Lance replies, "It was pretty lame." This offends Leroy and Emma, who not only had to save to pay for the vacation, but had a fun time as well.

The couple begin to argue with Lance, and Lance tries to explain that he missed a big game with his hockey team because of it. With Resolution, he can show them the emotional impact that hockey and his teammates have on his life. In addition, Leroy and Shannon understand that they haven't been giving him the encouragement he deserves. They did not understand the importance that hockey had for him, they just thought it was a fun pastime he did with his friends.



SCENARIO 2: INTIMACY



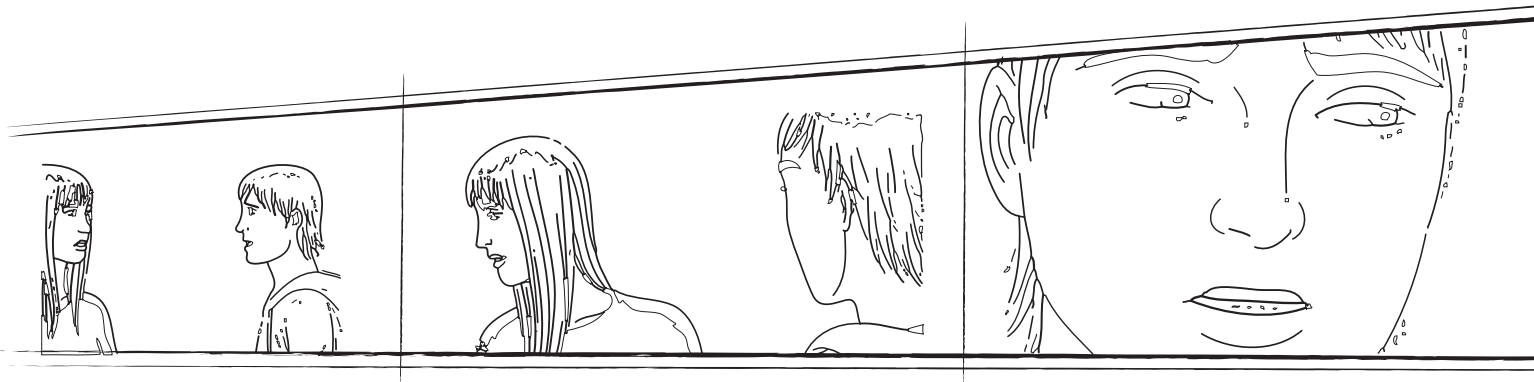
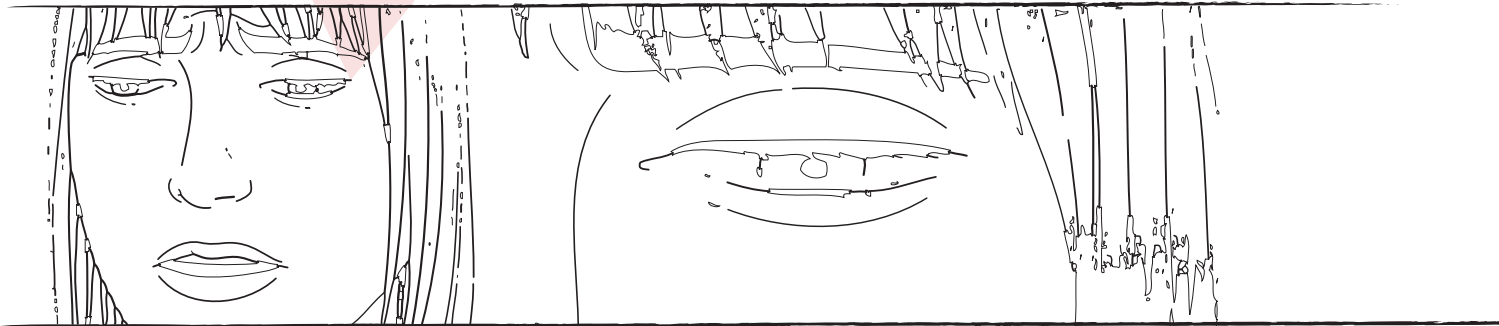
Each member has his or her own goals in life, which sometimes clash with those of other members.

Shannon has begun to seriously consider which universities to apply to. One day, as she and Emma are driving to the store she decides to discuss her choices with Emma. The most important thing, she says, is that the program be the top in the country. She wants the best education she can possibly get in business, and is considering a university on the other side of the country. Emma has spent the last sixteen years building a relationship with Shannon, and she believes that a school so far away could damage how close they have become. She suggests another university, just a few hours drive from their house. Although Emma believes the program to be comparable, Shannon refuses to consider it as an option.

The argument continues in the car, at the store, back in the car, and finally ends at home when both realize that neither will give in. A few days later, Emma uses Resolution. She sees how important it is to Shannon to get into a top university - she has been writing about it for an entire year. However, she also begins to understand why Shannon may actually prefer some distance from the family. She is surprised to see that Shannon hasn't been very happy during some of their family activities. Emma begins to question how much of her daughter's decision is being driven by the name of the school, and how much of it may be driven by Shannon's unease at home. While Emma doesn't understand the exact reasons why Shannon is upset, she can see she has most enjoyed activities in which her brother Lance didn't participate. She decides to try speaking with Emma again, hoping that they will both have a more open mind.



