

Process Book

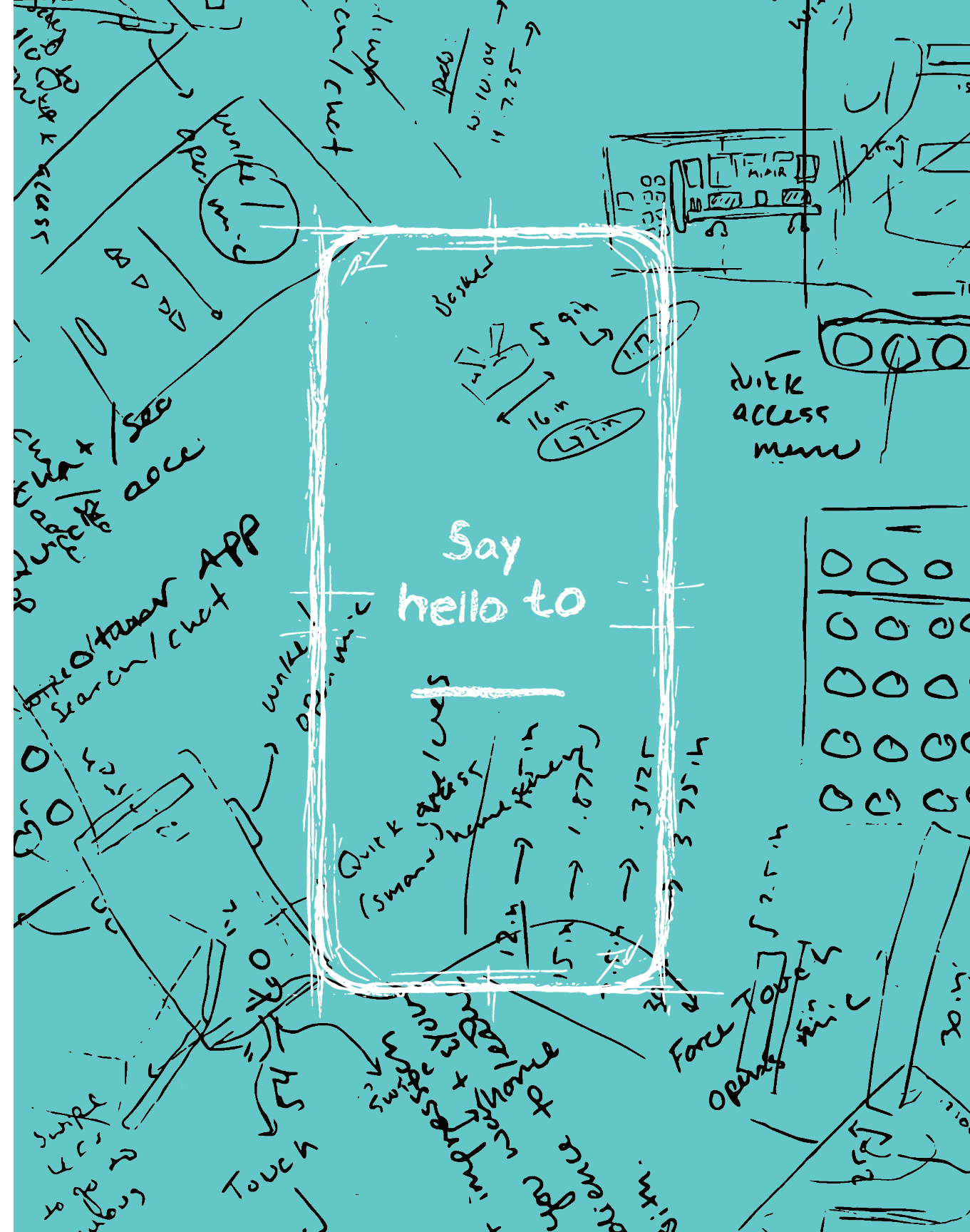
Foreword

Artificial Intelligence, its potential and the design challenges surrounding it have always intrigued me. I want to help in the creation of a future that will benefit us where it really counts—starting with making everyday life easier.

Special Thanks

Robin Avni, Anthony Atwood,
Vander McClain, Jackie Goldberg,
Gayna Williams, Tiffany De Mott,
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& of course my mom.

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Project Statement

An exploration on artificial intelligence, human connection & life progression that aims to assist millennials and gen Z in becoming independent and self-sufficient.

The Transition

We all know that painful transition of going from mother doing our laundry and making our school lunches to buying a house and doing taxes. This period poses a lot of growing pains for us as we attempt to navigate a world without any sort of instruction manual or assistance. Most of us spend our time googling when questions come up or even better we call mom and pick her brain because mother knows best. However, Mom isn't always able to answer or get around to helping us when we need it the most. Things like distance and personal experience limit the amount of support we can get. So, what then?

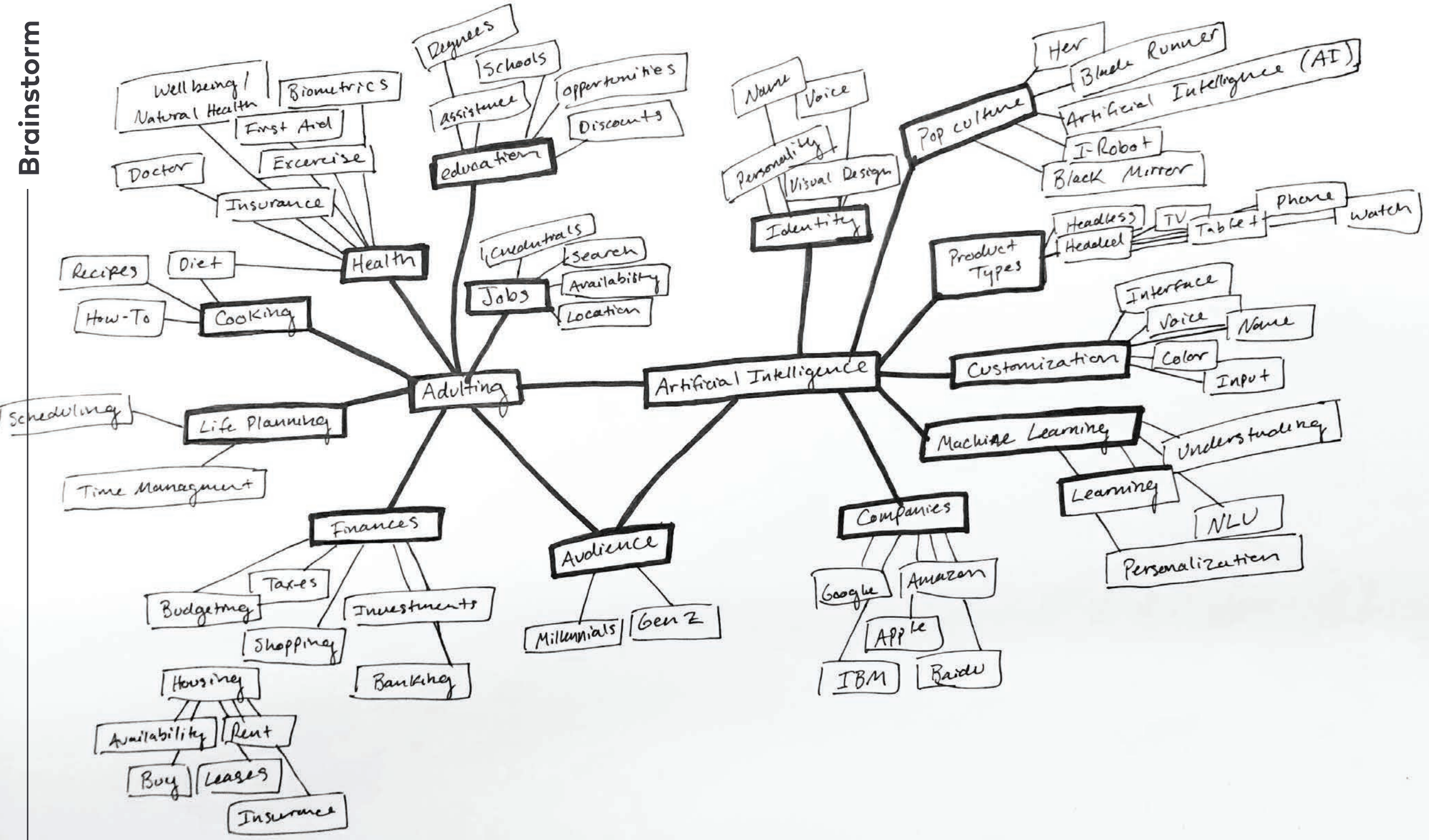
It Gets Personal

This particular predicament intrigued me a lot during summer 2017. It was the first summer that I spent away from home. I moved out of student housing into an apartment with a roommate and was about to start an internship at Amazon. All of a sudden, I was expected to be able to fully manage a house, food, laundry, and money. It was a struggle. I called my mom often during the week for questions like, "How long do I cook chicken for?" or "How do I remove this stain from my jeans?" Admittedly at times these questions were ridiculous and I wished I had a device that would make both of our lives easier. During my internship at

Amazon, I worked with the Alexa Voice Shopping team and discovered the world of AI. I looked at everything from pop culture to different research articles. I was greatly inspired by the potential of this technology to do good and change our lives. This led me to wonder, what if there was an AI that was created specifically to help me with all my adult life woes? An AI that helps people adult better.

Something More

However, designing an AI that stores adult related information and presents it by voice command just didn't seem like a good enough solution. We need more emotional support than that. The concept that I wanted to visualize in my BFA was an AI that would aim to build loyalty and trust through both its graphic and voice interfaces. It needed to be an aesthetic, adaptive, intuitive, all encompassing product that would convince us to go to it first as a our primary source. It needed to be like a mother or a wise, friendly mentor without any type of limitations. For my project I wanted to look past stigma or technological limitations and instead focus on what aspects of design could make meaningful connections between AI and humans.





Reinforce
Look it up

Ask the big
hunches
questions

Research





Design Question

Why is transitioning to adulthood a challenge for Generations Y & Z?

We've heard the stigmas on the news, Facebook, Twitter: Millennials can't grow up, they are entitled, etc. But, is there any truth to it?

Crippling Debt

Today's young college students are being crushed by debt. The average student debt is \$37,172 with an average monthly payment of \$350 or more. In addition, less than 40% earn 45k a year and 44% that have graduated with a BA are underemployed. So not only do these budding adults struggle to pay off their student loans, they can't even get a good enough paying job post-college to progress to the next stages of adulthood. In fact, according to the national consumer debt, adults under the age of 34 own 2.5 trillion out of the total 3.6 trillion. This has led to a decline in major adult milestones from marriage, buying a home, to other big ticket purchases. This has also led to an increase in parental dependency and living at home for much longer periods than previously seen.

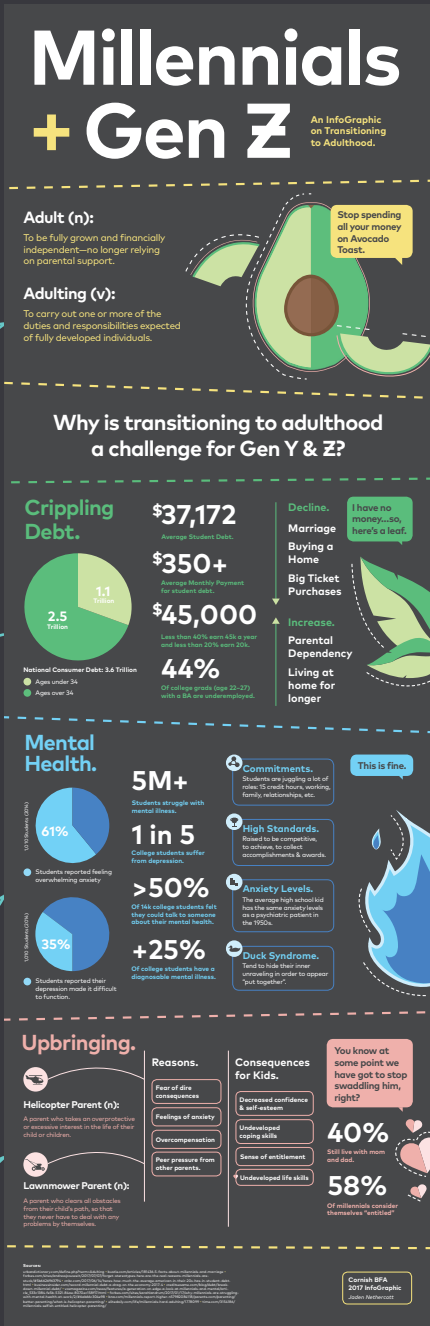
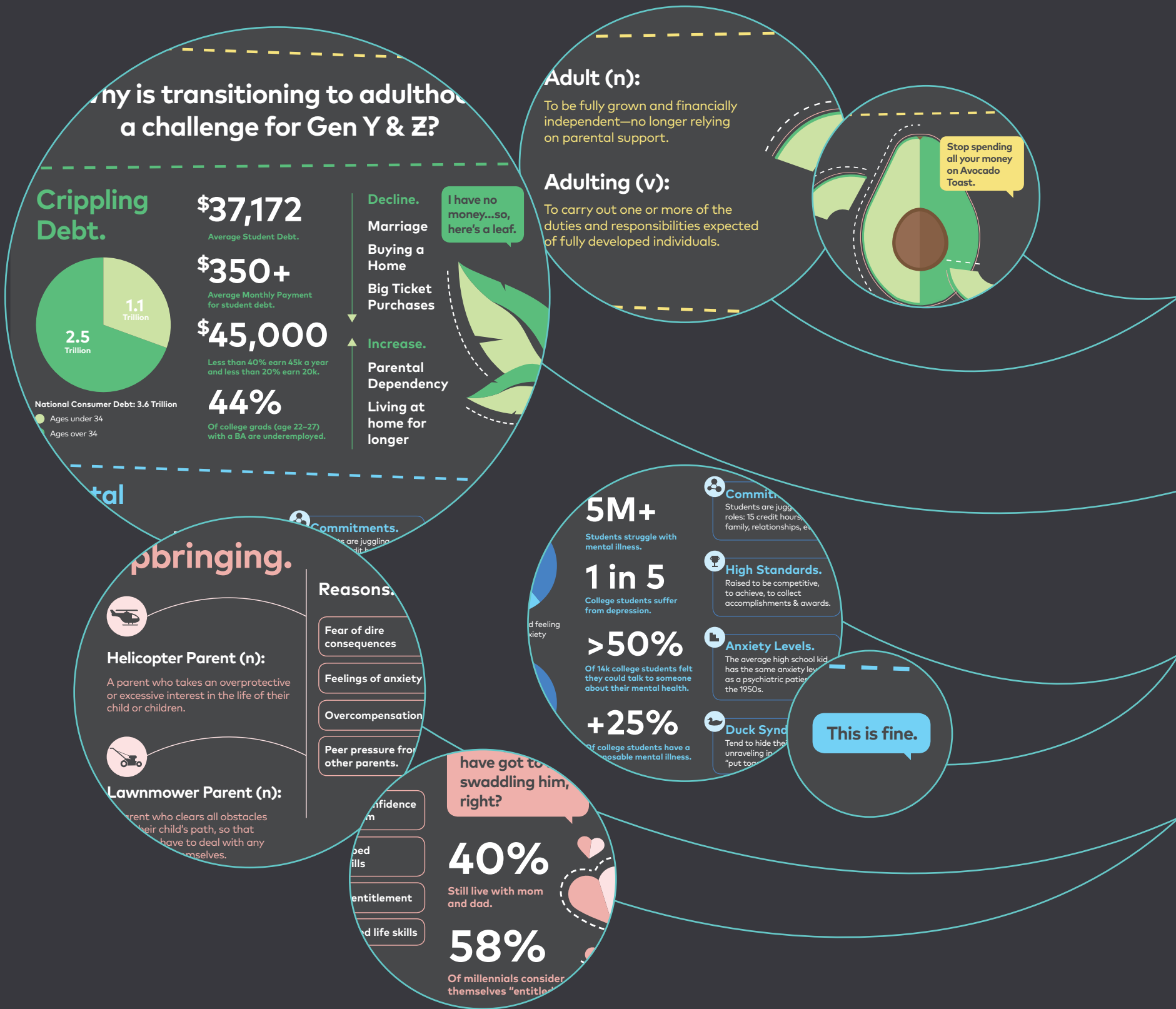
Mental Health

Overall, the mental state of Millennials and Gen Z in college is filled with anxiety and depression. Over 5 million students

have reported that they struggle with a mental illness and 1 in 5 suffer from depression. It has been reported that the anxiety levels of today's younger generations are the equivalent of a psychiatric patient in the 1950s. These younger generations struggle greatly under the number of commitments they are expected to perform: fifteen credit hours, working, dealing with family, and relationships. They were raised to be competitive, to achieve, and to collect accomplishments. On top of all of this, they tend to hide their unraveling in order to appear put together—dubbed the duck syndrome.

Upbringing

With the breakthroughs in technology and increased accessibility to things like plane tickets, parents are now more involved in their children's lives than ever before. While love and support are critical to child development, it seems that these modern innovations have led to a type of over-parenting. Terms like "helicopter" and "lawnmower" parents have arisen as parents let their personal fears and anxiety lead them to overcompensate for their children. This has led to many in the upcoming generations to have decreased confidence, ability to cope, created a sense of entitlement, and led to the underdevelopment of life skills. Maybe that's why 40% of young adults still live at home.



Interviews

To confirm my hunches about the struggles of adult life and the future of AI, I needed to talk to people directly: 9 Interviews, varied in generations and gender.

Interviewees

Sara Faralo pg 14, Phuong Sen pg 19, Andrea Lenksen pg 24, Anthony Atwood pg 26, Robin Avni pg 28, Robynne Raye pg 34, Cristy Maltese pg 39, Jackie Goldberg pg 42, Jonathan Grudin pg 49

An Adult?

One of the biggest parts that I wanted to achieve through these interviews was finding out what others thought an adult should be. Overall, the majority of interviewees sighted similar characteristics of what it means to be an adult, including: financial independency, personal hygiene, maintaining an ordered home, being responsible, being able to feed yourself and being respectful. As adults, we need to be thinking about our future, how our actions create consequences, and just overall be more mindful about ourselves and others.

A Good AI?

