

EVALUATING THE MEANING OF DESIGN

A Case Study of Julie Arnon's Engagement Ring.



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INTRODUCTION

After studying the different levels of design as described by Donald A. Norman and the four pleasures of design, each student was instructed to conduct an interview with a friend or family member about an item that is most meaningful to them. The student is to then analyze the interview responses using the emotional frameworks that they have learned. The different levels of design that is to be analyzed includes emotional design at a visceral, behavioral and reflective level. The four pleasures of design include physio-pleasure, psycho-pleasure, socio-pleasure, and ideo-pleasure. Once all of these frameworks have been analyzed, it should be documented in a visual report.



BACKGROUND

Levels of Design

Visceral Level: The basic level of processing in response to the immediate impact a product and its appearance has at first glance. This can be driven by appearance, sound, smell, and touch.

Behavior Level: The total experience of using a product, can be triggered by situations and subconscious.

Reflective Level: How the customer feels about the product after use and the social and cultural image it portrays.

(Milton & Rodgers, p. 239-240)

Pleasures of Design

Physio-Pleasure: The senses of touch, smell, and taste to create sensual delight.

Psycho-Pleasure: Emotional pleasure produced through the experience of using a product.

Socio-Pleasure: Relationship and status derived from a product and the pleasures gained from interacting with others through a product.

Ideo-Pleasure: The value that an item holds and how they appeal to a customer's taste.

(Milton & Rodgers, p. 245-246)

BACKGROUND

Methods and Process

In order to conduct this interview, the methods that I used were, preparation and brainstorming to ensure I was able to carry a good conversation and react with empathy. After the interview, I took observations and analyzed the information and stories shared with me in order to draw conclusions about the impact of emotional design. The image to the right is shows some of the preparation I made before conducting the interview.

1. Intro to project
 - a. What I'm doing, what I'm going to ask, why...
2. Why did you choose the ring as something important to you?
 - a. About relationship
3. Why What was your initial reaction when you got it?
 - a. Do you still feel the same way about the ring now? /How do you feel about it now?
 - b. How do you feel when you wear it? (meaning)
4. Can you tell me a little bit about when you received your ring?
 - a. What was your first reaction to seeing it? How did you feel?
 - b. What was your response after receiving it? (tell friends/fam; engagement party)
 - c. Did you find the ring comfortable to wear? (too big/bulky on hand?)
 - d. How long have you had it?
 - e. How often do you wear it?
5. Where is the ring from? (brand/specific store)
 - a. Did you go ring shopping or was the ring chosen for you?
 - b. Did you choose this particular brand/store? Why?
 - c. How did you hear about this brand/store?
 - d. Were you considering other brands/stores?
6. What is the shape and design of the ring?
 - a. Was it the perfect size when you got it? Did you have to have it resized?
 - b. How did you pick this shape? Did you consider or like other shapes?
 - c. How did you pick this band? Did you consider or like other bands?
 - d. What stone is the ring? Why?
7. Do you think you'll ever upgrade to a different/larger ring or alter this ring at all?
8. Thank you for your time
 - a. Can share finish product with you later...

CASE STUDY: CONTEXT

Object Description

The ring was given to Julie by her (now) husband, Matan, when he asked her to marry him, after dating for 7 years. Matan picked out the ring for Julie based off of pictures of rings that Julie liked and had sent him. Julie was surprised by the proposal and loves the ring because it represents the memories and love that they have for each other. Now, Julie wears her ring every day and feels like something is missing without it.

Object Background

The engagement ring is composed of multiple smaller diamonds that form a halo around a larger circle diamond in the center. The band of the ring is solid white gold.



CASE STUDY: CONTEXT

Profile of Interviewee

My interviewee is my sister Julie Arnon. Julie is 29 years old and recently started a new job in Philadelphia, Pa. working for Johnson and Johnson. She graduated from Penn State University, where she met her husband Matan. Julie and Matan have been married for 3 years now after dating for 7. Julie chose her engagement ring as the item that is most special to her because it not only represents the memories that they have together, but also the love that her and her husband share.



CASE STUDY: EVALUATION

Levels of Emotional Design

Visceral Level: The visceral level of the ring is the white gold band holding multiple smaller diamonds that form a halo around a larger circle diamond in the center.

Behavior Level: There is no behavioral level of design.

Reflective Level: The reflective level of the ring is that it was a gift from her (now) husband when he asked for her hand in marriage and represents their relationship of memories and love together.

CASE STUDY: EVALUATION

Four Pleasures of Design

Physio-Pleasure: The physio-pleasure is derived from the smooth, polished white gold that the band is made out of and the fact that the diamonds are not too large, that makes the ring comfortable to wear. The appearance is also very beautiful to look at so that also creates physio-pleasure

Socio-Pleasure: The socio-pleasure is derived from the fact that she received it from her husband and feels connected to him by wearing it. Engagement rings are traditionally worn as a way to represent a woman or man is “taken” by another. Julies engagement ring not only sparks a connection for herself and her husband, but also shows others their connection.