SCENARIO 3: SUPPORT



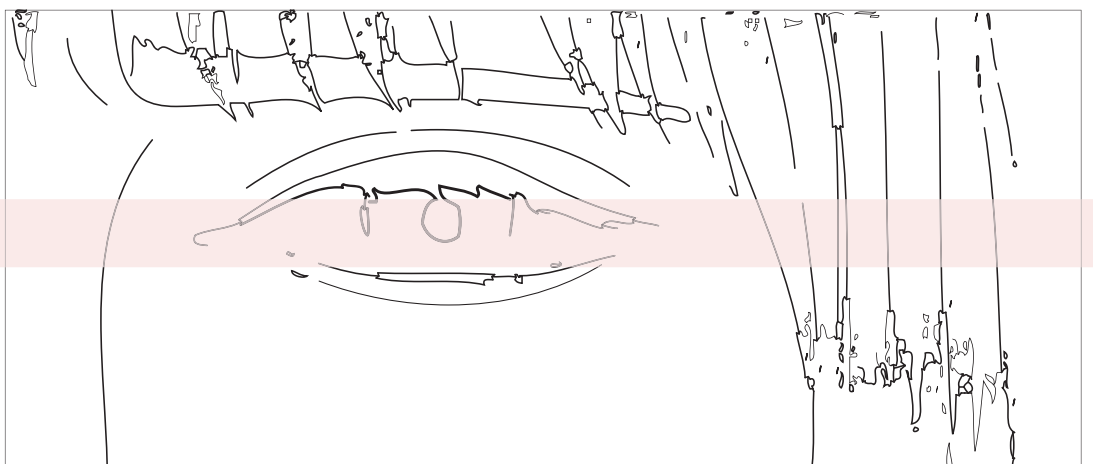
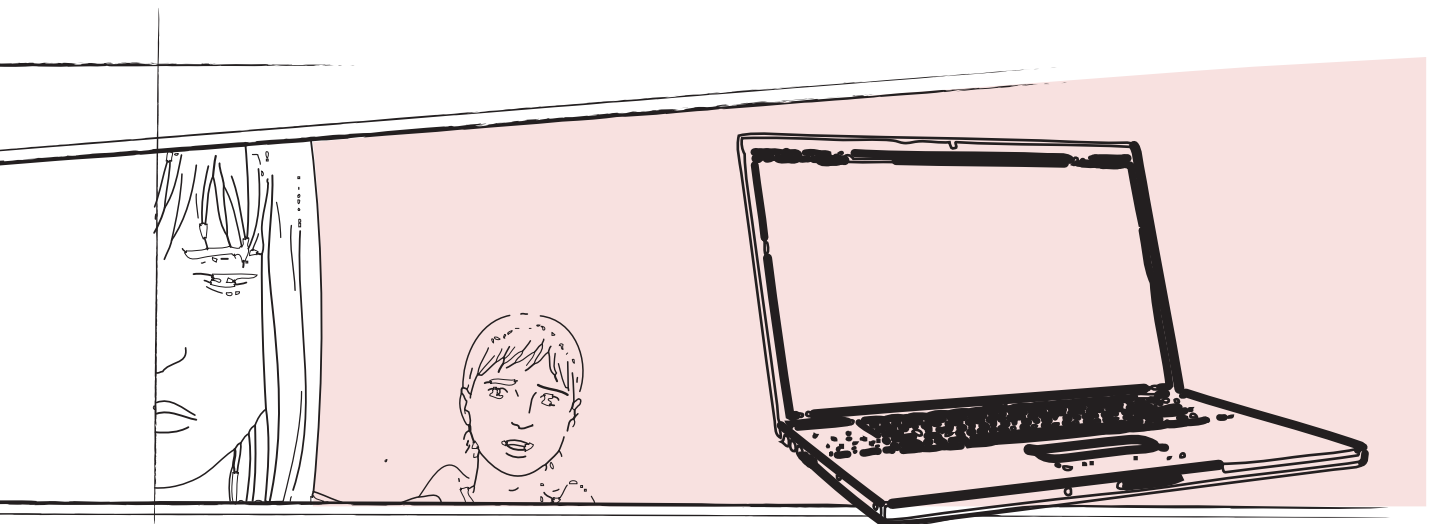
Even when one finds a balance in expectations between oneself and another family member, the presence of a third member can change the perception of that balance.

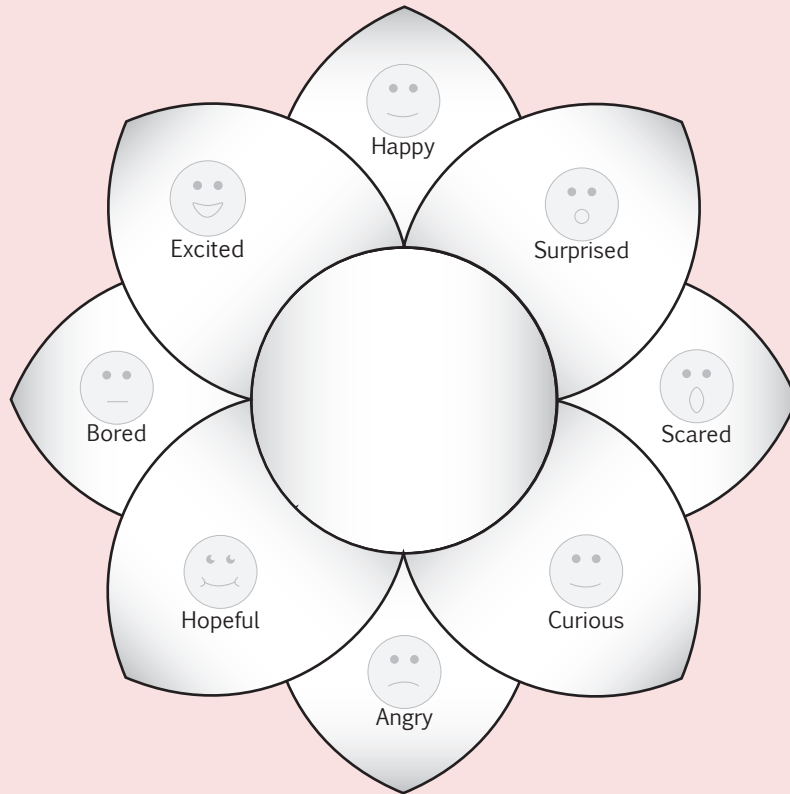
For the last month Lance has been begging his parents to buy him an upgrade for one of his video game consoles. The eventually agree, which makes Lance happier than he has been in a long time. However, it bothers Shannon. She feels that Lance hasn't done anything to earn it. Meanwhile, she works extremely hard at everything she does. It seems very unfair to her that her parents seem to support Lance so much when he doesn't do anything to merit that support.

Lance sees Shannon later that day, in a very bad mood. He asks her what's wrong, and she replies, "They like you better." Lance tries to convince her otherwise, pointing out the praise they give her for her achievements, and the expensive laptop she got for her last birthday. He finally says to her, "You have it so much better than I do, why can't you be happy about it?" She replies, "You don't understand Lance." Even though Shannon has the most intimate relationship in the family with Lance, that trust isn't enough to change her mind.

Lance can see that something is wrong, because it seems like Shannon is never satisfied with the way things turn out. He takes a look at a Vision of Shannon's ratings for some of the most important activities in her life recently, and sees that she isn't extremely excited about them. However, other family members who took part in those activities really enjoyed them. Lance sends this Vision to Shannon as proof that there are some things she needs to take into consideration.

It takes some time, but eventually the idea takes root in Shannon's mind that she doesn't have the skills to accept that she is doing really well. She brings it up with Emma a few months later, asking, "Mom, how do you know when you've done a good enough job at something?"





