

P.O.U.

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Paper-4

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Task 1

A person remains to be blissfully oblivious, until someone points it out, and for most cases, seeds of low self-esteem, self-doubt and societal standards first gets sown by the closest peers and family members, consciously or unconsciously, then it gets germinated by social media. A casual comment, from a family member, might seem harmless at start, but it later builds on, the more they are said, but genuine affirmations and appreciations during childhood significantly reduces self-esteem problems growing up. We are at the age of information, or rather misinformation, where there are so many glamorous presentations of societal standards and posh lifestyles, which is unfortunately often perceived as an ideal reality. Looks, fundamentally is one of the major factors which run this world, directly or indirectly. Beauty, is a visual stimulus, and in the modern world of stimulus hungry generation, the standard gets more sharper and obnoxiously unrealistic. Social media is constructed to keep you engaged, and their algorithm is thus curated, taking advantage of any primal instincts and psychological fundamentals to keep you hooked on. Let us analyse one of the possible user's journey, intentions and motivations viewing a fitness model's Instagram page, to get to the crux of the matter.

A user is scrolling through his/her feed, the feed thus so far seems pertaining to his/her interests, and in the middle, a post of a conventionally very attractive person pops up. This piques the interest of the user, either appealing to the male or female gaze, again it arises from the primal instinct of lust or having a cognitive bias of the person's mating potential. Then the person, finds oneself looking at the comment sections and the number of likes; there are tonnes of it, which makes the user believe that the influencer is validated by a lot of people, thus believing this is the norm one must achieve to be considered desirable. Humans crave to be desired; it is etched into their cognition and holds true to their instincts to procreate and confirm into groups. This validation they so crave, makes one to start doubting their body image to not be ideal enough. They might try to pose their own picture, just to not get the similar reaction or be burdened by the expectations to keep up with, if they receive a similar reaction. In both cases it may result in unhealthy measures and induces eating disorders. Later they look back into these pages and get stuck in this vicious loop, over fantasizing it. The views generated gets capitalised, and they slip in brand sponsors, ads, and promotions to generate revenue. The posts maybe heavily fabricated, to cater to your eyes, and information maybe be half baked which is equally dangerous for one's body given the content is targeted towards the same. They serve hope to the hopeful, and provide a seemingly invulnerable mould to the vulnerable

So, the core middleman, connecting media and body image is validation. We might be bound by our primal instincts, but we sure are gifted with cognition, making us different from animals. We can self-reflect and analyse. Let us not depend on validation, nor do we have to post pictures just with sole intent to prove anyone. On an individual level, we can learn to let be. Media, annoying nitpicky relatives, and brutal netizens will exist. Their words will sting, but we can develop an immunity over time, with undying self-confidence, which of course will not be done overnight and does take time to develop, but surely. Prioritize health, presentability and basic hygiene over extreme beauty standards. Finding middle ground and neutrality, goes a long way in a polarised world. Take everything shown in media with a grain of salt. As parents or guardians, one can make sure to take extra care into genuinely affirming their off springs so they do not turn to social media for their dose of validation, yet teaching them humility. As friends, sure we can banter, but compliment and affirm twice the amount. The biggest and most powerful validator, is oneself. We can be blissful, even if not in oblivion.

Bibliography

Freudian Psychology on Motivation- Sigmund Freud

Male vs female gaze- A YouTube video by Donna.

"Body Image: An International Journal of Research"

https://youtu.be/rOIwHD_ITIo?feature=shared

Day 3 daily journal

Bain storm session: Raw thoughts and conversations

First line of thought:

So, if validation is the crux of the problem, which ultimately makes one not happy with oneself.

How can I help with this social problem?

Does the solution have to be in social media? Heh outside the box, literally

Where are the common places, we consciously or subconsciously seek for validation?

Washroom mirrors? Yes, it is not just the ladies, guys do check themselves out too even if they do not admit it, cheeky

Barber shops? Saloons? Gyms?

Okay does it have to be at expected places? Will the impact be more in unexpected places?

Corporate settings? Funerals? XD

Where else?

