# what design should be thinking

**Shekhar Badve**

Lokusdesign

# Radical thoughts to transform life and its systems

Shekhar Badve

**We are living at one of the greatest inflection points in the history of human civilisation.**

# The inescapable forces of Entropy are necessitating a reset in nearly all walks of life.

**And therein we have a choice to make between thinking incrementally to soothe our immediate anxieties, and radically imagining a whole new paradigm of life in harmony with our planet and its inhabitants.**

**At Lokusdesign, we strongly believe in the power of the latter to bring extraordinary transformation to life and its systems in a manner that raises human consciousness and ushers in a new golden age for humanity.**

**And this book
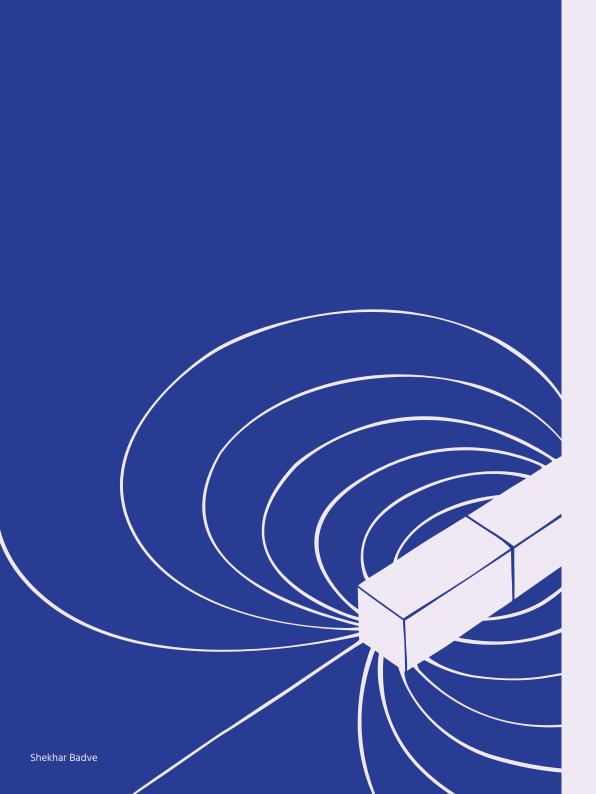is an earnest attempt
to elucidate our thoughts
on the same.** We hope it
inspires and
enables you
to imagine
the immense
possibilities
beyond the
apparent.

As circumstances change, the challenges we face vary in severity, proportion and impact. But haven't humans always transcended their limitations!

We always aspire to improve and become better - and design is just one of the many ways we do it.

Sometimes, however, we get too caught-up in the pathways already paved. Just like the army ants, who keep following each other in a continuous loop when they lose their pheromone track (only to die of exhaustion!),

# we circle the endless loop of set paradigms.

Although invisible, a magnetic field is a force that pulls on ferromagnetic materials, and attracts or repels other magnets. And it emerges out of the internal composition of magnets.

# Likewise, our behaviour and actions too emerge out of who we are from within, what we value inherently.

Everyday, we invest our energy in trying to align ourselves to our surroundings. But in doing so, we lose self-congruence. When our behaviour and actions do not align with our core values, we lose harmony. And such an increase in our internal disturbance, is just like the Entropy inside a magnet that reduces its magnetism.

# It is just like the entropy that consumes the Himalayan Musk Deer.

Excited by the ravishing odor of Musk, the Deer frisks about anxiously sniffing under trees, and searching everywhere to find the source of the fragrance. Unable to find the source, he grows very restless and angry. And in this frenzy, he ends up plunging to death by jumping off the high Himalayan cliffs.

If only the Deer could touch his nostrils to his own navel, he would have found the cherished Musk and saved himself from his painful death!
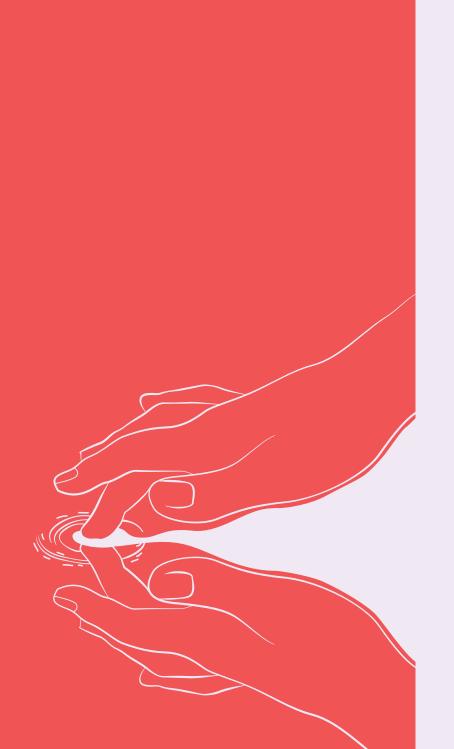
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# Our Positive Valence

## is our core building block that is intrinsic, inherent, authentic and positively inspiring to us.

It is the essence, the fundamental quality that the world would miss in our absence. It is that which enables the magnetic field for a magnet. It is that which delivers musk to the Himalayan Deer.