DESIGN: RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION

Shared activities and personal activities shape the interpersonal dynamics within families. On a practical level, families must schedule activities in order for each member to fulfill expectations. On an emotional level, it is one's reflections on shared and personal activities that shape one's expectations. "Resolution" is a family tool that will help bring users to mutual conclusions by giving an insight into what expectations each user holds dear. It combines features of a calendar, diary and tagging to remix expectations within the family. These expectations include family roles, personal goals and interests, and more abstract (but still important) notions such as emotional intimacy.



Figure 1. Jayne Wallace's 'Traces'



Figure 2. The Zorbuddha Steps to Change

PRECEDENTS

I based the conceptualization of Resolution on two projects. The first, a physical manifestation of memory, connected family members together with sound recordings. The second was a personal reflection tool, to be used achieving goals.

Precedents for a project such as Resolution are few. The majority of family help designs have focused on physical presence of family members¹. Some projects have addressed the issue of intergenerational links in the family. One such project was Jayne Wallace's project *Traces* (fig. 1), which captured speech bytes in jewelry. A pearl and a clasp, upon connection, would record sound. The clasp would only record once, making even unwanted recordings precious. The clasp could not be recorded over either. The captured sound could be played back, serving as a tangible and precious memory of shared family activities. This project explored how interpersonal relationships could be remembered by making memories shared and precious with captured sound. While this project highlights memory as interpersonal connector in the family, it does so through making the memory a tangible object, precious and not configurable. However, it effectively creates an emotional connection between family members².

Zorbuddha (fig. 2) is a personal diary tool used for reflection. It explores how one can objectively define how to reach goals, by reflecting on them for five minutes in the morning, and five minutes at night, every day. At its essence is an emphasis on positivity, and how to highlight pride, diversity and one's goals each day³. The length of the reflection period is 90 days, the minimum length of time for new behavioral habits to effectively take hold⁴. There is an initial "analysis," where one defines one's goals and commitments. The daily writings are then compared to the originals in 30 day intervals throughout the use of Zorbuddha. Parts of the daily writings are written in text, but the most compared data is numerical, based on a sliding scale between 0 and 100. The end of the self-treatment is a final analysis that summarizes the numerical data written by the user. In doing so, an easily understood analysis can be made, but minute, perhaps important, details are lost in the process. In the final analysis, Zorbuddha acts as a map of one's feelings and supports positive emotions. However, it does not provide an easy way for the user to understand the context of why certain emotions were felt⁵.

I intend Resolution to build off of the positives of *Traces* and Zorbuddha, which are creating emotional bonds between family members, and providing a measurable system to analyze activities. When joined together, an analytical system that builds emotions between users can achieve the desired result of understanding expectations through support rather than division.

DAILY USE

Resolution is a computer program based off of a digital calendar and diary. The calendar is an accessible form of technology for all living generations. Digital and analog calendars share the same aesthetics and functionality, so people of any age can use them. Diaries are intergenerationally accessible as well.

Both the calendar and the diary are centered on activities - the calendar organizes events of the future, while the diary is a rumination on events of the past. When the activity is created, an Activate window can be used to enter information about the activity type, who it is shared with, and other event data. After the activity has occurred, a second window opens when the activity is accessed.

The Reflect window allows the user to assign a feeling to the activity, as well as reflect on the family members who also took part in that activity. When someone in a shared activity enters information in the Reflect window, all other users will be prompted to the next time they use the application. The information in both activity windows create metadata, or tags, which the program displays in emotional and understandable ways through Visions.