Parties? Events?

How do people get validated?

Verbally? Texts? Eye-contacts? Words of affirmation?

Okay, so there are broadly two types of people, Emotional nuts, and the logical ones, right?

It appeals differently to both.

Words of affirmation- Helps in making someone's day, or better, even by 1 percent.

Can be used in mirrors where the person can see it.

Better mechanism?

Could be interactive?

Easily attachable- Tissue dispenser? Tissue as an element in washroom, can have affirming messages in it, Further exploration to be made.

Second Line of thought

Creative expression?

Art work, Charcoal, colour pencils

Morphing Different visuals

Posters?

Visuals? No generic ones

Mirror, blood, phone, text bubbles are first thought visuals,

Beyond?

Can use elements pertaining to different sub topics

Expressions, Number of likes, comment bubble, Dumbbells, Protein powder? Protein powder scoop?

Hour glass (body),

About three visuals, with different concepts

Third line of thought

Sometimes, people must merely hear the right words and guided with a different perspective, to improve their self esteem

Hot topic? Chat gpt? Ability to converse, morality and less intimidation?

Bingo, using a website, with small changes of chat gpt algorithm to be more humane, centred around body image where users can converse and hear a different point of view

Should have commonly suggested questions, presented in a non-judgemental way,(oof judgmental people can be a pain itself, imagine if an non-inanimate is judging your unhealthy obsession with Pani puri)

Use of warmer, rounder colours, having a mascot which induces warmth and acceptance.

Fourth Line of thoughts

A story represented with a hypothetical situation? Trio dynamic? No social media

No mirrors? Only way of validation was through each other's eyes?

Wholesome or Dark?

Character depth, should be characters with highly validating professions, oo spicy

Add in some, characters from non-validating professions,

Anthropomorphic Animals? Can use their animal characteristics

Gym bros? trainers?

Interactions ,

Day 4: Phase Two of Iteration

Iteration 1: An Anecdote

Script Summary:

The story is about three adolescent anthropomorphic animals, who find themselves in a confined room. Shaggy, the sloth, Ellie the elephant and Kang the Kangaroo. The room is triangular, with no access to mirrors or social media.

Each of them is confused as to why they are confined in the same room. They look at each other, anticipating someone to break the silence. Ellie decides to break the silence, by asking each one to as to how they ended up in this sort of Kafkaesque situation. Kang, A buff kangaroo, replies, with an obviously exaggerated deeper tone of voice, as to how he has no Idea himself, and Shaggy just nodded with a nonchalant smile, he has this sort of Eerie calmness to him, which the rest cannot wrap their fingers around. Ellie and Kang get a little self-conscious. Then Kang recognizes Ellie from somewhere. Turns out Ellie is a famous body positive influencer. This sets Ellie in a pedestal, as she tries to act famous. Kang gets little annoyed, and tries to shift the power balance towards himself by trying to assert dominance by establishing the fact as to how he is a famous body builder/fitness influencer/ philanthropist himself. There is a clear tension between these two, they Cleary not at the best books of each other based on their first impressions, and then there is shaggy, just calmly in his own world, He is a sloth of a medium build, who seem comfortable with this unusual situation, leaning back on his chair with both hands placed at the back of his head. Shaggy's reaction, places him in a position where, Ellie and kang have this subconscious urge to gain his validation.

Kang and Ellie get in a heated argument. They were defending their views which were both at the opposite side of the spectrum. Shaggy as usual, seemed like he was the most chill sloth to every walk this world.

Now, we must remember, this room does not have mirrors or any devices, so the only way to know was one's self-image was through the lens of the other two members present in the room. Kang wants to know, how the rest of them feel about him so far, so is the case with Ellie. They tried talking about their journeys trying to induce some sympathy, emotional element to it, and was an attempt to improve their image on others, ironic for a "self-image". Shaggy as usual, unbothered and had this eerie gaze to his eyes. Kang and Ellie, were at their peak of their self-consciousness. The anticipation was unsettling, as to what Shaggy think about them because they cannot make out what he is thinking, what he thinks of himself and as to how he is so comfortable with himself in this unusual situation. Kang decides to ask him himself, but when he tried calling out, "Mr sloth-"the light had suddenly gone out, there was no sound or reaction from Shaggy, and when the lights came back. Shaggy pulled out a notebook and a pen, out of his thick fur, and scribbled a message. It said "Sorry, were you all asking me something? I could make out by your body language, but then the light had gone out and I couldn't see". They seemed confused, and Shaggy could sense that. He got back to his scribbling, and revealed the message.

