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|  | **With Time Spent** | **With Time Well Spent** |
| **Design Goal** | We design to keep users active and hooked, while helping them *complete tasks*. | We design to help users *live their life* and spend time well, while gaining their loyalty and business. |
| **Ability to Disconnect** | We expect users to be connected 24/7. If they want to disconnect, they can turn off their phone. | We empower users to disconnect without missing important. |
| **Quality of Attention** | We slice people's attention into frequent short bursts of attention; who says short bursts are worse than long and continuous uses? | We treat people's attention as sacred and minimize task-switching and interruptions. |
| **Success Metrics** | We measure success in terms of number of transactions (clicks, sales, time spent, or daily use). | We measure success in terms of lasting benefits that land concretely in people's lives, while minimally using their time. |
| **Business Model** | We sell people's attention to advertisers, so we need as much of it as possible. | We use business models that don't force us to maximize how much attention we get: payments, subscription or support from other revenue streams. |
| **Framing of Choices** | Disempowering choices that relate to what business cares about. | Empowering choices that relate to what people care about in their lives. |
| **Self-Deception & Greenwashing** | We believe our Mission Statement explains our impact on users' lives. | We have a Mission Question that lets us humbly get in touch with our holistic impact on users' lives. |
| **Dignity & Respect** | Users are sheep we can influence with conversion funnels. We design to manipulate them. | Users are people whose attention, choices, relationships and lives are sacred. We design to empower them. |
| **Explanation of People's Choices** | Users' choices reflect their own free will. | Users' choices reflect the menu, situation and context from which they choose. |
| **Defaults & Responsibility** | Default settings don't matter. It’s the user's responsibility to get the most out of the product; even if most people won't know how and it takes effort. | Default settings matter. It's *our responsibility* to help the majority of people get the most out of the product with the least effort. |
| **Psychological Externalities** | It's users' responsibility to reduce anxieties and compulsions that come from using our products. | It's our responsibility to reduce anxieties and compulsions that come from using our products. |

I thought I’d put some of the possible differences of Time Well Spent into a chart – to distinguish how a company would design an app, website or service differently:

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| **Aspect** | **Before Time Well Spent** | **After Time Well Spent** |
| **Stance** | “I care about engaging users as much as possible. It’s *up to them* to stop when they want to stop, *up to them* unsubscribe when they want to unsubscribe and*up to them* to uninstall my app if they find it too distracting. How much they get out of using my product is *up to them*.” | “I care about serving people’s ideal lives and helping them spend time well. *It’s my responsibility*to help peoplecontinually get the most out of what I offer, including to stop when they want to stop andhelp them unsubscribe when they no longer benefit.” |
| **Ability to Disconnect** | “Users want to be connected and reachable 24/7, all the time. If they want to disconnect, they can always leave their phone at home or uninstall my app.” (All or Nothing choice) | “Users have a right to set boundaries between their work and personal life, bound their use according to their preferences, and set aside time to focus. I will design to empower them to create these spaces.” (Choice *within* being Connected) |
| **Quality of Attention** | “Frequent brief, bursty, interruptive use is no better/worse than long and continuous uses. If interruptive use is what gets people to click, that’s what I’ll maximize.” | “People’s attention is sacred. I will design to help people attend to one thing at a time, minimize task-switching, interruptions, and other unnecessary choices.” |
| **Measuring Success** | “I measure success in *# transactions* (clicks, shares, visits, swipes, sales, rooms booked, messages sent)” | “I measure success in *net positive contributions to people’s lives.”* (time reading articles they were *glad* to spend, places they were glad to stay, people they were glad to meet). |
| **Greenwashing** | “I talk about my product in terms of catchy one-liners about how it benefits humanity.” | “I talk about my product with humility, doubt and self-examination to see its full range of impacts more clearly– both positive and negative.” |
| **Design Goal** | “I design to help users *complete tasks* and transact.” | “I take into consideration whether completing those tasks would add up to time well spent (for them), and I design to empower them to tell the difference.” |
| **Respect** | “Users are sheep I can influence, put through conversion funnels, and get to do what I want. It’s up to them to say when they’ve had enough.” | “Users are people whose time, attention, relationships and lives I respect. I care whether I’m bringing them closer or further away from the life they want to live.” |
| **Model of User Behavior** | “Users are only doing what they want and *freely choose to do*. | “I deeply influence what users are doing, feeling and thinking with my design choices – I can’t *not* influence people’s choices.” |
| **Influencing Psychological Instincts** | “I design to make people’s psychological instincts and biases *work for me.*” (I set defaults adversarially to most benefit me. Users can change it if they want.) | “I design to make people’s instincts *work for them, not against them.*” (I choose default settings that most benefit them.) |
| **Minimizing Psychological Externalities** | “It’s *their fault* if my product adds new looping concerns, feelings of guilt, fear of missing something, or other stressful thought patterns to users’ minds.” | “It’s *my responsibility* to minimize psychological externalities that arise from using my product.” |
| **Menus and Framing Effects** | “People make choices rationally. How I frame and organize choices won’t change what people choose.” | “How I frame and organize choices (sorting by recency, price, rating, or using different words) deeply influences what people choose. I will frame choices by what’s most empowers and matters to them in the long-run.” |

These distinctions also apply differently for different kinds of technologies.

* **Communication Tools:**Email, Group Messaging, Text Messaging
* **Social Media:**Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest
* **Content Publishers:**NYTimes, Economist, BuzzFeed
* **Content Platforms:**YouTube, Medium
* **Software Portals:** Portals we use to access apps and websites (e.g. Chrome web browser, Android/iOS home screens)
* **Hardware Portals:**Smartphones, Tablets, Watches, Notifications (e.g. iPhone, Samsung Galaxy Edge)

I’ll go into great detail about these distinctions in future posts, along with specific examples of they show up in current products and potential new ones!

*To learn more, check out* [*http://timewellspent.io*](http://timewellspent.io)*or*[*http://empoweringdesign.org*](http://empoweringdesign.org)*for details on future meet-ups and events!*