Figure 3. The Activate Box

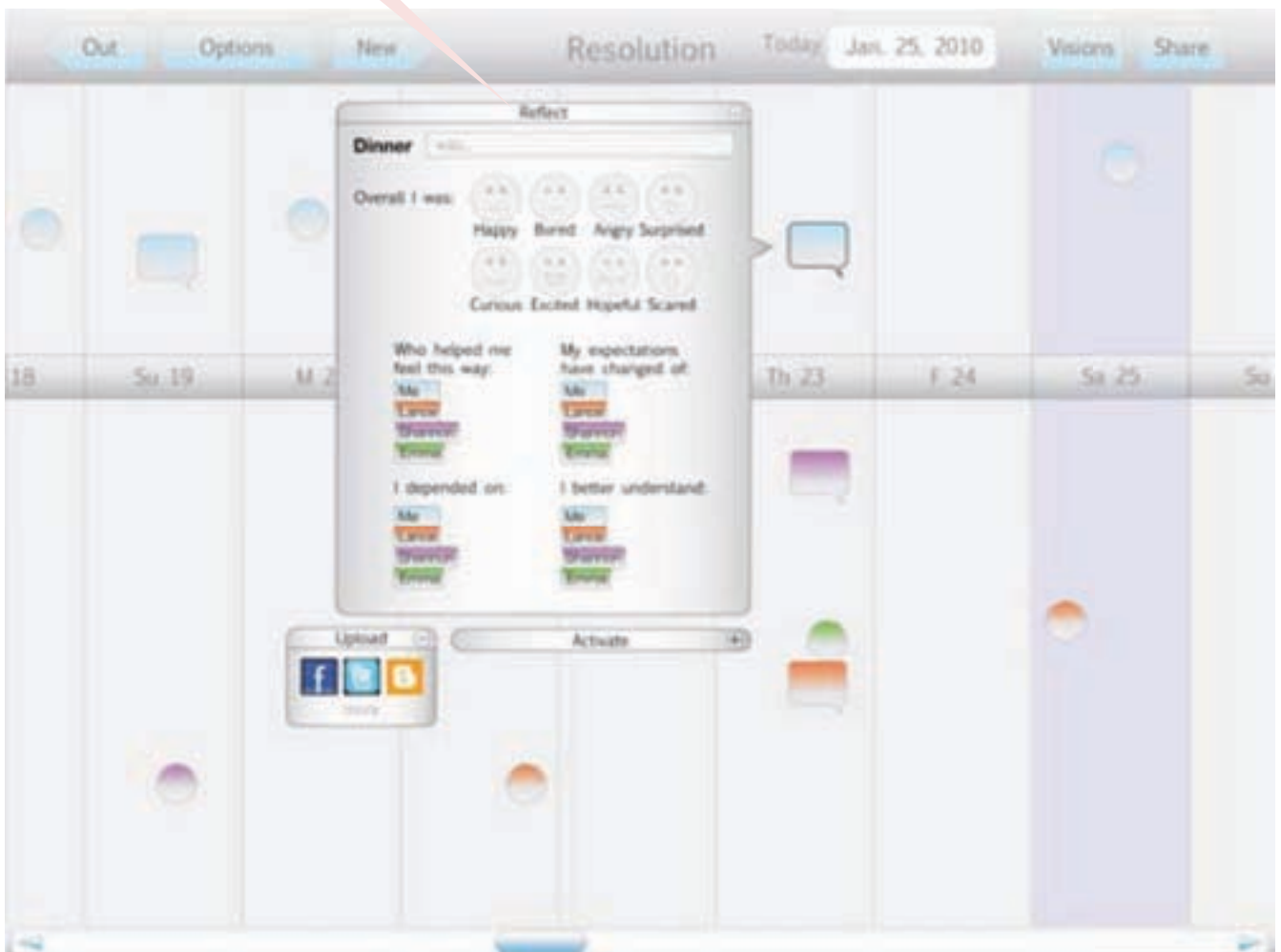


Figure 4. The Reflect Box

VISIONS

Resolution uses the metadata of the planner and diary to create “Visions,” remixed versions of family history. The idea of the remix is to take a universally understood object and recontextualize it. The aim of this project is to remix the everyday interaction of a family into understandable patterns and diagrams. The form and emotional content of the Visions are decided by the metadata that Resolution has collected from Profiles, and the everyday use of the calendar and diary portions of the program. Visions serve as visualizations of one’s past, both shared and individual. One can also form Visions and send them to other users as a gesture of goodwill, or to prove a point.