Qualities of a good AI include efficiency, transparency, customizability, personalization and personality. People get frustrated when an AI doesn't get something right the first time. They are more likely to stop using it if they deem it will be more difficult than other methods. It's important for technology to be humanistic in the way it reads environments and anticipates actions. It has a lot of potential to improve our way of life.



Sara Faralo

Millennial, College Student
Topics: Adult Life, AI

What was your growing up experience like?

I think it was good. I had a pretty great growing up experience. I was a really wild rambunctious child so I was always injured. We moved twice, once when I was 17. Overall I had a good experience and I loved it.

My parents are great. My siblings are awesome. I've had pets. I was a very happy child overall.

I was real close to my parents. I got even closer to them in late high school because that's when my dad got sick so that's when my family grouped together. Especially close to my mom, I was a super mommy's girl.

What were your responsibilities like while growing up?

I didn't really have a lot of chores. I never had the allowance situation or any of that. I would help in the kitchen with my mom if we were baking cookies or help my dad with dishes.

The most chore-like thing we ever had to do was cleaning the back yard and maintaining the garden and the ivy in the back yard but we all did it together. Pretty rare when I was assigned a chore but it was usually around the holidays when I would have to clean the living room or the bathroom.

Did you have classes in school that helped teach you?

I took Home Economics in 6th or 7th grade. It was pretty broad. We spent one part doing cooking, one part was sewing and one part was doing taxes. Learning to do your taxes in the 7th grade is a joke because I didn't have to do them for 10 more years. By the time I did have to do taxes I knew nothing about them. That was the only class I ever took that was like life skills that I can remember. Then I got really involved in the arts.

How would you define the term adult?

Responsibility and discipline are the two things I think of the most. Specifically discipline, but they go hand in hand. You have to hold yourself responsible enough to get things done. I've discovered that a lot of it is

just being able to say no when you need to.

I think adulthood is just being disciplined. You can be youthful and playful and all of that stuff that comes with childhood, but more than anything it comes down to reining that in and organizing it into boxes that make you successful and dependable.

Do you consider yourself an adult today?

I really do consider myself an adult. I've worked hard to get to this point.

What types of responsibilities do you think are expected that an adult should be able to do on their own?

Feeding yourself, saving money and paying bills, rent, utility bills, getting transportation to and from where you need to be in a timely manner. Then it gets down to personal aesthetics. Cleanliness I would consider an adult responsibility. I think I need to clean my room and my home. Other people wouldn't always think that.

How often do you seek outside assistance for doing adult things?

Assistance vs. guidance—they are different. Assistance

is with things I don't think I could accomplish on my own. Guidance is when I kind of made a decision and I want my father's input.

I do seek assistance when I really need it. It depends on the task. If it's something to advance my career I will reach out 90% of the time to faculty or to people that I think can help me. In high school I never wanted a school mentor because I didn't want someone my age guiding me. So I do reach out for assistance about 30–40% of the time. I do Google search frequently—100 times a day.

For example, to get help with cooking, I would call my dad or my sister before searching Google, but I would still do both.

Have you ever felt anxiety around adult responsibilities?

I really think far into the future, the bigger picture and the way things will impact that. Especially with my education, career and money I get so much anxiety because I think about timelines, like what my graduation time and date means along with pursuing my career. I get really wrapped up in the bigger picture, but other times I get wrapped up on a detail and

then that will stress me out. It's hard to find a balance.

Do you feel some of the adult processes are too complex? Some examples?

The thing is they are easier than ever. You can go on the Internet, and find a step-by-step process in seconds.

Things to do with the bank, Internet or cellular provider are such a pain. Even though they are simplified, it's still so many steps—more than I want to complete.

I have someone who does my taxes. I don't really know what goes into them except calling up my tax lady, Maggie and saying it's time.

Something I guess I didn't anticipate would be so challenging is when you are an adult with a job and want to go somewhere for an extended period of time or need break from your job. It's really hard to make happen. Like if you want to leave for Thanksgiving, there's so many things to think about—not just getting my ticket and going, but who is going to cover all my shifts? It's pretty complicated.

What are your thoughts on younger generations today?

I am such a person who romanticizes the past, especially the 1940s. There are so many problems with that time. I am fully aware of the social issues that were so present then and still are.

The issues I see with my generation and with myself are that we don't really bask in the joy. When you walk outside and the sky is really beautiful, you don't stand still for a minute and look up.

We are moving so fast all the time, especially here at Cornish. We are all in these programs that are so rigorous and so time consuming. We schedule ourselves to the minute. Because we all put ourselves on this constant timeline, we don't take any actual time away from the timeline.

I've also noticed our impatience and inability to just sit still for a few minutes and watch a 5-minute long video. We love to skip to the good part of things. I think that's really telling in its own right. There's something to be said about the struggle and the work that goes into things.

We just have a lot of access to technology resources that previous generations didn't have—talk about a way to create a divide between us. No wonder we don't all understand each other because our minds don't work the same fundamentally. We don't think the same.

With technology, I think it's really sad how young we are exposed to it now. My niece is 2 ½ and she is on a phone watching videos quite frequently. I have this fear about the magnetic waves that go through your skull from cell phones.

I feel like my observations of our generation are different between Cornish and the outside world. I sometimes feel like we are in our own world here and that's really good in some ways.

A lot of us really want to be actively involved in social justice and politics in general and we want to make art like that. In some regards I think our generation is brilliant. I feel things teeming under the surface here. I feel constantly we are on the precipice of something really big happening. I feel it's coming from here, from the people.

Our generation is so brilliant, bold and crazy— a lot more enlightened and aware than previous generations have been on a grand scale. That's my observation of Cornish because there are also people of our generation outside Cornish that are just deeply mean and have this hatred in their heart that hates the world. It's tricky a time to analyze anybody.

Do you feel your generation struggles with completing adult responsibilities?

No. I don't think they struggle too much. Some, but it varies from task to task. We are all a combination of lazy and tired, half of us are tired and the other half are just lazy. Yes we do struggle a little bit. It's complicated, most everyone I know does not struggle. But there are other people out there that do struggle. Yes. I think our generation has gotten used to asking for help. We've grown up in a time where we are being trained to ask for help more and we do take advantage of assistance quite a bit. More than other people do outside of Cornish. On an overall scale, yes, we do struggle. I know don't know a lot of people who know how to do their taxes, people who

haven't cleaned their house or cooked in a long time, people who are late very frequently.

Have you heard of any stigmas regarding your generation about not being able to successfully adult?

Yes. It's like the urban legend of the old man, who says, "In my day we didn't have access to any of that stuff and I worked one job and paid my way through college."

There are a lot of stigmas about our generation being dependent, irresponsible, and ungrateful. I've definitely heard a lot of stigmas. It's just different. We have access to things they just didn't have. Why wouldn't we use these things like Google to educate ourselves when they are right at our fingertips? If you had the answers at your fingertips, would you look at them? The debate is about why wouldn't I?

On some scale they are justified. The world is so different. We are working multiple jobs. I don't really understand all the stigmas. The stigma about us being lazy all the time is not justified. Some of us are just tired because of working so much. I understand where they are coming from. As

humans do, they can deny that change is happening. Even though they have seen the world change so much, sometimes, older generations can have an issue with not understanding why we are just different.

Do you feel you were adequately taught how to complete adult responsibilities while growing up?

Overall? Yes, definitely. Not education wise. I didn't receive hardly any training that way. But at home my parents held me accountable, even though I didn't have specific chores. They raised me to just be responsible and dependable and not get involved in things I couldn't be reliable with. Subtly I was raised in a way that impacted my ability to be an adult and has made me a successful one.

Not by social media and the entertainment industry either because they just set up unrealistic expectations of what the world is. (Carrie Bradshaw could not afford that New York apartment.) It all came down to my parents. My parents definitely are the reason why I was a successful adult.

Do you feel that unrealistic expectations is why our generation doesn't see ourselves as successful?

Absolutely. We grew up watching TV shows where the two main characters would get married at 22 or they would have a house at age 24 together and we thought, "Wow that's totally what I'll be doing at that time."

Except we all got here and it's not what we were set up to be that's real. It's crazy how much we are impacted with those unrealistic expectations. They are all across the board. They are in every area of our life—image wise, what the world is going to be like, how humans respond to each other. Expectations about everything.

A lot of what our personal assessment failures come down to is the fact that we don't really know what success is anymore. We don't know how to measure success and the world has set us up for failure. It's really important to narrow down what you think is successful. We need to reward ourselves for successes—I cooked dinner today. That is a success. I am adulting with success on this day.

Definitely there are unrealistic expectations from the world.

Are you familiar with AI and what are your thoughts on it?

I saw that movie AI when I was younger. I think of robots and assigning humanlike traits and tasks to robots. I don't really don't know about AI at all except that I am afraid of them.

This is so random, but I have an Amazon Tap. Not the Echo. It doesn't respond to you unless you press the button and then you can have a conversation but you can't be across the room and go, "Hey Alexa," because that is the Echo.

My Amazon Tap has updated herself and become an Echo! I don't know when it happened. The other night Clayton and I were in the kitchen and he got mad at Alexa and he called her a name. She responded and said, "That was not very nice." Alexa is updating herself. Yesterday, I said "Alexa, play this." And she played it. She's not supposed to do that. I wish someone would tell me that (they were discontinuing the Tap line and making it into an Echo).

I'm not afraid of AI like I am of robots and zombies and

other weird unrealistic things. I think it's pretty intense. I think it's fascinating because a lot of progress has been made rapidly. But I don't have a lot of knowledge about it.

Would you feel comfortable sharing personal information like your finances, location and personal preferences with an AI, if it is private and secure?

Is it like putting your credit card into Apple Pay? Then apparently yes, I would trust doing that and I don't know why I trust it. I weirdly have a lot of faith in all of the technological advances we've made. So, I weirdly trust all of these things. Which is kind of scary when you hear about ways that it can go terribly wrong like the Equifax breach. But you still do it and have faith in it. Apparently I would do that because I've done it.

Phuong Sen

*Millennial, College Student
Topics: Adult Life, AI*

What was your growing up experience like?

It's a bit different from everyone else because I grew up in an Asian household. I was born and raised in Chicago in a relatively white neighborhood where I was the minority.

Growing up I had a lot of responsibilities taking care of my siblings. For me I felt like I was always taking care of someone else. My childhood was pretty emotional because I was such a rebel. Overall, it was like everyone going through awkward stages in high school and figuring out what to do after high school, making new friends and losing friends. A lot of ups and downs that people experience.

I was always sneaking out of the house and do things against what they wanted me to do.

They are different because they are from another country. My mom is from China and my dad is from Vietnam. My mom is very conservative, believes women should be

elegant and in the kitchen and sewing. My Dad was never really open towards me. He cared obviously and loved us but it was difficult because it was like being an emotional kid back then, always going against my parents. Now after experiencing my teenage life I'm better. I'm super close to my mom, she's my best friend. I am close to my dad and talk to him too. Experiencing the things I did growing up helped me appreciate my parents more.

What were your responsibilities like while growing up?

My mom taught me a lot about the hardships of life. Moneywise, they always taught me to save money. I cleaned up a lot. That really irritated me. Being a kid you hate chores obviously. My mom taught me how to clean and be hygienic. My parents tried to teach me how to cook. But I was spoiled because my parents were phenomenal cooks. "I'll watch and maybe I'll just eat it." They taught me just to be responsible about taking care of myself.

Thinking back today, if I don't have a clean house, things are not going to go well for my daily activities of life. I can't live in a dirty house. That's

why your parents have you do chores and clean.

I also had responsibilities taking care of my siblings while my parents were out. That was a completely different experience because I was watching and teaching my brother. My little sisters were really young, so I just basically had to be a big sister which is hard. I have one brother (22) and two half sisters (15 & 12). I am the oldest.

Did you have classes in school that helped teach you?

In elementary school, I remember being in this class where we worked with different needs students, interacting with them and learning about how they did life for part of the day – It gave me a perspective on life because how they did things was so different from the way I did.

In Middle school we had Home Economics class, they taught us how to sew and cook, basic stuff. That is where I learned how to sew and it was really fun for me.

In high school – This class was similar where they taught you how to write a check, how to do taxes. It was in school but it was just basics.

My parents knew how to do stuff like going to DMV, and taught me how.

How would you define the term adult?

I can't define it by age, because I'm still naive about things and I do things that wouldn't constitute being an adult. I guess just being responsible for yourself and others—experience learning and growing.

At age 26 I don't feel any older, but there are things out there I still don't know. I would have a panic attack, like jury duty.

Do you consider yourself an adult today?

I don't consider myself as an adult. Not at all, because I'm still in school, working part time but not in a career or my dream job. Being an adult is like owning a house and paying the mortgage. I'm not there yet. Stability separates adults from kids.

What types of responsibilities do you think are expected that an adult should be able to do on their own?

How to shower and be clean people—need to know how to do that. I have a friend that doesn't know how to cook.

He has a maid to do it—such a kid. As humans, we need to know to take a shower every day, basic human stuff, eating healthy, not staying stupid or mean things, trash talking. There are so many things adults should be responsible for. You'd think they would know better. It really depends on their perspective and what they are doing. Don't know if there is a certain stage in life when you should know these things and do them by yourself.

Have you ever felt anxiety around adult responsibilities?

I feel like I work in a state of anxiety all the time. For the longest time I was afraid of having a credit card. I did a lot of things late in my life. I didn't get my drivers license until 17–18. You have to be responsible for taking care of your car and paying insurance. Filling out student loans and financial aid is always nerve racking because you are signing into something you have to commit to and pay off. You have to worry about your credit score. Thankfully there is technology to learn these things like how to build your credit. I had 2 credit cards and that was scary but I've paid them off. You have to think about your future.

Do you feel some of the adult processes are too complex? Some examples?

For my life, I don't think so. Viewing other people and my best friends, they are more adult than me because they are having kids, taking care of them, more expenses, more to figure out for taxes. That's a really complex process. Planning for hospital bills, getting insurance for them, putting them in school and daycare. Example: my best friend is a single mom, to get help any assistance from the government was not easy, a lot of forms to fill out. Laws of what she could do with or without child's dad. I wish it wasn't so complex. I feel like the government is working them not them working with the government. With FAFSA I didn't understand why they needed my parent's information but I don't think taxes are hard. My counselors and family helped me with that so it wasn't too hard.

What kind of support do you have when you have questions about adult responsibilities?

I would call my mom. If she didn't know the answer, she would give me people that she knew to call nearby. Ask

a family member like my stepmom or my aunt who lives in Seattle and knows a lot of medical stuff.

If I have to do it alone, I would look it up online and type in a question. I have learned I'm not alone with these questions. It's easy for me to look it up on Google.

What are your thoughts on your generation and younger generations?

There's a big influence in technology. We were introduced to it. The difference is that younger generations are born within technology in its advanced form so they have everything at their fingertips, not in isolation, but different social norms like dating. When I was a freshman in high school, it was weird to hear someone say, "I have an online boyfriend." You shouldn't be talking to strangers. Not supposed to do that, but now more normalized. I feel like they are born with a cellphone in hand. I didn't have my first phone until I was 16. Now kids that are 8 or 9 have their own phones.

Do you feel that these younger generations as well as yours struggle with adult responsibilities?

My brother has a lot of adulting issues. He needed help with financial aid. Didn't know how to fill out college online applications. I had to do that all for him. He didn't know how to look it up. This is an age where everything should be more efficient and easily accessible. They are learning a different way of doing things. A simple click here and there and it's done. They don't learn how to do it the old way where we had to mail things and look up a word in the dictionary, like the old school. Not really fair cause they have more advantages than I do.

Have you heard of any stigmas regarding your generation about not being able to successfully adult?

I've heard a lot like we are too sensitive, babies, defensive and handed everything, old people say you youngsters don't know what it's like to work hard and save up and go through college. With their generation things were different, it was easy to get a job. Can't live in past,

now things are different. Companies looking for unicorns, programmer that knows how to do all these things. A college education isn't enough. I feel like it's harder for us.

Do you use any phone applications for assisting with time management, cooking, etc.?

I use Google for recipes or ask mom. I don't really use apps that much to assist me because I feel like it's not efficient. I try but the efficiency of the app is too much, all these buttons to go through and you have to commit to it and I couldn't. I remember downloading this app to remind me to drink water everyday. Just frustrating because it was not something I could customize for my needs. I tried this health app with a responsibility to log everything like daily activities. It was really annoying to name food I ate, what time, look up calories—too time consuming. It just gave me more stress. Time management I sometimes write it down in my notebook. This year I'm using my computer to download my schedule and sync it to my phone. Somewhat frustrating

and I wish it was more customized. I hate that you have to put in so much time to set it up like birthdays that you have to put in.

Daily tasks to do including clean up house, making time for homework and other activities. These apps force you to put your personal life into a category that doesn't fit, so what's the point?

Do you feel like you were adequately taught about adult responsibilities?

As part of my philosophy class, life will always be complicated and there are no guidelines you can go with. My parents taught me as much as they could but they couldn't teach me that life would have all these hurdles that you have to learn yourself. No one can teach you that. I learned the basics. There is more to learn but I don't feel the need to. Growing up I feel I did get the basics down. Certain aspects of my life I have to learn on my own.

Are you familiar with AI and what are your thoughts on it?

Pretty sweet. Experiencing Amazon Echo and Siri, I feel like they are useless. My family had an Echo in their

house. It was interesting to listen and talk to and have a conversation but I feel like I won't use it. If it is out of sight, out of mind, I wouldn't use it. It's such an ugly little thing, it looks like a speaker and I don't need that thing near me. AI in Japan is interesting, still definitely in process. I think they have something going on.

How do you put personality in there and how do you connect with it? It's hard to connect with a robot thing. Siri never gets anything I say correctly, its infuriating. Not what I need. I wish it was more customizable. I wish the language was closer to actual speaking. AI doesn't say my name right so I'm not going to talk to it. As a person you wouldn't hang out with someone that keeps saying your name wrong. I hate repeating myself.

It's a good process that could benefit people that really need assistance, in a health or medical level. I don't think it's efficient enough that I would use it. I don't need it. I turn off Siri. It's super robotic. It's such a broad realm that I don't know what to do with it. I would rather look something up on phone—more quickly—search rather than spend time asking and answering Siri

questions. Would rather type it into my phone. I haven't ever asked it to time manage for me. It's different when you're just saying it vs. the action of doing it yourself.

