



HURT SO GOOD: EXPLORING HEALTH AND PLEASURE DRIVEN EXPERIENCES

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A STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

**MARCH 2019
FINAL REPORT**

BACKGROUND

We have had this ongoing interest in the interplay between “health” and “pleasure” and so couldn’t wait to explore it further in our March SEEQ session. There is so much packed into these two concepts for the contemporary american. There is the perspective of being young and foolish, a period we consider more pleasing and naturally healthy, to the times in your life where health catches your attention in profound ways.

But, it was more than that. We were interested in a shared perspective on why we often see health as “good” and pleasure as “bad.” In conjunction to that viewpoint, why healthcare is so completely sterile and clinical, as compared to pleasure which can often feel unrestrained and more sensorial. We are watching the rise in interest in both CBD and THC and are curious which spaces these substances will be assigned to, as culturally we have a practice of assigning punishment to things not only like cannabis, but anxiety, and obesity. Our wellness seems locked in a slurry of things, influenced by norms, upbringing and personal experience.

In March 2019 we gathered and heard stories about pleasure and health to see what we could learn. Our goal was to expand our understanding of what these topics are about for people. Our approach to insights has been iterative: listening to people, reading their stories, looking at data, re-reading stories, looking back at the data and so on. What follows is the detail

of what we saw and what that made us think further about. We weren’t disappointed...

HOW WE DO DATA

We start with our initial questions, then apply what we heard, observed and read. We noted what stuck out to us, what was similar to what we expected to hear and what was different. That is summarized in a one-page “Quick Read.”

Our next step is to begin machine learning analysis. We start with the text of the stories as they were written and submitted to us. Those files are initially processed through IBM Watson and assessed across a standard set of heuristics. We get a read on sentiment, emotions, needs, values and personality traits of the authors. We then iteratively use algorithms and observation to look for patterns. Further analysis helps us uncover relationships across the initial data set. For example, do certain personality traits correlate with certain needs or values that are expressed? Are some emotions correlated to specific needs, values or traits?

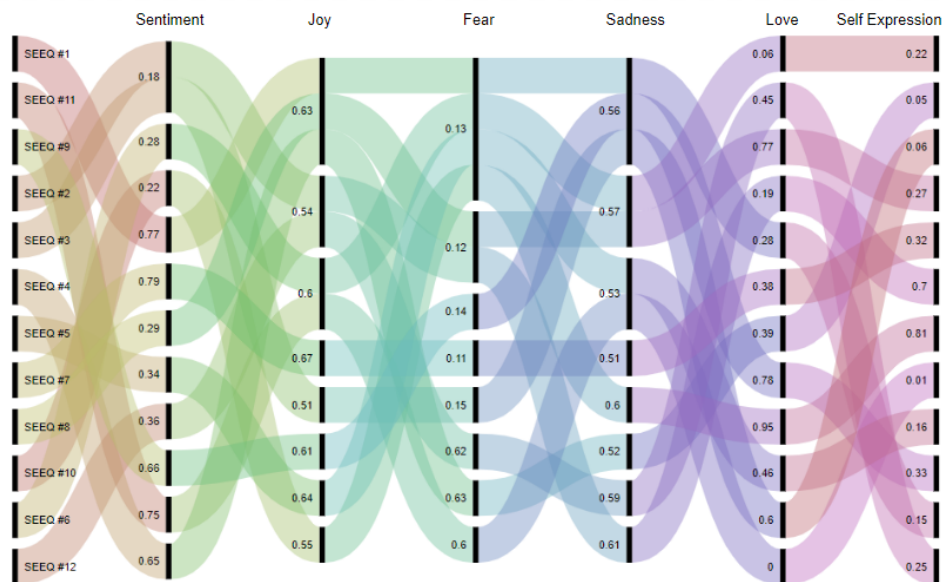
This analysis, alongside re-reading the stories, helps us think more deeply about the possible meanings of what has been shared with us and helps us ask more interesting questions. Our goal with SEEQ is to discover, question and build new understandings. It is open-ended, identifying further opportunities for exploration.

