Using Social Networks to Bridge the
Employee Engagement Gap and Build
Healthy Culture at Work

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Let's start with
a story

(my own)

My 30s work habits

- **The good**: some exercise

- **The bad**: unsustainable stress, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, punishing travel, workaholism

- **The ugly**: adrenals, digestive issues, inflammation, strained relationships

Happy 40th birthday: burnout

New job = new social network & culture

+ Organizational commitment to fitness: "workout bonus"

+ Culture obsessed with self-improvement

+ Focus on experimentation & quantification
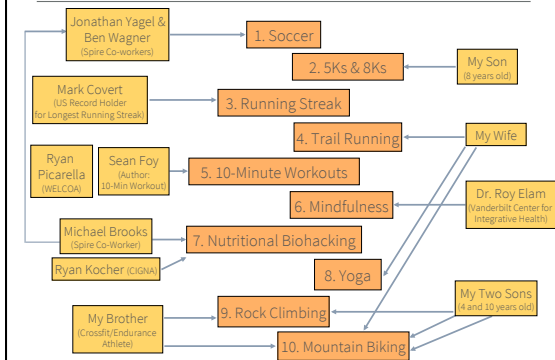
+ Support/encouragement/accountability

My 3-year-health-journey network

65-mile mountain bike race + 50k trail run

Personal summary

- 11 key influencers in my social network; much larger group of supporters

- Journey w/ 10 different "experiments"

- Uneven progression: from burnout to vitality

- This was a happiness story

What is going on here?

In 2007, Harvard researchers found that you are

171% more likely

to become obese if a close friend becomes obese.

1. "The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network over 32 Years," Christakis and Fowler, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2007
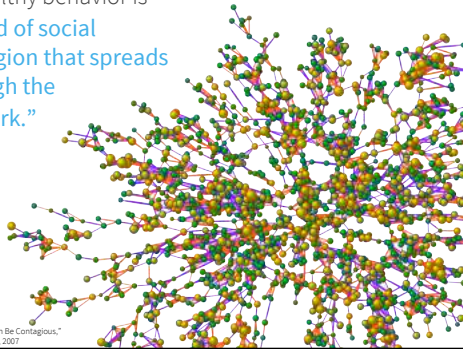

Their conclusion:

Unhealthy behavior is "a kind of social contagion that spreads through the network."

1. "Study Says Obesity Can Be Contagious,"
New York Times, July 25, 2007

So, what if you could use the same social network (and media) to spread health and happiness?

People with strong social support…

+ Live longer by 7.5 years [1]

- Are less likely to develop a cold [3]

+ Lose far more weight on diet plans [2]

- Are 22% less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes [4]

1. "Social Relationships and Mortality Risk", Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Brigham Young University and UNC
2. "Involving support partners in obesity treatment", Dr. A Gorin, Miriam Hospital/Brown University
3. "Social Support, Stress and the Common Cold", Dr. Sheldon Cohen, Carnegie Mellon University
4. "Work characteristics as predictors of diabetes incidence", Dr. Sharon Toker, Tel Aviv University

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Impact On Gene Expression!

+ **Eudaimonic well-being** = social connection; sense of purpose/meaning

+ Decrease in pro-inflammatory genes

+ Increase in genes for antibody synthesis

"A functional genomic perspective on human well-being," Barbara Fredrickson at UNC, 03.20.13

Employee Engagement → Purpose-Driven Wellbeing

+ "Engagement" = emotional commitment to org and it's mission + deeper connection with co-workers

+ Engagement and wellbeing are a "virtuous circle"

Companies with engaged employees have…

- 37 percent lower absenteeism
- 65 percent lower turnover (in low-turnover organizations)
- 48 percent fewer employee safety incidents
- 10 percent higher customer loyalty/engagement
- 21 percent higher productivity
- 22 percent higher profitability

Engagement at Work: Its Effect on Performance Continues in Tough Economic Times, Gallup, 2013