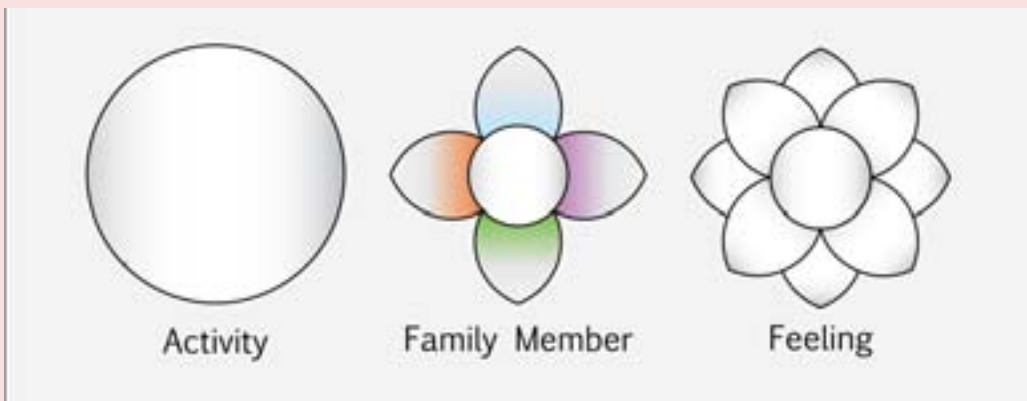


Figure 5. Three Types of Visions

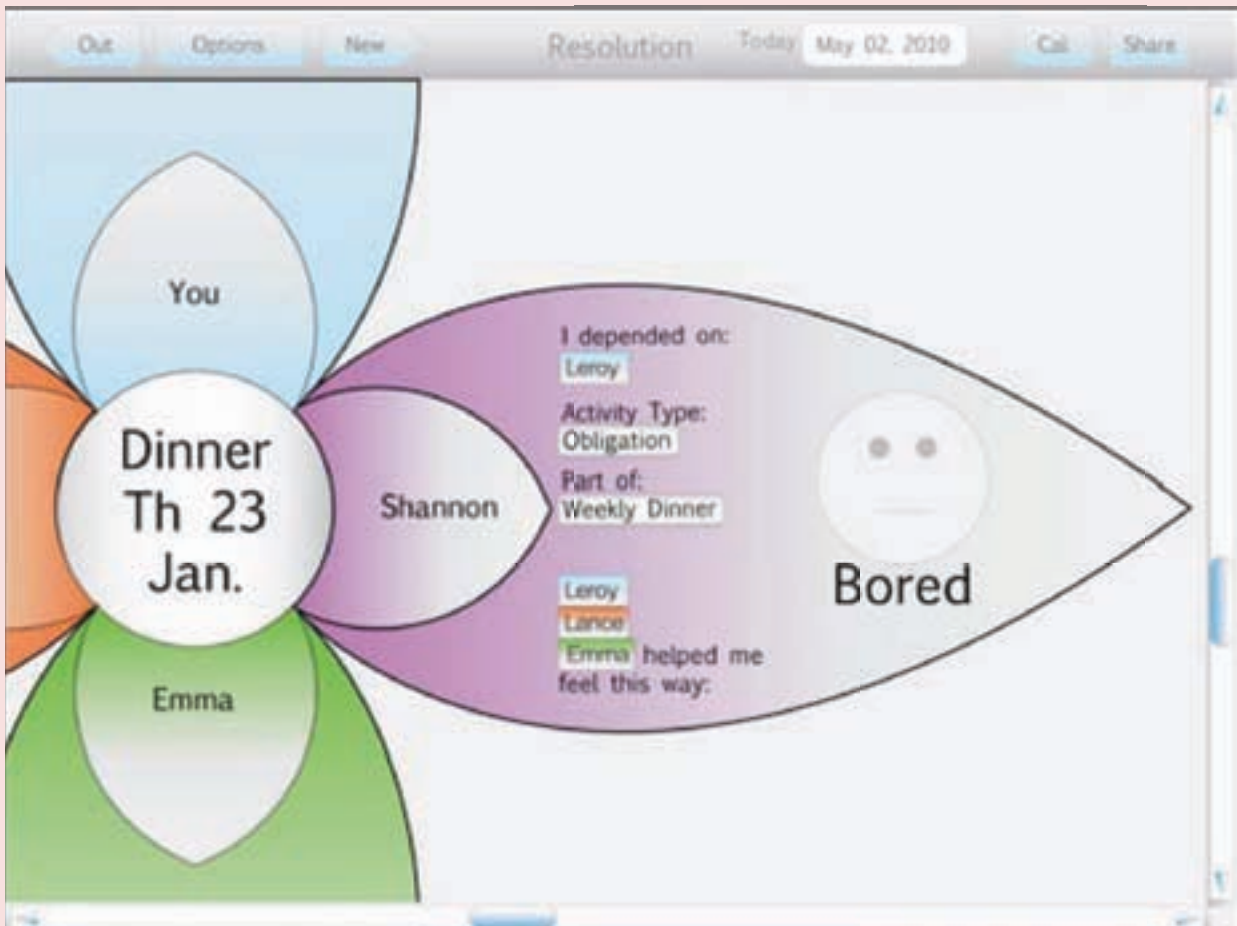


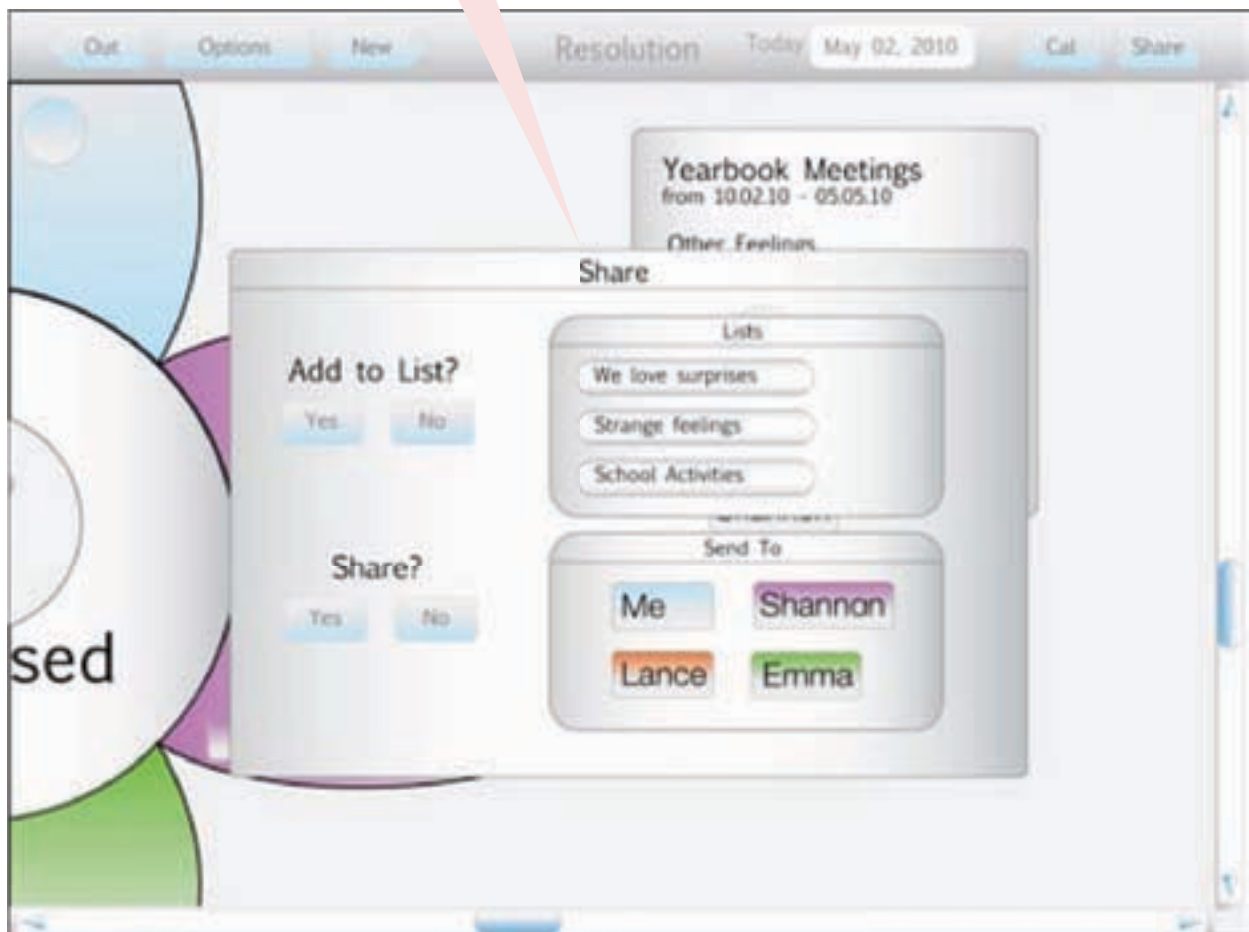
Figure 6. The Last Stage in the Activity Vision

SHARING

Family members will be able to save Visions, and may send them to one another if they decide to. Members can also reply to Visions with Visions or other media. This will stimulate family members to have deeper conversations, and even come to terms with arguments that may have been considered too subjective to reach a resolution. In the end, Resolution should be a tool that augments memory. As expectations are built over time, Resolution acts as a more objective memory by merging your subjective memory with the subjective memory with other family members. It is the combination of many memories which brings one to a proper resolution.

PLATFORM

The platform for Resolution can be a computer or other electronic device. However, the the most appropriate device may be the iPad, a product in between a personal electronic device and a family device. The first iteration for Resolution will be made for the iPad - subsequent versions will be made for PC/laptop OS'





EVALUATION
+
CONCLUSION

EVALUATION

This project began as an attempt to understand how people connect in Western society. The first part of the research looked into social objects and online social networks, the connection points indicative of the Information Age. While the opportunities to connect with new people are more numerous than ever, there were a number of problems within the family that such opportunities exacerbated. The largest problem was that of mutual understanding. Social connections begin in the family, and are defined during shared activities. Family support, expectations, and intimacy are all important parts of the interactions between family members, and all lead to a better understanding between family members.

Family teaches one how to structure reality, and how to react in daily life. Without a mutual understanding between family members, one learns what to do or how to react in a situation, but not necessarily why a particular action has been made. It is this lack of reflection and mutual understanding that Resolution is meant to address. The application is supposed to work over time to help families gain a better sense of the inner workings of how members interact. An evaluation by families over a long period (a month or more) can help to ascertain the merits of the application as it is. This is the next step in the process. Family trials can determine how Resolution is used, which aspects are used most successfully, and what aspects are missing from the application.

As families become comfortable with applications like Resolution, the emphasis on the visual language can shift from a standard format to one that better fits the idea of the remix. Further iterations of Resolution should determine how an individual visual identity and a family visual identity can be balanced within the app. Personal computer programs and applications are currently a visual clean slate, allowing users to promote their individuality by accessorizing the application. This has been left out of the first version of the program, and in the future could be an important aspect to its usability. To push the idea of individualization even further, creating an interface that responds to the way the entire family uses Resolution would be a more fitting personalization. Each individual could personalize the calendar and skins. The personalization choices of each family member would interact with all other members, based on how (s)he is using Resolution. The application could then serve as a visual map of how one uses it in relation to other family members.