## But we people have been hard--wired to set our reference points outside of us,

even when we are deciding for ourselves. All our external reference points- be it our families, friends, professional colleagues, or even the larger socio-cultural context- are fickle variables beyond our control.

This lack of self-congruence is where our deepest insecurities stem from. It is the principal source of the internal Entropy that we are perpetually consumed by. And there is external Entropy as well- the way external forces of heat and damage hamper a magnet's potential of creating a strong magnetic field, our potential too is hampered by the many self-consuming and powerful influences surrounding us.

We have to distance ourselves from this Entropy to discover our Positive Valence; and maximize its potential towards creating enduring relationships and inspiring positive action.

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We hope that they make you rethink what you already know and think beyond in your own ways!

# From "user" centered design to
# "harmony" centered design

The shift from user centred design to harmony centred design is a shift from a self-centred approach to design, to a much more holistic, encompassing approach to design- focusing not only on the users, but also on the various social, cultural, ecological and economic aspects concerning them. By opening up new possibilities and diverse intervention opportunities, it will have a far reaching positive impact.

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# From "object" oriented design to "subject" oriented design

Take the example of ceiling fans -
- most often, an object oriented design
of it will end up in aesthetic modification
or some bit of functional correction.
It will never work upon its subject -
to reduce the body core temperature
(and not to reduce the temperature of
the room or to throw air around).

If we ask ourselves fundamental subject
oriented questions at the beginning
and throughout our journey of creation,
numerous possibilities and opportunities
will open up for breakthrough innovation.

The number of subject oriented approaches
to solve a problem is directly proportional
to the number of innovation possibilities.
So the next time you are designing a pen,
ask yourself if you are designing merely
an object (pen), or you're designing for its
subject (communication).

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# From form follows function to function follows purpose

A mother serves a thali, but a restaurant serves one too. The difference lies in the way the two are served and received- the Purpose underlying them. The mother serves to nourish, whereas the restaurant serves to earn loyalty. By understanding the Purpose - why something is done/ created, many opportunities open up.

Function and Form are intrinsic to Purpose, but it is not the case the other way round.

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# From correction to creation

By allowing the design to be subject oriented and understanding the Purpose, we can shift our mode of operation from correction to creation. And this can open up a whole new set of opportunities for us. The more the number of opportunities, the more the innovation possibilities.

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# Design for collapse

**Even after the leaf withers and falls off, it replenishes the soil. Cut yourself or break a bone, and they will heal with no trace. But if your chair breaks, you won't be so fortunate. If only the chair was designed to heal!**

**Taking disorder and eventual destruction into account from the very beginning of the process of creation, can present you with loads of design opportunities-recent innovation in the smart materials domain is a case in point. This could also help us move away from "throw if broken" culture.**

# or entropy_ moving away from "throw if broken" culture.

# Connect apparently distinct dots to
# Identify new and unique patterns

sustainability

learning locally

inquiry

citizenship

"Analysis"- (process of taking things apart to understand the components) is important to the innovation process. But "Synthesis"- (process of reasoning whereby we put disparate parts together to gain an understanding of the whole) is even more critical to it. Synthesis looks at how parts are put together to form the whole and how the whole system interacts with other systems, and operates within some environment. In this process, diverse elements interact, self-organize and combine to give rise to something novel and different.

# From the
# cartesian
# Maslow's
# hierarchy of
# needs
## to a
# decision
# making
# model
## based on

**6 fundamental human needs and 10 fundamental human values:**

Given so many people with basic needs met are still bored, entitled, frustrated, despairing, and not necessarily seeking transcendence, perhaps there is a need for re-thinking Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

We need to understand that people behave and act in a particular way in certain situations or contexts; but behave and act differently in others.

# Human beings have 6 fundamental needs and each need (or the reason behind the need) comes into play, in a certain situation/context in a very dynamic manner

A person at the dinner table, in public transport, or at a mall is very different and expects varied responses and outcomes. These expectations are based on- which specific need is triggered and in what context. At the dinner table it could be Love and Connection with the family; in public transport it could be Certainty; whereas in a mall it could be Significance.

