

How to Feel Happier, Lose Weight, and Save Money (and More)

Video available at <http://goo.gl/5Sv6cK>

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Overview

In July 2014, my husband convinced me to buy the first bicycle I had owned since childhood. Almost instantly, I transformed from a bike skeptic to a cycling enthusiast. I went from not riding a bike in more than a decade to being a regular commuter in the span of one month. After reflecting on some of the observable results of my adoption of two-wheeled transportation since then, I was inspired to create a *pecha-kucha* presentation that encouraged other skeptics like my former self to at least give it a try. I planned to share the presentation with friends and colleagues who have shown tentative interest in biking but felt discouraged by concerns over safety and initial costs.

My target audience was already averse to the idea I wanted to relate. Their existing opinions could have affected their receptiveness to my message, meaning it was important to appeal to them on a personal level. With that in mind, I used the story of my own experience to explain the emotional, physical, financial, and environmental benefits of cycling for transportation and leisure.

Although I initially planned to use Adobe Premiere for this project, I opted for Camtasia instead. I had used it for several years and knew that I could work faster with a more familiar program. To prepare the presentation, I built a storyboard using Google Slides. I drew all the images using Autodesk SketchBook, an iPad, and a stylus. I had never created images this way before; I found it to be a surprisingly therapeutic and enjoyable part of the project.

Design decisions

Above all, I focused my design tactics on connecting with an audience that was potentially biased against my core message. I did so by appealing to emotion, building credibility behind my story, presenting the content based on its impact to the audience, incorporating

unexpected elements, putting a personal touch on graphics, and addressing specific audience segments.

Decision 1

I placed extra emphasis on tapping audience emotion and fostering credibility. Heath and Heath (2008) suggested that credibility and emotion were critical to an idea's stickiness (p. 18). My audience was more likely to buy in to my message if they found it easy to believe what I had to say and if my message reached them on a personal level. Reynolds (2014) argued that including compelling imagery in a presentation could make it more emotional for viewers (p. 98). I used vivid images to churn emotions around key ideas, such as a plume of car exhaust juxtaposed with a bike's non-existent emissions. I incorporated personal examples of cycling's benefits in my life to add credibility to the presentation.

Decision 2

I presented the core idea through the lens of its impact to the audience. Duarte (2010) proposed a one-two punch to help an audience adopt an idea: first make them want something, then show them how the proposed idea gives them that thing (p. 27). By presenting the benefits of cycling up front and in terms that directly affected them, I was more likely to hook potential viewers. Appealing to an audience's self-interest makes them more likely to care about an idea (Heath & Heath, 2008, p. 177). I forecasted the core idea's benefits in the title, and the rest of the presentation flowed through each one in order: emotional, physical, financial, and environmental.

Decision 3

I used elements of the unexpected to keep my audience's attention. Medina (2008) asserted that individuals' ability to encode and retain was closely related to the amount of

attention they paid when it was presented (p. 74). If my presentation did not attract and hold attention, it would not be effective or memorable for the audience. Heath and Heath (2008) suggested using surprise and interest to capture and keep attention (p. 65). To that end, I first held the audience in suspense with a broad title addressing several problems that could affect everyone, then surprised them by revealing a simple, unexpected solution and incorporating a relevant and familiar audio clip. In the first draft, I incorporated quick response (QR) codes throughout the presentation as an unexpected means of providing additional resources without distracting from the images and narration. I saved these for the last slide in the final version.

Decision 4

Rather than using photographs, I created the images by hand. Kaimal and Thappa (2010) encouraged designers to use sketches as a way to hold viewers' attention. This decision could be considered as one more unexpected element of the presentation. Roam (2008) suggested that audiences might perceive hand-drawn imagery as less intimidating than high-quality photography (p. 25). I wanted to ensure that my presentation would not be off-putting or overbearing. I sketched the visuals based on my imagination, photos I have taken, and Creative Commons media allowing for modifications.

Decision 5

I catered portions of the presentation to subsets of the audience that might have been preoccupied by issues that conflicted with my core idea. Heath and Heath (2008) reminded readers that audience members could have a part to play in a message's stickiness—and in how that sticky message was interpreted (p. 240). I needed to anticipate issues from the perspectives of different audience members and address them in my presentation to ensure that my message was interpreted in the way I intended. In *Resonate*, Duarte (2010) attributed the compelling

impact of Reagan's rhetoric to his ability to address different segments of his audience with messaging that met their unique emotional requirements (p. 60). I identified some potential reasons that my audience might be resistant to my core idea and incorporated two into the presentation: (1) bike safety and (2) availability or affordability of a bicycle.