Would you feel comfortable sharing your personal information with an AI for a better experience?

I've been researching into people that have been doing it. It's like a hackers paradise, where people have access to your camera, all information on that device. Be secure unless it's a safe software. I would have to see it in actual prototype in actual different stages to be comfortable. There has to be some personal control for me to have it stored on an AI system—scary even on laptop. Finances would be tricky. Security is a concern for me. Like having my phone, security of having it on my phone that is with me instead of having one at home that someone could steal and have access to all your information.

Andrea Leksen

Gen X, Design, Professor
Topics: Adult Life, AI

What was your growing up experience like?

I think it was good. I had a super great, easy childhood, super close family, older sister, great support with challenges, great supportive loving parents.

Did have chore list—keeping up own room, setting the table, as got older we had more chores—vacuuming, etc, helping around the house.

Taught a little cooking, ironing, etc, Dad—contractor, did wood working with him.

Did you have any classes in school that taught adulting skills?

I attended a conservative Christian school. In junior high—girls took home economics & boys took shop. It was a year before there was an uprising wanting to switch so both were canceled. I don't remember cooking or sewing at school.

Define "Adult" and what it means?

Being responsible for yourself, doing what it takes to have income to feed and clothe

yourself with a place to live, being responsible, not dependent on someone else.

Do you feel like an adult today?

Yes, I do consider myself an adult, but it is stressful to figure out life.

When did you feel you were an adult?

Married right out of college at 22, moved out of parents house 3 months after graduation into own home with husband, dependent on parents during college and lived on campus senior year, did not feel like a huge step.

What tasks should adults be able to complete on own?

People with disabilities are adults too even though they may not be able to do everything.

Cooking, cleaning, having transportation, pay your bills on time with good system in place, have a budget and be thoughtful about long term strategies for retirement, allocating funds for expenses month to month, being responsible for bringing up children as good citizens, community services—giving back.

An important thing learned from mother – how to host, create atmosphere, have guests over for dinner, how to set table, sit down and eat together, etc.

Ways you have reached out for assistance?

I call mom to ask about recipes and cooking instructions, call parents and friends for parenting advice. I call my aunt for budgeting & finance. I use a financial advisor to make sure I'm thinking strategically long term. I call my ex-husband of 17 years because he's good at finances. I learned importance of having an advisor.

I'm not really concerned about cleaning advice, if looks clean—it is. It's important to have job mentors and career counselor that you can use for advice.

Have you felt anxiety in completing adult responsibilities?

Finding balance between work and play, being responsible in having fun but watching and budgeting your time is important.

What do you do for stress relief?

Dance (Salsa, Tango) therapist on-call, working out for sure (endorphins), getting enough

sleep, seeing & talking to friends, dinner parties, travel

Do you think Adulting processes that are too complex?

Taxes, buying and selling car, transition of finding a job, budgeting—especially long term, parenting.

What are your thoughts on younger generations today?

Screen time has changed attention span, reflects on work and affects common human interaction, lack of patience, expecting whatever they need to be immediately available.

Cell phones make it too easy to cancel, seeing low commitment levels (dinner party for 150—only 40 showed up).

Do you think younger generations struggle with responsibilities?

They expect more spoon-feeding of information instead of figuring out for themselves—everything online instead of going to library/books like older generation.

Have you heard of any Stigmas of younger generations not being able to adult successfully?

Being late for class because of commuting issues—not

allowing enough time. Need to figure out that they need to leave earlier to make it on time.

What are your thoughts on Artificial Intelligence?

Interesting, a lot of ways it could be used for good, can take away from figuring how to do things for yourself, aids the spoon feeding issue

Would you feel comfortable sharing with AI?

Not comfortable sharing personal information with an AI—i.e. hesitant about "what is your location?"

Anthony Atwood

*Gen X, Creative Director,
Amazon—Alexa Shopping
Topics: Adult Life, AI*

What was your growing up experience like?

I'm super close to my family, parents are near and dear to my heart. I grew up as a Catholic boy, middle class to poor. My mom is a 5th grade teacher and dad is in windows, doors, house building wood. My brother (4 years older) is a huge part of my life and why I'm in design.

I had chores like taking out garbage, cleaning room, mowing the lawn. I did not learn to cook, wife will attest, I was not in the kitchen at all. Dog—take out, clean poop.

Did you have any classes in school that helped teach adult responsibilities?

Sewing class was it. Would be amazing if they would do more.

How would you define an adult?

An adult is better at making stuff up because they are more aware of it. I don't know if you are ever an adult, you just get used to figuring it out and making it up. This

interview is making me feel like an adult.

Adults are just more aware.

As you make decisions that force you to be an adult like getting married, moving out of your parent's house, thinking about somebody other than yourself. Being able to do things that you are not a little kid about. Jobs help too when you work with various levels of adults, it forces you to get to their level of conversation and thinking.

Do you consider yourself an adult?

No, still a 5-year-old kid, but I guess I am, but I don't look at it that way—I'm just living life

What are some responsibilities of an adult?

Pay taxes, bathe yourself, feeding yourself and paying bills, not just laying around all day like a blob. Get to the point where you think of volunteering—stuff you don't think about when you are younger—freak of nature—rare for younger people to do that.

Do you ever feel anxiety with adult responsibilities?

Yes, Daily. Buying a house, several things.

What are your thoughts on younger generations?

I don't look at it like that. I feel part of it. You are applying yourself so I don't look at you as younger.

20–25 year olds, just so young and so naive, excited about things, more of those type of moments. I don't break it down, I look at it as individual people. Hard to see them as a group, just younger kids doing kid things, what they don't know is because they haven't been there, just young and stupid like we all are/were.

They think about smart ways to get what they want—for example \$400 shoes—priorities change. Looking a certain way through digital life puts things at the forefront that are more important to them than eating.

Do you think AI can have personality?

Jibo—childish, designed to have personality but too much, depends on who built it. Right now it's oriented from an engineering perspective. Engineers are dorky geeks. Very smart—too smart. Need someone with sense to build it, like the voice.

How do you see personalization playing a role in AI?

It should know individuals like we do—male/female, etc. It's scary and amazing. Right now it's basically just a speaking box that needs to progress.

What do you think will help create a more human connection with AI?

I can read your presence, vibes. AI doesn't do that. If it can understand anger, sadness by tone of voice, like thumb movements on phone. Feel if you are happy. Has to get an understanding of that.

How should it respond?

Have to be like a human. If stressed, ask are you okay, what's up. If sad needs a certain tone or it would be kind of creepy.

What are your favorite pop culture references of AI?

SNL making fun of Alexa, Jetson's are cool—maid is robot, all AI's are like (portrayed as) slave robots, human's first thought is to own something instead of just thinking it's cool.

What do you think will improve the AI experience?

Personalization is huge, new technology, how to create brand experiences, opens doors of what we can do. Challenge is adding human elements to technology, all we want is entertainment. That's what would make a good AI.

Do you think current AI branding is reflective of an intelligence?

Apple design is beautiful—colors, soothing, but Siri isn't a good AI. Ours [Alexa] is better, but it's inanimate and not representative of what we have in mind. It's not ours to do right now. We get caught up in politics as adults instead of putting a face on it. Right now the brands just aren't human. They aren't linked to anything we see.

Is there a way to give AI more expression, i.e. a smile?

No one is doing it yet. You will. Good challenge.

How do you see AI affecting the future?

Blade Runner. It's going to solve crime, health issues, add joy to people's lives, give fun things to people but not scary, creepy, futuristic. Solving cool

things. Clean up air, do good for the world, not take over the world in bad way.

How do you feel about AI and ethics?

Yes—who is governing this? Not taking over this? There should be laws for it so someone doesn't get their hands on it for bad intentions.

Would like to be a part of it—so much to do—branding, advertising, long way to get there.

05

Robin Avni

Baby Boomer, Design, Expedia
Topics: Adult Life, AI

What was your growing up experience like?

My mom died when I was 5 so my dad remarried and I had a stepmom. I was very close to my dad—extremely close to my father. I was kind of close to my stepmom in the beginning but then it kind of wavered. A lot of odd things began to happen in the family that we won't go into.

I have 3 younger brothers and sisters where she is their natural mother. I'm very close with a younger sister. We came to the conclusion over the years that she was psychologically abusive. So, I'm not very close with her.

My father has passed away. My sister and I were close to him. My dad was kind of our protector in a sense.

We enjoyed a lot of the same things—sports. He was very creative. I will say this about my stepmother. One of the things I thank her for. She always said that I was a talented designer and always encouraged that.

I have 6 brothers and sisters and I'm the only one related to all of them because my father was married three times. When he married my mom, she had been married before, her husband had died and she had two kids. I'm related to those. I have siblings who are not related to one another. I'm in the middle but the odd thing is there's 7 years on either side of me. So I'm older, younger and middle child all in one because of the gaps.

What were your responsibilities when you were growing up?

This was one of the issues with my stepmother. I had a lot of chores, like more chores than most kids. She'd make a list every day of all the things I needed to do and then she would inspect them afterwards. My cousins called me Cinderella. Like Mondays—first floor bathroom, Tuesdays—I did the dishes all the time. Because of that 7-year gap on either side I really got the bulk of it because there was nobody to share it with. I had a lot of chores, which was why the minute I could afford it I hired a cleaning lady. I lived in a studio apartment—I had a cleaning lady. Also, carrying that forward, I really wanted

to limit the amount of chores my own stepchildren did. They had certain responsibilities but not like I did.

Growing up in school did you have any classes that taught you life or adult responsibilities?

We had this thing called Home Ec. At that time it was very segregated. The guys had woodshop and the girls had Home Ec. You were taught sewing and cooking but nobody ever taught you budget balancing or how to save money. They eventually went away, but were introduced back in a more democratic way but they were not so segregated. I was terrible at all of that but we did get exposure to it.

How would you define the term "adult" – what does it mean?

In the Jewish religion, at 13 theoretically you become an adult—boys become men and girls become women. To me being an adult is living independently. I think college is when you get that first mini step of it. Then after college if you can live independently and support yourself, that's when you become an adult.

Do you consider yourself an adult today?

Yes, I am a super adult. However, I still want to hold on to that surprise and awe. To me, that isn't adult or not. That's just part of staying creative and engaged, it's important—like looking at the flea market and laughing. It's important to make that distinction.

What types of responsibilities are expected for adults to complete on their own and with assistance?

I think it would probably be to get a job and to allow them to be independent. That's an important step. My kids all came home to live for a while to save money when they got their jobs. Then it was up to us to move them on and out. For them to become an adult that's important for them to understand responsibility not just financially but for your physical being like what's appropriate health care. Do you have it? How do you take care of yourself? When the parents have taken care of all that, that's a real transition. To realize you are now responsible for all those things. I think voting and becoming an engaged citizen

is important. Caring about others outside the purvey of your world. Compassion. All those things come into play. It's not just financial. There's a certain maturity level that comes with adulthood.

Have you ever felt any anxiety around completing adult responsibilities?

Yes. Absolutely. Even now. I'll give you a good one. As an adult now, I have this fabulous granddaughter, the best in the world of course. I still don't drive with her in my car even though we have a car seat. We'll pick her up and if my husband is driving that's fine. But I still get anxiety putting her in the car. I remember feeling this anxiety when I met my husband because my children are my stepchildren, so when I first drove her mother (meaning my daughter and two sons in the car), I would get real anxiety about that responsibility of driving someone else's children. I think everyone carries with them anxiety about money. Where I work I have some friends who are incredibly wealthy and they are anxious about it too. I try to go back to what my dad said. "Making enough is being able to do the things you want to do."

Whatever that scale is. But I think everybody worries about that and I think that's a very adult thing that goes hand in hand with earning money.

Do you feel like any adult processes are too complex? Like taxes?

We hire someone to do our taxes and I always have. What's complex and hard is when you get to a point where you are earning money and you want to put it away and save some like 401K. Buying a house for the first time was really scary. Even things like apartments, rent, leases, contracts.

What are your thoughts on the younger generations of today?

I think they are not so different than any generation before. We've spent a whole hour talking about technology and classmates. It's all the same. Technology just speeds things up and makes some things more accessible. It doesn't change the dynamics of human beings.

Do I think Millennials are lazy? No—some are, some aren't. Do I think GenZ's, and some Millennials, almost have been over scheduled by their parents in terms of achievement. Several in the

junior class are so intense. That's where I see the divide. They've all been applied this pressure to do certain things. My pressures when I was growing up were literally that you were a woman trying to go into some male dominated areas. Other barriers exist. They just ebb and flow. Do I think GenZ's are more inclined to social causes? Probably, because that's what they learned in school and from their parents. Was it something they were born with? No.

Was I more inclined, when I went into my career, to look at how to be a working woman? That was the time. I remember my daughter sitting at the table doing a group project when they were doing a senior project and they were supposed to look at the last 20 years and what were the phenomenal changes that had taken place. The women's movement didn't even come up because it wasn't an issue. It wasn't the same as when I was there.

Do you think younger generations struggle with completing adult responsibilities?

I don't think they struggle. I think the parents enable them too long. I think it's the

parents that struggle. You can't skip steps. And it's painful to watch. Like when we kicked our daughter out of our house. She was terrible. It was just kind of who she was. She wasn't helpful. She wasn't thoughtful. We had lived there 14 years. The last two years she had a room there and a car. In six months she destroyed that room. She literally knocked stuff off the wall and melted wax on the carpet. It was time for her to go. We sat down and said, "We really think it's time for you to move out. If you don't want to move out, we'll have to start charging you rent." She looked at us and said, "Ya, this really isn't working out for me." My husband looked at me and said, "Don't say a word. Just sit there." I was ready to jump across the table. There was no "Thanks for helping me get on my feet". We were enabling her by letting her stay there. I think it's the parents who are enabling. It's their fault. I don't think it's the kids' fault.

Have you heard about any stigmas about young adults not being able to do adulting successfully?

I've seen lots of them struggle. I come from a very privileged

point of view because most of my peers have good incomes and the resources are there. I see a lot of parents holding their kids back. For instance, I have two nieces, one lives in Seattle and they still talk to their parents twice a day. We maybe talk to our kids who live near here every week or couple of days if there's more activity. We'd be in the car and they would get a phone call asking where are you going for dinner? They are so engaged in their lives. What happens with that is on the flip side of the kids, I see her with a different light than I see her with her parents. If that is happening every day, you never jump out of that and resort back to being a kid. I see this thing of rescue instead of "no, this is a hard decision and you made this decision and these are the consequences".

What outside sources growing up did you utilize to help you with adult responsibilities?

I was always pretty independent and very good at finding resources like teachers or professors. I was good at reaching out to people who I admired and asking them their opinions as opposed to relying on my parents. My father was never good with money. My

stepmother and I didn't have a good relationship.

For me, my love was magazines. I'm still a magazine junkie today—and then I also went into the newspaper business. Media was how I learned. When we sold the house and we were downsizing, I had every copy of the Vogue magazines for the last 30 years. I have the first original year of Martha Stoles. I had every copy of the New York Women's Magazine, which doesn't exist anymore. It was a great magazine. It was career woman and fashion. That's where I learned everything—in these magazines.

Are you familiar with AI and what are your thoughts about it?

Yes, I am familiar with AI. Although I don't have an Echo or an Alexa or Google home. Can you hook me up, with two? I'll pay the difference. I would like one for our new house because I think I should keep up on it. It's basically voice communication—voice interaction.

Would you feel comfortable sharing personal information such as finances, location or personal preferences, with an AI?

I would stop at finances. It makes no sense because we do it all online. I'm not into Chatbots. We're doing some work now with Expedia on them. It's very popular in Asia. Our team is going to do some research on them. I would feel comfortable with say—if you have an Amazon Prime and said find me such and such book. Tell it to send it to me. But to talk about an investment would feel weird.

How do you see personalization playing a role in AI?

As a way of tasks—I see it task oriented like play me music, give me a movie time—all the stuff I would Google, look up a recipe, order me this—I see it task oriented.

Do you think AI can have personality? Any suggestions to make it realistic and natural?

I'm trying to think of our phones when they came out. Every form was a case. I see a personalization as form factor. It needs to have more

personality as it lives in a home environment. Siri has shown you can have a sense of humor, but humor is very tough. In the future, the algorithm will understand your speech pattern and sense of humor and adapt to that. It's enough just to answer questions right now.

Personality in terms of it's look and feel—absolutely. When I was at Microsoft I did a proposal of a book about integration of technology in the home. It was happening now but had no style to it. Like the Microsoft table but I thought, "Who's going to put that in their home? Nobody." If it's sitting in my house, I want to personalize its look and feel. I don't care so much about the voice at this point.

Do you have any suggestions on how to make an AI seem more natural?

I think I'm at the point for me I don't want it to be too comfortable. I don't want it to feel like my friend. It might not be the case the younger you get.

What if you could adjust the sassiness of your AI, more friendly or tough love?

You have to be able to adjust from the sassiness. Goes back to the algorithm asking it to read mood and tone. That's a hard thing to do.

What is your favorite pop culture reference of AI?

Hal and the Door. I'm going to date myself. Filled with fear. When I was on the Windows team and thinking about the future, I said that it could be a memory catcher for you—a way to capture memories. You could have memory recordings of your parents. Not only for yourself but those who follow you. I've always loved that idea. I think that would be brilliant. I would love that aspect of it.

I've seen the whole computer transition through the years. Cold at first. Your photo album becomes personal history. There has to be a visual component to it. Not just the story.

I need the visual. 'For example of having something in my closet and ask Alexa "when did I last wear this outfit". Oh you wore that for your sister's wedding and here's a picture

of the day. You need to wait a few days.

The best thing Facebook does is birthdays. It is those personal tickets make it feel more special but it doesn't take much. The psychology of memory and expressing everything from political views to their ideal life. See some real raw emotion. That's what makes it real. So is Alexa like a facilitator?

I don't want it to be my buddy but I do want it to be friendly.

In regards to singularity, one of my professors said, "It's going to take twice as long as you expect but will happen sooner than you think."

Basically five years but it's going to take time. It's going to happen and when it does it will be like "BOOM."

Singularity is a scary thing because no one knows when it's going to happen and how it will affect humanity.

What is your vision or theory of how AI's are going to affect humanity in the future?

Do we go to the greater good or do we become isolated? There's a lot of questions when we open up that space. It would be good to look into history of

the industrial evolution. It's really interesting. If you look at clothing styles, kids dressed like they're going to work in factories. It changed attitudes about labor unions. Laws came into place. Didn't have to put kids to work anymore. They could go to school, play and have fun.