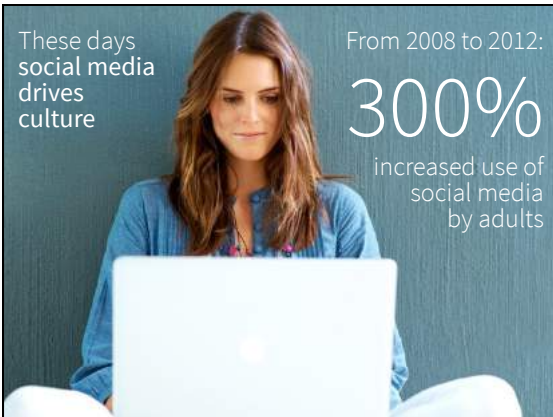## How do you make health and happiness habits scalable and sustainable?

These days **social media drives culture**

From 2008 to 2012:

300%

increased use of social media by adults

Look for ways to align
social support
social networks
social/mobile media
**to shape a culture
of health and wellbeing.**

Use Culture To Change Culture

2 Definitions:

- 1: Human capacity to represent experiences with symbols

- 2: An integrated system of learned behavior patterns

Use #1 to shape #2 to create #1…

Sean Astin - Runner/Movie Star   12 Olympians Posting from London   Co-Promo: NBC's Biggest Loser

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So What Does
Healthy Culture
Look Like?

This.
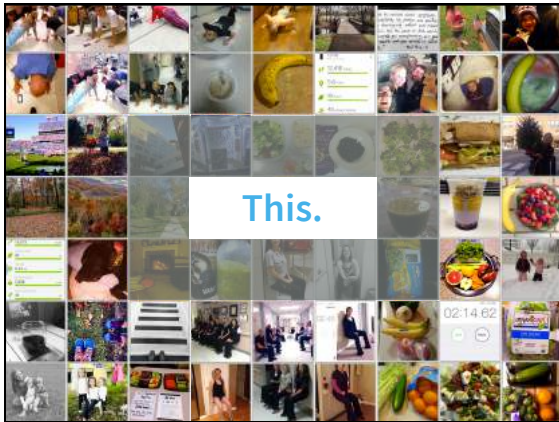
What We've Learned About
Building Healthy Culture

Make It Mobile, Intuitive And Inviting
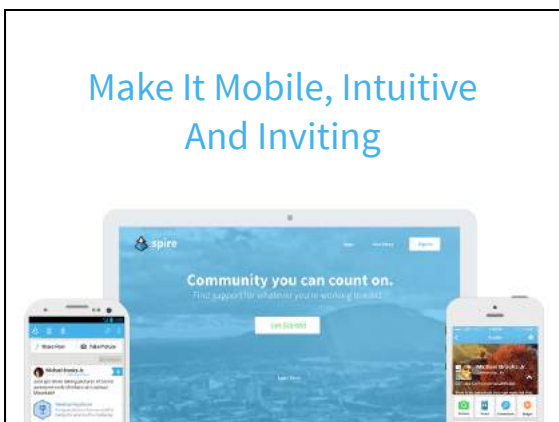
Share:
accomplishments

Give:
social points

Savor
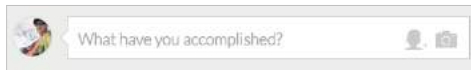
Savoring Positive Experiences   Showing Self Compassion

Expressing Gratitude

Reflect

My Pics	Me Page	Most Encouraging
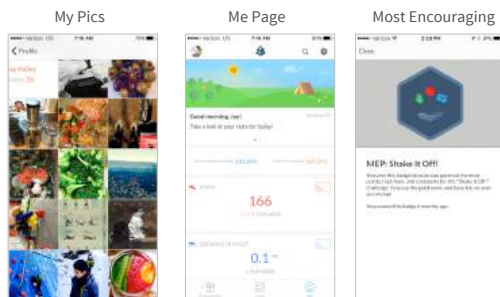
Meaningful rewards that build relationships
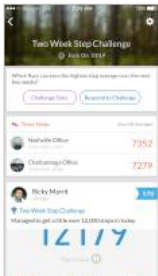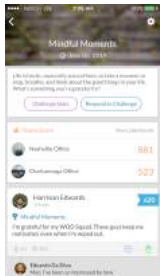
Social action, Mindful action