Psycho-Pleasure: Julie gets Psych-Pleasure from wearing the ring because when she looks at it she is reminded of her love for her husband and the special memories they share, especially those of her wedding day.

Ideo-Pleasure: Not only does Julie love the look and style of her engagement ring, but she also receives ideo-pleasure from the fact that it was expensive and has sentimental value. Julie’s husband, Matan saved money for a long time to be able to provide her with such a beautiful yet expensive ring.

Diamonds are one of the most expensive gems in the world along with a white gold band, the ring is very expensive.

CONCLUSION

Summary

In this project I analyzed how the experience of a design affects the emotional impact that an object can have on a person. In order to do this, I interviewed Julie Arnon about the object that is most meaningful to her, her engagement ring. From her responses I drew conclusions and analyzed more deeply why the object was in fact meaningful to her. Julie's ring was meaningful to her because represents the love and memories between her and her husband.

Findings

Julie's ring was meaningful to her because represents the love and memories between her and her husband. She associates the ring with positive memories of their wedding and experiences together as well as the vows they made to each other on their wedding day.

Reflection

I was able to find many correlations of feelings with the different levels of emotional designs and the four pleasures of design. I found that because the ring was so meaningful and a lot went into receiving the ring, many different emotional attachments were made to this design object.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX

What is the item that you chose that is most important to you?
The item is my engagement ring.

Why is this so special to you?
It's special to me just because obviously my current husband picked it out for me and everything that that represents.

How long have you and your husband been dating?
We were dating almost 7 years before we got married. (10 now)

How did you guys meet?
We met in college at a fraternity party, waiting in line for the bathroom and we started talking there.

What was your initial reaction when received the ring?
When I received the ring, he was proposing. So it was obviously very emotional for me. It was excitement and happiness and you know a lot of emotions.

Do you still feel the same way about it now as you did when you first got it?
You know whenever I am looking at the ring, it's definitely just reminds me of that time and how I felt when I got it as well as bringing memories back of our wedding which was a really happy and fun occasion for us.

How do you feel when you wear the ring? Do you wear it every day now?
Yeah, I pretty much never take the ring off, you know once in a while, if I'm doing something with my hands and I don't want to get it dirty. But for the most part I'm always wearing it and whenever I take it off, I'm very aware that I don't have it on, you know, just always being careful with it.

Does the ring have more meaning than just the reminder of your initial reaction the excitement of getting it?
Yeah, for sure. I mean, like I said before it just brings back memories of everything with our wedding and all the emotions and love that I feel for my husband. I think that you know, it represents memories, but also the love that we have.

Going back to when you first received the ring, what was your first response after you received it?
My first response was. I guess excitement and kind of like an overwhelming joy.

Were there any actions that you took after receiving it?
Yeah, so once my husband, or fiancée then, shared the moment we definitely wanted to share that with all of our family and friends, and reach out to them and let them know our exciting news.

APPENDIX

When you receive the ring, was it like the perfect fit or was it too big on your hands? Was it uncomfortable trying to get used to wearing it?

The ring was a little too big when I first got it, but I think I received it on a Friday and Saturday we went and had the ring sized to fit me perfectly and haven't had any issues since then.

Where is the ring from? Is there a specific Jeweler or someone that you loved? Did you pick out the ring, or how was the specific ring got chosen?

You know overtime while dating my now husband. I had just sent him pictures of rings that I thought were pretty, we were living in New York City at the time when we got engaged. So he basically just took those pictures that he had saved from over the years and he went to the Diamond District in New York City and picked a store and picked it out. So he picked it out himself based on some of those images I had sent previously.

Can you describe to me the shape and design of the ring and its overall look?

The band is just a white gold band plain and then it's a circle diamond with a halo around it of diamonds.

What stones are in the ring?

It's all diamonds.

Did you always want the shape of the ring, did you like or consider other shapes? The Halo was definitely one of the pictures that I had sent, and I probably considered some other shapes, but this was my favorite. And so that's the picture that he kept but he used to pick it out.

Did you consider having other stones or why did you decide to go with diamonds?

I didn't really consider anything else. I guess I've just always imagined having a diamond engagement ring and didn't really consider anything else.

Just because it's more of a traditional ring?

Yeah, I guess so, that's just how I always had pictured it and those were the pictures that I sent to my husband as well.

Do you think you'll ever upgrade to a different ring or a larger ring in the future or maybe alter the ring that you already have?

Yeah so the ring that we have, when he bought it definitely had, you know like I said, there's a halo around it and there's a case if I wanted to get a new main diamond for the ring that I could put a new one in and I think I would definitely consider it but at the same time just because this ring you know has so much value do to me, I might just leave it how it is because it you know, it's perfect.