There's always the hope that it will be a better society. Put it into perspective. Will it allow more time to travel, be more global? But with that comes conflict. Where do skills and technology come in? What fills the gap? Where's the technology space? With codes they didn't used to be copyrighted but then they became part of the copyright. Look at steep analysis of what is going on around that and how does it impact the world. Will it allow banking and take away jobs? What jobs go away and what skills are needed? How does an AI become pervasive? Not just for those who can buy it and have it on their phone. Industrial Revolution changed labor unions and workers rights.

Transparency—what goes in is what comes out. How is AI going to be manipulated? Trump and Twitter—changed and saved Twitter.

How do you feel about AI and ethics—worldwide council to determine universal ethics?

It will never happen. The chip is getting us closer. I believe ethics are important in life. Technology is just a reflection of life. Internet brings situations to the forefront. Bigger question is not the AI, but social norms. Is it spiritual?

Some examples:

Senior Class Project with self-driving car—if you are going to hit somebody, do you have a switch to turn it off. This is an ethical issue. Some group needs to determine who controls what is put in and what it will spit out. Shouldn't be the government. No large body. There is no universal body.

Old Twilight Sci-Fi movie "To Serve Man"—aliens come down to eliminate the human race because they can't get along and are fighting each other. All world leaders worked together and signed peace treaties. Gives them 24 hours to come together. They did it. But they did it wrong. Supposed to be who is going to win not Kumbaya.

The future has to be part of AI in thinking of the things we have to protect against.

Robynne Raye

*Baby Boomer, Design Professor
Topics: Adult Life, AI*

What was your growing up experience like?

I had a very dysfunctional family, common with a lot of people. I left home when I was 16 and lived out of a car for 3 months. Then I ended up moving in with a friend. I have talked to people who had it much worse, but I never felt like I had a solid foundation. I had a messed up family. I'm over 50 so I've gotten over it.

Did you have any responsibilities while growing up, chores?

My mom was definitely a very good cook but I can't say she taught me. When you come from a dysfunctional family, often the older kids become responsible and that's what happened to me. I was responsible for my younger brother and sister. Because certain things weren't happening in the family so I became an adult as a kid, I was probably a very rude kid. I was already handling shopping and cooking. When

my mom was all there she was very good. She was often not able to be like a parent.

Did you have classes in school that helped teach you adult responsibilities?

I was a big saver. Paid myself through college. I never borrowed anything from either parent. My mom was quite a bit older than my dad. She had gone through the Depression and WWII. She was Rosie the Riveter. She was 18 years older than my dad. Her generation was always fearful of living in the ditch. They were real savers. I saw my mom worry about money when I was a kid.

Ironically my dad is like a millionaire. He is still alive. My mom is gone. He is really financially well off. I didn't notice that when I was a kid so I think it happened when he was a little older. He's a builder. His finances came in later.

I came from a family of 6 kids. That's large now days. I have twin sisters who are 17 years older than me from my mom's marriage when she was in her early 20's. I didn't really grow up with them and they kind of looked like my mom. When people saw us in public, they thought one of my sisters

(because they were twins) was the mother and my mom was like the grandma. I was initially #5 but I'm #4 now. My older brother was a twin. My mom had two sets of twins from two different husbands. I was the first single birth. I grew up in this unusual environment of a big family. With a lot of kids and a parent who lived through the Depression and WWII, they instill a fear of not having enough money. So, I was a big saver.

Growing up, I pretty much had my first two years of college paid for by the time I left high school. I was one of those kids who started working and just saved my money and that all came from my parents. They were savers. They weren't flashy.

Why do you think younger generations struggle with adulting?

Temptation—like the new iPhone costing \$1000 I'm grateful I grew up when I did. We didn't have the Internet; we had records, we didn't have computers. There's a constant barrage to sell things to that age group. There weren't so many temptations to spend money. My friends that have kids want to give them everything. Cell

phones when they are 10 and they have everything. That's part of the problem. They don't know what it's like to save up their money to buy something.

I never had an allowance. I had to babysit and mow lawns to make my own money. I was jealous of all the kids whose parents took them to Hawaii or gave them things because I didn't have that. Now I have a house and I feel good about where I'm at now. Even when I had a crummy job not making much money, I saved 17 grand (like 70,000 today) and I bought my first house as a single woman 20 years ago.

I'm really proud of those accomplishments that all came around from having one of my parents being super weird about money. She was a little kid and she was from a big Italian family. They had a dirt floor, a coal mining family. They didn't have enough money and they went hungry. We don't know what that's like but for immigrant families, they just didn't have resources. There was always a little bit of that fear when I was growing up that it was going to happen to us. So you saved your money. I wouldn't wish that back on today's generation. But they don't know what it's

like to go without. That's a big thing. My dad is from a totally different generation than my mom. I can see a difference even between those two.

It goes in cycles. What's interesting about the Millennials and GenZ's is that they are not buying cars. Advertisers are really scrambling because this is the group that just doesn't want to buy a car. Probably they aren't buying cars is because of all the other stuff that gets in the way of that.

I almost feel like the change has to come when people are younger. In college, I was even a weirdo among my friends because I was the one that saved my money and paid for my education. We all came from dysfunctional families in the 70's and 80's and all our parents were divorced. I didn't know anybody whose parents stayed together. Most of my friends had a hard time handling money. I was like the one kid that always had money for dinner. I was always okay. I didn't have family to lean on. When you don't have that safety net, you become an adult really quick. If I messed up my dad wasn't going to come and bail me out and I would never have asked him to.

My friends with teenage kids bail them out. My friend's daughter had two speeding tickets and was going to get her license revoked. Her dad went in and paid a lot of money to a lawyer to have the tickets taken off. Looking at that from afar, I would have told him to let her get it revoked. We are in a time where no one wants that to happen to their kids. We have less kids, so we are more protective. With seven kids, you're not going to come in and bail each one of them out. No—you figure it out.

How would you define the term of adult and what does it mean to you?

It is to be completely independent, being financially independent and being responsible for your actions. If you are an adult, you are no longer borrowing money from your parents.

Do you consider yourself an adult today?

I realize that I definitely am, but I still feel like a kid.

What types of responsibilities are expected for an adult to be able to complete on their own?

For me, it all centers around money. I have a friend in her 30's that only knew how to make toast when she met me. I was blown away by that; I couldn't imagine that. She is very smart, a Full Bright scholar, speaks 3–4 languages but her excuse for not knowing how to cook was that her mom never taught her. I thought how strange that was for me to hear that because my mom never taught me.

You become an adult when you stop blaming your parents for your behavior. Not someone else's fault. You are like a kid still because you're not taking responsibility. I don't care if someone doesn't know how to cook or clean. I have a cleaner. I don't make a ton of money. I can do it and I keep a pretty clean house. My husband's messy and I don't want to fight with him about cleaning. So I just bring in a cleaner twice a month to do bathrooms, etc.

You are an adult when you stop leaning on your parents or anyone else and blaming them; or looking at someone else to bail you out. I don't lean on my husband. It would

be different if we had kids. The dynamic would completely change. I am responsible for myself. We live together and share expenses and help each other. It's about not pointing fingers at someone and saying the reason I'm like this is because of someone else. You can't do that your whole life; it only works for a little while. Someone who is 30 should be more responsible. It's better to say, "I have no desire to learn how to cook" and just get take-out or go to restaurants.

Do you feel any anxiety around completing adult responsibilities?

The only anxiety I've ever had is over my animals because they are equivalent to someone else's children. It has to do with their health, like when I had to put a dog down. That brought me a lot of anxiety. That's an adult making that decision to take a life is pretty heavy duty. That's even more intense than some kid stuff that comes up.

I have friends that don't have kids; they have animals instead. Our hardest decision is of what to do with your animal when they get older. Do you let them continue to suffer or do you take their life. I felt like an adult then and a little kid afterward.

Certainly when you sign a mortgage, buy a house, any type of big ticket item, any time I screw up like making a mistake with relationships or friends. You're an adult then. You can still do stupid things. There are a lot of people who misbehave badly but they are adults.

Do you feel some adult processes are too complicated?

I don't like doing taxes. I hire someone. Paying taxes is not fun and it's complicated. Some things are unnecessarily complicated. I think they do it on purpose to keep us going to that industry. The tax industry could be a lot more streamlined but then thousands of people would be out of work. It's a huge industry that keeps a lot of people employed. I've never done my own taxes as an adult. Ever since I've had a company and working in different places, my taxes are complicated.

My husband does his own taxes and I watch him every year. I would just rather give a box of stuff to someone and just have them figure it all out.

What are your thoughts on younger generations today, in general?

I'm around a lot of younger people. I don't know if I really think they are that different. In art school in general, there's been a wave of accommodations. I get a lot of letters of accommodation. That didn't exist with my generation and even ten years ago I never saw that. I feel this generation coming up is more anxiety ridden. There has been a lot written about why that is. Some people say it's because that generation had to watch their parents go through the 2008 crash where some people lost houses. They grew up in a different unstable financial world. There are probably many other factors. I think that is a trend. I don't see that at Seattle Central as much as Cornish right now—the average age is 28 so I might see it in ten years from now or five, but it hasn't really hit that age group.

They are more aware of just human being conduct, like the "Me Too" thing. The generations before would never have even talked about it openly let alone posted it. That kind of openness is changing and I think it's healthy. There are a lot of

good things about it. As well as some negatives. If you add it all up, is that group that a lot different? Some people may say that they are, but they may not remember how they were younger and how they behaved. I don't really think it's that different. There is something going on about them not wanting to buy a car. That sounds weird to focus on that but it is telling of the generation.

Do you feel that younger generations struggle with completing adult responsibilities?

I think they have always struggled. It's a common thing throughout history.

Have you heard about any stigmas about young adults not being able to do adulting successfully?

I hear it all the time from my friends. Every generation has been picked on. With every young group that comes along, the groups ahead of them always look at them and say, "You are so inept." That's been going on forever. When I was younger I remember hearing the same kinds of things. There are certain things that happened to that generation

that are unique. Like the stock market, the big Lehman mortgage fallout, and just being technology driven. They have had things happen that are unique to them. You hear about and read about it.

Are you familiar with artificial intelligence and what are your thoughts about it?

I use Alexa every day. I use Amazon every single day of my life. I can't imagine not having it. Everything from controlling lights to alarm and asking about weather. I am completely dependent on it now. That's how I feel.

With AI in the beginning, it's inviting something into your home that controls things. I was skeptical at first. My husband is really into it and he brought it into our house. He is my age and is really into technology. Finds it fascinating, loves having Alexa. He loves having everything controlled like thermostat, even through our phone. There's a stereotype that younger people have that we are not up on stuff. It goes both ways. I can only see it getting better. I love Alexa. I do. I used it today many times. Like this morning, "Alexa—turn on the light".

Would you feel comfortable sharing personal information like finances, location, or personal preferences with an AI?

I feel like I kind of do. The only thing I don't like is that I've been hacked a few times in Facebook and Instagram accounts. I've never had my SSN stolen. But I did have credit card problem. I think I'm more protective of credit transactions. That makes me a little nervous. As far as giving personal information, I feel like it's already out there.

Cristy Maltese

Baby Boomer, Art, Digital
Topics: Adult Life, AI

What was your growing up experience like?

I grew up in what would be known as a nuclear family with a mom and a dad married with two kids in the suburbs middle class. I went to a Catholic school. I got a lot of tradition ground into me, which I did not like at the time, but in later years I learned to really, really appreciate that.

I was one of those artistic kids. The ones who other kids would come up to and ask them to draw a chicken. My parents never ever tried to steer me away from art into a "real job". They supported me all the way through. My parents did have some marital problems but they worked it out. My high school years were not particularly great. But in general I had a real decent, happy growing up time.

What were your responsibilities while growing up and who taught you?

Yes, we had to weed. When we were real little my mother would set a timer for 15 minutes, which was an eternity. Then the time got longer and longer. In the house as we got older we had to do dishes, keep our room clean, the yard, walking the dog.

My mother did all that stuff. My dad brought home the bacon and didn't really have that kind of responsibility with us kids. It was just me, and my sister. They were both disciplinarians, but he was a retired Marine Corps officer and all he had to do was use that voice with us. My mom was a lot softer. But with my dad, you just didn't mess with him.

Define the term adult and what it means to you?

It's not an age thing. Being responsible. That would be the one word I would boil it down to. Being responsible is an umbrella term. All those things you would want in a spouse. Someone who isn't going to tell stories, fess up when they screw up and take action to fix it. If you take on added responsibility, then you should be willing to see things



through. Act in a civilized manner like a civilized human being.

Do you consider yourself an adult today?

Pretty much. I would say I'm 65–70% there. Always room for improvement.

What responsibilities are expected for an adult to be able to do?

Paying rent, paying all your living expenses, being able to maintain relationships with people—friendly, romantic, acquaintances, work relationships, neighbors. It's important to be involved in something that is bigger than you like an organization of some kind that's beneficial to society. There are so many organizations that meet once a week and benefit society. It's good to think about the bigger picture and to give back. Gratitude is a really, really important thing to me. I've introduced that into my classes. I think it's the root of all happiness—to be able to express gratitude and feel it.

What about basic responsibilities?

Feed yourself, put a roof over your head, clothes on your back and shoes on your feet. Pay for all of that stuff. We

all have to just go through the peanut butter phase. No matter how good you are at it, at some point you always get stuck along the way. That's another factor on how you handle that.

Before me and my husband got married, he got laid off—they laid everyone off. It was like a bloody Friday. He handled it so well. That's what made me want to marry him. He didn't get upset. He immediately got busy and they hired him back in about a month or so. He acted like an adult. He was a big boy. Of course, there are always those times when it is appropriate to blow a fuse.

Do you feel anxiety with completing adult responsibilities?

I just grit my way through it. On occasion I will get behind on bills and it's only because I don't make the time to just sit there and do it. Or reading mail. Who wants to read mail? I've always been that way and always will be. What happens is, I get my back up against a wall and then I get busy and do it all. At the 11th hour, I take care of everything. On the outside, nobody would know it. I do get it done but not in a timely manner.

During times you have struggled, did you have a support system?

I didn't call my mom. I did more like looking things up in encyclopedias. We didn't have the Internet, but we had these books. I was more dependent on myself. I didn't depend on a lot of other people. I should have because I have learned in my later life it is a really good way to go, to be able to bounce ideas off of other people. If they've been in a situation like that, what they did about it. That was a real good way I have picked up along the way. I was just a real quiet, kept to myself type of kid, not real chatty.

Do you feel like some adult things are too complex and what are some examples?

No, because with more complex things, that's what experts are for. We have a tax lady. We've been going to her for 20 years and she's great. I have no idea what she does.

What are your thoughts of the younger generations?

I am of two minds. I see people like you and I thank God that we are saved. But then you see some people whose stories are so pernicious and awful.

What I want young people to understand is more of our nations founding principles. I know that's not being taught in our schools. People have to find it on their own or in some place else. Every time I really get down about it something happens and then I think wow! I find these quotes going all the way back to Socrates, like, "These teenagers now days don't have any respect for their elders." Its kind of built into the human being. You have to go through that phase. Childhood and even the teenager phase is kind of a recent thing. It used to be when you were 11 or 12 years old you were a blacksmith or whatever you were going to be for the rest of your life. They didn't actually have a childhood.

Do you feel younger generations struggle with completing adult responsibilities?

I don't think it is any more than other generations have. I don't know how young married couples buy a house. In California, they can't. I had it a lot easier in that respect. I think of the younger people in my family and they have the same struggles I had. It's just an upgraded form.

What are your thoughts on the snowflake generation and entitlement?

That's the generation that scares me. When they get out and into the real world they are going to be and are getting God-smacked. They are precious, unique individuals but the world doesn't give a damn about who they are. The laws of physics, or finance are not going to bend to your will. Or the laws of nature are not going to bend to your will. There is something every five years—some new meme that gets really hot and then goes away. Like right now transgender seems to be really hot discussion topic. I think when people finally relax about it, then something else will come along that people will be uptight about. I want to say, look this is nature and there are all kinds of flavors. You don't have to get all greased around the axles about it. Just relax—its just nature. You have to acknowledge that nature builds in certain things. Wherever you fall on the spectrum, that's where you fall. I don't understand why everyone has to get so uptight about it.

I remember when I was younger, people were coming out as gay. I was supposed to be impressed. I'd think, "I'm not gay, I'm straight. Aren't you impressed?" I didn't understand. I was raised to be tolerant and accept people for what they are. I was raised to be colorblind. I don't care. I just want people to be adults. I don't care how you came out of the chute as long as you take care of yourself, your family, your neighborhood, your city, your state, your nation, your world and your solar system.

Are you familiar with AI and what are your thoughts on it?

I am not as familiar as you are. I look at it as a double-edged sword. It will be very, very helpful and also could be really terrible in the wrong hands, like nuclear energy. It could be used for incredible things. There are so many things AI's can do.

There was a Twilight Zone episode— an astronaut man was banished to this prison planet. They had pity on him and sent him a robot woman. When he was found not guilty years later and given the chance to be rescued and go back to earth, he didn't want to leave "it" because she had

become so important to him. I can see that happening. AI—you can think of it as robots, or smart houses, cars, everything, and we could all be turning into Borgs. I think it will have just incredibly wonderful and incredibly terrible fallout possibilities. It could be catastrophic. It will have to be very carefully dealt with. I don't believe we will ever have a skylight thing happen where robots are turning on us.

Would you feel comfortable sharing personal information with an AI?

Yes, I would. I just assume everyone has all of my information anyway and it's already out there. I've been hacked several times.

Any other thoughts about Millennials and the future?

I have high hopes. I am much more optimistic than I am pessimistic—90% optimistic to 10% pessimistic.

08

Jackie Goldberg

*Baby Boomer, Design Director,
Amazon—Alexa Shopping
Topics: Adult Life, AI*

What are ways AI is affecting our lives today?

There are some very mundane ways that people might not even realize. Like anybody who receives an Amazon package and some of the fulfillment methods we use. A lot of it is driven by or supported by machine learning. A lot of the products we use are digital products. The algorithms that drive or define what news we are fed or what ads we are fed. There are some models underlying that.

