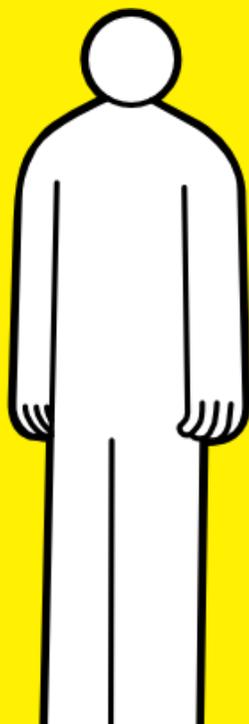


# Rebuilt the **Fading Vicinity**

Yifan Du



# Content

01.				
<b>Thinking in the Sinking Ark</b>		1		
02.				
<b>We are Becoming Islands</b>		4		
Invisible Wall				
Our Phantom Limbs				
The Furthest Closeness				
03.				
<b>The Dying of the Light</b>		16		
The Sense of Vicinity				
The Changing of the Productive Structure				
We are Turning Inward				
04.				
<b>Colosseum of Earthly Delights</b>		22		
Tu Lou				
The Boundary				
The Trusted Network				
05.				
<b>Communities with Intention</b>			28	
The Amazon Project				
Business Model for Amazon				
3 Core Factors of Amazon Prime Success				
Limitations of Unity Program				
Building a Community with Intention				
Social Recognition				
06.				
<b>Neighbors App Design</b>			42	
Wireframe				
Core Features				
Persona #1				
Persona #2				
07.				
<b>The Answer is in the Vicinity</b>			68	
08.				
<b>The Savior of None</b>			70	
09.				
<b>Work Cited</b>			74	

## PROLOGUE

By Mike Fink

At semester's end the usual final "crit" draws a crowd of professors, fellow students, and friends to create an audience, a community, for your share of about a quarter of an hour. My job from liberal arts is mostly to admire! as eloquently as do-able. I had a t.a.—a teaching assistant—from China—who helped me to zoom my lectures internationally with his technical skills. Here is my word-portrait of Yifan Du.

He joined my next door neighbor and me as we collaborated on a block hike labelled "Jane's Walk" in honor of Jane Jacob, the N.Y.Times architecture critic who turned against the Moses mission to re-create Manhattan. She wrote about the value of neighborhoods and of re-discovering their history and thus started a major international movement, with its core center in Toronto.

Well, our particular mini-world consists of a few streets from Summit Avenue downward to North Main Street and containing houses telling in brick, rock, and timber the historical tale of four centuries of America! A mix of tenements, farmhouses with barns currently functioning as garages, cottages, bungalows, and churches, synagogues... and even a few empty lots!

Yifan joined us twice, or even thrice, and June weather can be iffy. One of those wee journeys took place under a stormy sky, and we were drenched, the little troupe diminished leaving Yifan the sole survivor. I didn't realize then how deeply he was studying our words and following our footsteps. You see, these little streets contain the entire evolution of our nation and our culture. Count General Rochambeau the ally of George Washington threw a party for the troops and the farmers' daughters, despite the disparity in their language skills. The names of our lanes recall that revolutionary chapter in our struggles for independence and liberty...and

"freedom"—a word each of us must define in our own terms. Some of the smaller houses have a Japanese look, designed for the G.I. generation on small lots of land requiring miniature adjustments to the "American dream"—a more modest one then than recently.

Yifan's senior project was to combine the ancient civilization of China—a vast country with smaller communities dealing with local issues of defense and community relations—and yet to celebrate the "progress" achieved by Yankee ingenuity. The computer: useful or imprisoning? His thesis was to salute inventions, as an industrial designer, but also to salute society--your neighbors. These days with our emphasis on issues of diversity can hardly find a better landscape for a tour than this Summit neighborhood, which brings together racial, gender, national origins, and generational differences. And encourages hospitality through four seasons. Parties in winter and summer, in gardens and before fireplace hearths. The cobbled driveway between my neighbors and me has served as an Independence Day picnic ground more than once.

My colleagues asked Yifan to build something to illustrate his philosophy of design to add to his written essay. He came up with...a few benches for neighbors to stop and chat together, but with signs suggesting topics useful or imaginative to stimulate conversation.

I write this contribution at this time of searching for somebody to blame for the ills of our time, to say with my fingertips on my laptop that Yifan, my student and assistant, has become my professor. By his example of stirring together the various ingredients of loyalty, memory, enthusiasm, courtesy, patience, and respect for where he is, what we are, and how our buildings narrate a declaration of independence ...as well as co-dependency upon goodwill, friendship, and mutuality. His final photo for his presentation was a stone plaque on a public wall that reads "Speak to the Past and it shall Teach Thee." Which summed it all up nicely, neatly, and kindly.

01.

# **Thinking in the Sinking Ark**

“Our surroundings are sinking down.” I have this thought when I stand on the shore of the river. It’s true that nothing gold can stay. However, what’s the meaning of being in the present? It’s the first time that I have visited this river and enjoyed the scenery after I moved to this area.

When I stand by the river I think of a story I read when I was a kid. The story is about a boy trying to save stranded fish after an ebb tide. In the story the man sees a boy trying to throw all the fish one by one back to the sea when the tide ebbs, but there are still so many fish left lying on the beach dying. The man walked to the boy saying “Kid, there are hundreds of fish there. You are not going to save them all.” “I know,” the boy replies while bending down to pick up another fish. “Then why are you still trying to do that? Who cares how many fish you can save?” “This little fish cares!” the boy answers the man and then throws back the fish in his hand back to the sea. “And this one cares too” he throws back another fish. “And this one, and this one, this one...”

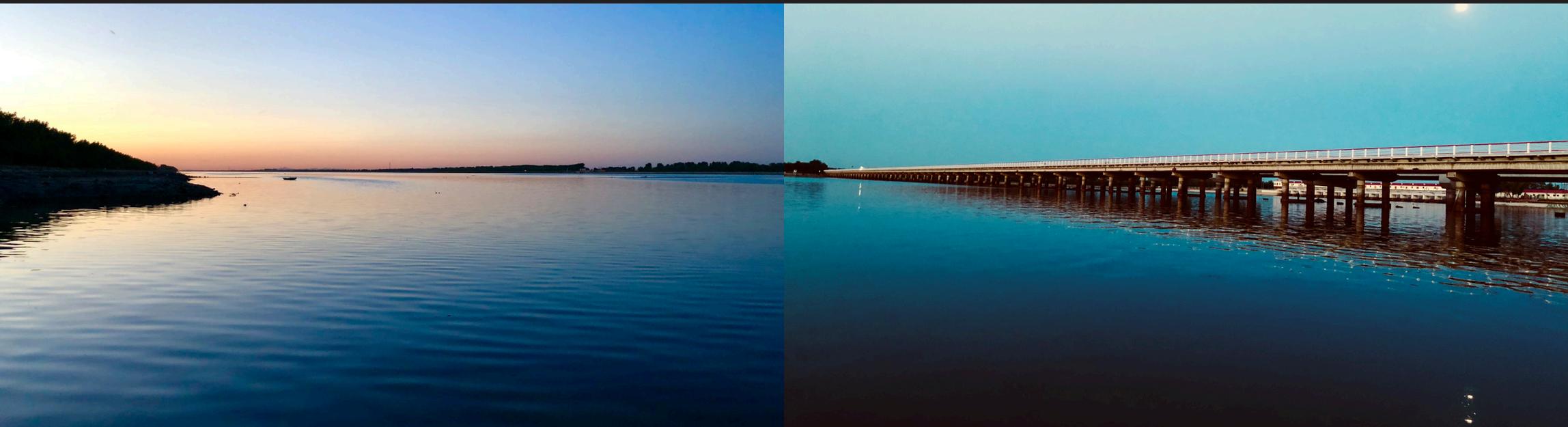
That is one of my favorite stories when I was a boy.

