



Humanity in the balance

We go deeper with customers by tapping into their imagination,
creativity and perspective.

We before Me

For Episode 5, we asked people to draw their “highs and lows” across a spectrum of time, broadly defined as “Now, Next and Beyond.” The exercise, we call “art from within”, is designed to get people to express themselves – in ways most people are not used to doing (but everyone can do) – in drawing. By tapping into underutilized skills, people’s other talents – of imagination, creativity, perspective – are heightened. Kind of like when people lose their sight, their sense of hearing improves. When people can’t use words, their pictures say a thousand.

What people said in their pictures is really interesting. In all of them, people imagined a brighter future. That’s good. Their highs were brighter than the dark of their lows. However, their highs were more macro than micro. They projected greater progress for the world, the environment, health care, etc. than progress personally felt.

In contrast, people’s lows, were illustrated as more personal – macro challenges, experienced individually. People worry about enforced masks, temperature checks, less human interaction, more reliance on technology etc. and the adverse effect these changes have on them...to a person.

People fear losing our collective humanity...on a personal level. When we wear masks, we aren’t able to read emotions. When we see one another within constraints of screens and physical distance, we lose touch. When we fear one another, we lose who we are.

There is an emerging human truth to reconcile between the “highs” of collective progress and the “lows” in sacrifices to individual freedom. The people we are engaging in via “Customer, Now” are projecting this truth to come into greater focus as the future unfolds.

In the balance is our humanity. Do we lean too heavily to one side or another on the scale of progress and freedom? Or do we gain a greater sense of our humanity for the constraints put upon it?

It is said that creativity thrives under constraints. It just may be that we tap into more of our underutilized skills – of imagination, creativity, perspective – to heighten our human condition.

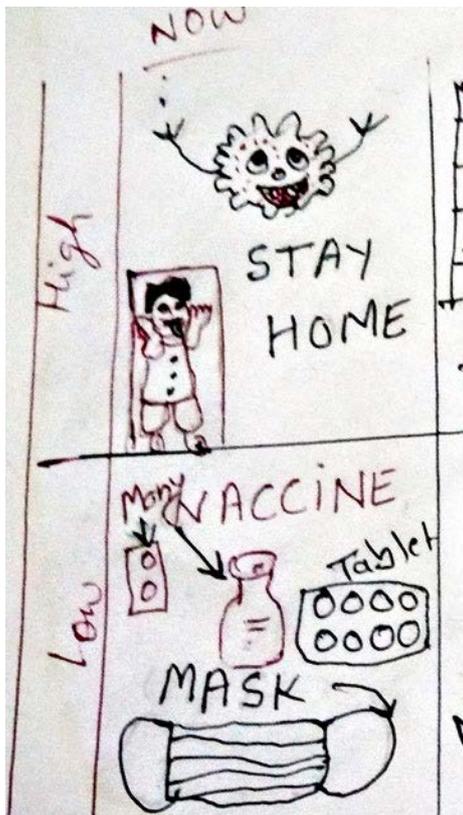
What’s next for brands?

People are projecting a shift in how they will behave – from consuming, i.e., taking from; to creating, i.e., contributing to. While there are no “rules” to follow, we offer the following principles to consider when shifting focus from consumption to creation.



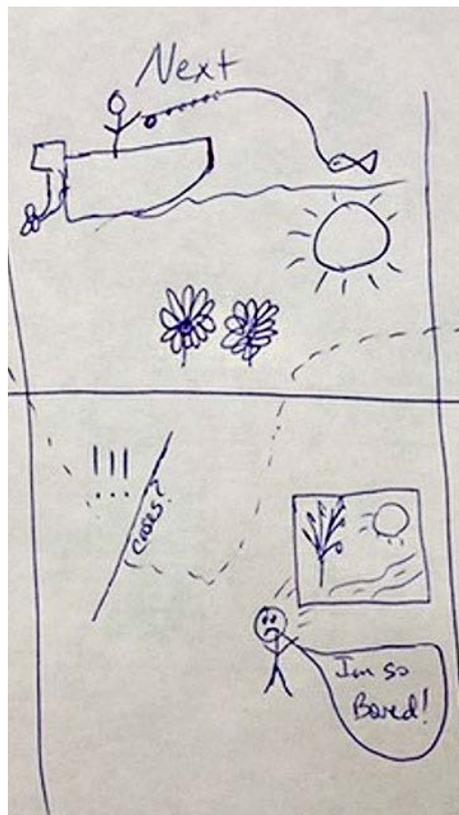
I am too afraid that this quarantine will last much longer to a point than being stressed at home without being able to do anything productive or relevant, tired of being so much locked up without being able to carry out my usual tasks But, in a moment of hope, I think that when this virus passes, we will be able to take back what we love the most, and continue traveling to learn and enjoy the great views of our country.”