Fulfillment center is like some of the processes, machinery even, that is packaging, shipping, the logistics pieces are often powered by the rudiments of AI not to mention any the digital products we use like apps and websites. These products are loaded with very simple AI mechanisms. Somebody wrote that, "AI, once it starts working, and is put to purpose and is in use and producing, is then called just machine learning." It has a much less intimidating

name. But AI is a great rubric for the big abstract promise in the sky that's going to come down the road. But today I think it's actually all around us and in the products we use on a day to day basis and could be increasingly so.

Do you think an AI can have personality and do you have any suggestions on how to develop personality that is realistic and natural?

I definitely think an AI can have personality, but what is personality? Like quirks or idiosyncrasies? Even a machine has a pattern of behaviors that if you expose them and make them correctable it could come across as personality quirks in a way. I'm kind of an iconic classic. I don't like a lot of artificially applied personality. The equivalent in graphic design is like style—applied style. Like something that is very self-conscious super imposed or an overlay of an aesthetic that may or may not be serving a purpose. Like it's there for it's own sake.

I tend not to like those extra things. I think Johnny Ives said it best, "There's an applied style of simple and then there's true simplicity."

Like when you have actually worked on a design problem and have refined it to its absolute minimal yet most expressible capability, a minimal presentation full capability. That's pretty profound. That's super refined. The notion of creating a personality is something that requires a lot of care. You don't want to be getting in the way of what the user is trying to do. It would be real easy to mess it up by trying to be cute or clever. The Paul Rand line about, "Don't try to be original just try to be good. Stop trying to be so cute or have so much personality. Let's just get the job done."

When you say realistic and natural, it almost has more to do with what the user can do than what the AI itself does. What can the user say? Anything. That's going to feel like a natural interaction. Can the user correct the AI when it makes a mistake? That is going to feel like an actual interchange of two people giving input and output. That's going to feel natural too. Realistic—I think about content presentation. When context comes on screen can it ease on screen in a way that feels like a graceful transition? Or it almost seems to obey the laws of physics. There's

gentleness to it or there's gravity when appropriate of easing in and out like the old keynote hoc animations. There are things that can feel realistic by integrating with what we as human beings expect like the way we expect light to fall, shadows to be cast, objects to be weighted. There's a great piece on this. "A Brief Rant on Interaction Design" by Bret Victor. He wrote it a number of years ago. He's talking about a lot of these issues like how do we make digital experiences that start to truly integrate with and replicate the experiences of the physical world. At the point in time he wrote it, almost a decade ago, he talks about how we control our digital experiences right now with our hands. He calls it pictures under glass, like we are tapping on glass. That has no weight or volume. It's consistent whether you are tapping on something that's full or empty—everything basically responds the same. When you lift up a glass that's empty versus a glass that's full, your sense of touch can tell you. I think the thing about reality is in understanding the physical world and the human's expectations of the physical world.

Where does it make sense to apply it reasonably without going skeuomorphic to a digital experience? One of the tricks to that is engaging more senses. That's what we do every day.

How do you see personalization and customization playing a roll in AI and what are some examples?

When I worked at Yahoo I went there to work on a personalized magazine experience back in 2011. iPads were fairly new—all the rage. Yahoo was really known for its media content—news, sports, finance, and entertainment. Up and down, all of these different content verticals as we called them. So what we wanted to do was create an experience that would pull together the best of these verticals and over time, learn your preferences.

For example, you're not just interested in sports, you're interested in Sonics; you're not just interested in finance, you want to know how Apple stock is performing. Over time the content you would be served would become more and more tailored to your interests. We were building a rudimentary personalization logic. There were a bunch of technical

issues in just serving up the content in a beautiful way.

We wanted the magazine to look like the articles that were about financial news out of Business Week or Forbes, Sports Illustrated for the sports ethnic, like it would have the vibe that was appropriate to the content being served. That was just presentation layer. That's where I got to experience what is was like to design not only how content was presented but to design the logic that determined what content was shown and why.

There were a bunch of changes at Yahoo and we got a new CEO who understood a lot about artificial intelligence and a lot about search. Our new CEO started a project on probably the most trafficked page on our network at the time, and the third most trafficked page on the Internet, which was Yahoo.

I had never used any Yahoo products in all honesty and I really had no interest in working on what I thought of was big Yahoo. But she saw our little personalized project that was like this experimental thing optimized for touch. Why don't we put this where the users are? Instead of asking people to download

this app, let's put it where we have the most traffic and see how it performs. We had to go through a lot of reshaping of the presentation of the content but the fundamental idea of having a personalized news feed—that core idea we tried to stay true to.

It's tricky presenting that on a page that people had been coming to since 1995 and never had to sign in for. As opposed to Facebook or Twitter or others from what we called Web 2.0 instead of apps that required authentication where the user got to customize or define by adding people or subjects they wanted to follow. They got to customize the experience they were going to get.

What we did on Yahoo.com was similar in that we would let the user customize by expressing this interest declaration—they could say I'm interested in the Sonics, the Sounders, the SeaHawks, Seattle teams, Seattle weather, Apple stock, Amazon stock. They could really quite tune their experience down to the entity (tag), a person, place or thing that they were interested in. The trick was how much news do we serve them that are basically exactly what they asked for. How much news do we serve them

that is just these are the top news stories of the hour and they need to see them even if they haven't expressed interest in it. If there's some natural disaster somewhere, even if they haven't expressed an interest in that location, shouldn't they know about it? Well, yes.

How do you pivot them from the topics they've expressed an interest in by customization, into other topics they haven't explicitly said they are interested in. That's personalization. So you can start building a really robust, sophisticated content lineup for that user based on what they've told you. But then you can also learn from implicit signals like what did they click on, how long did they stay, how far did they scroll down, did they like the article, did they comment on the article, did they share the article, did they go to another article on the same subject from there, if so did they use the carousel at the bottom of the screen, what was the means by which they got to the next. All of those user actions were given a score like a rating. We called it waiting. How important was that action? We could rank the user actions on the content. Then we could actually

create very sophisticated personalization models based on not only what you told us you were interested in but based on what you did. What you actually looked at. People would tell us they didn't want anymore Kim Kardashian but then they would end up looking up the articles. Customization would allow users to say, "Please for the love of Pete, turn that down and show me less of that."

That is probably the most important example of my experience but it's not necessarily about AI though. I think an AI would learn in a more natural way. Like you could say, "Listen Alexa, I'm interested in Apple stock and Amazon stock and I want to track those two and if anything happens, you let me know. Okay?"

Or, I want to follow this Instagram user and that Instagram user so if they post anything, a story, or if they like somebody else's content, I want to know about it. Will you let me know? You could explicitly ask the AI. Hopefully, if she were a really good assistant, she would then be able pivot from the customization you are explicitly telling her into the personalization, reading your implicit signals. She might

say, "You didn't ask for that third Instagram user but you are often liking their pictures. Maybe you want to know about them too. Or maybe you want to know about the person you don't yet follow who is a lot like the one that you specifically asked for updates on."

These are ways in which an AI can actually be intelligent and make suggestions to you. Not too pushy but start surfacing things to you that you may not know about. There are a lot of good reasons to think you might be interested in that you don't have to do the work to go dig for it. We actually use customization at Yahoo to build our personalization engine.

If you said, I want to follow Amazon, Jeff Bezos, and machine learning as topics. Then when the next user came down the line and said, "I want to follow Amazon." We could say, "Ah, you might also be interested in Jeff Bezos or machine learning. Other users have followed those topics too when they follow Amazon."

It's just like our collaborate filtering here. It's a way of bootstrapping the system and getting it up and running. Once people are giving you all kinds of implicit signals then you can

get really subtle and you don't have to ask so many direct questions. That's actually a very natural and human way to go about it when you first meet someone. You are a little more explicit than you would be down the road.

What is your favorite pop culture AI?

I love, love, love Max Headroom. It's early 80's. I haven't looked at it in a long time but basically he helped solve crimes. He was able to process a lot more information than the any of humans who were controlling him could do. There were also a lot of really famous graphics that at a glance you could recognize as being Max Headroom. It was like a grid of TVs on his head. It would sometimes cut in and out. He was obviously digital. He had a head, two eyes, two ears, a mouth and nose. He was obviously done like a human but very clearly not human. He had capabilities that the humans didn't. He also had a lot of glitches but came across as rather charming and had this very jarring way of talking. He became a real ally asset to the two human agents. There was a man and woman that controlled and dealt with him. Nobody was ever operating under the mistake that he was human.

A more current version is Ex-Machina, which is really eerie and violent. I watched West World. I can't wait to see where it goes. Was this all part of Ford's master plan? Is he really dead? It seems like he has created sentients and memory in his creations and in his hosts. These are all fun and interesting. Max Headroom though is retro, never scary. He was always an ally. He didn't pretend for a minute to be human. It's almost like C3PO and R2. They are allies. Sometimes they are a little hapless. They are actually super helpful. They're able to endure some things and go through some things, and process some things that the humans around them cannot. They never pretend to be something other than they are and that's kind of charming like R2 with all his little beeps. Why is that cute? But it is. The list goes on.

What are some guidelines or suggestions in making a good AI experience?

The truth is we don't really know yet. Like an AI experience for what? What is the user trying to do? It always gets back to my glib answer to what is realism or what feels natural. What are you letting the user

do? What do they want to be able to do? I think if you start and end with a focus on what does that human being want to accomplish here. That's the only true north that there is right now. The technology is improving by leaps and bounds and going so fast. I think about designing dialogue and what makes for a good exchange.

Alexa could go on asking you a series of questions and then give you a chance to answer or she can ask one question and wait for you to respond and it becomes a volley. I suspect that users want to be engaged. What is the duration of from when the conversation begins to when you get to talk? How long is that? Somebody goes on for a really long time and you have to wait for your turn politely. With Alexa you can butt in at anytime, you can interrupt her. What is the conversation designed to optimize for?

I think about cognitive load and informational groupings and what people can retain—certainly an auditory chunking of information or visual presentation. We have to be very thoughtful about how much we push at you the human before you get to respond to what you've just seen. How active do you need to be, do you need to push it

the whole way? The AI should really take on a life of its own and have it's own momentum but also create the openings for the user to engage.

"Organic? Yes or no? A bag or a single lemon? You pick. OK, how many do you want? Five."

It's how to design for that kind of lightweight quick volley. That's one way in which you can design an AI experience that starts feeling good and right. Guidelines are big for what you are trying to accomplish. The only true north is staying super true to what the user intent is.

I think about my predecessor at Yahoo, a guy named Luke Wroblewski. He was infamous for writing "Mobile First". He did the homepage design before I came in. He is a terrific designer, great thinker and writer. He talked a lot about how when we moved from desktop to mobile we had to really refine what was shown on each screen of a mobile experience. With this kind of ruthless prioritization I just loved the clarity, focus and simplicity of that. When you think about designing for an AI if it is conducted by voice certainly the screen is optional. I think you are talking about an experience that is on that same continuum.

We used to pack tons of content into a desktop screen because we could. The idea of optimizing design was to minimize the number of clicks. But when we get to mobile we will actually tolerate more steps as long as each step is crystal clear. Move to voice is just further along that trajectory. Guidelines for AI—this is where the nuance of what's natural, give them the context, what's best for that specific user and personalization have to come into play.

But as a baseline guideline, you could say it's kind of further on that trajectory if you want to have a natural conversation maybe it's really incremental, light weight, its really iterative, it's really bit by bit. The way regular conversations between humans should be. Whether or not that involves visual presentation. Obviously I am very passionate about all of this. I love all of this.

What are your thoughts on branding of today's AI's and do you think they fit and represent artificial intelligence well?

I think we do a good job because Alexa is very friendly and approachable. Intelligent

though. Alexa is a genius for your smart home and things you want to control like playing music, shopping for you. But the branding right now is very thin, light, there isn't much there. One of the things when you joined us in the summer when you, Jaden, started working with us, what was so exciting was that you had a very strong sense of brand and brand development and identity building. From my perspective, I thought that is exactly what the doctor ordered. Asking people to compute in a totally new way. Take your hands off the wheel. You're in a car. It's moving. It's going where you want to go. You're not driving it. That requires quite literally a leap of faith. We're talking about blind trust here. When you are trying to get people to do things in a new way, design can really help them adopt new technologies. It can really smooth the path and make it more palatable, more beautiful, more natural, easier, and more efficient. Any of these pluses might make it worth taking that leap of faith.

When I think about brand, my old boss, Roger Black was a Texan and had this awesome spiel about brands being like a cattle brand that originated

with branding animals that were part of your domain. It was really about ownership and propriety. "This is my land and my livestock." Brand actually has a real role to play and is totally untapped as of right now. When you are talking about a new experience and an unfamiliar way of doing something, any element that can help you with recall that you might recognize, that you have some relationship or association with, a brand mark, brand elements, might help you also take that leap of faith. "It's something I know and trust. It's something that's familiar. I know how to use it over here. So when I'm presented with the same thing in a new context." As you know we are working on new devices all the time that we can't talk about. Our hope is if you learn how to use Alexa to shop in one place, you are going to understand how to work with her anywhere. There's not going to be any manual that you have to read or anything fancy. Maybe things will change depending on the device's capabilities. But it should feel really intuitive. There should be enough for you to hang on to that's familiar.

When I worked on that homepage project of

Yahoo.com, Marissa said something to me that I've never forgotten. My first mocks for the homepage, let's just say I blew it up. I went really radical, really extreme. I changed every element on that screen. My memory was that she smiled and kind of chuckled. She gave me some really awesome guidance at the time. She said the thing about innovating is that you don't have to do everything at once. And in fact, it's better if you don't. You have got to give users a lifeline to hang on to and help them bridge to the new experience—some familiar thing.

This is where I think brand can be so powerful. It could be just the use of color or motion, or sound or the typography. It's form, line, balance, negative space. All of these graphic signatures or other elements of design can create a mood. They cast the spell. Even if you're walking into a completely new and unfamiliar situation, you'll recognize these things and it might help you get over the hump. Try shopping a completely different way or whatever the AI is intended to do. What do I think of it? We are not taking advantage of it. There's so much more we can do. It's a great opportunity to do more.

Jonathan Grudin

Baby Boomer, Microsoft—Research Topics: AI

What are ways AI is affecting our lives today?

One of the challenges is we need to specify what artificial intelligence covers. The term went out because there were periods of extreme optimism that it would be here. Then it kind of went out of fashion. We want to focus in on what it includes. So robotics is one area that can be included. One area is object recognition, visual image recognition by the robot that is considered part of AI by some.

There are the Bots that are more interactive forms of AI. As far as affecting our lives, things like object and face recognition have really come quite a ways. With Google, you can store images and it will say, "These 40 photos look like these are old receipts, can we flush them?" so Google doesn't have to pay for the storage. Then I would say, "yes I've taken a photo of them and don't need them anymore." If Google does that for millions of people they can save a lot of cost of storage space.

Have you heard of Windows Hello? It is an eyeball. What it does for this laptop I'm using now, I don't need to type in a password anymore. It uses facial recognition but it has infra red so it can get through my facial hair. One of my favorite features better than our computers that log out every few minutes. It doesn't always recognize me like if I just come out of the shower, facial heat is not enough to recognize my face.

Lots of small ways it's helping us—if you are doing searches it will provide type ahead, figures out where you are. If I start typing on phone it gives me choices of words based on words that are familiar to me.

Not always seen as helpful such as when I have a certain birthday I might be besieged with ads for knee replacements. So there are pluses and minuses. It is affecting us.

Can an AI have personality that can it be realistic and natural?

Good question—is there really personality behind there somewhere or does it just seem to have personality, which is important. The problem is there are some

limitations. There are general purpose things like Siri but then some are intended for specific tasks. Looking at it for a specific domain, then you can build in more personality because you have a better sense of the sorts of tasks involved and people using it so you can customize it. One problem AI has is if it starts to have a lot of personality, then we tend to assume it is actually like a person, then once you get out of the domain it knows something about, unlike a real person who can listen and follow along, whereas an AI would just derail if you change the topic. Try to keep it on task or sense of personality can just evaporate very quickly.

Example: Not sure what's behind the software or type of AI, but when I do my taxes I use Turbo tax, used it for long time, every year it seems to have improved. It used to have a lot of bugs and you had to work around it. But now it asks things like, "How do you feel about doing your taxes today?" It asks questions that a tax consultant might ask you. Gives you choices of how to respond like good or anxious and it uses information to guide how it goes through to seem more personal and take you through

at your own pace. It's just a delicate issue.

One other challenge here is if you interact with AI quite a bit, first few times you will feel good about how it reacts but when it starts acting repeatedly, it might lose some personality.

This is a fairly new system that is a communication system that pops up and will say, "You're missing all the action on this product. You want to go over and look at these conversation threads." After awhile I have adopted a routine now – I look at it every other day. Now when it pops up, I'll say, "No I'm not. You are just interrupting me and making me nervous." You're not even telling me if there's new messages I need to see.

Other examples where they are trying to introduce personality like "Hang tight, we'll be here in a minute," is kind of cute the first time but 10th time you're wondering why it's taking so long to boot up. Take into account that you can personalize it but it will be a hard job to do it right.

One of the big problems we had when I was a developer early in my career – we would put jokes into the message that appealed to developers but to our astonishment the customers didn't appreciate

them and found them offensive sometimes. Personalization and customization are great things but they have to be done carefully.

Open ended and sounds great, very customized but at the end of Her your kind of let down when the AI's leave.

What are your theories on how AI will affect us in the future?

I've gone through periods like 30 years ago when I was optimistic about how it would be out there right away, but it obviously didn't, so I've had my ups and downs. A lot of my friend's work with AI so I don't feel I'm overly biased.

I don't think they will take over government or health. They will kind of change the nature of jobs, some will be eliminated, some will extend the way we do things.

For example – nature of coaching is changing. Kids in all these sports, music etc. AI helps people adopt adult responsibilities. Will AI simply be between it and the person or will there be a third party? There could actually be someone behind it who occasionally hears from the AI. Open question – goal might be to have the AI do it all but

it might be able to alert a specialist if something serious comes up.

A counselor could help more people out by having the AI alert them when serious situation comes up.

Example: I was diagnosed with sleep apnea, doctor gave me CPAP machine that uses air pressure when sleeping so I don't stop breathing. Diagnosed by study that measures everything that happens while sleeping. Records what goes on during sleep, wirelessly transmits it out to be diagnosed, some results come to patient and a lot more is sent to the sleep doctor who goes in and looks at it. Maybe about once a month he looks it over and will contact patient when needed. AI works in conjunction with specialists.