Since when did I stop caring about the things happening around me? “I am too busy to care.” seems like a good

excuse. Indeed, I’m busy with my school and my jobs. I’m busy caring about the things that are big. However, as my self-justification, I’m not a person who doesn’t care about anything. I do care about many things. I care about the U.S.A. election result. I care about the poverty issue in Africa. I care about how to solve environmental pollution. Those things are surely important and mean something to me to some degree. But they are too distant, too far to engage for me. Let’s say that I care about myself, my family, and my friends. And I care about the world as well.

“Our surroundings are sinking down.” Something is missing on the scale between me and the whole world. That’s also the dilemma of the Millennials. The giant gap between the ego and the world builds an invisible wall. This invisible barrier makes us nonchalant toward the trivial things happening just right in front of us. Ironically, the nonchalance makes our society more emotional and drastic. We get outraged more easily compare to the past.

How should I invite people to appreciate and care more about our surroundings? How do I rebuild the fading vicinity? Those questions are the starting point of my thesis journey.



02.  
**We are  
Becoming Islands**

No man is an island,  
Entire of itself,  
Every man is a piece of the  
continent,  
A part of the main.

— **John Donne**

## INVISIBLE WALL



Figure 1.1. IBM Simon 1993 cellphone

In the year of 1993, IBM cooperated with BellSouth Cellular Corp. to create a product called IBM Simon Personal Communicator, which was regarded as the first smartphone with a touch screen. It set the foundation for a revolutionary product 14 years later called Iphone.

The first generation of iphone came out in 2007. The invention of the iphone is often regarded as the first milestone of the emerging industry. With the growth of the smartphones market, the world seems to be moving to a new era, an era stuffed with algorithms and digital information. The numbers of smartphone users hit one billion in the quarter three of 2012. The world migrates to a so-called intelligent age at an unprecedented speed.

Since then, with a smartphone and a pair of earbuds, from our eyes to our ears, from our hands to our spirits, we start to gear ourselves up from every angle. By equipping ourselves, we build up an invisible wall between our ego and our surroundings. We have too much information and too much access to the information as well. It's ironic that the Internet was built for connecting people by creating an open world, instead we are actually turning inward. We are



Figure 1.2. Listen to music while running

good at building our ideal self in the digital world by getting more likes and followers. However, we are less used to smiling at strangers in the street. We value our privacy so much, because letting people know your information is dangerous and risky. The civic virtue and public manner that developed with the history of mankind is fading away. The situation that Sartre once described as “l'enfer c'est les autres” has come to reality. “Hell is other people.” is an appropriate way to describe contemporary society. Our vicinity is fading away. We are becoming islands surrounded by the ocean of hostility. We are slowly losing the ability to talk with our inner self, let alone talk with others with sincerity.

There is another kind of losing the vicinity in terms of propinquity. It's a common family scene that everyone is too



Figure 1.3. Family with laptop, tablet and smartphone, everyone using digital devices busy with their phones and computers to interact with others.

The foundation of human society is the interactions and cooperations between every individual, groups, and social classes. In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book, *The Social Contract*, he wrote "Since men cannot create new forces, but merely combine and control those which already exist, the only way in which they can preserve themselves is by uniting their separate powers in a combination strong enough to overcome any resistance, uniting them so that their powers are directed by a single motive and act in concert." In his point, the power and capability of an individual is highly limited. Even a very simple social behavior, such as trading, requires complex social interactions. We cannot exist solely and without being a part of this social machine. In another word, he believes that "Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains."

Since we are so obsessed with the magic of "the free will", we invented the technology to liberate us from those "unnecessary interactions". Some examples are online shopping, food delivery, and automation. Those technologies on one hand improve the efficiency of the transaction, on the other hand, monotonize the ways of living, and simplify the relationship between us and our vicinity. The complicity in the multivariate social network is fading away. For instance,

the relationships in a farmer's market are vivid, active, and multivariate. In the past when we shopped in a farmer's market, we interacted with the farmers and our neighbors at the same time. When we want to have some food, whether we go to the restaurant or cook for ourselves, we need to interact with people in our vicinity. Those physical interactions slowly become the interactions between us and our phones. Those forms of vicinity disappear in the virtual relationships.

Moreover, digitalization simplifies our emotions. We are less likely to empathize with people around us. When we feel low we seek for the "motivations" from the words, videos, and audios online. Seeking consolation online is indeed a form of self-ostracism. It might offer us temporary comfort. However, getting help from our families and friends when we face problems is more reliable. It seems much easier to find someone who shares the feeling with us online, than explaining what we experience to the people nearby. The convenience of finding someone to talk to in the digital world reduces the importance of our surroundings. We care less about the people in our proximity and care more about the strangers far away. Our emotions become a sort of information that can be podcasted and delivered.

## OUR PHANTOM LIMBS

It is not an exaggeration to say that our smart devices become our phantom limbs. Those devices are our extended body. We are able to see broader and hear further but meanwhile, our real bodies are making fewer interactions with the real world. It used to take true efforts, a couple minutes or longer to travel to actually see and greet our families and friends. By using various media and digital platforms, those greetings are easier, or more superficial. A lot of times we tend to hide our emotions behind the screens and send out those emojis to pretend they are qualified substitutes of our facial expressions. We don't rely on walking, running, writing a letter, or hugging someone to express our emotions anymore. There is always an easier option for us to choose.

In this diminishing neighborhood, we can get everything done just by clicking those buttons on the screen. We can rent a place to live, book a taxi, order food and anything else online. We can avoid any obstacles in the real world if we want. We are indulging in easy thrills brought by technology. With the fading importances of vicinity, there is the fading importance of our hands and feet. In many cases, the physical activities shift from mandatory to optional. We can achieve many things solely by our phantom limbs.

The technology not only affects our limbs but also our five senses. Since our eyes have been captured by smart devices, our ability to perceive the natural world is declining. We are less and less able to appreciate the beauty of nature sensitively, and we will not be easily fascinated by the beauty of nature. Similarly, we are becoming less and less sensitive to the degradation of nature. That's why we hardly notice the disappearing species, melting glaciers, let alone the nuanced relationship between this disappearance and ourselves.

Our ears are also filled by smart devices, and they are completely losing their ability to perceive hidden music in nature. Similarly, our ears become busy and confused due to the complexity of information. It becomes more difficult to hear nearby sounds, such as parents' concerns and admonitions, and friends' advice and suggestions. However, we listen to content that seems to comfort ourselves with smart devices every day. We put on earphones listening to the music we like and content we are interested in.