"Oh, my apologies, I am deaf by the way."

Iteration 2: An interactive website using AI.

Features of the website:

- A safe space for a person to chat to.
- Warm calming Colour schemes
- Adapting the AI algorithm to be more Humane with response.
- Having, Non-judgmental conversation starters prompts, for someone trying to use the chat bot in the website for the first time, E.g-“Tell me about your day?”
- Having common questions, worded in a relatable manner, regarding body image and self-esteem, as at suggested questions tab
- Anonymity guaranteed
- A pleasant experience overall, client must leave with a different perspective and affirmations
- Helpline numbers on standby

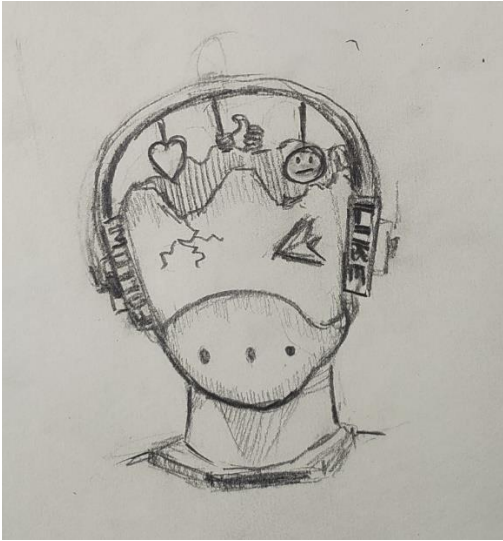
Iteration 3: Mixed media collage.

Concept Note:

The main theme was to capture the emotion due to the desire validation in media which affects one's self image. Different visuals which one can associate with popular media motifs such as a comment bubble icon is curbed to form the umbrella's top part, the body/self-esteem of the person is represented by the phone, with fidgety hands, indicating low confidence. The heart of the person, is represented by the heart icon widely used in social media, and the umbrella is held by a thumb's up emoji, yet another popular social media element. The message is to convey that, the very thing social media should promote, such as genuine connections, constructive criticism, gets back fired and causes detrimental effects to one's self-image, just like how the sheltered umbrella of social media, fails to protect the person from the rain of unrealistic standards, and becomes the root cause for the need of validation, resulting in a negative body image



Iteration 4: 3D model



Concept note:

The theme is to capture the suffocating feeling of social media due to toxic expectations and the dirty game of validation and its degrading effect on one's body image. The use of Follow/like marked headphones and a "comment bubbled mask" emphasis on the feeling of getting suffocated and feeling closed off. The cracks and half open skull represent, the damaged body image, due to the likes of social media. The heart, thumbs up, and a face emoji suspended on the headphone on top the of the head represents, how one is constantly thinking about factors of validation online.