WHAT WE HEARD

The session itself was dynamic. The group felt very open and candid. Story analytics confirmed that most of those who shared their stories with us had open personalities. What was also notable was the palpable energy and desire to connect in real life. In our work, we generally observe that people have this desire for

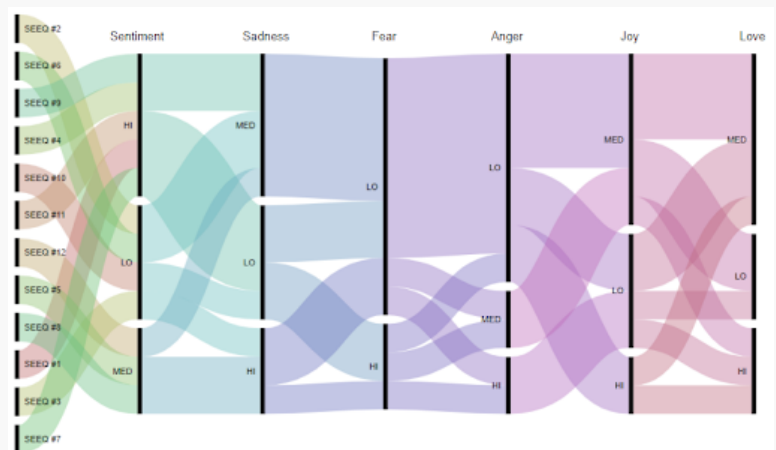
face-to-face connection. In fact, greater connectedness is one of the core outcomes of a SEEQ session. However this group was particularly remarkable in this way.

The stories we collected were riveting. They were emotionally deep and complex. The diversity of storylines and range of experiences shared revealed the complex web of emotional connections we have with past experiences. This graphic shows the range of how people feel when discussing their experiential perspectives of pleasure and health:



FINDING THE STORY WITHIN THE STORIES

At first it seems daunting to try and find patterns within the collective set of stories. However, there are similarities and alignment as we further interpret the authors' needs, emotions, and values as expressed in the stories. Swaths of shared expression materialize and raise additional questions about what can be said about our shared voice in regards to our attitudes towards health and pleasure.



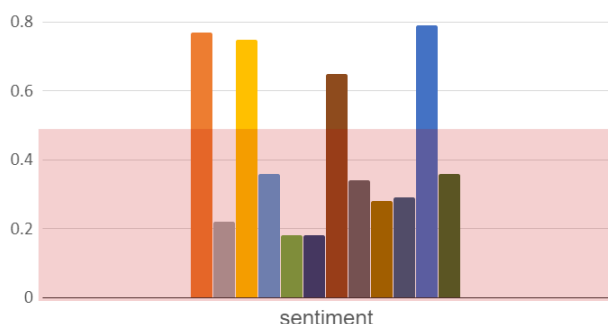
Three-fourths of the stories explicitly talked about both pleasure and health, often leading with pleasure, or its inverse, pain. Even in the few that focused more on either pleasure or health, there were clear inferences to the other topic. This was so interesting as it indeed seemed that with this group these two topics do, indeed, live together but have a distinct function in our mental, physical and emotional well-being. Through the stories, the concept of pleasure seemed in ways more intuitively felt, and health more a mental assessment of one's place within a defined reality.

What also surprised us is how these two topics, health and pleasure, which on the surface would be concepts that one might think are generally positive, elicited stories with a negative sentiment for most of the respondents.

We also saw almost equal amounts of sadness and joy expressed in these narratives. We have seen this before in our work in healthcare: respondents tend to share stories that are a mix of sadness and joy. However, to see this also be true for stories that were equally about pleasure surprised us.

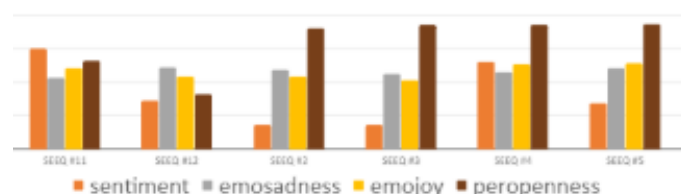
Given our topics, we expected to see people express values of self-enhancement or hedonism. This was not the case. Instead, we saw strong expressions of self-transcendence. This aligned with the stories we read, as a majority of them referenced others either directly or indirectly. Perhaps the story talked about what people wanted, needed or were expected to do for others. Or the story may have shared the assumed expectations that others or "me as other" had of them.

SENTIMENT EXPRESSED IN THE STORIES*



*The pink area represents stories with negative sentiment.