## THE FURTHEST CLOSENESS

Intelligent equipment is bringing people closer to the world. As long as you turn on the screen, you can quickly learn about the world's information, yet almost no one thinks that this kind of proximity is just a falsehood. That proximity is just the distance between the person and the device. We are getting closer to our phones but further apart from reality.

The mass-production methods of which he was the most eminent exploiter were accomplishing more to alter human nature than even the steam-engine had done, dissolving pride of station and family.

*'It destroys the social prestige of traditional occupations and skills and with it the satisfaction of the individual in his traditional work,'*

Peter Drucker says of the assembly-line and the newstyle industrialism. 'It uproots-quite literally-the individual from the social soil in which he has grown. It devaluates his traditional values, and paralyzes his traditional behavior.

— **Russell Kirk**

### The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot

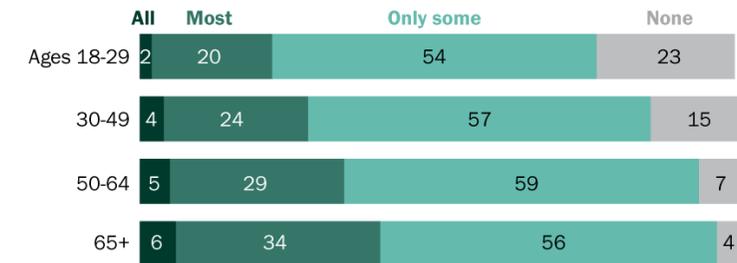
Intelligentization can easily set people free from nearby fields by attracting people to a cold flashing screen. People no longer value friendships, responsibilities, and obligations in proximity, and they also value social morals and virtue less. On the contrary, we are more and more concerned about what happens in the distance: the story of fictional characters on TV; the rumor of a celebrity we have never met before; what a exotic youtuber did in his or her country.

The time spent in a handshake or hug is becoming cramped; the patience in the process of listening and sharing is losing day by day. The information presented on the screen makes people feel less and less involved. We seem to know our surroundings yet we don't really care about it. The research from Pew Research center shows that almost a quarter of people whose age between 18-29 know none of their neighbors.

The proximity between them and their neighbors is the furthest closeness, because they don't bother to know their proximity.

### Older Americans are more likely to know their neighbors than younger ones

% saying they know \_\_\_ of their neighbors, by age



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 26-March 11, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 1.4. 5 Facts About Neighbors In U.S.



# 03. The Dying of the Light

## THE SENSE OF VICINITY

The sense of vicinity and feeling of being a community member not only come from one's understanding of acting as a social role in a physical space but also the mental feeling of being recognized.

The concept of vicinity is a compound of several areas, such as sociology, psychology and geography. I used to have this school exercise when I was young, which is picturing where and what career I will be in 10 years. Just like many of my classmates, I was so obsessed with all the great expectations of my future. In our imaginations, there will be a perfect world with many perfect careers for everyone. It's a good exercise for children to teach them the beauty and strength of having hope. However, there are not many exercises about picturing your future in tomorrow or next week, as those seem less important and less attractive. Future is such a cool word to say when you are young. Putting the "near" in front of "future" is making it less cool. Predicting yourself in 10 years is so awesome and predicting tomorrow is lame. It is just tomorrow. It is so close to us and it will come soon. Future is such a bright world for young kids. It is so bright that covers the importance of being in the present. However, the present, tomorrow, and next week are our vicinity in time.

Similar situations happened in my geography class as well. We used to have a 10 minutes presentation at the beginning of each class to describe and introduce your dream city to the class. Many popular cities are Paris, Rome, London, Munich, New York City, Los Angeles etc. If you were saying your dream city is the one you currently live in, you will get kindly mocked by the class. Because it is so close to us, people are familiar with it. It seems less qualified to have "dream city" as its title.

Our society almost devalues the vicinity, because vicinity looks like the opposite of aiming high. There are no problems with aiming high. However, if we indulge in the hallucination of the future we will ignore our surroundings easily. The future is filled with uncertainty. The worst case is we get lost in between the gap of future and present and that's where our anxiety comes from. Detaching us from the vicinity is attaching our vision to the unbearable lightness of an uncertain future.

## **THE CHANGING OF THE PRODUCTIVE STRUCTURE**

Knowing our neighbor requires more effort nowadays compare to how we did in the past. Catching up and hanging out with your neighbors seems old school in some big cities. That's because the productive structure of our society has shifted. In the past the requirements of different jobs were more general. The magazine editor can work as a librarian. A plumber can work as a construction worker. It's easier for us to understand and imagine what each other are dealing with. However, with the development of technology and the division of labour in society, the production activities become more complicated, more technical. The technical barrier between each profession becomes stronger. The different occupations require more specific skill sets. For instance, a salesman may never understand what a coder is working at, even if they work for the same company.

The difference between technical areas is indifferent to us. The adaptation we take to understand each other with these stronger technical barriers is not trying to understand at all. We might lose the ability to empathize with others. I feel it is harder to build a trusting relationship. Moreover, the worse thing than losing those abilities is we haven't noticed we are losing them.

## Those most concerned about state of interpersonal trust worry about social breakdown, polarized politics

**25%** of adults believe that the level of confidence Americans have in each other is a very big problem

Among those, % who say \_\_\_\_\_ is a reason that interpersonal confidence is a problem

<b>Lack of trust relates to broad societal problems</b>	<b>67%</b>
People can't trust neighbors or fellow citizens	29
Results from polarization/tribalism	24
Results from selfishness	8
Relates to racism/strained racial relations	4
Results from lack of civility	2
Results from breakdown in morals, ignoring God	2
Makes it hard to address inequality, social safety net issues	1
<b>Results from actions of President Trump</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Results from actions of politicians as a group</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Results from negative/divisive media coverage</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Results from problems tied to technology/social media</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Results from actions of Democrats</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Refused/Don't know</b>	<b>16</b>

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple answers and up to three of them were coded.

Figure 1.5. Those most concerned about state of interpersonal trust worry about social breakdown

## WE ARE TURNING INWARD

### The generation gap is large when it comes to views on respecting others, helping those in need, accepting elections

% of U.S. adults in each age group who have a great deal/fair amount of confidence in the American people to ...

	Ages 18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Net difference seniors vs. young adults
Respect the rights of people who are not like them	35%	41%	52%	67%	+32
Do what they can to help those in need	53	66	77	80	+27
Treat others with respect	48	57	63	74	+26
Accept election results regardless of who wins	44	50	52	66	+22
Reconsider their views after learning new information	40	42	57	61	+21
Work together to solve community problems	52	56	67	71	+19
Cast informed votes in elections	38	40	42	54	+16
Obey federal and state laws	70	70	73	79	+9

Note: Respondents who gave other answers or no answer are not shown.