Resolution accurately begins to explore how common technology can be readjusted to, or remixed into, the contemporary family. The family calendar, which previously focused on the question, "what are they doing?," has developed into the question, "what are they thinking?" I believe that, while this is normally an important question, it is especially important for current families. On a larger scale, what does the next decade promise for Western families? If American trends are followed, it will be a continuation of overextended expectations, an excessive desire to achieve more than previous generations. However, the desire for attainment, when taken out of its usual materialistic interpretation, can be applied to the family unit in a positive, progressive manner.

CONCLUSION

I believe that the time is ripe for an evolution in family dynamics. 1950's American families "worked" so well because each family member learned a specific role, which was socially derived. The contemporary family decides on roles in a more individual manner, resulting in a loss of family cohesion when members do not share mutual understandings. Family roles are now ambiguous, as a result of the individualism emphasized by Western society. As a result, the necessary structure for family cohesion can only come from a deep understanding of the entire family. We exist in a time where psychological and sociological concepts have become more mainstream than ever. Popular television shows liberally reference psychological ideas as part of their storylines, showing the reasons why characters develop certain traits and characteristics. Family members of most ages share a common understanding of psychology and should have a higher acceptance for diversity than ever before (based on the highly mixed cultural makeup of Western society). The majority of the Western family should now have the knowledge and experience to accept diversity within the family, and understand it by embracing it. Applications for the family that focus on (emotional) quality rather than quantity (of time) should then be more in demand in the coming years.

The next generation in society brings with it many new questions. In what ways will the openness of the Millennial and Generation Z groups influence how their children come of age? In which conditions will their children come of age? Will the family be a group specialized in emotional and reflective knowledge, or will it grow more distant, more utilitarian? Will people cope by creating family bonds with perfect strangers, found online? The future can be a time of degeneracy, or one of transcendence for the family. Most likely, it will be both. The importance is in making sure that the family adjusts to changing times, so that problems are not compounded.

The desire for attainment, when taken out of its usual materialistic interpretation, can be applied to the family unit in a positive, progressive manner.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NEW MEDIA AND TECH

MEDIA SKEPTICISM

Mizuko Ito writes that “media literacy is somewhat unusual in that we are dealing with both an inter-generational tension (between adult authority and youth autonomy) and a tension between educational and entertainment content¹.” These tensions are also defined in part by economic status.

Teens are expected to use new tech for educational purposes, specifically in lower and middle income families, or non tech-savvy families². Media is seen as an investment to “ensure their children’s success in education, work, and income generation³.” Anita, a working class mother, explained to Tripp that she constantly needs to remind her daughters that the computer is only for schoolwork. “I have to keep a close eye on them to see what is going on. They get on the Internet, and with so many things there. They look for their girlfriends and all...”⁴

Parents may also view media with fear or skepticism. In what is termed the “lay theory of media effects,” some parents believe that media is a capable agent of antisocial and unproductive behaviors. Highly publicized cases of child stalking and predation are often on the minds of parents, who sometimes go to extreme lengths to control their kid’s online activities. Examples of these reactive restrictions range from hiding the modem or power cord while parents are out of the house, to deleting programs, to refusing online access⁵. In my interviews with teens, each kid couldn’t remember a parent or teacher explaining the benefits of online media. However, all of them could remember several instances in which they were warned of the dangers of social media. It was accepted that teens would use it, but proper instruction on how to get the most of the technology were never given. Ito parallels these restrictions with “beliefs about the correlation between computer ownership and education and parents’ anxieties about their own lack of experience with media⁶.” A shared understanding of media between parents and children is necessary for a successful integration of online media into contemporary culture.

Many students make brilliant use of media in their work, embedding audio files and video clips in their presentations, but the habit of grazing among many data streams leaves telltale signs in their writing, according to some educators. “The breadth of their knowledge and their ability to find answers has just burgeoned,” says Roberts of his students at Stanford, “but my impression is that their ability to write clear, focused and extended narratives has eroded somewhat.” Says Koonz: “What I find is paragraphs that make sense internally, but don’t necessarily follow a line of argument⁷.”

MEDIA EMBRACEMENT

Millennial teens use social media almost exclusively when they are online⁸. Adolescents born into an online-connected world have adapted to its use very smoothly. New methods of communication are being invented by teens, methods which would have been impossible without the internet and current technology⁹. For instance, the public nature of social media means that conversations considered private in the past now happen publicly. Teens can flirt with each other online, using “codes” which are understood as friendly banter when taken out of a flirtatious context¹⁰. The safety of this code protects the writer in the case of rejection, all in a public context. Although other methods of emotional protection exist for teens, this is one of the very first public ones. By assimilating existing cultural habits into the distinct qualities of an online context, teens are defining a new media fluency. While notable and even applaudable, other generations have a hard time understanding the shift.

Twitter, a text-based online platform, is making people appreciate the mundane. Users (mostly in their 20’s and 30’s) can send small messages via email or mobile phone to all of their followers. These generally range from random thoughts, to famous phrases, to just saying hello, to judging the sandwich from lunch, ad nauseum. Surprisingly, the instant on, “bite-sized” 140 character connections of Twitter promote deeper conversation. Many who use it say that they feel more intimate with their friends and relations knowing casual snippets of their daily lives (Thompson). This is done without even having to put specific time aside create intimacy. It is easy to have an impromptu meet up when Twitter tells you where your friends are. In addition, it makes conversation that much easier, because those small snippets become gateways to more lively exchanges. It is almost like walking into the middle of a conversation and knowing where to pick it up.

SUPPORT AS AN IDEAL

No matter how new media is adapted to older practices, it is most important that these practices be supported by parents and other authority figures. “Even among youth who are more technical and espouse an ethic of being self-taught, narratives of how they get started contain many references to peers, family, and other adult mentors who provided advice and encouragement in their media-production efforts¹¹.”

APPENDIX B

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

INTRO

The Netherlands has a comprehensive treatment system for teens who are having troubles. There are three levels to treatment within the secondary school system. I interviewed three women involved in each level. All of them were affiliated with the VMBO-t in which I conducted my teen interviews.

LIZ BISCHOPS

Liz Bischops was in charge of students in the first and second year. She gave me an overview of the first level of how they take care of teen problems in the Netherlands - mentors. Mentoring is an additional job for normal teachers, and they are the first and least formal stage of student-educational institution help. The most important aspect to this level is that mentors include friends of the students in the discussion, when possible. By doing so, the mentor is able to adjust understand how the “support group” of the student will respond to the advice of the mentor, as well as to offer an open environment to allow the friends to make suggestions. The idea is that suggestions will be taken more seriously when supported by friends.