Formative evaluation response

Question 1

What was your initial response to the first two slides? I intended to draw my audience in with the title, then surprise them with the core idea and delight them with an element of humor via song.

Peer reviewer A: *The first slide was a little distracting because of the text. I felt a little conflicted between listening to what you said and reading the text. I wanted to reconcile them in my mind even though they were slightly different. The text says happiness and your voice over mentions the environment. Perhaps you could convey the same message with images and voice over only to make it a bit more sold. However, I honestly laughed out loud at the song! That definitely drew me in and got my attention. That was a great use of humor.*

Peer reviewer B: *I agree with Reviewer A about their comment regarding the environment. Instead of mentioning the environment, mention happiness. I loved your use of Queen's Bicycle Race. It totally hooked me because it was a high energy unexpected element.*

Considerations: Both reviewers were confused by the narration's reference to *environmental impact* before *happiness* in the first draft, considering that the text on the title slide was *How to feel happier, lose weight, and save money (and more)*. As a result, I re-recorded the narration to mention each title attribute in the order in which it appeared on the slide. Reviewer A recommended removing the text from the first slide; however, I felt that it was important for the presentation title to be clearly stated without imagery. Even so, I re-drew the first slide so that the text was easier to read. While drafting the first version of the presentation, I

noticed that with each new slide I felt more comfortable with SketchPad. It seemed appropriate to refine the first slide once I had established a bit more proficiency with the program.

Question 2

To what extent, if any, did the use of hand-drawn visuals affect your reaction to the presentation? I hoped that the decision to illustrate the imagery would impart a more personal and credible feeling to the presentation.

Peer reviewer A: *I really enjoyed the visuals and felt it gave a very laid back conversational tone to the presentation. I would just suggest being careful about text to keep your viewer's focus a bit less split. You did a nice job on your 3rd slide with the four visuals about the benefits of biking and most of the pictures are very engaging. I would take a look at the first slide, the graph slide and the "go ride a bike" slide. They seem a little empty in comparison to the others. Otherwise, I feel like you were right on track.*

Peer reviewer B: *I think you achieved your goal of personalizing your images. I think you established credibility when you used illustrations showing comparisons like, scale o' death and emissions. I also like the illustrations of the carbon footprint and gas pouring out as money because they made me think deeper about the image. If you're looking to revise some images, I would consider the stop sign and the running / biking images because I didn't think they were as clearly or directly illustrating your narration compared to your other images.*

Considerations: Both reviewers' feedback supported the decision to use hand-drawn visuals, though each one suggested revising a handful of slides. Consequently, I redrew slides 5, 9, and 16. Instead of a text-heavy graph relating my mood to how often I rode, I juxtaposed a storm cloud and sunshine. Instead of running and cycling sport icons, I drew a knee x-ray. I replaced the *Stop* sign with a *Caution* sign to relate more directly to the theme: safety.

Question 3

To what extent, if any, did the audio hold your interest, and what could be done to improve it? After reviewing the draft, I felt that there was something lacking with regard to my narrative. I wondered if my reviewers would feel the same.

Peer reviewer A: *At first the audio really held my interest, especially with the bicycle song. As the video continued, I was hoping for more surprises like that and was a little disappointed. Perhaps you could add a few more similar elements with humor or sound effects to continue with that idea. I felt like your narrative had a lot of good information but started to feel flat about mid way through. Think about changing your tone and pitch in different places in order to add some variety. I guess I'm saying overall just try to liven it up a bit either with your voice or more unexpected sound effects. You set a strong tone and if you continue with it I think your message would have more impact.*

Peer reviewer B: *I agree with Reviewer A regarding the music. Since you included it at the beginning I was hoping to hear some more music, even if it was the same song at the end of the presentation. I thought you did a nice job narrating at an even pace with a conversational tone. I also struggled to liven up my narration, but I agree with Reviewer A's comment. I considered adding some sound effects to mine but I ran out of time on my slides. You could consider doing the same. Maybe adding the sound of a car starting or driving off when mentioning emissions, or a yum sound when mentioning dessert.*

Considerations: Both reviewers found the narration to be flat. I suspected that this was because I recorded the narration slide-by-slide in the first draft. I rerecorded without segmenting the script. Doing so made it easier to ad-lib, which imparted a more conversational flow and dynamic tone. The reviewers also suggested using more sound effects. I was wary of overuse, so I limited myself to adding a bike bell at the end to balance out the clip at the beginning.