Figure 1.6. The generation gap is large when it comes to views on respecting others, helping those in need, accepting elections

### Young adults are less confident in the military, religious, police, business leaders

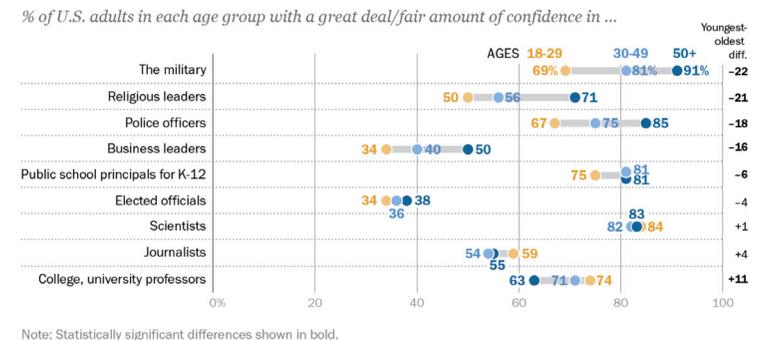


Figure 1.7. Young adults are less confident in the military, religious, police, business leaders

### Most young adults in U.S. see others as selfish, exploitative, untrustworthy

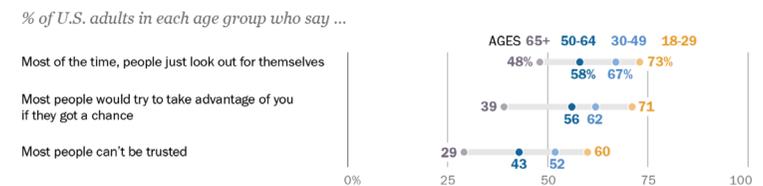


Figure 1.8. Most young adults in U.S. see others as selfish, exploitative, untrustworthy

## 04. Colosseum of Earthy Delights

When I thought about the fading vicinity, an earthly structure came to my mind. That is Fujian Tulou. Tu lou are mostly built in the rural area in Fujian. Young people slowly move to cities to seek a better life. Tulou nowadays, become a place for sightseeing. A place for tourists to experience how life would be like to live in tulou. In many publications, when journalists interview the people who move out from tu lou, they always talk about how they miss the old neighborhood culture.

### TU LOU

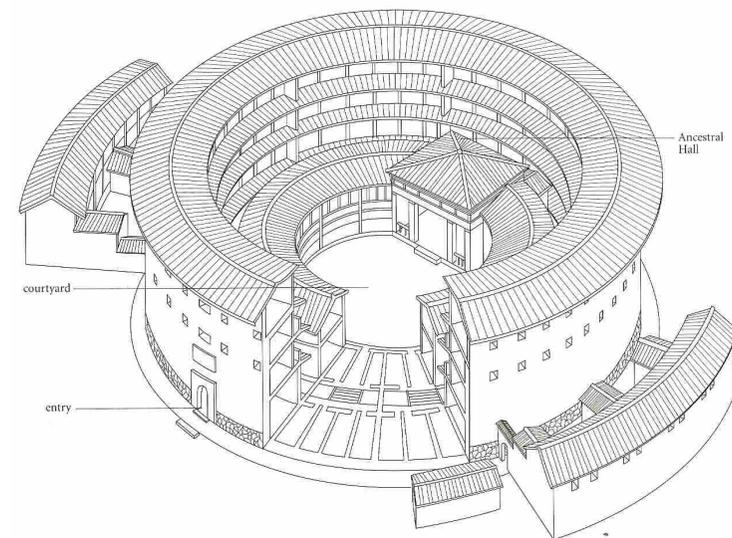


Figure 1.9. Drawing of a Tulou

Fujian Tu Lou, the Hakka walled village, is a type of building which is unique in southeast China, Fujian province. The first tu lou was built by the end of Song Dynasty, 960AD - 1279 AD. A ethnic group called Hakka move from north to south in order to avoid the war. After Hakka people settle down in Fujian, they start to build fortresses to protect families who live in tu lou. Tu lou has extremely thick walls that form a circle or

square shape. The walls are built with materials around the building. The Hakka family use densely hammered clay and stones to build an indestructible house for their family to live in. One tu lou has the capacity for hundreds of people to live inside.

Tu lou are mostly joined by people who share the same family name. Normally, tulou has a communal space in the middle. The center areas are saved for the ancestral hall. Which is a place for younger generations to pay their respect to their ancestors. Tu lous are built in clusters. When emergency situations arise, families are able to unite together to defend their home. People were willing to share things together with their neighbors. Families know all family members in this place. They are more likely to help each other in urgent situations. Children grow up together. Families celebrate holidays, spend time together. This made tulou become the best place to create a friendly neighborhood culture. People are treating their neighbors like family. The boundaries are thin as it does not exist between the families.

After hundreds of years passing by, tulou nowadays no longer suits the modern lifestyle. Since young generations are more likely to choose to seek a better livelihood in urban areas, where hospitals and schools are located. Which marks the end of the tulou era.

## THE BOUNDARY

Talking about the past living experience in Tulou, Chongsheng Jiang, a resident who was born in 1983, would describe it as “a feeling of togetherness”. Growing up in Tulou, Jiang was able to recall the memories vividly. “Lots of families who live in the same Tulou meet with each other on the daily basis. We would gather together for a meal or start a meeting. During holidays, until all the families sit together, clint glasses, we would feel the most important event is finished.” In his opinion, either the Tulou building or the tiny round table, embed the wishes for all of their family members.

The boundaries between each family are almost nonexistent. People would help each other whenever they could. Residents would borrow things from each other, share food or snacks with their neighbors, or look after their children when someone needs a babysitter.



Figure 2.0. 我的土楼记忆

## THE TRUSTED NETWORK

Tulou are built in the unit of the family. There are a set of family rules that need to be followed by the members in each household. The heir of Shixiong Jiang shared 10 principles that needed to be obeyed by the family.

- I. 往年购买楼门口溪埔良田四亩二分，充作二宜楼修理之用，设专人轮流管理，财目公开，不许侵吞。  
The farmland which was brought for the family to use needs to be managed. Financial charts should be published for review. Family property should not be used for personal purposes.
- II. 各房房屋不准买卖，只许房亲借住。  
Each room is not allowed for sale. Rent for relatives temporarily is allowed.
- III. 喜事请客，各宜量力而行，楼内人宴请楼内人，概不得收“红包”。生下男孩，满月要送一碗“红圆”（汤圆）给邻居，满四个月，要特制直径约三十厘米的两块大饼，切成碎块，由母亲或祖母抱着婴儿到楼内人家逐户去送，称之为“乞爱”。  
When holding an event for celebration, do not overspend the personal savings. When a boy is born to a family, a bowl of red sweet dumpling should be given to the neighbors when the boy is 1 month old. When the boy is 4 months old, the family should cook two large pancakes, cut them into pieces and share them with their neighbors and ask for wishes for the boy.
- IV. 丧事由房亲协助，全楼帮忙。  
The Funeral will be helped by the whole house to be held.
- V. 对“红”、“白”之事，由大门进出，娶亲到四楼公共祖堂祭祖，楼下公厅办理丧事，  
Marriage events will be held on the fourth floor of the community building to pay their respect to the ancestors. Funeral will be held on the third floor of the community building.
- VI. 同姓不准结婚，独生女允许招赘。  
People with the same family name are not allowed to be married. Families which only have a daughter are allowed to take in a son-in-law to bear the family name.