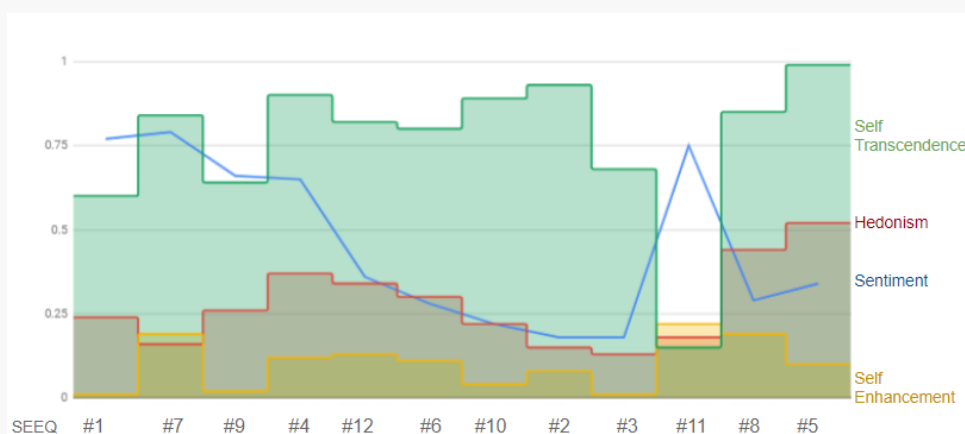
SENTIMENT & EMOTIONS*



*This is a partial data set for illustrative purposes. We are happy to show you scoring for all stories, if you are curious.

THE STORY OF VALUES EXPRESSIONS & SENTIMENT

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THE STRUGGLE TO GIVE
THEMSELVES

FREEDOM AND PERMISSION

TO ACCEPT WHO THEY ARE AND
DO THINGS FOR THEMSELVES

Looking across the data, we see that in these stories, there is a combination of valuing self-transcendence, which we would expect to correlate with feelings of joy, while also feeling sadness. These stories revealed that participants are actually more focused on others and struggle to give themselves the freedom and permission to accept who they are and do things for themselves. In doing things for others or focusing on what others expected of and needed from them, they had difficulty experiencing health and pleasure for themselves. This seemed to us to partially explain why stories of pleasure and health were shared with a mix of joy and sadness. People seem to focus on health as the foundational, if not aspirational, goal with "breaks" for pleasure. Those "breaks" ranged in time from routine to singular moments of release that changed their on going perspective. Health seemed obligatory and responsible.

Often times, health was associated with embarrassment; a failure to achieve what one "should" achieve in terms of physical status, or finding oneself in a place of awkwardness. Pleasure seemed to be experienced in the context of taking risks, being naughty, doing things that have been "pent up" for a while, or getting a break from "doing it the right way all the time." And like health, it too was often associated with embarrassment.

Pleasure was also talked about in relation to nature, as several people had such clear sensorial memories of how nature and being in nature just felt so good. In this 'break' context, even realizing you don't have to be perfect (or perfectly healthy) is in and of itself, pleasurable. These points in time could observationally called casual moments, yet all of these experiences were profound to the writer, and became defining cues in their life perspectives.

ACCEPTANCE | PERMISSION | MANAGING THE MIX

After this session, we wondered if perhaps it shouldn't have been called "Feel So Good," as much of what we heard was describing health and pleasure as emotional, not physical, states. Should we feel pleasure as much as we feel health? Currently it seems that these stories share a struggle to achieve that.

Often times, the stories were going back to experiences that framed how people saw themselves or how others saw them. "Health" was often framed as what they should be, which left pleasure a tough state to reach without breaking some "rules." We heard origination stories about when and how rules and definitions and meaning were set. These emotional structures and memories set health and pleasure paths. They defined



Release



the way, lasting for varying degrees of time, until another event or realization changed the path again.

Behaviors described in context of pleasure included travel, drinking, running, reading, laughing, drugs, expressions of love and sex. Behaviors described in context of health included seeing doctors, responsibly managing risk, exercise, not judging or being judged, food and managing stress.

Several stories that spoke of life's biggest moment of pleasure described it as a moment when they achieved mental release. Many other important things followed: managing or even getting over the judgment of others; redefining assumptions to allow oneself permission to pursue a better mix. Bringing health and happiness together seemed to be tied to a mental realization, a release from expectations and ultimately, acceptance of oneself and one's circumstances. At some point, many talked about a moment that required acceptance of one's current state, physically or emotionally, as well as an understanding of how or why one got here as being critical to enjoying pleasure. It can also be said that there is a notable segment of "pleasure" that is an escape from the burden of not being in a place of release and acceptance.

Are we seeking to redefine both pleasure and health? Do we need a new emotional bundle that allows more balance? After all, it's no fun if you can't achieve it.

CARE OF SELF | SELF-CENTERED

Does pleasure with health included require making yourself happy without guilt? Does health with pleasure require permission to recognize the emotional benefit of self-care?

It seems that it might. As you will see on page 8, a sense of "Harmony" is correlated to a sense of liberty and self-expression. One may need to be a little self-centered to achieve the harmony necessary to care for one's self and others.