John T



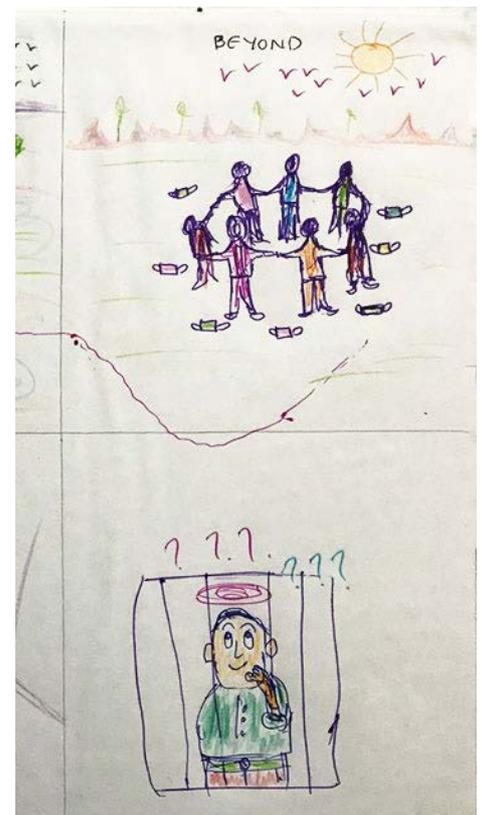
Now

Now is framed by what people miss from before and what they're gaining within the constraints of social distancing (e.g., time with kids, introspection) matched against an uncertainty of what it all means and what will come next.



Next

When people project out to what's "Next" they reflect on both what they'll return to that they missed and the changes in their behavior for what they'll need to do.



Beyond

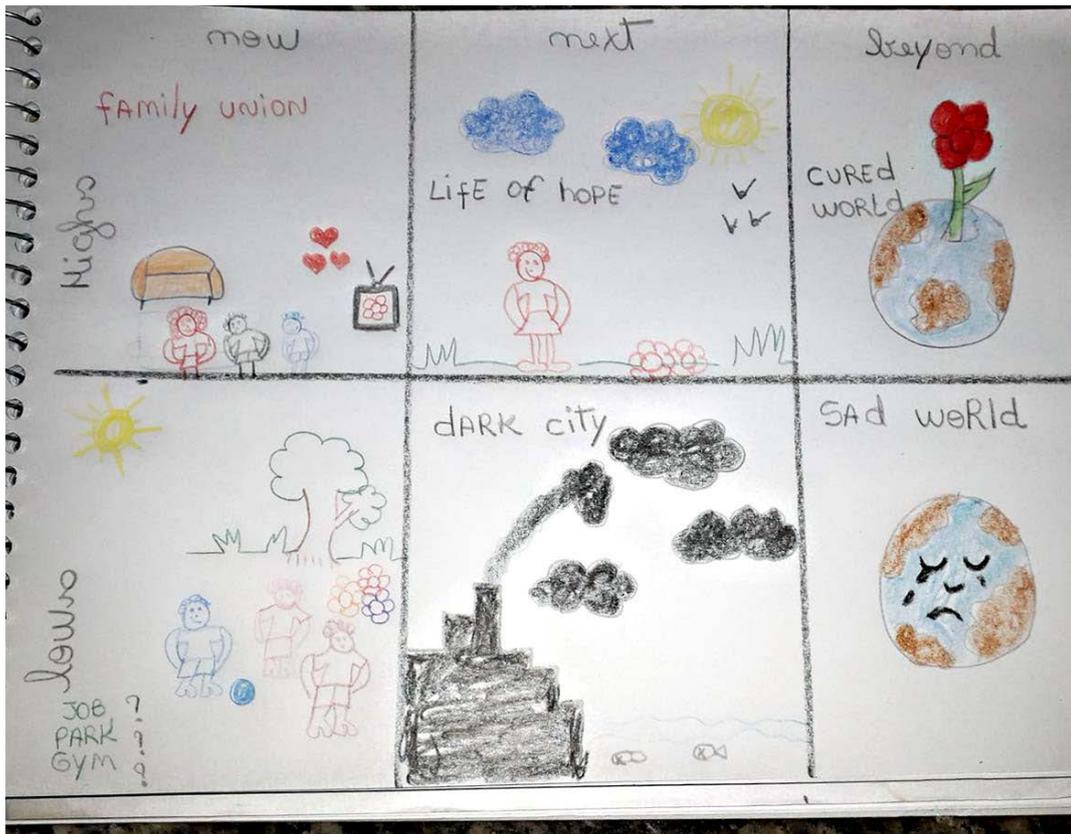
From all that, there will be progress and sacrifice. People believe in a brighter future. In progress. That the earth and human kind will broadly improve. However, people see the cost to their own freedom in service to a better world.

Customer, Now. Nothing is changing faster than ourselves.



I hope that we can eradicate this virus and that no more people die, that we can fully enjoy our lives. The bad thing is that I will have to return to work and I will not be able to be with my family as much as now, I am really enjoying being with them."