- VII. 村中族人遇难相投，楼内人应热情接待，  
When a villager asks for help, our house members should help as much as we can.
- VIII. 大门、中厅、南北边门等公共场所，由各户轮流打扫，保持清洁。厅门通道不乱堆放东西，厕所、猪牛栏一律建在楼外，匪警时，猪牛方许牵入楼内，楼外沟渠，每年至少清除杂物一次。端午节那天为掏井日期，楼内人共同清理。  
Community buildings and spaces will be cleaned by each family in turns. On May 5th, the well will be cleaned by the whole community.
- IX. 每年逢二月初三、六月初三，为“中厅公妈”（蒋士熊夫妇）生日，十月廿五、五月十九为其忌日，宜共同祭祀。  
February 3rd and June 3rd are the birthday of Shixiong Jiang and his wife. October 25th, May 19th are the death date. Members should pay their respect together.
- X. 民间信仰主要是崇拜玄天上帝、清水祖师，岁时活动，各户自行安排。  
The family believed in the same religion. Religious activities will be held privately.

Since Tulou is built as a family unit, the unit automatically creates a trusted network between the members. The family has a clear hierarchy system for families to follow. When conflicts happen, elders will be the judge. Residents of Tulou are not only neighbors, but also relatives.

Tulou is a form of community. It consists of living, storage, shop, market, community entertainment center together. Tulou creates a cohesive power for the community. The connection between families is tied closely by the daily activities, which allows the trusted system to thrive.

# 05. Communities with Intention

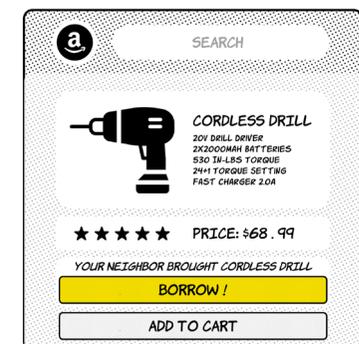


## THE AMAZON PROJECT

The history of the coliving movement is almost as long as human history. In the era of material impoverishment, humans relied on one another for everything from food to protection to child care assistance. Living together to form tribes, clans, villages, are simply their only option to survive and grow. Sharing is one of the main reasons that people should live as communities. In many ancient societies, the production tools were more like public property before they became personal capitals.

The sharing economy happened to be the trendy topic in recent years. People tend to borrow/rent things from others. I thought about creating a way for people to be able to borrow things from their neighbors via Amazon. Since amazon has become the biggest online shopping site in North America.

I thought about creating an extension based on the Amazon website. When people browse products online, they will be able to have the option to borrow the product temporarily from their neighbor instead of purchasing for themselves to use. In this method, neighbors can not only start to know each other, but also eliminate the unnecessary products they store at home.





### Customer reviews

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5  
438 global ratings

5 star 85%  
4 star 8%  
3 star 4%  
2 star 1%  
1 star 2%

~ How are ratings calculated?

### Customer images

See all customer images

### Read reviews that mention

stainless steel   stains   broken   cleans   containers   powder  
envelope   pans   pots   scratches   tub

### By feature

Easy to use ★★★★★ 4.7  
Thickness ★★★★★ 4.6  
Scent ★★★★★ 4.1  
~ See more

### Review this product

Share your thoughts with other customers

Write a customer review

### Top reviews from the neighborhood

Neighbor reviews

Frank Tho South Man S  
★★★★☆ Really good for stainless steel appliances but expensive online  
Reviewed in the United States on August 3, 2020  
Item Package Quantity: 2 | [Verified Purchase](#)  
We just bought a new stainless steel sink and both the manufacturer and plumbing supply house recommended this product. It cleans the sink really well but this is one of those products that may be found much cheaper in your local grocery store. We have a small grocery store in our town and they had it for much less than the online price.

Titus N. Omaha S  
★★★★☆ Expecting it to be something like Comet - more powerful.  
Reviewed in the United States on July 9, 2020  
Item Package Quantity: 2 | [Verified Purchase](#)  
I might have been expecting the Bar Keepers Friend to be a bit more powerful. However, when trying to clean off my stove top it still didn't clean to my standards. Also, I read a lot of reviews about the packaging. The same thing happened to me. One of the containers was broken and half the powder was in the envelope it came in. So, be careful when opening. I think the product is good for a basic cleaning and what I like is that it is less chemical compared to something like Comet.

### Neighbors from Near to Far

## BUSINESS MODEL FOR AMAZON

### Introducing Community function similar to Amazon Prime

By creating a service that is similar to Amazon Prime, the new service may encourage neighbors to know each other. Unity service allows users to publish products for borrow on Amazon. When someone wants to borrow instead of buy the product, they will have to communicate with the one who was willing to lend the product for a lend fee.

I came up with a payment plan in order to keep community function active. Customers need to subscribe to Unity for monthly payment to stay in service. Subscription fee could combine with Prime in order to give customers with two functions for a cheaper combined price. Membership for Community will be free for the first 2 months to encourage enough users to join the Community function.

Amazon can also generate income from Unity subscription to keep both programs alive.



Unity program combined with prime program on Amazon

### 3 CORE FACTORS OF AMAZON PRIME SUCCESS

Selection, Price & Delivery

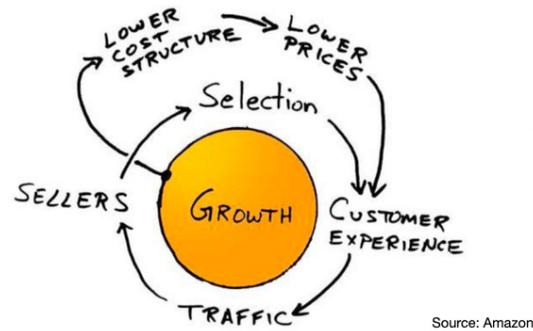
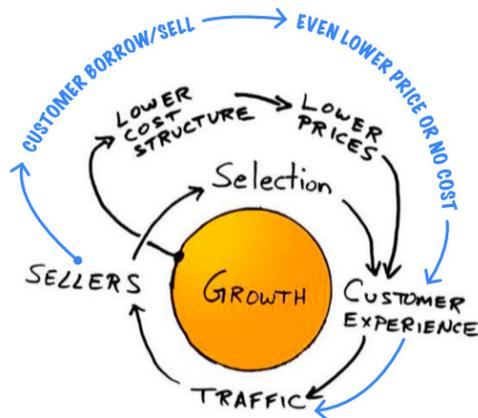


Figure 2.1. Jordan, Franz. "Applying the Amazon Flywheel to Your Online Business"

Amazon Prime is able to sell millions of products in all categories combined with reasonable prices, and cheaper delivery fees in the market.