Step Competition

Invitation to Mindfulness

Localize wellbeing

Organizational Hub

Sub-Communities

And engage social influencers with each other

Map analytics to business objectives: Connectedness, Fitness, Happiness
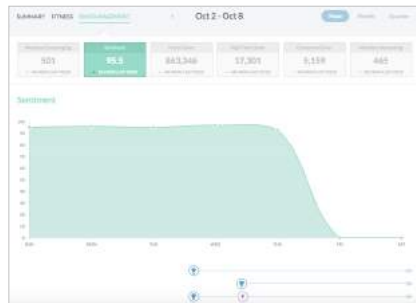
Personalize wellbeing…
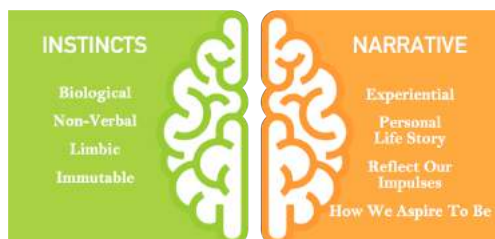
...By speaking their language
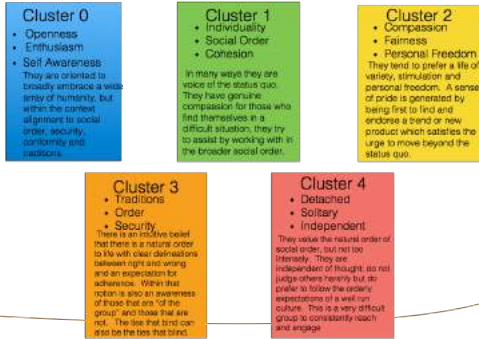
What kind of impact can health & happiness habits have at work?

Building happiness inside trauma.

Multi-Month Study

76% felt more motivated to improve health

72% said group culture was healthier

65% reported positive impact on emotional wellbeing

65% reported increase in daily exercise
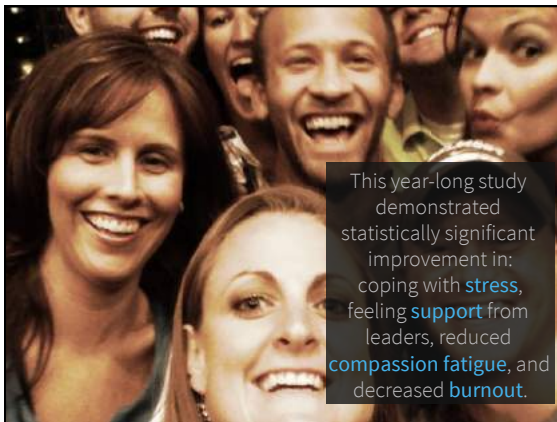
Awarded for Highest Retention Rate in System

This year-long study demonstrated statistically significant improvement in: coping with stress, feeling support from leaders, reduced compassion fatigue, and decreased burnout.

Engagement Principles

1. Maximize positive social interactions

2. Leverage culture (#1) to shape culture (#2)

3. Change/evolve/adapt at consumer speed

4. Work with partners

5. Be person-centric & allow for personalization

6. Be ready for multi-year journey

The greatest challenges are worth the effort!

"Since joining this community, I've begun to make better eating choices, I've tried things I never thought I'd do, I've lost 35 lbs., I've discovered that I actually enjoy running and exercising, I've become a morning person (miracle of miracles) and I have more energy than I've had in a long time. Because of living like it counts, I'm enjoying my job, my kids, my marriage and my life in general. Friends and family members have noticed the difference and asked about it, and are starting to make changes in their own lives as well. I'm pretty sure that all this would not have happened if it weren't for the inspiration, motivation and accountability this community provides."

- Spire Member

Thank you!