Iteration 5: Charcoal art

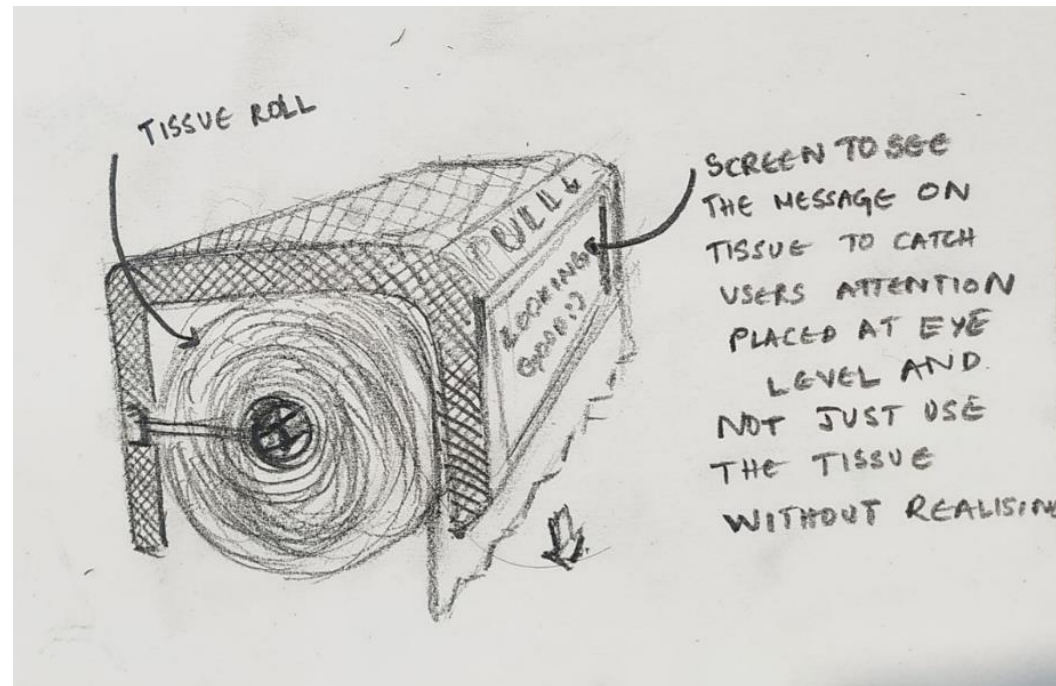
Concept note:

I wanted to represent the cut-throat beauty standards in media, which bends and destroys so many people self-image and body. The person's body is again represented by a phone, which is deformed at the cost of social media validation, expectations, and portrayals



Iteration 6: Affirmative tissue dispenser

- A tissue dispenser, is usually placed in front a mirror, and a mirror is one of the most direct instigators to make one to become self-conscious.
- Words of affirmation, coming from unexpected places, helps most people with their day and self-esteem, even if it is a little.
- Using tissue is a mostly an autopilot sort of an experience, so a screen mechanism through which the message on the tissue can be seen, to catch the user's awareness and successfully read the message
- The messages on the tissues are carefully curated affirmations which is warm and playful.



Day 5 daily journal

Brain storm session:

Anecdote is the chosen iteration.

Different ways to present the story? Film, Documentary, Graphic

Novel, puppet show, animation

More unconventional, the frames can be rolled?

Power point with sound effects?

Voice recording ?

Excel sheets?

'A Ballot, with each frame drawn out? Stimulate all the senses why just visually? Texture, Smell , Sound

Reset formats

It is a dialogue heavy story, so there must be enough space? Or could be half visuals, and half writing.

So, Could have a different way of having dialogue bubbles?

Day 6 daily journal

Character draft sketch



Characters: na

Shaggy- A sloth, Relaxed, Nonchalant, Medium built, mysterious, Blue colour, best boy.

Kang-A kangaroo, Buff, Authoritative, Bloated ego, has, Fitness influencer.

Ellie- An elephant, Plump, Body positivity influencer, acts self-accepting over media but is insecure about her body.

CONCEPTS AND THEMES EXPLORED:

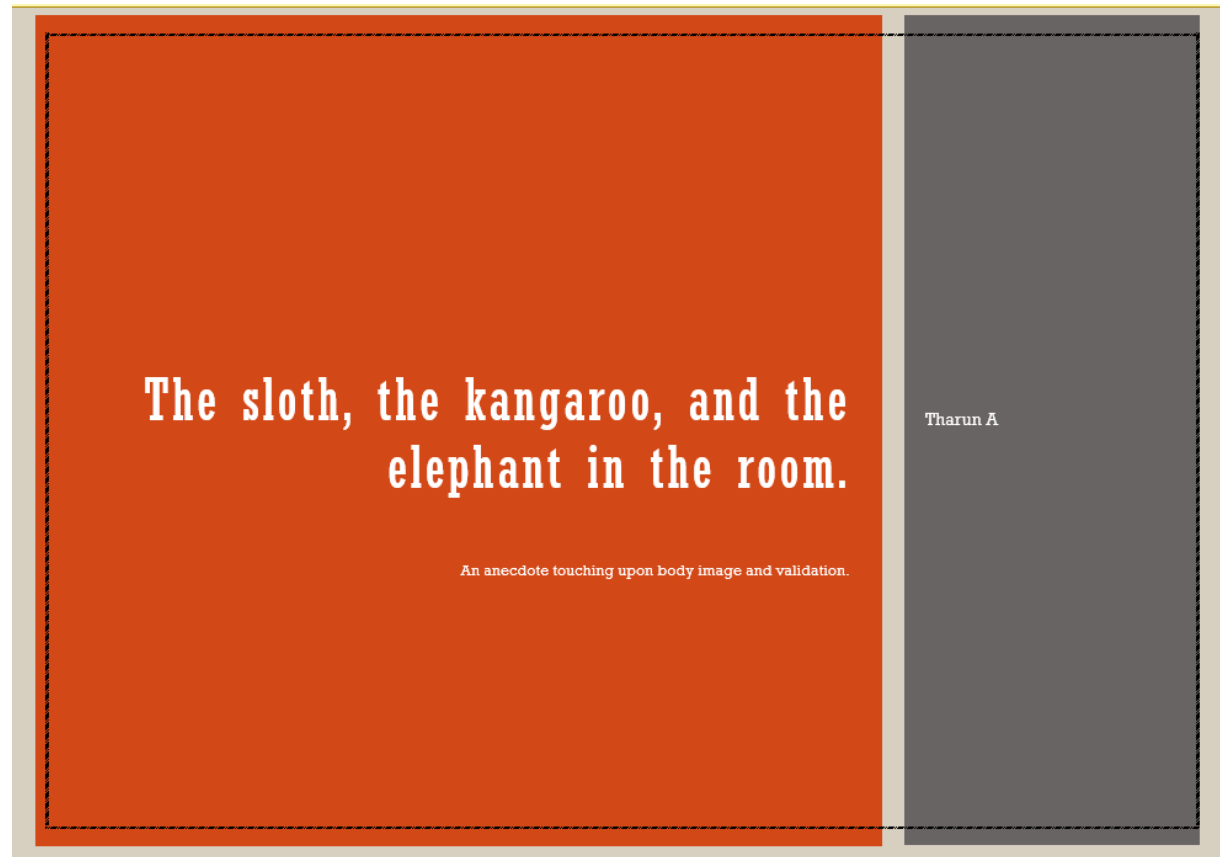
The sloth seems to be the most comfortable, in his own skin in contrast to the two influencers.

Body image and need for validation – Setting and environment where there is a psychological element of validation.

Self-confidence – Presence, and warmth, inducing people to open.

Clash of extreme opinions- Having two contrasting characters of professions at the opposite spectrum.

Cover page:



Day 7: Final script

Three adolescents find themselves in a rather unusual situation. Not in a million years did they envision themselves to be stuck in a triangular room, with no access to phone's, social media, or no mirrors, and two other random strangers. There is anticipation, for someone to break the silence. Kang, a kangaroo with a physique which seem like it is sculpted by a Greek god, takes the honour to break the silence.

"So, does anyone of you all have any idea as to how we ended up here?" He asked in an obviously exaggerated deeper tone of voice.

Ellie, an unconventionally scrumptious elephant, replied with a slight tint of entitlement

"Well, I do not know, do you? Who even are you all?"

The last person due his introduction, was Shaggy, A sloth of a medium built, not necessarily attractive yet presentable, with this sort of uncanny presence, who just nods and blesses the room with a mysterious smile. This subconsciously makes Ellie and Kang feel a little self-conscious. They could feel the presence.

Kang, seems to recognize Ellie from somewhere, turns out she is a body positivity influencer. Kang exclaimed "

Aren't you Ellie? The body positivity influencer?"