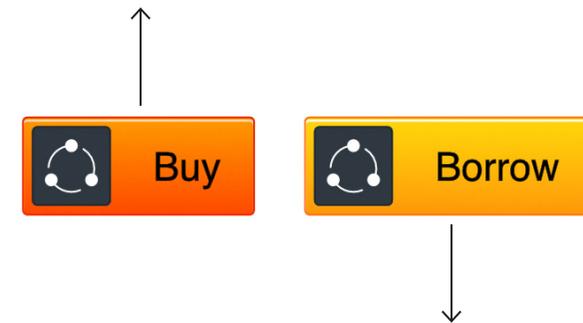
By creating a new borrow service on an existing program, Unity will be able to create the maximum potential.



#### Discount price set by the owner

Users can list the product they purchased from Amazon to sell. Set up the price on their own (the price has to be lower than the product's original price).

Products which was listed to sell by user will appear on a marketplace page within the neighborhood. Product will be delivered to the buyer by the product owner to encourage physical interaction in the neighborhood. After the product was sold, Amazon takes small portion (eg. 2%) as income.



#### Borrower automatically charged half of the product original price as deposit to ensure return

To ensure the lender will receive the listing product back to the home, the borrower will be charged 50% of the product price as deposit. The deposit will be on hold on Amazon. After the lender receive the product from the borrow service, deposit will automatically put back to borrower's account.

## LIMITATIONS OF UNITY PROGRAM

I originally wanted to build a web based extension to assist the Amazon shopping experience, and enhance community relations. The Unity program will need lots of private information from Amazon, which makes it impossible to be an extension on the web page. As an outsider looking into Amazon operations, Unity program may also not be able to fit into the current Amazon system.

Furthermore, in many places of the world sharing tools is not a necessary need anymore. Besides, according to a survey I did, the majority of people aged 18-29 are not willing to contact their neighbors more than once a month for borrowing stuff. Therefore, I looked back to Tulou. I got inspired by its physical and sociological structure. The three key words learned for this case study are 1. Boundary 2. Layer 3. Social Recognition.

## BUILDING A COMMUNITY WITH INTENTION

### *Boundary*

The boundary of Tulou, the earthen wall, not only has the function of protection but also gives residents the feeling of belonging and feeling of being safe. The concept of setting a boundary is often missing from the internet, because people believe the internet should be an open world.



Figure 2.2. 朴之原 寻根夯土墙，致敬中国土木建筑

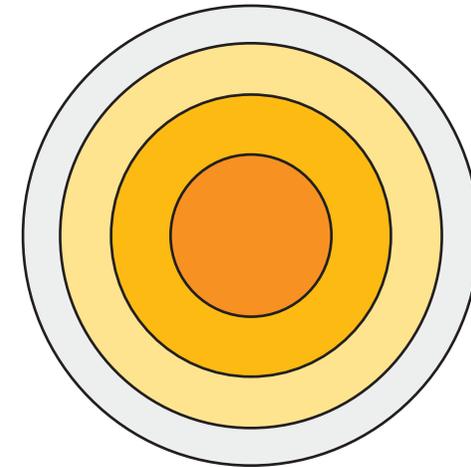
## Layers

The different layers of Tulou serve different purposes.

Usually the outer layers are for the residential purpose and inner layers are for the public activities. That's similar to the social circle layers we have. In our social circle we have our acquaintances separated in different layers. We are having different activities and conversations depending on their position in our social layers.



Figure 2.3. Lennartbj. China Fujian Yongding Hongkeng Tulou Zhencheng Lou



### Inner Circle:

These are roughly 5 people in your life with whom you share an intimate connection and lifelong closeness. Keeping them close means staying in touch with them regularly and ensuring your connections are high-caliber. You'll likely keep an eye on that quality-over-time tracker to make sure things stay strong.



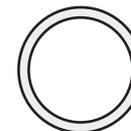
### Middle Circle:

Your middle circle's likely a combination of family, mentors, and besties — somewhere around 10 people who you trust, are totally real with, and share life experiences with, but whose little life details slip your mind when they're out of sight. Keep notes and reminders on these folks, so you can show up when it matters most.



### Outer Circle:

The crust of your social pie comprises about 35 people who share your interests and whom you'd like to stay in touch with regularly.



### Extended Circle:

Around 100 people who make up your greater personal community whom you'd like to keep on your radar.

## SOCIAL RECOGNITION

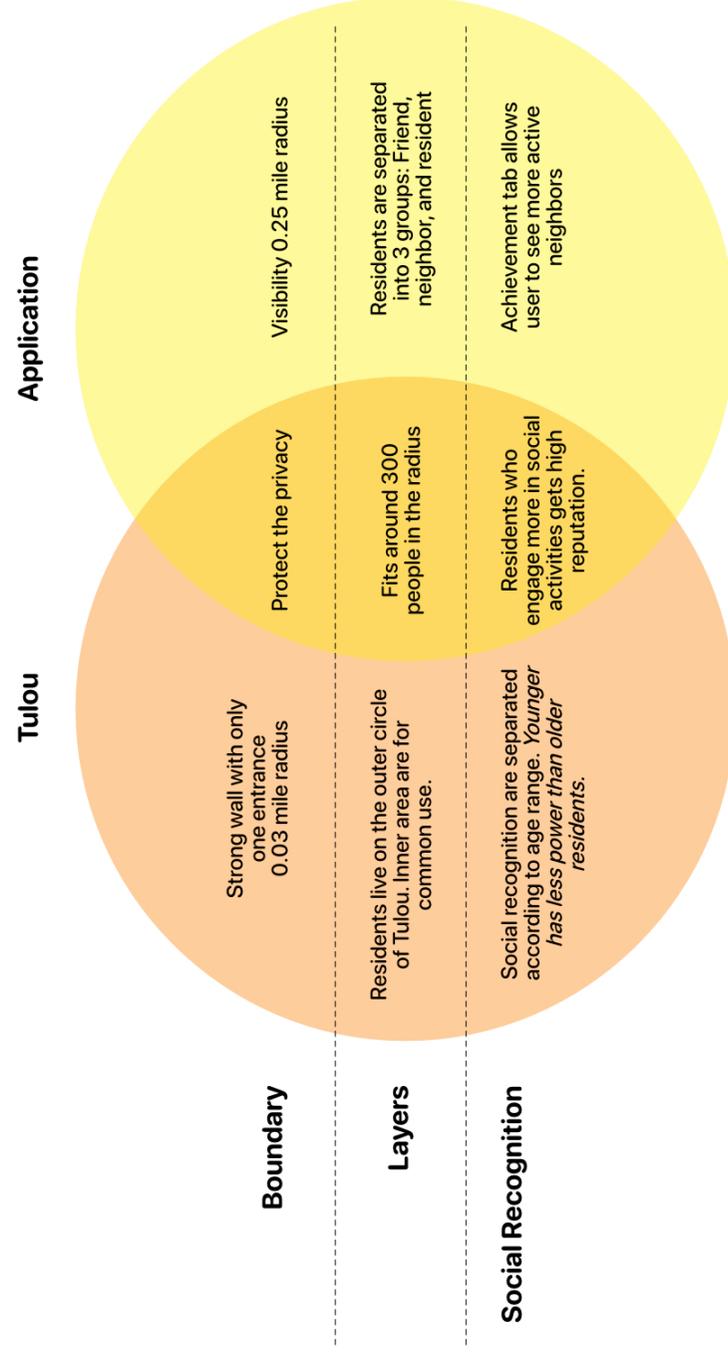
It is crucial to be recognized as a member in the Tulou community. Everyone living in Tulou plays their social roles to contribute to this big family. We are eager to be seen and to be heard in the community which proves our value of existence to some extent.