What are your thoughts on AI and Ethics like a World-wide Counsel on AI's?

Getting tough. New York Times published article by the head of Paul Allen's AI think tank or group: "3 laws of robotics and how to update them". Putin and us have different ideas about this. Sounds nice but can't see how it would come about with different countries.

With the time frame, I'm not optimistic. I won't live to see it nor my kids. Because I work for a development company, I see how long it takes to do simple things. It's getting more complex with so many systems out there, hard to understand how they all work.

Do you think we will reach singularity in 2039?

First encountered this in 1975, then in 1960 it was predicted farthest out to 1980, by Herb Simon, AI leader. I've gotten a bit jaundiced about it. In 1989, Marvin Minsky said it still will happen but since AI went down wrong path it will take another 30 years (which is next year).

How can AI be exploited and affected in a negative way?

Could be used to convince people to do things that are not in their best interest more efficiently, to buy things that aren't really useful, system built on getting people to want more things and do more things. AI's make advertising more affective – like CPAP. Now that I have one and mention it, I find that so many people are on one. Can't be that many people who really need one.

The other concern I have is that it undermines personal relationships, in particular small groups and extended communities around us.

They are more and more going away. Don't know most of people around me. What most worries me that it is pulling us away from the environments we are designed to operate in.



Pop Culture and Other Research Sources

The movie Her was a major inspiration for my BFA. It was able to bring humanistic qualities to a computer in an incredibly aesthetic way.

Pop Culture

One of the best aspects of this project was the amount of pop culture I got to read and watch. AI has been dreamed about since the early 1990s. I particularly enjoyed watching the various AI films that are out there in the world today. I watched *Her*, *Blade Runner 1&2*, *Altered Carbon*, *A Space Odyssey 2001*, *iRobot*, *AI*, *Black Mirror*, *Ex Machina*, *Chappie*, *Humans*, and *Ghost in the Shell*. All of these movies/TV shows visualize what the future could be with artificial intelligence—both the good and the bad.

In terms of visual inspiration, I found *Her*, *Blade Runner*, and *Black Mirror* to have some of the more well thought out graphic user interface (GUI) and voice user interface (VUI) designs. I particularly like *Her* because it focuses on the human-computer relationship. The movie illustrates how an AI onboarding system might work, how conversational UI could be improved, and the importance of a good voice.

Books Skimmed and Conferences Visited

In addition to watching an insane number of movies, I skimmed a few books and had the wonderful opportunity to attend a couple of conferences.

One of the main books that was recommended to me was *When the Machine Stops* by E.M. Forster. This book was very motivational in that Forster was able to predict many of the future technologies we have today in the year 1909. He depicts a society run by the machine and being able to get anything you desired at the touch of a button—not that different from services like Amazon's Prime Now. This book helped me to remember that even though some of the designs that I may come up with today might seem outlandish, they have a good chance of being built in the near future. Don't be afraid to dream big.

I also had the wonderful opportunity to attend a panel at the 2017 Seattle Design Festival that discussed ethics and AI. In this panel, I learned a lot of terminology around AI like "general intelligence" and "singularity". The panel was filled with local design firms and prominent figures that work at Microsoft on many of their AI initiatives. The talk was incredibly influential and helped me to think more deeply about the positive and negative consequences of AI.

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This is a
Google Skits
Shoot for the stars
project.



Brand
Vision

Looking to
the future,
with roots in
the present.
Dream big or
go home, hun.



The Brand

*Tired, broke, and done with the shit.
The generations of today want honesty,
personality, and real.*

The Company Concept

Mimir focuses on creating personal AI assistants that aim to make life easier through automation and guidance. The product acts as a general intelligence reskinning of today's AI platforms. It does this through tapping into the intelligence of other AI such as Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant in order to get things done, while also maintaining a consistent and personal experience.

Creating a strong connection between humans and AI is one of the tenets of the company. For example, Mimir let's you name your AI because ownership and familiarity help build loyalty and trust. With Mimir, your AI is uniquely yours and only yours.

Ironically Imperfect

The brand of Mimir is very young and encompasses the sassy and imperfect nature of younger generations—or at least from a stereotypical, Baby Boomer point of view. In order to highlight the difficult challenge of growing up and moving into adult life, all photography and marketing are representative of the sometimes ugly and difficult transition. Using the juxtapositions of imperfection, high-fashion, and elevated design the brand is able to be both accessible and upscale.





The Nordic God of Wisdom

It was difficult finding a name for my BFA company, but after a day of searching I stumbled on the myth of Mimir and it just clicked.

Finding the Perfect Name

One Sunday, I was in bed trying to think of names for this concept company and I began to search online. I tried everything from different fruits, mythologies, to words about being helpful. After googling gods of wisdom, I came across Mimir and thought it was, honestly, the most perfect analogy for an AI. I knew I had to use it. Plus, it wasn't trademarked.

The Mythology*

Mimir (pronounced "MEE-meer;" Old Norse Mímir, "The Rememberer") is an exceptionally wise being and a counselor of the gods. Mimir was killed and beheaded by the Vanir during the Aesir-Vanir War. Upon seeing the severed head, Odin embalmed it with special herbs and chanted magical songs over it to preserve it. He consulted the head in times of need, and it continued to dispense incomparable advice. More than any other being in Norse mythology, Mimir seems to be regarded as the divine animating force behind the wisdom of past tradition and its indispensable value as a guide for present actions.

**Written by Daniel McCoy*

My Year of Progression

My design process usually starts with me doing visual research and creating a moodboard. I find this helpful in creating a vision for the project and it allows me to check my ideas against what's already out there.



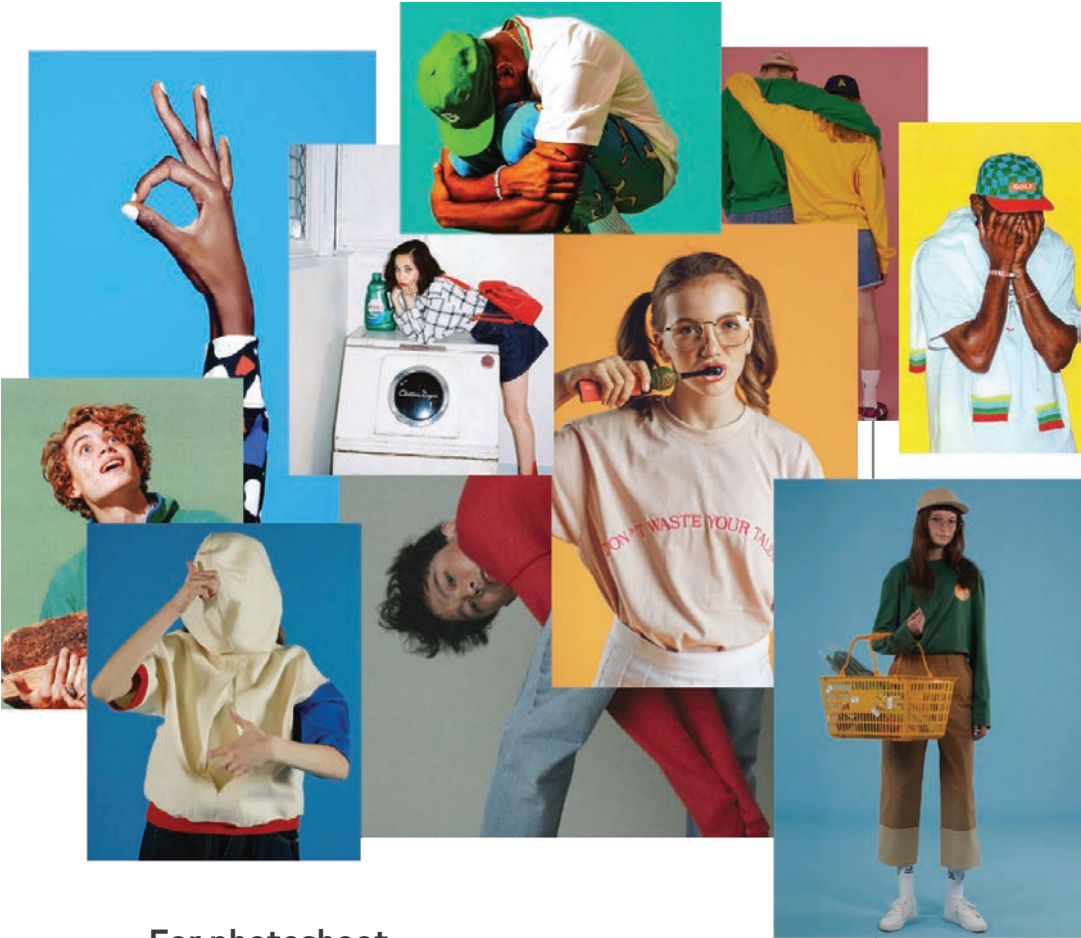
I was initially inspired by the ethereal nature of AI and the simplicity of children's learning toys. My first moodboard focused on layers, flow, basic shapes, light, and color pop.

This led me to create a UI and brand system utilizing an expressive gradient and basic shapes to represent the AI. However, this felt too safe and too "Apple-y", so I scrapped the direction.



Then after scrolling through Instagram, I began to notice a trend around 3D art in marketing. After looking at artists like TwistedPoly, I began to think it would be interesting to see it applied as an interface for an AI.

For the next three-and-half months I taught myself (with some guidance from Jeff Brice) Cinema 4D, X-particles, and Redshift to create dynamic particle art as the main staple of Mimir's interface.



For photoshoot concepts I searched Pinterest and found several fashion companies that did color pop photography with their own twist. I felt like high fashion color pop juxtaposed with imperfection would be a cool direction for my marketing.

After a full day of shooting with six models, over 1,000 pictures taken, weeks of being in the studio rendering until 2am, and late night walks thinking about the future of AI, I was able to create a bold, cohesive brand for my BFA.



Typeface: FF Mark Pro

Sharp. Clean. Geometric.

FF mark pro is designed by German type designers Hannes von Döhren, Christoph Koeberlin and the FontFont Type Department created this sans FontFont in 2013.

The new Germanetric sans is strong, simple, bold and created with utmost consideration and precision. True to geometric tradition, contemporary for

today's needs. The family contains 10 weights from Hairline to Black and is ideally suited for film and TV, advertising and packaging, editorial and publishing, logo, branding, music and nightlife, software and gaming, sports as well as web and screen design.

FF Mark provides advanced typographical support with features such as ligatures, alternate characters, case-sensitive forms, fractions, super and subscript characters, and stylistic alternates.

Mark

Heavy

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

Bold

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

Medium

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

Book

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

Light

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

Extra Light

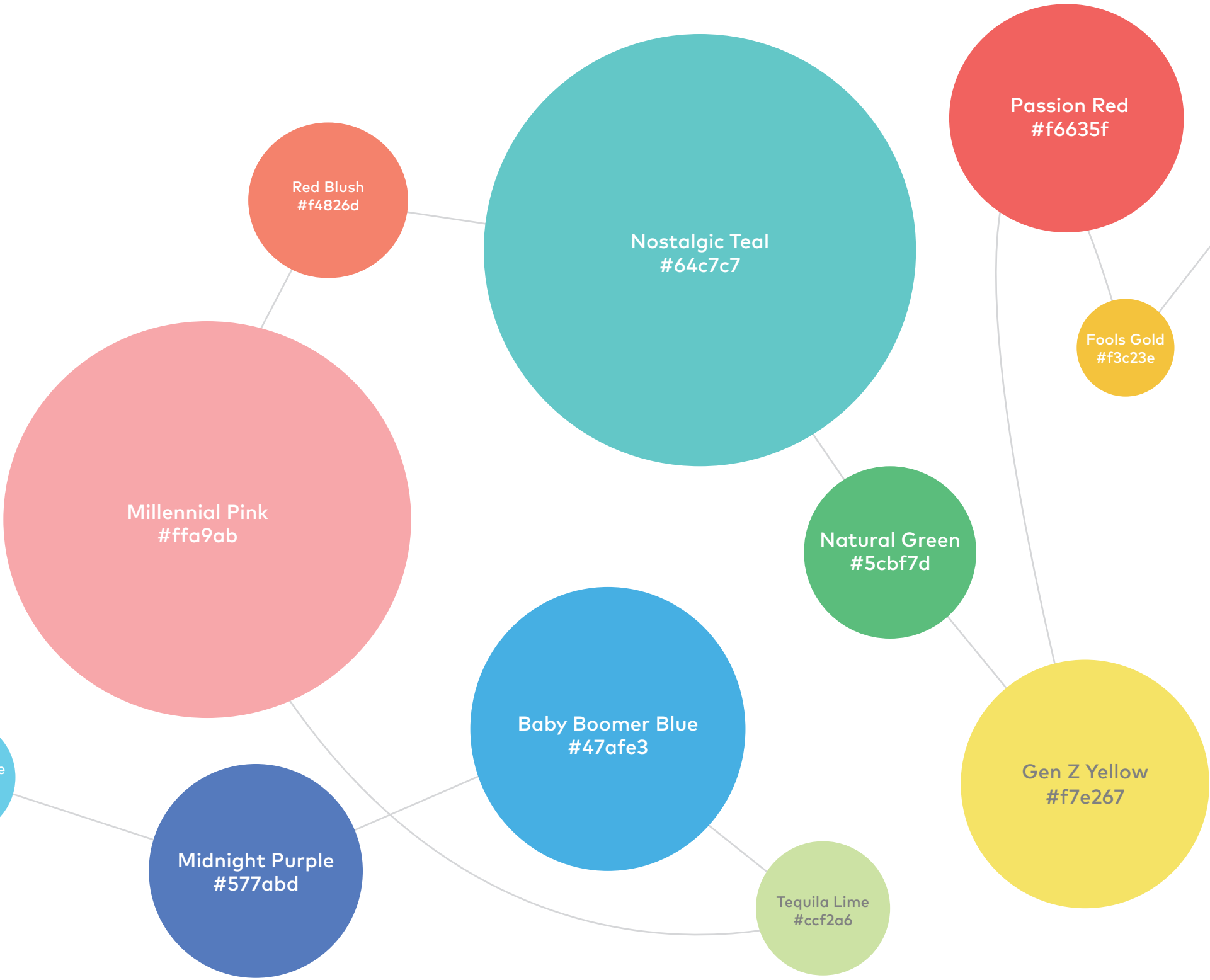
AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

0123456789

! & % # @

Millennial Pink & Stuff

My color palette for Mimir was a couple months in the making. The palette ended up being inspired by colors attributed to different generations and children's toys. I felt like they fit perfectly with the Mimir brand and helped elevate the young and nostalgic moods I wished to portray.



Mimir AI

Mimir AI

Mimir

Mimir AI

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Mimir AI

The logo for Mímir is a graphic logotype in a bold, sans-serif typeface. The word "Mímir" is rendered in a dark red color. The accent mark on the "i" is a small, dark red rectangle, tilted at an angle.

A Graphic Logotype

I went through a bunch of logo designs for Mímir, but none of them seemed to work as well as just simply using the Mark Pro typeface as a logotype. In order to make it work better as a logo, I tightened the kerning and simplified the design of the accent mark to be more graphic.




An Icon.


For Mímir, it's important that the name of the company is well recognized. This is why I chose not to have a logomark, but rather an animated conjunction of the Mímir logo. Netflix recently adopted a similar format with their branding. This format works well for digital platforms.




GET HELP
WITH ALL
THE ADULT
STUFFZzzz

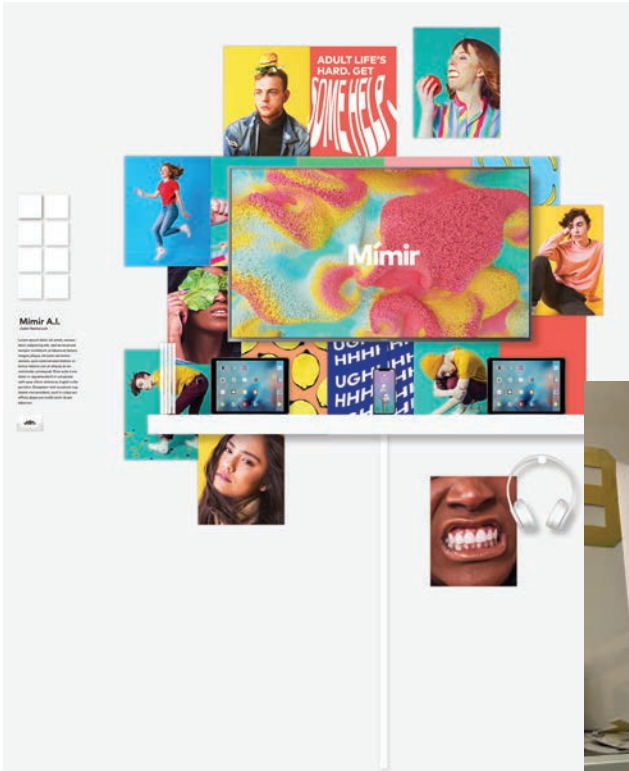
Mimir











I went through quite a few renditions of my BFA exhibit—even spending entire days rearranging the elements. After trying various minimal designs, it just didn't feel representative of my brand. After consulting my mentors, they suggested I go even louder with my imagery.



A next-gen *Skeuomorphic* futuristic *Flat and 3D* blend Interface



An Operating System Fit for an AI

An OS that aims to assist you with all of the “adult responsibilities” we are expected to figure out on our own.