GEERTJE HENDRIKS

The second level of treatment was headed by Geertje Hendriks, the psychologist at the school. She is responsible for the health and well being of the students, and heads the first level in which helpers would look for solutions outside of the school. This includes speaking with parents, finding personal records from previous schools, and coordinating with other government agencies. One of these agencies is health services, administrated by the city.

“I can try to make the students a little bit stronger to help to handle things in their own way, but how do you handle things like this?”

MARIEKE STAAM

Health services assigns social workers to children who have very difficult problems. Marieke Staam is one of those social workers. My conversation with her had less to do with the organizational structure of how students are helped, but what she has specifically done to help students. Her actions were generally defined by how easily they could solve problems. If issues could be solved easily, goals would be set for both kids and parents. Otherwise, meetings would be set up with the student, to try to find strategies to deal with family and personal issues.

Marieke pointed out that parents are often at the “height of their possibilities.” This means that the parents would be unwilling to make the changes expected of them by the social services, and the student would have to work on appropriate coping strategies. As each case is different, she highlighted the fact that she makes sure not to begin meetings with preconceived notions of how to fix problems. She believes that it is important to understand the context of each individual family - “So work with what is there, don’t make your position their position.”

Ultimately, she pared her job down to two steps. First, it was important to speak with everyone involved, and make sure they understand each other. This step comes first, as it can lead to a solution of the problem. Mutual understanding is extremely important, as it allows all parties to enter the conversation speaking the same language. If step #1 fails, step #2 would be to teach the student coping skills for the problems that other family members cannot help with. The skills generally involve understanding what they need emotionally, and understanding where to find it.

While this doesn’t solve the problem, it does offer teens a way to cope. The downside to this is that while stress may be reduced, the origin of the stress is still active. In addition, coping with psychological issues instead of solving them may invite them to re-manifest themselves in different ways even years later. However, as it is impossible to effectively solve the problems of some families, Marieke hopes to contribute to a solid coping foundation for her clients. This will give them a solid skill set to fall back on when they need it. She said that she isn’t there to solve problems, as a source external to families. This becomes more important the more severe the problem is. She says, “I can try to make the students a little bit stronger to help to handle the things in their own way, but how do you handle things like this? It’s almost not ethical to advise a child how to handle that her mother’s being raped or beaten...” It is imperative for families to solve problems through mutual understanding, rather than requiring family members to individually develop coping methods for unbalanced relationships.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEWS

INTRO

I decided to interview Dutch teens to see how new media factors into their daily lives. It turned out that Dutch teens use the internet far less than American teens. However, speaking with Millennials about their relationships with their families help me to understand how important understanding and support within the family is. The teens were all from one secondary school, a VMBO-t in Eindhoven. It is a school of only 350 students, which makes it unique in Eindhoven. There is a diverse range of students, from hardworking to those who try less hard, to those with slight impediments such as dyslexia or light autism.

I first spoke with coordinators in the school, to understand the type of students who attended the school, as well as to inquire about general problems students may have. I then talked with students about their general circumstances, to get a better understanding of how the Dutch school system worked, as well as Dutch teen culture. Next, I prepared a set of questions which built off of the research of Twenge and Ito. The focus of my discussion were how students related with those in their intimate social circles, as well as how they used social media.

THE FINDINGS

Parents want teens to use media to achieve future goals

Future goals are materialistic in nature

Parents and schools lack an of understanding of the positive potential for social media

Institutions and adolescents do not have a shared understanding of social media, leading to fears on the part of the institutions

Parents and schools may fear what they do not understand or value

Privacy is important for teens, to exhibit the understanding of their identity

The child has the opportunity to be an expert for parents

Some families have managed to address family issues and bond with creative social media

Many teens lack a passion for something

Time spent with friends is seen as completely separate from time spent with parents

Many teens lack pride in life

A sense of pride or achievement can give teens confidence

Learning and education equate to materialistic qualities

THE QUESTIONS

FAMILY

Name, Age?

What are your interests?

What activities do you enjoy?

Who are the closest people in your life?

What do you do when you spend time with family?

What do you do when you spend time with friends?

Are you in a relationship? How do you spend time with him/her?

Can you imagine doing family activities with friends and vice versa?

What makes you proud?

What do your parents do?

How much do your parents understand you? Do you have issues with them?

Do your parents speak to you about future goals?

Are you friends or peers with, or dating, anyone a different age than you?

How has being close with someone of a different age helped you/them?

What do you want to learn more about? - it could be school, your friends, or whatever

What is the difference between an adult and a child?

Do you consider yourself an adult?

Is there a place that you can call your own? Online?

Are you better than your parents at anything? Activity, understanding, etcetera?

What objects are most important to you in life?

MEDIA

Do you use Hyves or Myspace or Facebook, and which do you prefer?

How much time do you spend in these communities?

Who are you in contact with in these communities?

Do you post photos or videos online?

How does social media relate to the people closest in your life?

Who has spoken to you about social media and how to use it?

Who has spoken to you about social media and its dangers?

Does the school have a place where you can access online media? And is it only for school work?

Have your parents ever taken away any media as punishment?

Do your parent want to be in an online community, or are they already?

What technologies are you most comfortable using?

APPENDIX D EXPECTATION SURVEYS

INTRO

In order to gauge what family members understood of one another I created an open survey on expectations within the family. There were only two questions. Each person who completed the survey (Millennials and Gen-X'ers) answered completely differently, especially because the questions were so open ended. I asked them to define what they understood the meaning of expectation to be, hoping to get a better idea of how they view their families. I also left the term family undefined, which gave way to their interpretations. One person included his house and dog as part of the family, while another included her cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The similarities in answers were mostly in age and gender role stereotypes.

THE SURVEY

What are your expectations of your family as a whole?

Please list the other members of your family, and write what your expectations are for each of them.