I want to build a mobile phone application based on those three key factors. There are two main reasons why I took the app as my approach. Firstly, our phones are one of the tools we use the most to communicate with each other. Secondly, most of the phones can get the user location information.



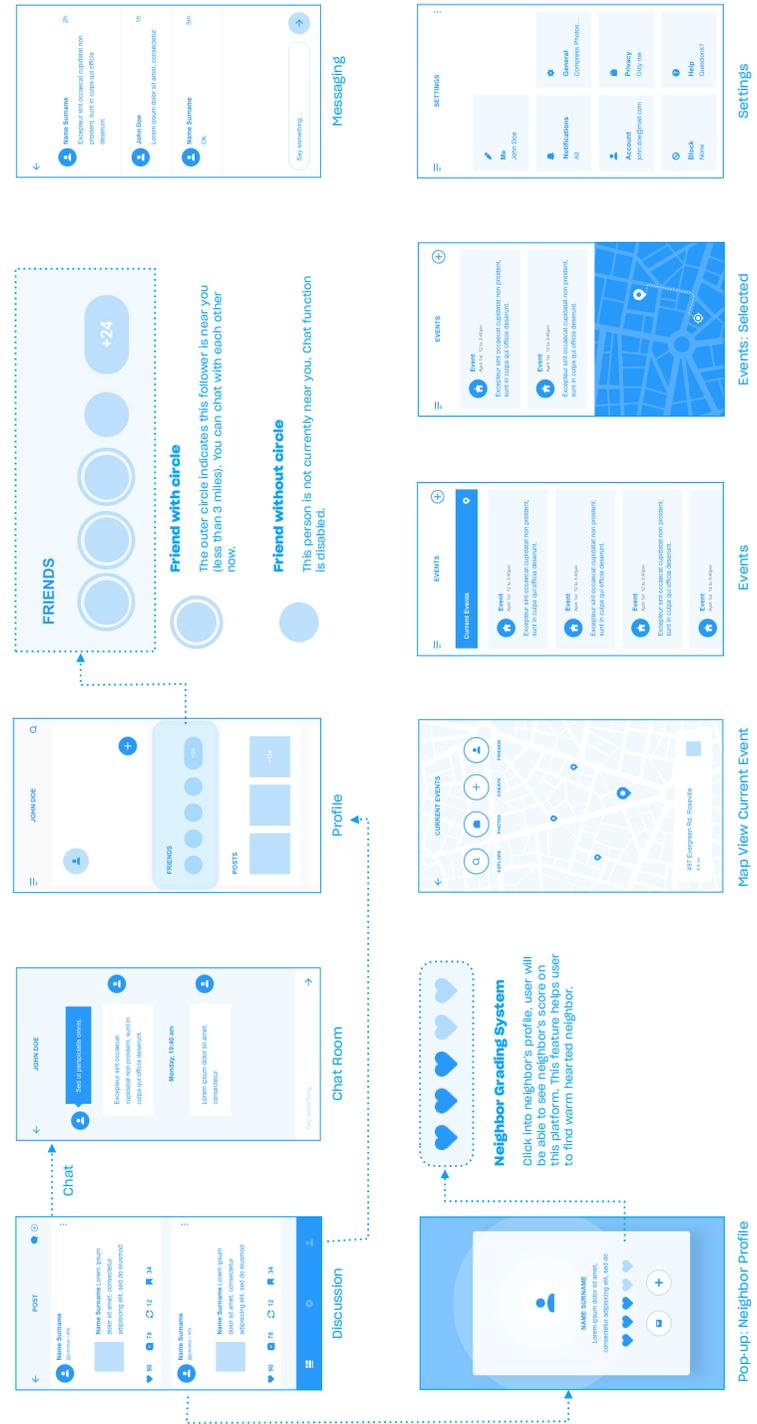
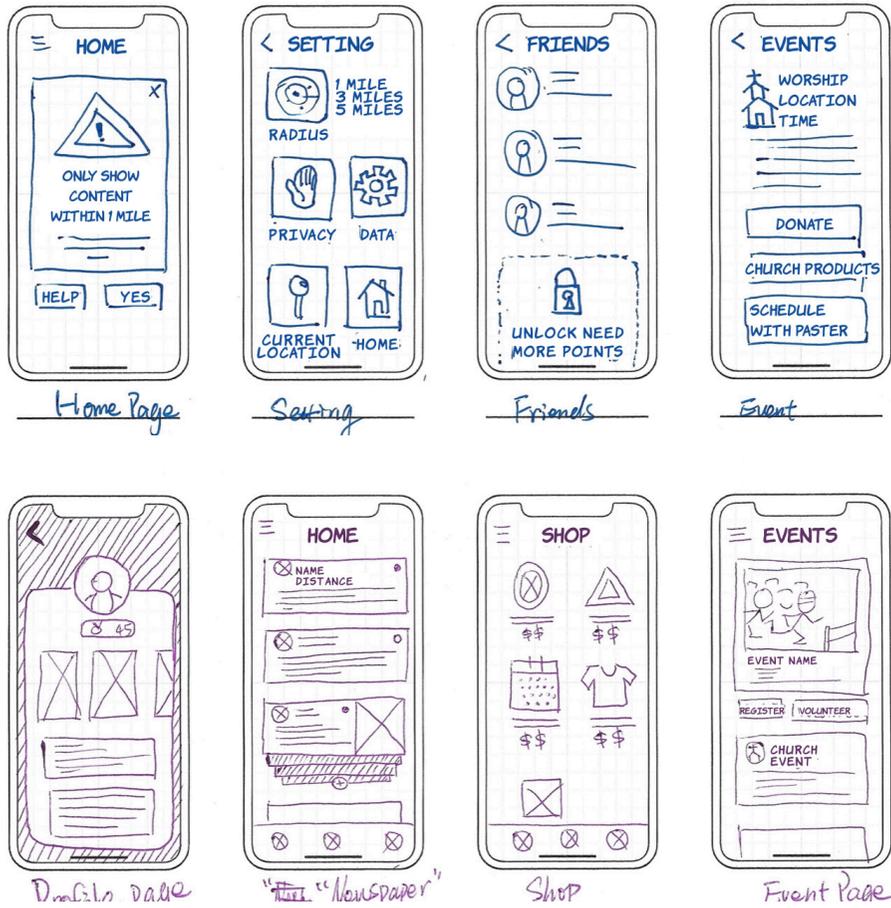
Figure 2.4. Yamashita, Michael. China's Remote Fortresses Lose Residents, Gain Tourists