Creating an Emotional Connection

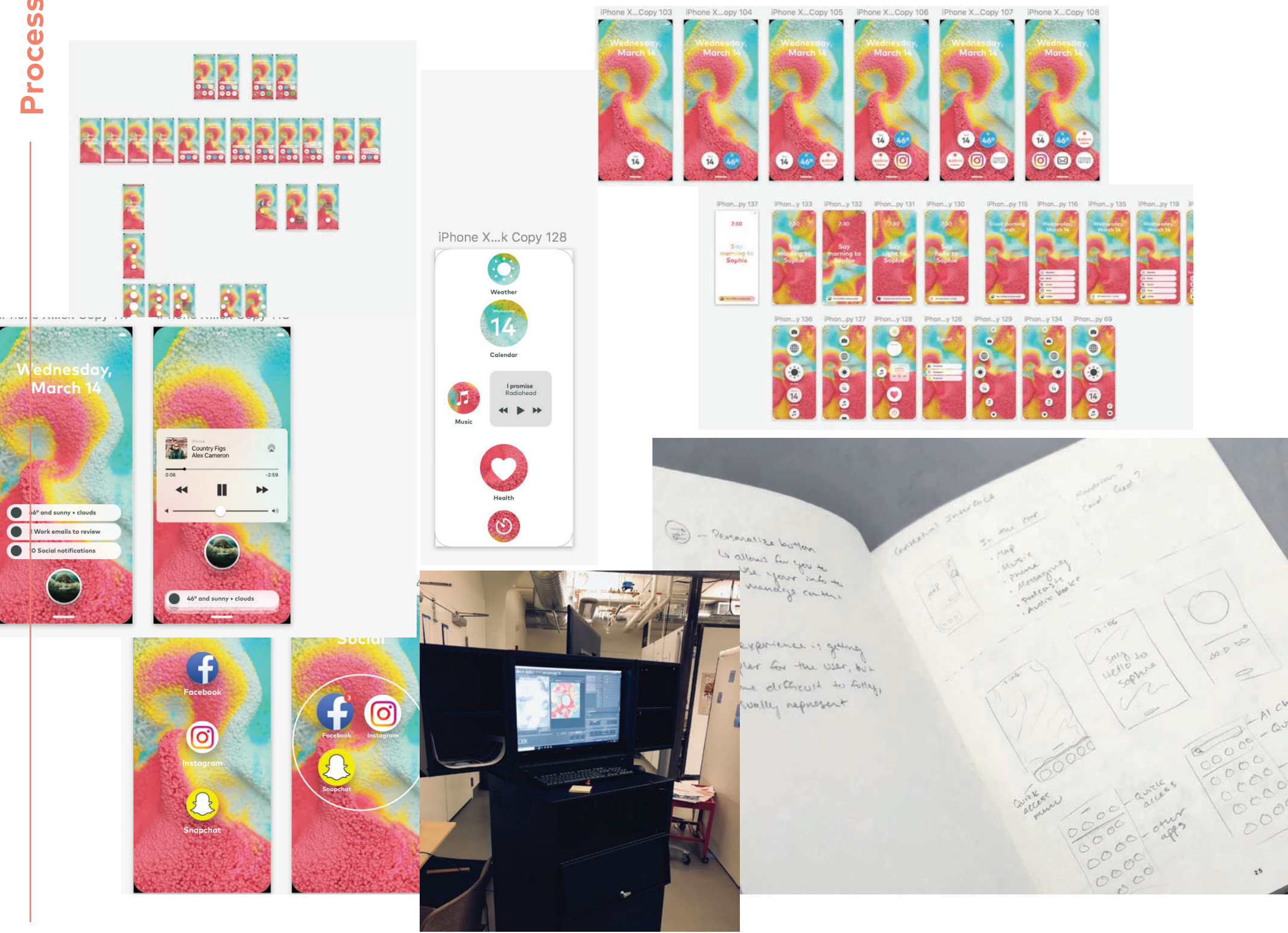
Artificial intelligence is an attempt at putting humanistic qualities into a computer to help it think and respond. Yet most companies today brand and treat them as just another tech product or an add-on to your phone. AI aspires to think, feel, and respond like we do—to be conversational. It will fundamentally change the way we do everything. For this reason, I wanted to create a visual identity and interface that would give the AI the tools to express and adapt itself. I wanted to create a UI that could live, breathe and express.

Customization and personalization are great starting points to help an AI create a more real emotional connection with its users. With Mimir, you can adjust everything from its voice, interface, screen color, and so on to fit your preferences. Everything about the design is meant to make it belong to you. Mimir is a fast, smart and reliable AI platform that is uniquely yours.

Proactive and Intuitive Design

Mimir’s interface gives it the ability to best adapt to your needs. Utilizing three interface levels (based on the five levels of conversation), a Mimir is able to preview and notify you of information, express itself emotionally, and access a deeper level of relational information (i.e. third party apps and other web content). The user experience aims to help you get things done faster and thus reduce your overall phone time.





My process can be difficult to document. The majority of design work goes on in my head and comes to me in bursts of inspiration.

I then try to execute those visions in as high fidelity as I can to best communicate them. But, in order to capture fleeting ideas, I do quick sketches in my notebook and write a lot of description lists.

In Sketch, I will take my high fidelities and iterate on them until I come across a design that feels right for the project.

After a lot of iterations and long nights thinking about ways the interface could be elevated to another level, I came up with Sandbox UI. An extremely simplified design that uses the particle layer as a backdrop and transition.



Sandbox UI ►

01

Informational

The Informational layer represents the top level of conversation with the Mimir. This layer previews content, allows you to access things efficiently and acts as a type of heads-up display or preview mode.

02

Emotional

The Emotional layer is where the Mimir is able to express itself through a generative particle emitter. It's able to control this through color and motion that are affected by different variables. The Mimir can choose from things like weather, mood, location, and time of day.

03

Relational

The Relational layer is the deeper knowledge of the Mimir. This layer connects to third party apps, settings, or more robust functions that the Mimir needs to call on in order to better fulfill your request.





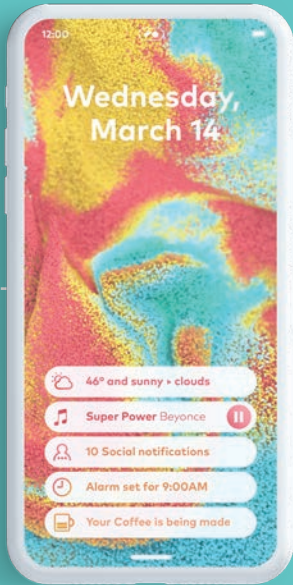
Lock screen
Displays a suggested wake phrase depending on time of day



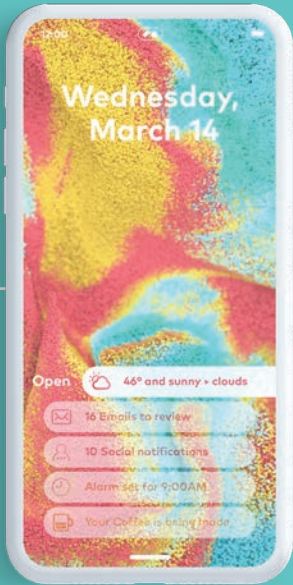
Lock screen
Transitions between wake phrase and time/date



Greeting Screen
Unlock through Face ID/ Retina Scan



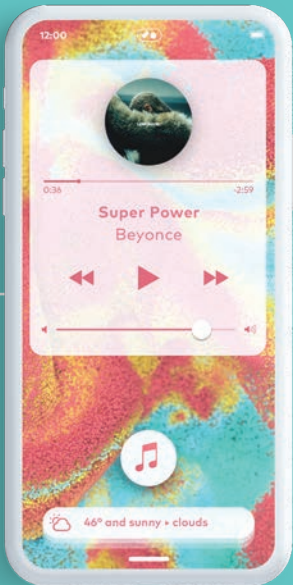
Task Menu/Homescreen
Open task menu by tapping bottom or scrolling up



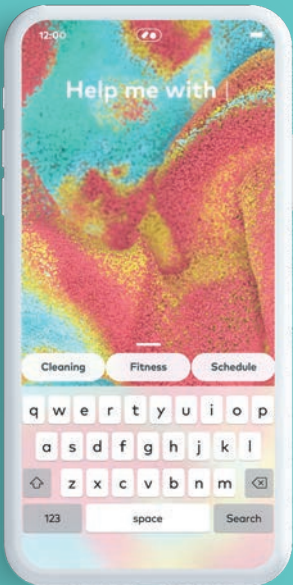
Tasks
Open a Task by swiping right



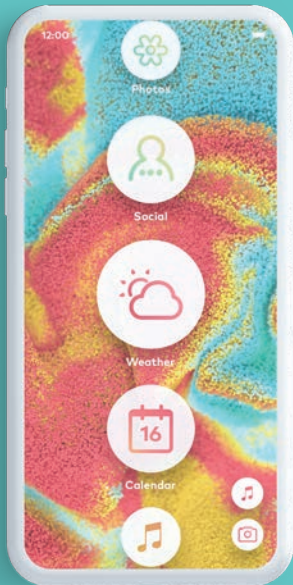
Tasks
Remove a task by swiping Left



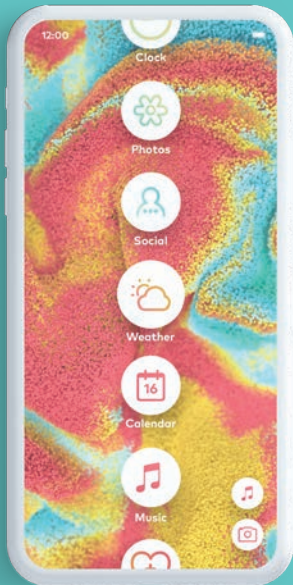
Task Preview
Preview a task by tapping it



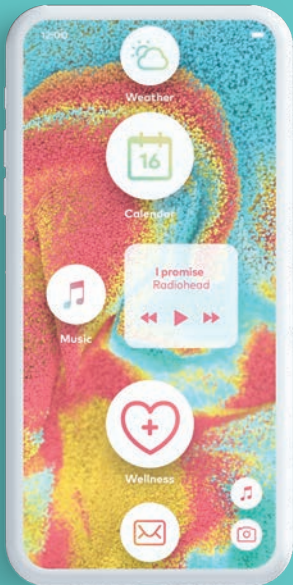
Mimir Chat
Access the chatbot by swiping down from the top



Menu
Swipe up from bottom to access app menu



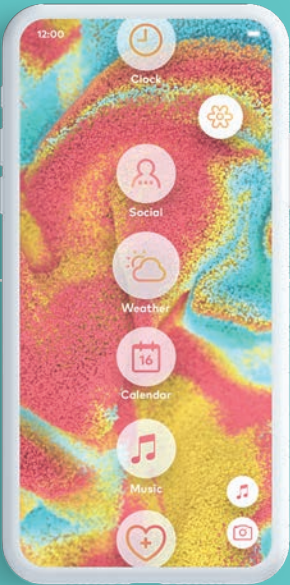
Menu Scroll
For faster search, icons shrink and grow based on scroll momentum



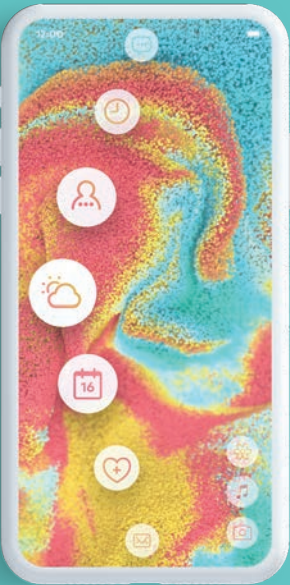
App Preview
Swipe left on an icon to see a preview menu for quick functionality



Smart Folders
Mimir takes care of organizing your various apps into smart groupings



Favorites Menu
Press & move apps into your Favorites section for quicker access



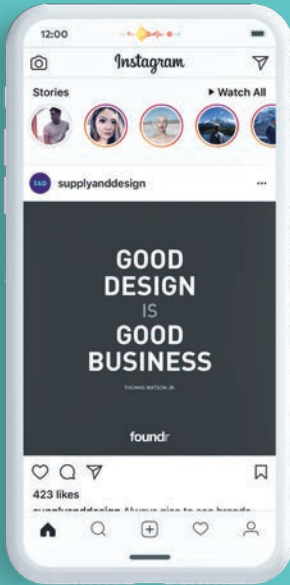
Exit Menu
To exit the app menu, simply swipe it away



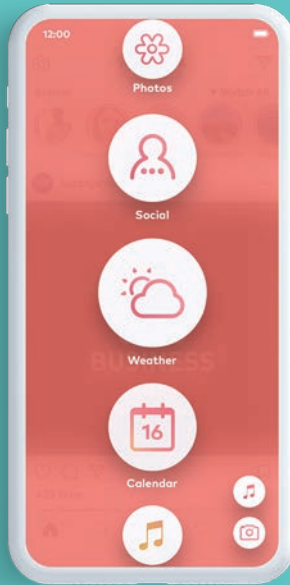
Pre-Listening Screen
Activate your Mimir by wake phrase or word



Listening Screen
When listening, the Mimir displays a voice wave at the top of screen



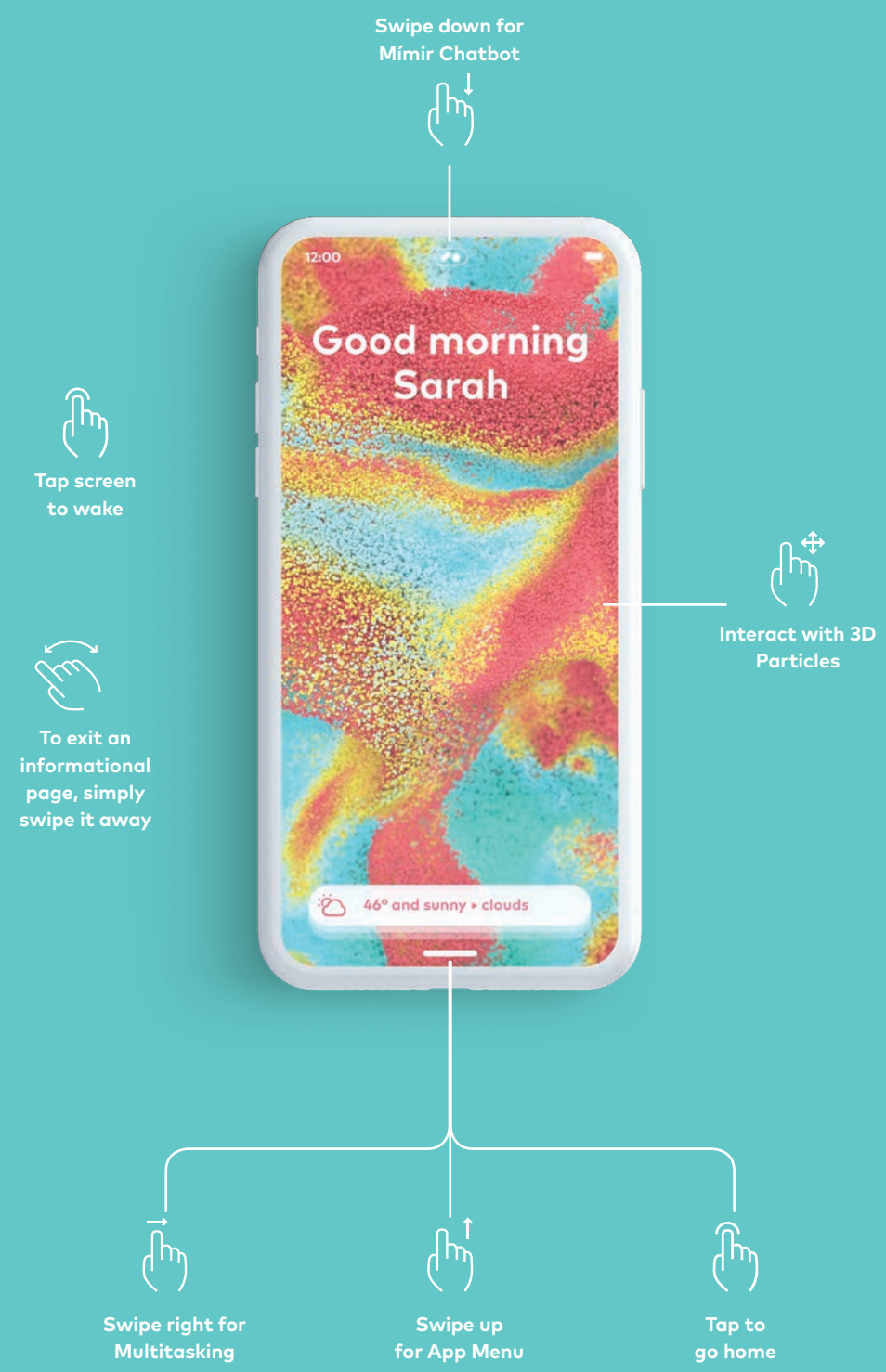
Listening screen in App
When listening in-app the voice wave turns the color of the emotional layer



App Menu in App
Can access app menu anywhere by swiping up from bottom



The Emotional
The AI generates the emotional layer based on location, weather, mood, and the user's preferences.



What's a Wake Word?

A wake word or phrase is what initiates the AI to start listening to you. It helps with privacy and making sure the AI doesn't mistake you for calling on it when you didn't.

Mimir's Wake Phrases

Most other AI platforms today only allow for a single wake word or phrase in order to get its attention. What makes Mimir different is how it expands the wake phrase options. It not only allows for you to say more than just "Hey, Sophie" or "Sophie", but also things like "Good morning, Sophie" or even "Yo, Sophie." This helps for the VUI to be more conversational and natural than ever before.

Yo, Sophie
Morning, Daryl
Night, Charles
Hey, Becka¹⁰¹

"Hey Sophie,



When introducing the 3D particles, I knew they had to function as more than just a smart video background. This led me to attempt a few different ways the particles could

interact with the content. I ended up going with using the transition through the 3D layer as a way of visualizing the AI going deeper into its brain and pulling up content like third

party apps or other deeper functions that the informational layer isn't immersive enough for.

open Instagram"

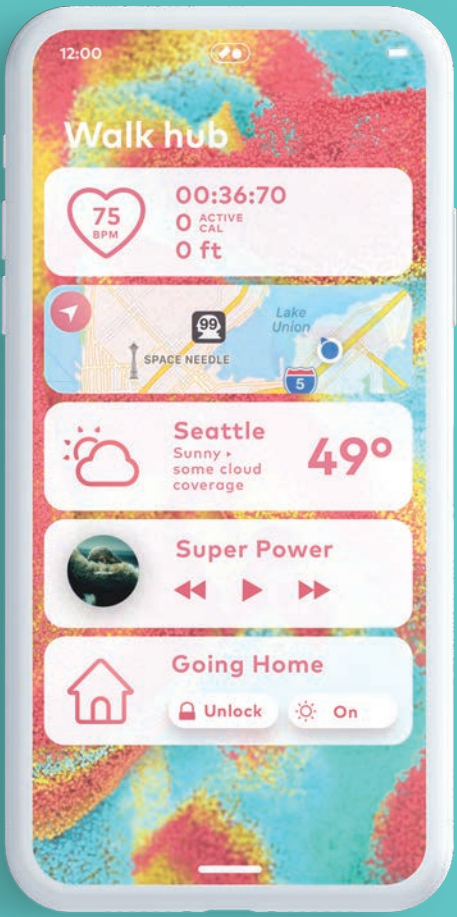
"Okay Sophie, I'm walking home"

Contextual screens can either be created or generated. They act as quick access hubs for particular actions or habits that help you get what you want in the fastest and most intuitive way possible.