For some people, the fact that their self-transcendence felt like denial of self, vs. self-realization may be indicative of the burden of not giving oneself permission and acceptance to draft their own harmonious mix. Serving others wasn't in a feel good way. We noticed a lot of women expressed negative health experiences and related them to their roles as moms and wives. We also saw evidence that the pressures of working in big business left some with a similar feeling. Caring for others or doing what needed to be done for the company, sometimes seemed to get in the way of taking care of oneself.

FRAMES | TRUST | SHAME

So many stories talked about the important edges that we find in our lives to help us find that right mix. Perhaps it is a healthy environment that allows for more pleasure. Or a commitment to health that allows you to pursue your pleasures. In our discussions, we heard about frames as a way to help define that balance. People can choose what goes in the frame and as long as it is inside the lines, it is an acceptable mix of pleasurable and healthy experiences.

We also saw evidence of this in the story analysis. When we share stories about health & pleasure we need love, practicality, self-expression, and stability; perhaps the rails of the frame. Over half of the stories expressed this similar pattern. We think this idea of framing may be a larger construct with strategic importance. If you consider that we all cognitively live within frames of thinking and feeling, frames are our sense of place. Some people are trapped in less than perfect frames, some joyfully live within well designed frames, and still some are wandering frameless. It can be said we humans like boundaries, this is true in our physical, mental and emotional spaces. For this reason, the concept of frames are an important topic for human harmony.

Frames give us a place where we can apply the emotional learning we derive from the human expression of stories.

Framing appears to be important to how health and pleasure are evaluated. A person's emotional state is defining what physical healthcare they look for, pursue, are willing to receive. This can be impacted by trust or shame. Trust helps us open up our frames to include more things inside of them. If I trust a health provider not to judge my past behavior or choices, I may be more willing to explore issues related to my health. Shame can keep things out of the frame. For example, if I think that some of the decisions I have made in my pursuit of pleasure may have had consequences, I may not seek the opinion of a professional.

Another component of our frame appears to be time. Both health and pleasure were topics in the stories (mentioned on average 1.5 times per story). However "time" was mentioned 2.2 times per story. Time was also expressed in different contexts. Sometimes it was time of day or in one's day. However more often it related to time of life. This makes sense as what might be framed as acceptable health and pleasure behaviors vary with what time of life a person might be in.

THE STORY OF MORE CONNECTIONS

You know how it is: you start to think about something and then you see references to it everywhere. That happened to us about health and pleasure. We wanted to share some of the stories, posts and videos that we came across and thought were really thought-provoking.



"Beer in America"



Navigating Polarities
Emerson and Lewis



McGilchrist and Peterson
Interview
(You Tube)



Medical Tourism
Magazine

EMOTIONAL BUNDLING

It was important to assess the information iteratively across human and digital paths to find inferences and new questions to ask. One of the most intriguing discoveries is the impact emotions, in concert, have on other emotions, and the individual who feels them.

HARMONY	corr
Agreeable	0.41
Emotional Range	-0.6
Open to Change	0.41
Liberty	0.64
Self Expression	0.62

During our feature analysis work, we began to see signs that there are determinant and correlative relationships between emotions, values, personality traits, and needs. Our work demonstrated that these were not single “peer to peer” relationships, but that they were grouped together to create what we are calling “emotional bundles.” So for example, underneath the expressed need for liberty were a set of related personality traits, needs and values that together

contributed to the level of a need for liberty that was expressed in a given story.

As a separate process, a correlative score was generated between the dependant feature (pictured at the top of each chart) and the independent features within the bundle. It is important to again stress these findings are short of being considered statistically significant, but they did show both notable variance between features, and consistency across the data set.

This may suggest that what we think of as the five basic emotions are really layered. There are other emotions, values or needs that correlate with them. Thinking of people as happy or sad is too simplistic and trying to help someone be happy or sad is too hard. Emotional bundles may be required to understand experiences.

So for example, to understand (or empathize with) joy we must understand that stability, structure and self-expression are also interactively present (per our initial findings). It is not adequate to consider a person’s sadness, without also understanding they likely have an additional need for self expression. If we don’t acknowledge the full bundle, we will be incomplete.

THE STORY OF PRIMARY EMOTIONAL BUNDLES

Within this study, we are working with a small data set and can not yet prove statistical significance of these initial findings, but we consistently found these groupings. As we continue to run these routines across additional data sets we speculate their ranking may change, and potentially new bundles will appear.