Question 4

How much, if at all, did the presentation inspire you to ride a bike, and what is your current view on cycling? The core idea and call to action were the same: Go ride a bike. Failing to inspire the audience to do this would indicate the need for some major revisions. However, if a viewer was already a regular cyclist, this video may not have had any impact on their opinion. I needed to gain perspective into my reviewers' experience with cycling in order to understand their responses better in the event that they were not inspired to take action.

Peer reviewer A: *I did find myself thinking that I should really get out in the garage and dust my bike off. It has been a while since I have taken a ride. My bike looks very similar to the one in your second slide so it really got me thinking. Also, I feel like you made*

some good points that hit home for me, like the picture of the bike rider thinking of pie! I found myself agreeing with all of the points you were making. I definitely believe you have made a strong case for riding in your narrative and the call to action is clear.

Peer reviewer B: *I think you achieved your goal. I've been thinking about my bicycle the entire time I've been sitting here and what I need to do to get it tuned up for spring and summer. I think your points regarding the physical and emotional health benefits resonated with me because those are concerns in my life and things I feel like I need to improve. Although I am concerned about the environment, it didn't feel as personal. However, I think you cover a variety of benefits that viewers will be able to personalize at least one of them.*

Considerations: Both reviewers felt inspired to get back on their bicycles. Their responses did not necessitate any adjustments to the core message or call to action.

Question 5

What changes would you recommend for the final draft beyond what you have already suggested, and why? In a previous peer review cycle I found that my questions were rather subjective. This question was my attempt to cast a wide net for additional feedback that I might not have considered asking about.

Peer reviewer A: *One thing that really stands out for me are your QR codes throughout the presentation. I found them a little distracting. At first, I wondered what they might be trying to tell me but I was focused on your presentation. However, by the time I saw the third or fourth one, I found myself trying to catch them with my phone (unsuccessfully) and I had to go back and start the presentation over because I had totally lost my focus. I think it's an interesting way to include references, but distracts from your message because of the curiosity factor. Also, I tried pausing the video to catch them and trying to get them on the fly and couldn't get one to work until I got to your reference page. I think this was because of the size possibly. If you want to keep them in, I would suggest waiting to have them only on your reference page. That way, it will be clear what your intention is with them and won't detract from your presentation.*

Peer reviewer B: *I agree with Reviewer A regarding QR codes. I also stop the presentation to unsuccessfully scan the code. At first, I really liked the idea, but in reality I think it distracts from the narration and images. The reference slide is nice but I think your narration at this part is longer than the time allotted. I would also consider revising the images that aren't comparisons or combining symbols (gas and dollar signs / CO2*

and footprint). I think you did an exceptional job with comparisons and combining symbols so it might be good to capitalize on that talent.

Considerations: I inserted QR codes on some of the slides throughout the first draft, and it was clear from the reviewer feedback that this backfired. I removed them from all but the last slide and tested each one to make sure it worked. I also incorporated more comparisons into the revised slides.

Lessons learned

The peer review feedback served as a reminder that once an audience has been “delighted” in some way, an expectation is set for the rest of the presentation. By surprising the audience with a clip from Queen’s *Bicycle Race* early on, I set a precedent that I found difficult to meet through the rest of the video. I resolved to avoid this scenario in the future by asking myself critical questions when considering unexpected elements in my presentations, such as *How else can I incorporate this into the project?* and *How does this affect my core idea?*

The process of obtaining a legal license for copyrighted content was frustrating. After a lengthy search, I contacted Sony/ATV Music Publishing to explain the project and request permission to use the first three seconds of *Bicycle Race*. I purchased the track included in the video through iTunes. I also completed Columbia University’s Fair Use Checklist (Crews & Buttler, 2016). Thirteen responses favored *fair use*; four were in opposition. Despite the fact that I was still awaiting a response from the publisher when submitting this project, I felt confident that I had exhausted all avenues available for legal licensing and that my application of the song would not be a detriment to the rights holder in the meantime.

References

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Appendix

Link to first draft: <https://goo.gl/76pT7j>