Robert J

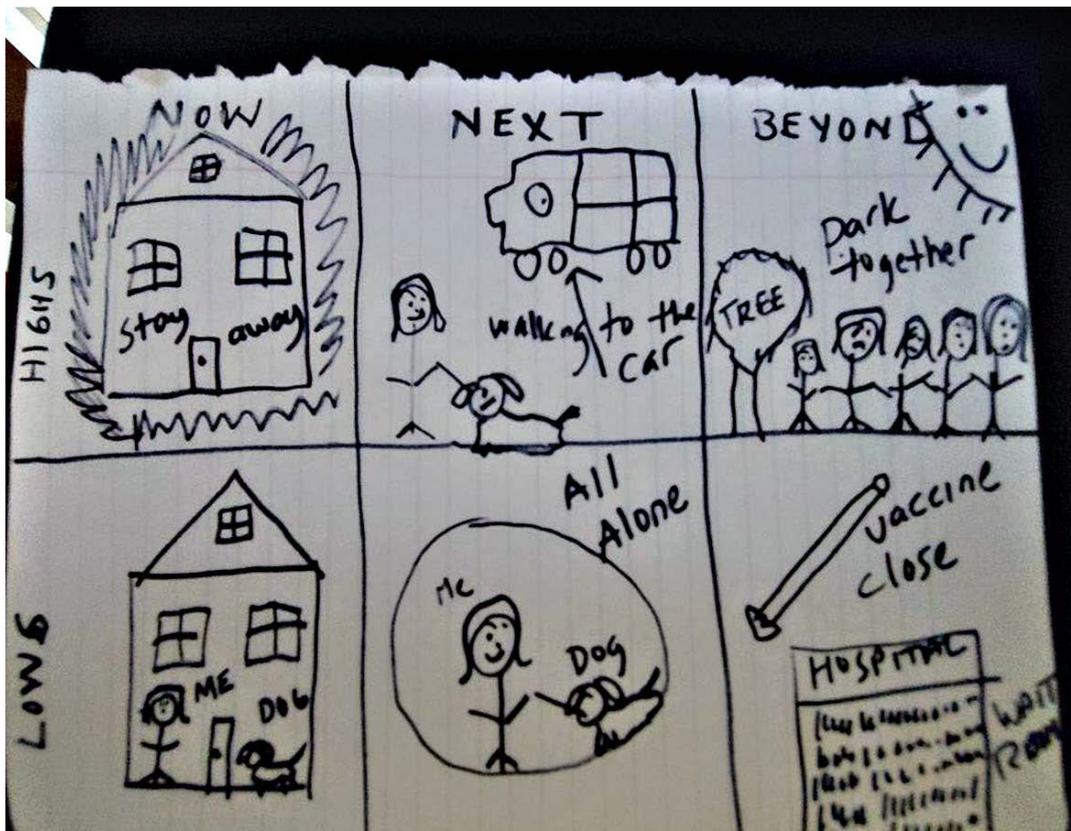


Customer, Now. Nothing is changing faster than ourselves.



My fear is we will need to always be wearing masks for travel and routine activities which has never been case here. Loss of freedoms.”

Beth C





It's the unknown. We don't know what we don't know. I'm worried about things going back to 'normal' and a resurgence in cases in Fall. Working remotely and social distancing is the new normal. This is how I'm taking it. How will this effect dating, and shopping and other activities? The unknown is scary."

Ari C



From consumption to creation

As people's humanity is constrained by masks, distance and sacrifices to freedom, they will look for new ways to project their identity. To connect with who they are – beyond how they see themselves – to what they do, to what they create and contribute to.

People are projecting a shift in how they will behave – from consuming, i.e., taking from; to creating, i.e., contributing to. This goes beyond charity and altruism to adding meaning to everyday decisions. “What am I contributing to when choosing this brand?” When that answer is difficult, so is the decision to choose that brand over another.

While there are no “rules” to follow, we offer the following principles to consider when shifting focus from consumption to creation.

1/

Better worlds are created in actions

Beyond a brand's stated “purpose” or “promise” – what is the difference you make? To the betterment of THE world, OUR world and MY world. Brands that don't make a difference in each of these contexts matter less and are easier to reject.

2/

Durability of pleasure is the path to self-actualization

You don't want to be anything where I don't know when to stop. Whether disposable or ostentatious, brands at either end of the spectrum lose. However, experiences in and of themselves of quality; of design; of touch; of feel; of durable pleasure created, have an opportunity to connect with needs increasingly present in everyone.

3/

Clarity of outcome is the essence of choice

It's not “what do I get?” It's about “what do I create?” With this brand. For myself and others. It's about getting to the outcome customers create with the choice they make. I saved money. I feel smart. I helped out. I did my part. When the outcome is clear and compelling, so is the choice.

4/

Greater freedom in the decision means better decisions

Rather than signing on to a company's terms and conditions, what are the Ts and Cs of customers? Where can brands provide flexibility? Cancel anytime. Go when you want. Change as you need. Freeing customers from risk lowers the barriers to decision-making.