SADNESS	corr	JOY	corr	DISGUST	corr	CONSCIENTIOUS	corr	HARMONY	corr	LIBERTY	corr	PRACTICALITY	corr
Love	0.24	Love	0.16	Love	0.05	Sentiment	0.43	Agreeable	0.41	Openness to Change	0.59	Emotional Range	0.7
Practicality	0.29	Practicality	-0.2	Practicality	0.42	Agreeable	0.11	Emotional Range	-0.6	Curiosity	0.44	Conservation	0.4
Self Expression	0.68	Self Expression	0	Self Expression	0.25	Emotional Range	0.77	Open to Change	0.41	Excitement	0.69	Challenge	0.77
Stability	0.33	Stability	-0.6	Stability	0.35	Curiosity	-0.6	Liberty	0.64	Self Expression	0.81	Closeness	-0.7
Structure	0	Structure	-0.5	Structure	0.01	Love	-0.5	Self Expression	0.62				

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN FOR BUSINESS

As with any rich, juicy session, this one left us wanting to explore even more. It also raised lots of thoughts for what potentially this could mean.

Of course, when we started this topic, one of the emerging industries that we were intrigued by was cannabis. As we see it now, so many companies are picking either health (CBD) or pleasure (THC) as their "way in" to consumers. Isn't it interesting that nature has chosen a balance of both to occur in the plant? Might there be an opportunity for someone in the industry to anchor their product experience to that of the full plant, and explain the benefits of the full spectrum and/or the "entourage effect?"

Or perhaps it is best to pick a side, as our culture reinforces an "either/or?"

If we were to talk to health-focused companies our question would be, "how might you design more pleasure into your product experience, even as you anchor it in health?" Could the packaging just feel good? Could the brand persona make you grin?

Likewise, were we to talk to a pleasure-focused company, our question would be, "how might you design more health into your product experience?" For example, can you create structure through your packaging so dosing is clear? or managed? For example, what is the ideal size of a bottle of alcohol, wine or beer? What could make labeling more helpful in the pleasure-foods segment?

Of course, the way we are designed, our thinking went way beyond the industries that we started in. This exploration has caused us to wonder about quite a bit. If you are interested in hearing about it, or building ideas with us, please get in touch. In the meantime, here's a little of what we've been wondering:

MANAGING THE MIX

Could more companies build in ways to help their consumers manage their mix of health and pleasure? Why can't my fitness app measure oz of chocolate I'm earning vs. miles I'm running?

FRAMES

To effect change, consider what frames exist within the current environment, then what frames should exist in a well designed future, and finally what behaviors will migrate the population from the old framing to the new.

EMOTIONAL BUNDLING

If a company wants to build authentic relationships with a group of consumers, employees or the community, it may be important to not try and present happy, sad, or any other stand-alone emotion, but to do so within the context of others.

ABOUT US

ABOUT SHARE MORE STORIES

We are a team of seekers. Of dreamers. Of believers. Of game-changers. Yeah.

We believe that good is profitable -- and critical to company growth in the future. We are creating tools that help companies put humanity back in their businesses, by guiding them to develop more mutually beneficial relationships with people. These relationships are developed through genuine connections with customers, employees and society, through and across values-based communities.

We use stories to help brands and organizations grow through human-led experiences, insights and ideas. SMS' proprietary methodology combines the authentic, human connection of shared storytelling, the power of machine learning, to deliver culture growth and brand relevance.

We have also probably been where you are. If you work for a big company and are trying to solve for what's next, we have done a lot of that. In fact, we have a very interesting team of professionals with a wide variety of experiences and expertise. That, combined with interesting applications of digital tools is our magic sauce.

If you would like to learn more about us and our process, drop us a line at info@sharemorestories.com.

ABOUT SEEQ: STORIES TO ENGAGE, EXPLORE, QUESTION

SEEQ is a storytelling experience presented by Share More Stories.

SEEQ is focused on exploring topics that are relevant today, in an effort to more deeply understand human experiences and ultimately develop ideas for companies, brands and communities to grow.

Our next SEEQ Session is scheduled for May 30, 2019 at The Dark Room in Richmond, VA. We will be exploring "(Dis)Connecting: Stories of Travel." As we do this, we will be curious about exploring the reasons why we travel and how we think about going to places and getting away. And yes, we see this topic as connected to and building from our last SEEQ Session. If you are curious, check out "8 Reasons Why Traveling is Good for Health", posted on FabHotels.

We plan to host six sessions in Richmond, VA in 2019. You can view the current plan for dates and topics at www.seeqrva.com. We will keep it fresh as the year unfolds.

If you would like to stay informed about upcoming events, receive our insights reports from our SEEQ sessions, or are interested in bringing a SEEQ session to your area, you can email us at info@sharemorestories.com.