So the first step is whether the fundamental need is satisfied. Only then the person will be ready to go to the second step of selection.
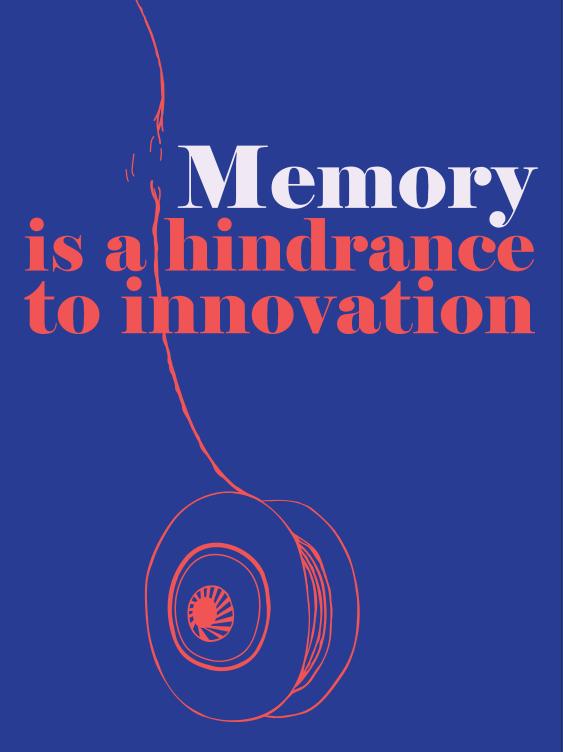
The second step is to choose between two or more competing products or brands, who are satisfying a particular need. It is a tough task. We choose a product, brand, person, organisation typically based on what we value in them and the alignment with our ownself. There are 10 categories of fundamental values- Benevolence, Achievement, Security, Tradition...

# Decisions are made only if there is value alignment.
So a combination of Step 1 and Step 2 is needed to make any decision.

# Memory is a hindrance to innovation

Think of a fan, or a book, or a table, and you will instantly have an image in your mind. Alien, however, is an absolutely unfamiliar form! Who knows what they really look like, but in movies aliens typically resemble insects of some kind.

Just like a yo-yo which is tethered to a string and can move only within a limited space, our thoughts and understanding too are bound by our memories and set mental models. If only we could think and imagine free from the bounds of our memories- it'd open up massive possibilities for design innovation.
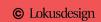
# Definitions and archetypes create dogma

Innovating/ imagining within
the constraints of your memory
is like throwing a ball
confined within four walls.
How much ever force
you might throw the ball with,
the walls will never allow the ball
to venture beyond and explore
in the truest sense.
Definitions and archetypes
limit our understanding;
just the way the walls limit
our understanding of space.
If we wish to innovate, we must
first put down these walls
of archetypes and definitions.

To design is to de-assign a thing,
from all that it already is
and is expected to be.

Dogmes create Dogma

Dogma creates Archetypes

Archetypes

# The process of empathy becomes burdened with one's own perception, memory, and baggage

When a cup is already full, it is unable to receive more tea. Water that is fully saturated cannot dissolve more salt. Similarly, if we are filled with our own perspectives, we wouldn't be able to accommodate others. So when we research, we should ensure that we don't flavour the process with our own perception, memory, or baggage.

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# Exaptation
## creating adjacent possibilities

At any moment the world is capable of extraordinary change, but only certain changes happen. It's like you begin in a room with four doors, each leading to a new room that you haven't visited yet.

Good ideas are not conjured out of thin air; they are built out of a collection of existing parts, the composition of which expands over time. Some of these parts are conceptual ways of solving problems, or new definitions of what constitutes a problem. An organism develops a trait optimized for a specific use, but then the trait gets hijacked for a completely different function.

A feather adapted for warmth is now exapted for flight. Mutation, error and serendipity unlock new doors in the biosphere's adjacent possible. Exaptation helps us explore the new possibilities that lurk behind those doors.

Can a product or a device be designed for Exaptation? Can it evolve along with the user, increasing its life or usefulness rather than being rendered useless? A world where a diverse mix of distinct professions and passions overlap is a world where Exaptations thrive.

Shekhar Badve

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All pages
put together,
we aim
to induce in you

# "posiderium"

an ardent desire
or longing, especially
a feeling of joy,
for something
that can be achieved
or gained in the future.

Let us imagine (design) a future for which
a deep emotional longing can be created/
generated; something that we would care for;
love and strongly look forward to.

## Let's design with a sense of postalgia (nostalgia for the future)!

Shekhar Badve

विषय
**Concept and Ideas**

Shekhar Badve


**Content material**

Shekhar Badve
Sanket Shah
Vrushali Landge


**Design**

Shekhar Badve
Purva Ratnaparkhi
Vrushali Landge


**Illustrations**

Vrushali Landge

**"You never change things
by fighting the existing reality.
To change something,
build a new model that makes
the existing model obsolete."**

**- Buckminster Fuller**