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Images

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Scenarios: Resolve

All illustrations based on drawings by the Luna Brothers

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0. Author's Image
1. Olivier, 210
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5. Author's Image
6. Author's Image
7. Author's Image

Evaluation

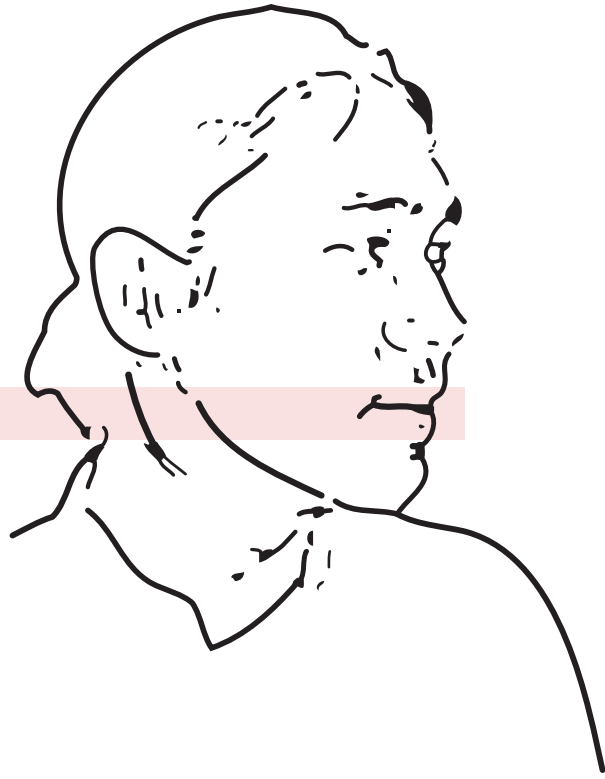
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References

0. Author's Image

Personal Information

0. Author's Image



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Profile A dedicated designer who focuses on human interaction, with excellent human and resource management skills, and proven abilities to persuade, lead and actualize.

Commissions

- Spring 2008 **Dining Room Table** - Brian Schmier (private residence)
September 2007 **Retirement Box** - Florida Atlantic University School of Architecture
December 2006 **The Living Room** - Parc Place, Miami Beach, Florida
September 2006 **Knockdown Shelving System** - John Sandell (private residence)
March 2006 **Dining Room Table and Benches** - Jay Fung (private residence)
April 2006 **Sink stand** - Francis Lyn (private residence)
June 2005 **Bathroom Cabinets** - Aron Temkin (private residence)

Experience

- 2007-Present **Eat or Graze. Inc.** - Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA
President and Founder - A sustainable furniture design and visual arts corporation.
33 Salon - Miami, Florida, USA
2009 *Furniture construction and installation*
Florida Atlantic University School of Architecture, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA
2004-2008 Coordinator, Academic Support Services
Created and coordinated student woodshop projects; instructed students in woodworking techniques and safety; designed and maintained the FAUSA Workshop, machinery; managed workshop budget (up to \$3000/month)
2006-2008 Adjunct Instructor
 - Design 5 - Woodshop Portion - Design/build portion of fifth semester of core architecture design studio. Taught and evaluated students: design, techniques, and aspects of materiality
 - Furniture Design - Initiated, designed, and taught upper level course in furniture design and construction, with an emphasis on the postural and social implications of seating
 - Beacon: Community Interaction Exhibition - Exhibition design course, including gallery and furnishings, culminating in a sound and light show for opening night
 - Design 6 - Managed 40 students during the fabrication of a 40' long bamboo truss bridge
 - Directed Independent Study - Lighting design with an emphasis on dynamic systems
2002-2004 **Rhode Island School of Design**, Providence, Rhode Island, USA
Monitored the furniture woodshop and metalshop, sculpture foundry; taught students techniques, maintained machines
Summer 2002 **Van Hoek Woodworking**, Brooklyn, New York, USA
Interned with fine cabinetmaker; interior restoration of streamlined recreational vehicles

Education

- Fall 2008-Present **Design Academy Eindhoven**, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Man + Humanity, Master in Humanitarian Design and Sustainable Living
Concentrating on the importance of the user in design objects.
 - **Awards** - Ruth Clark Scholarship
Fall 05, Spring 06 **Florida Atlantic University (FAU)** Boca Raton, Florida, USA
Dept. of Visual Art and Art History - 4.0/4.0 GPA
Courses in concept-based sculpture - focus on consumption of natural resources
 - **Awards** - Jurors Award - presented by Frederic Snitzer, Employee Educational Scholarship
Fall 01- Spring 04 **Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)**, Providence, Rhode Island, USA
Department of Furniture Design - BFA in Furniture Design - 3.46/4.0 GPA
 - **Robbins Lumber**, Maine, USA - *Furniture design with a sustainable lumber company*
 - **California College of the Arts**, San Francisco, California, USA - *Furniture/Textile design*
 - **Kartell Workshop**, Milan, Italy - *Furniture accessory design course*
 - **Brown University**, Providence, Rhode Island, USA - Italian literature courses
 - **Awards** - Joseph G. Reynolds Scholar 2001-2004, RISD Scholarship Program 2001-2004

Exhibitions

- November 2009 **The Great Indoors**, Maastricht, The Netherlands
Organized by FRAME Magazine and Marres Contemporary Art Center
- October 2009 **Maken Smaken**, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Smallehaven, for Dutch Design Week
- October 2008 **Houseproud**, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Organized by Your-Space and the Van Abbe Museum
- September 2008 **Apportionment Exhibit**, The New Gross Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel
- May-August 2007 **Southern Open Biennial**, Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, Louisiana, USA
Curated by Dr. Jerry Culum, Senior Editor of Art Papers
- February-March 07 **CANDO**, Parc Place Miami Beach, Miami, Florida, USA
Curated by Brandon Opalka. An inauguration of the CANDO Arts Neighborhood
- Dec. 06- Jan. 07 **Open Space**, Parc Place Miami Beach, Miami, Florida, USA
Curated by Brandon Opalka. Art Basel Satellite show.
- June-August 2006 **55th Annual All Florida**, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida, USA
Curated by Anne Ellegood, Associate Curator, Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA
- March-April 2006 **Annual Student Juried Art Show**, Ritter Gallery - FAU, Boca Raton, Florida, USA
Curated by Frederic Snitzer, Director, Frederic Snitzer Gallery,
- January-March 06 **Sculpture Key West 2006** - Fort Zachary Taylor, Key West, Florida, USA
International juried exhibition of outdoor sculpture.
- December 2005 **In and Out** - Miami Arts and Design District, Florida, USA
Art Basel satellite show.
- December 2005 **Michael Mihalchuk Performance**
Part of *Co-dependent*, The Living Room Space, Miami, Florida, USA
- May-June 2004 **RISD Senior Invitational**, Woods-Gerry Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island, USA
Competed with over 400 entrants for curated show

Reviews

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- May 2007 Greenwood, Chelsea. □ [Nothingman is Forever](#). □ *Blueprint Directory*. Volume 1, Number 3. pp. 76-79.
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I am a furniture designer making a digital calendar for a graduation project. If someone would have asked me the odds of this happening at the beginning of my time at the Design Academy, I would have replied, "That's not what I came here for." Yet, interactions between people are exactly what I came here to study. This project just manifested itself in a very surprising way. And none of it would have been possible without the support of many friends, family, and mentors.

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