

Episode 08

Habits of control

We go deeper with customers to discover that as we create new habits we find new meaning.

Habits of control

66 days is often referenced as the time it takes to create a habit that sticks. In many markets, today marks the 66th day of stay-at-home orders. While a lot has been written and discussed about new habits people are adopting, we wanted to look beyond the behaviors and better understand the “whys” – the motivations of those behaviors. On the surface, new habits and their motivations are fairly obvious. Taking a walk every morning. Making the bed every day. Gardening. Meditation. Showering when I want. Both the habit and the initial reasoning for them aren’t terribly insightful.

With Customer, Now, we used a favorite technique of ours to go deeper, called the “5 whys”. The “5 whys” is a simple sequencing of asking people to explain “why” they are doing what they are, again and again, until people discover in themselves what they hadn’t yet realized.

What customers revealed was a nearly equal and opposite reaction against the constraints created by the crisis. People are trying to create a balance through their experience of COVID-19. To offset the negative feelings of the pandemic with the positive feelings they can CREATE AND CONTROL for themselves. With so much out of people’s control, they are balancing the equation to create control where they can. Control over a garden. Control over their kids. Control of their minds.

The motivation for control revealed itself just as much in “good” habits, as it did in the “bad” habits people shared. Smoking. Overeating. Drinking too much. Laziness. Showering less. Because we CAN. We control these decisions. And in these decisions, “good” or “bad”, they are little moments that demonstrate our power.

In science, one must balance a chemical equation to follow the law of conservation of mass – i.e., matter cannot be created or destroyed. Similarly within humans, habits aren’t really created...so much as they are the natural reactions to a loss of control.

While the “showering less” habit may or may not stick in the next 66 days (let’s hope it doesn’t), the motivation to balance the equation of what we can’t control with what we can control is growing in importance given the gravity of what is out of our control.

What’s next for brands?

In our habits, we look for meaning. We are questioning the meaning of our choices, brands, experiences and behaviors we bring into our lives. What matters vs. what doesn’t. We take up new habits to connect to what matters to us. And we leave behind our habits in what matters less...what has less meaning.

Positive Habits

Positive Habits During Pandemic

Maria G.



The Outside

Baking – I have started baking as a new hobby and it makes me feel accomplished and happy to provide treats for my husband and family.



The Inside

Practice for sons wedding – I have offered to make my sons wedding cake and this has given me a great opportunity to practice for it, Its made me feel more confident in my abilities at baking and I have bought items to put away for the wedding cake that I wouldn't normally buy for everyday baking. I feel very positive and happy.

Ring rring rrring

Johanna B.



The Outside



The Inside

Since the social distancing restrictions, I call friends and family more often. It feels good to hear them and to know that I am not alone in this situation.

Colors in life

Nirupama P.



The Outside

Drawing and painting is one of my hobbies which I was not doing due to lack of time. But since lockdown I have made it a habit to spend at least 1 hour daily to keep my interest alive.



The Inside

This gives me inner peace and let me relax during this hard time and makes me feel that life is colorful just like my color palette and using these rainbow colors I try to paint my imagination. These paintings make me realize how beautiful nature and life is.

Healthy Inside and Out

Lin O.



The Outside

Walking more and getting more fresh air.



The Inside

It makes me feel healthier and keeps my heart healthy.

Pride!

Sophie C.



The Outside

Cooking with my son more.



The Inside

It makes me feel happy & worthwhile. My son started to get a little more into cooking just before lockdown having attended a cooking day, he has wanted to carry on with this & decided to choose a meal to cook once a week together with him being more involved, so we look for ideas & decide on a meal, write anything we need on the shopping list. & then cook it together. He gets a real sense of achievement & I feel proud!

Negative Habits

Negative Habits During Pandemic

Maria G.



The Outside

Cocktails – I have started to create cocktails both known ones and some of my own ideas and recipes.



The Inside

I started doing them for the novelty of being at home with my husband. It made me feel excited and happy at first, now I am drinking more alcohol also I have gained weight from eating extra snacks and food so my clothes don't fit. Now I feel overweight and unhealthy and am buying larger clothes.

Unhealthy habits

ran T.



The Outside

Carbonated drinks and snacks every day.



The Inside

When I am entertained, the gas of carbonated drinks and snacks makes me feel happy and relaxed. I started this habit because I was bored every day. I could only watch TV or play games. As we all know, when people are entertaining, they always want to have snacks and drinks in their mouths to improve their emotional sense, even if I know that it has a problem for my health.

Late night movies with deep fried food...Sleepless Nights

Nirupama P.



The Outside

Watching late night movies and webseries with my kid and eating lots of deep fried food which is a bad habit I have developed during this lock down.



The Inside

Due to this bad habit I am feeling sleepy during day time while working. This has also impacted my kids daily schedule. He is waking up too late and nothing is happening in proper time. I know its impacting our health out still we are doing it to get entertain. We are eating more deep-fried food and as not doing exercises frequently I am gaining weight.

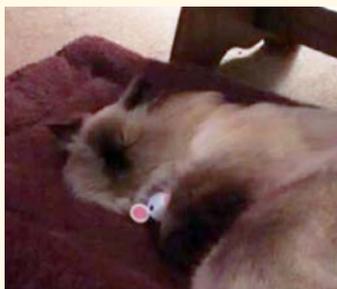
Not really bad habits

Diane B.



The Outside

Sitting on that bench looking at the view when I should be cleaning up the yard.



The Inside

Reading instead of cleaning. Just watching Noel.

Shopaholic!!!

Swapna P.



The Outside

Shopaholic all the time. :)



The Inside

Whenever I do shopping I don't think of saving money, whatever I like I keep on buying and at the end of the month there is no penny left and after long time e-commerce websites have started the sale. so couldn't resist myself and did lots of shopping.

Investing in meaning

In our habits, we look for meaning. We are questioning the meaning of our choices, brands, experiences and behaviors we bring into our lives. What matters vs. what doesn't. We take up new habits to connect to what matters to us. And we leave behind our habits in what matters less...what has less meaning.

As people are questioning the meaning of their choices, the central question brands must help customers answer is: "What am I really paying for?" As every dollar comes under greater scrutiny (either by necessity or discretion), the question itself takes on greater meaning. "What am I really paying for?" "What am I really getting?"

We can feel just as smart for buying cheap as we can for buying expensive. It's not a price point or even a value equation so much as it is a question of self-worth. "What am 'I' really paying for?" "How do 'I' feel for what I get?"

In our choices, we are investing (making "good" or "bad" investments) in ourselves. Brands are our investment advisors. Helping us improve. Comforting us. Giving us advice. Giving ourselves a greater sense of control. And creating meaning from that control.

Brands that can connect their purpose to their customers' motivations can create win-win propositions for the business and the people it serves.