"Well yeah, someone has been on the internet" replied Ellie, with a noticeable increase at the entitlement.

Kang does not like the tone, and the way she replied. His ego felt questioned.

"Oh? I am Kang, a body fitness influencer" as he replied emphasising on the word 'fitness', trying to shift the power dynamic to himself like a dictator who just got humbled by a democratic super power.

Shaggy, was still in his own seemingly, blissful yet mysterious state. This make's Kang and Ellie feel more self-conscious than before. The battle of painting one's status and identity based on body has commenced between Ellie and Kang, and Shaggy seems to have become the canvas. An interesting dynamic initiated, inducing the inner-influencer tendency of both.

"You, body positivity influencers, are all the same, you all are just lazy to put the efforts to lose weight" A first offensive under the order of dictator Kang

"Oh excuse you, you misguided hunk of testosterone, I am pretty sure, you count the number of dumbbells instead of lambs before you cry your actually insecure-self to sleep" A ruthless first line of defence initiated by President Ellie.

Makes you wonder, who exactly needed to hear that, or was it for both? There are some who agree with one or the other, but our nonchalant sloth stretches his arms upward with no bother.

“I worked hard on my body, I was so tough on myself, Sleepless nights of being constantly shoved with expectations, what do you know?” a genuine reply given by Kang

“Oh, I know a thing or two about sleepless nights, those nasty comments from people who can’t get a life, and makes me want to do my job even more, and I am not surprised you are one of them” yet another genuine reply by Ellie.

This, had turned into a vent out session, and we could partly blame Shaggy’s demeanour for this. He seems to be comfortable, not even flinching to an already absurd situation of being in room, with now two adolescents at the opposite extremes of the spectrum going at each other to top it off.

We must recall, how this is a room with no mirrors, social media, devices, or any reflective surface, for one to find out about one’s current self-image. The only way, is through the biased lens of the other two presentees. So, you will never know of that spinach stuck to your teeth from the spinach corn sandwich you had for breakfast unless someone points it out. Amidst this environment, Ellie and Kang seem to be at their peak of their self-consciousness.

More than, knowing what Ellie and Kang thought of the respective other person, they wanted to know what Mr Sloth had to say. They craved for his validation, and somewhere believed his word would be the peace treaty.

“Mr Sloth- “, before Ellie could finish, the lights to the room had gone out. When, the lights had come back, Shaggy had a diary and a pencil pulled out. As he starts scribbling, with each stroke increasing the suspense by the second in Kang and Ellie.

“Sorry, where you asking me something? I could tell by judging your body language and facial expression before the light went off”

Revealed the much-awaited message.

Ellie and Kang seemed confused, and after sensing the same, Shaggy got back to his scribbling another message just to reveal

“Oh, by the way, I am deaf, even more than a cuttlefish.”

Day 8 Final Reflection

The relevance of this metaphorical story, to today's current day situation is stark. Social media exist and will continue to exist, and there is no telling as to how degrading it will turn out to be. People will set standards, break it, get more extreme with their opinions. At core, we try to paint our ideal image, to the canvas of others, why must we waste our paint?

In this story we can see, how Kang and Ellie try to paint their image. They are confined with their standards and constantly try to prove each other. We cannot fully blame them as media has sown such standards into their minds, but we can sure question how they responded and react.

Amidst the tussle, we can see Shaggy, completely unfazed, and comfortable in his own skin. He is deaf, so he does not hear to the hurtful comments or polarised opinion, yet empathetic enough to understand when someone is trying to ask them something.

My approach is more humanistic, and trying to understand human intentions and behaviour. One should take control, by letting go things you cannot control.

This does not mean, we should be ignorant of media, yet find ways to find our own stride. We could focus on presentability, and health over validation based on extreme standards.

To sum it up, everyone has issues, and insecurities, even the nasty commentators, we are gifted with different circumstances and bodies. So, every time you look at the mirror, you should be able to fall in love and spread love at the person behind you too without expecting anything in return. That we can control, it's tough journey yet very much achievable with the tenure of a lifetime.