For example: when you tend to go on a walk, you often open up the health tracker, use a GPS to find a route, check weather, start playing music and unlock/lock your home. Your Mimir is able to see that

and learn from it. Rather than forcing you to go to the menu for each individual app or having to ask your Mimir over and over to open them, your Mimir intuitively creates a walk hub with all of your "walking" apps. That way you can easily access what you need, with a lot less hassle.

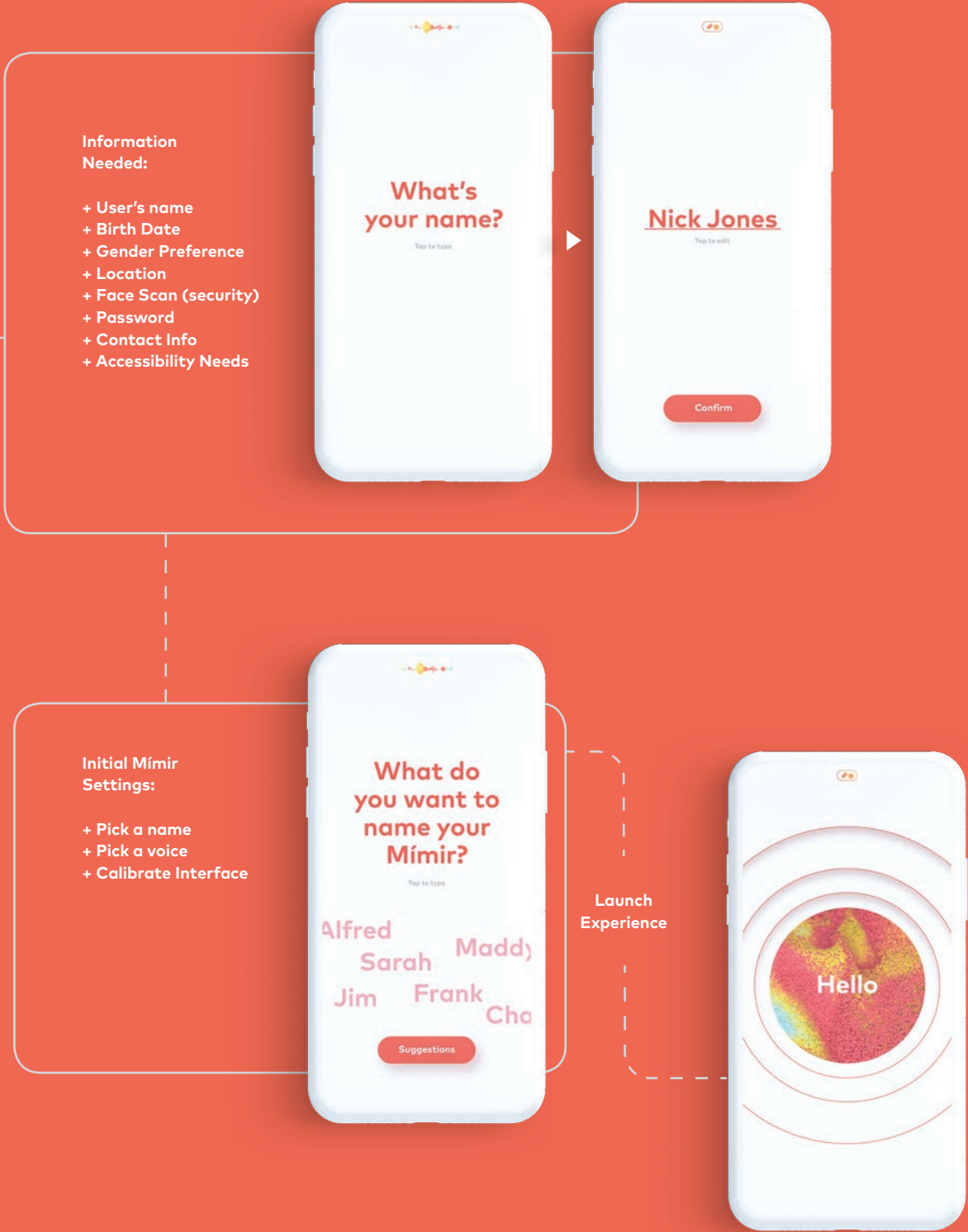
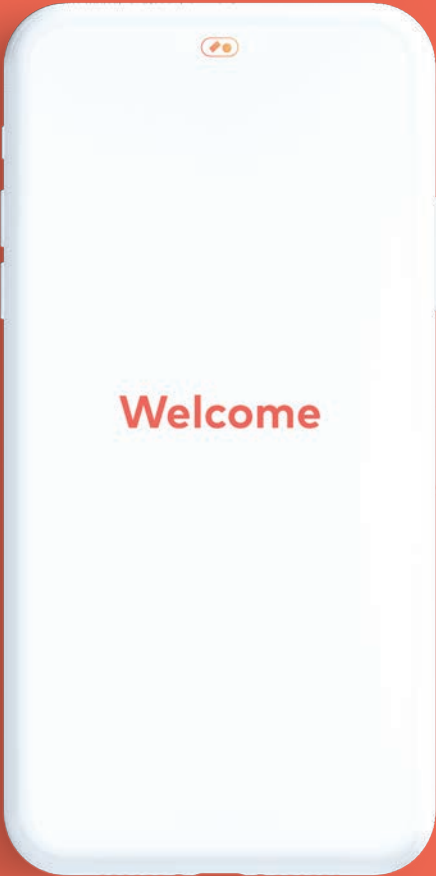
When you're done with a hub and want to go back to the main Homescreen, simply swipe it away.



Minimal but Powerful

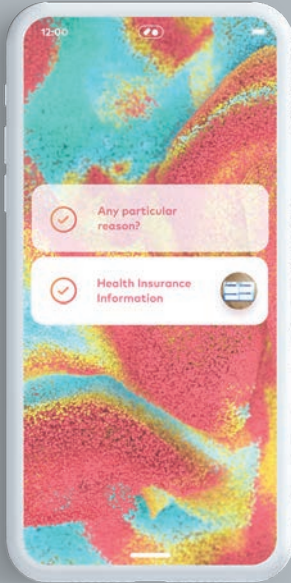
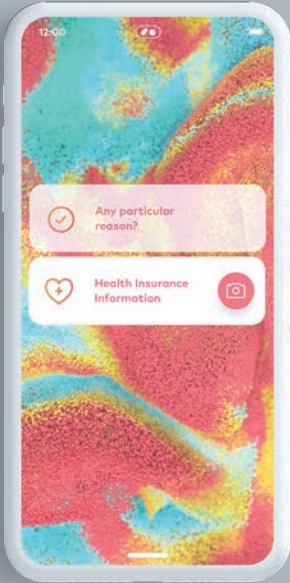
The entire onboarding is voice driven by a neutral narrator. This is to promote voice as the main form of input from the get-go. The onboarding is where the user gives their top level information in order to give the initial Mimir experience a bit of personalization. During this process, the user is also asked to pick a name and voice for their Mimir. Here is where they can also calibrate the interface by picking their favorite and least favorite colors. This can always be adjusted later in the settings.

The visual design is minimal in order to give off a feeling of being neutral and uncusomized. This gives a nice contrast to the bold and colorful aspects of the main experience.



"Hey Sophie, help me find a doctor"

A Conversation between Nick and his Mimir, Sophie.



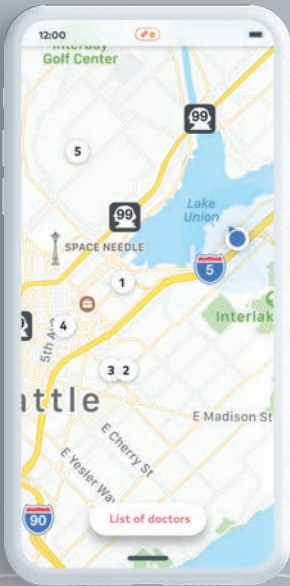
S: Okay, is there a particular reason you need a doctor?

N: Yeah, I've had a nasty cough for the last two weeks and I think it might be bronchitis. I also probably need to do my yearly check up.

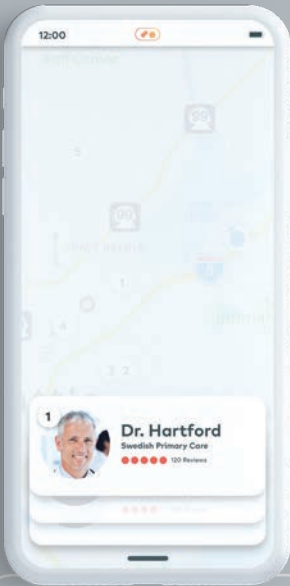
S: Got it. Would you mind sharing your insurance card information? This will help me to narrow down your search.

N: Sure.

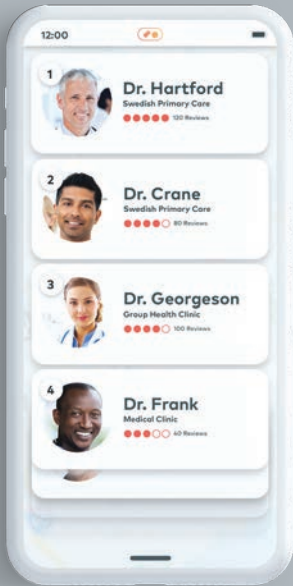
S: Perfect. Let's find you a doctor.



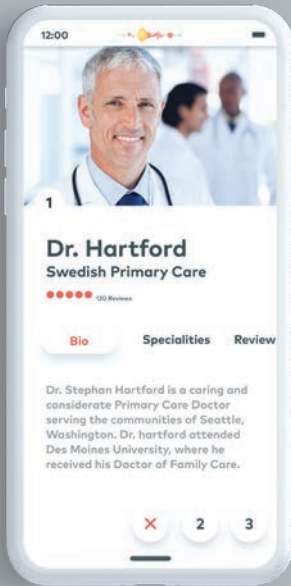
S: Based on your insurance coverage and your home address, here are the top five doctors in your area that I would recommend.



S: Would you like me to go through them?

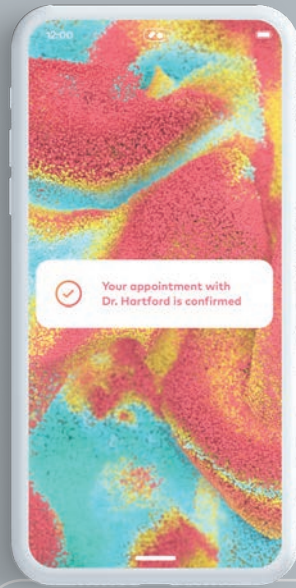
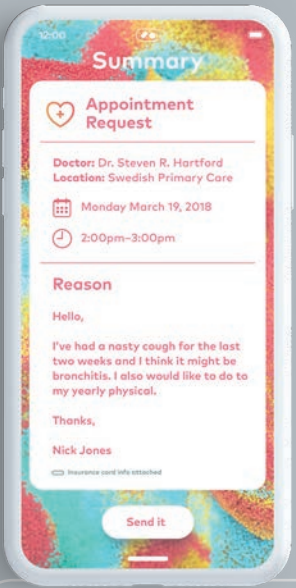
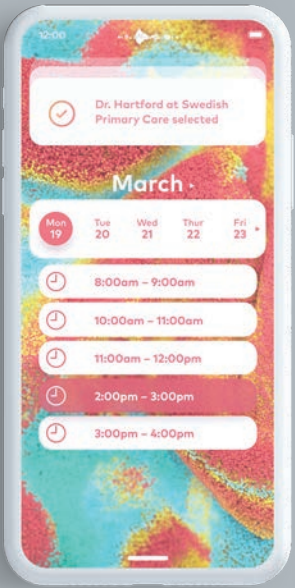
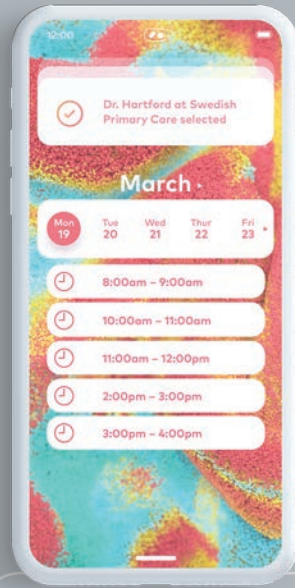


N: No, thanks.



N: Sophie, I'll go with the first doctor.

S: Great, I think that's a good choice.



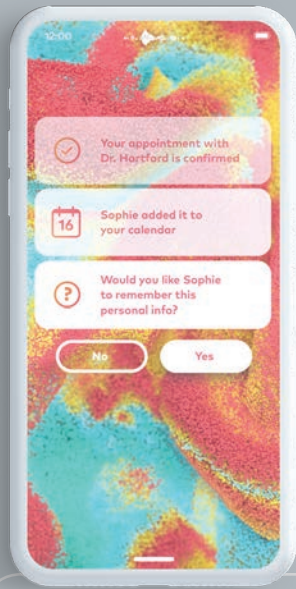
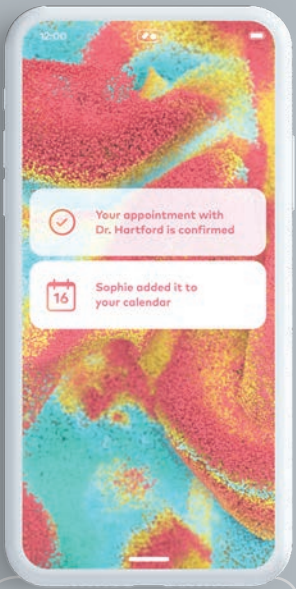
S: I've selected Dr. Hartford for you.

S: Looking at your calendar, here are some suggested dates and times. Which one would you like?

N: Let's go for 2pm on Monday.
S: Got it.

S: Here's a summary of your request.
N: Sophie, looks good. Send it in.

S: Your appointment has been confirmed



S: and I've added it to your calendar.

S: Is it okay if I add your insurance and doctor information to your profile?
N: Sure, thanks Sophie.

S: Yep, you're welcome.

Coming up

- Mimir Actions:**
- + Reminder
 - + Traffic
 - + Transportation
 - + Office Location

After visit

- Mimir Actions:**
- + Follow up
 - + Prescription
 - + Notes
 - + Review and rate experience

Engagement Ideas

Temporary Voice Filters

Change your Mimir's voice for a day or two. Want it to sound like Morgan Freeman or Sigourney Weaver? Choose from a large selection of celebrities, accents, genders, and pop culture references to add a little fun to your day-to-day interactions

Expletives

So you swear like a sailor and you want your Mimir to have a little more edge to its communication? Adjust its expletive functions and prepare for some colorful conversation.

Personality

You want your Mimir to be an English aristocrat, a wise

grandfather, or a sassy man that tells you how it is? Adjust its personality settings and create the perfect persona.

Color Requests

So you're a SeaHawks fan and the big game is coming up? Show your team pride by asking your Mimir to display SeaHawks colors on its Emotional Layer.

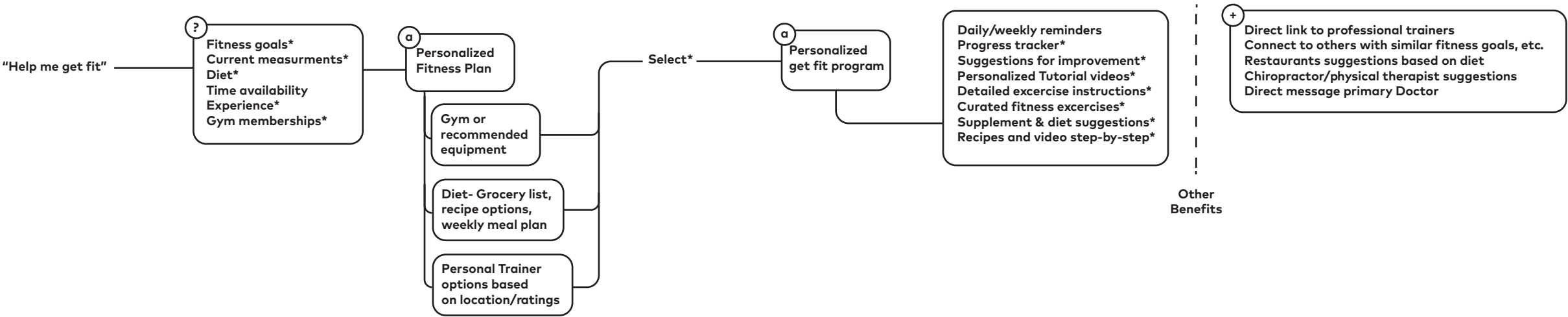
Memories/Life Network

Storing your thoughts and memories can be a challenge. With Mimir all you have to do is simply talk to it and it will record voice clips that you can store for your friends, future children or relatives. They'll be able to hear about your life directly from you.

Other User Path Ideas Cut for Time

- 01 "Help me find something to make for dinner tonight"
- 02 "How much can I spend on groceries this week"
- 03 "Help me create a budget for the month"
- 04 "How many tequila shots can I get tonight"
- 05 "Help me get fit"
- 06 "I'm sick"
- 07 "Help me time manage"

- 08 "What should I wear today"
- 07 "How do you clean a toilet"
- 08 "How do I remove a stain from my jeans"
- 09 "Schedule a laundry day for this week"
- 10 "How do I get whiter teeth"
- 11 "Help me find a job"
- 12 "What insurance should I get"
- 13 "What's a 401K"
- 07 "Help me do my taxes"





Conclusion

This project has been immensely challenging, but also soooo much fun. I wasn't able to explore all that I wanted to over the course of this year, but I am excited about what I was able to accomplish and visualize. AI is such an amazing technology with a lot of potential and I look forward to working with it throughout my design career.

Here's to the future.

Thank You.

**Process book for
Jaden Nethercott's
2018 BFA Capstone**