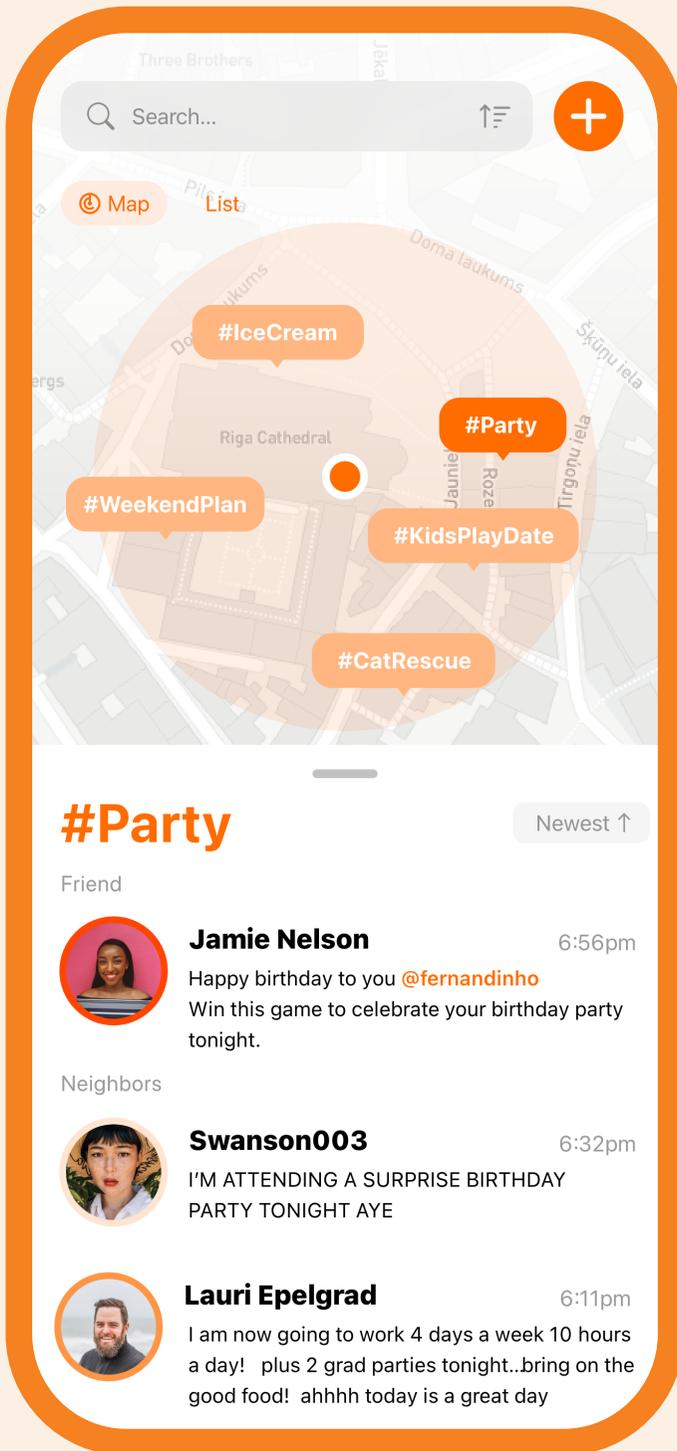
# 06. Neighbors App Design



# WIREFRAME

After researching all current Apps which target toward neighbors, I draw the wireframe of the application. Deciding what functions I should include in order to encourage neighbor interaction in real life.





## Location based tags display

Neighbors app will display posts that are within 3 miles radius.

Saturday May 1

Hi neighbor  
Let's catch up!



Search...



Map

List

Friends



**Jamie Nelson**

6:56pm

Happy birthday to you @fernandinho  
Win this game to celebrate your birthday party tonight.



**Erle Shayma**

5:53pm

et's start a thread of your favorite vegan tacos or mexican dishes. Some information about Cinco de Mayo will also be in this thread and feel free to add to it. SeedlingTaco I'll go first!!!



**Bidziil Rhamesses**

5:22pm

This is my advice to people: Learn how to cook, try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless and above all have fun. - Julia Child

Neighbors



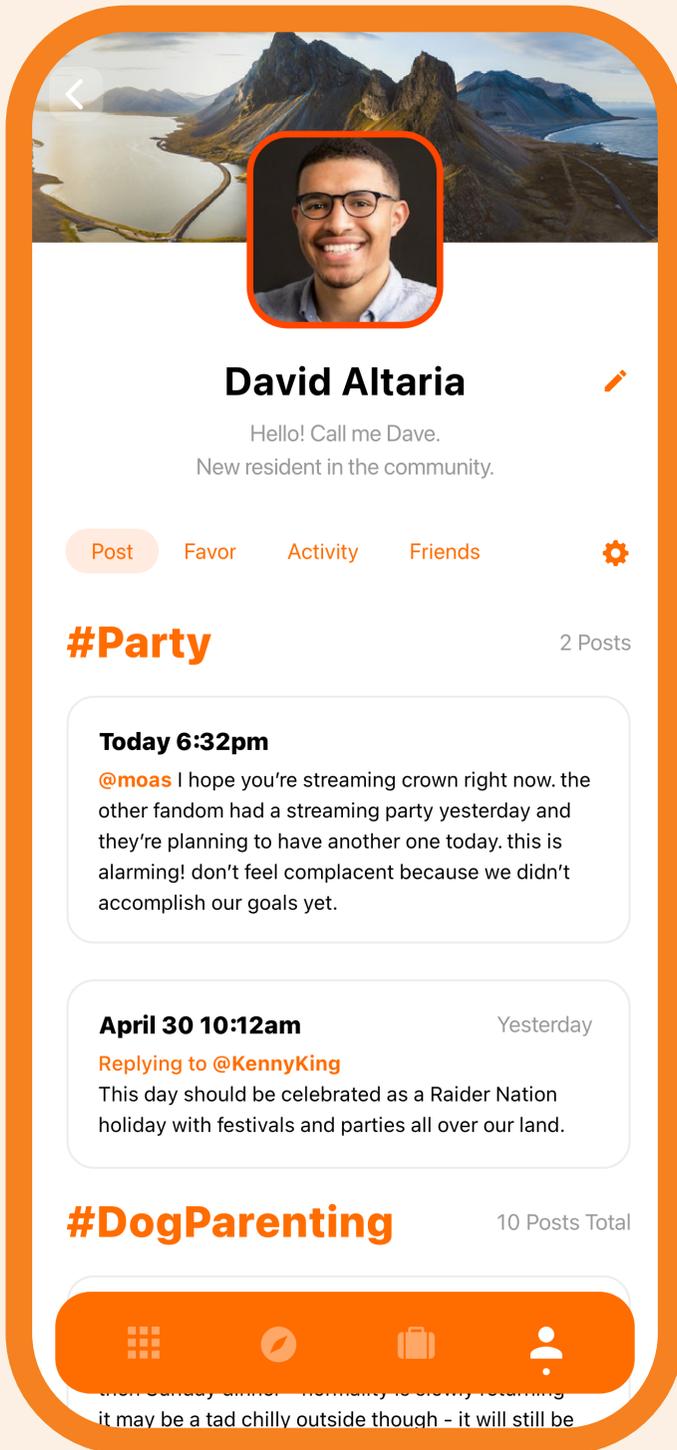
**Cale Crispian**

6:47pm



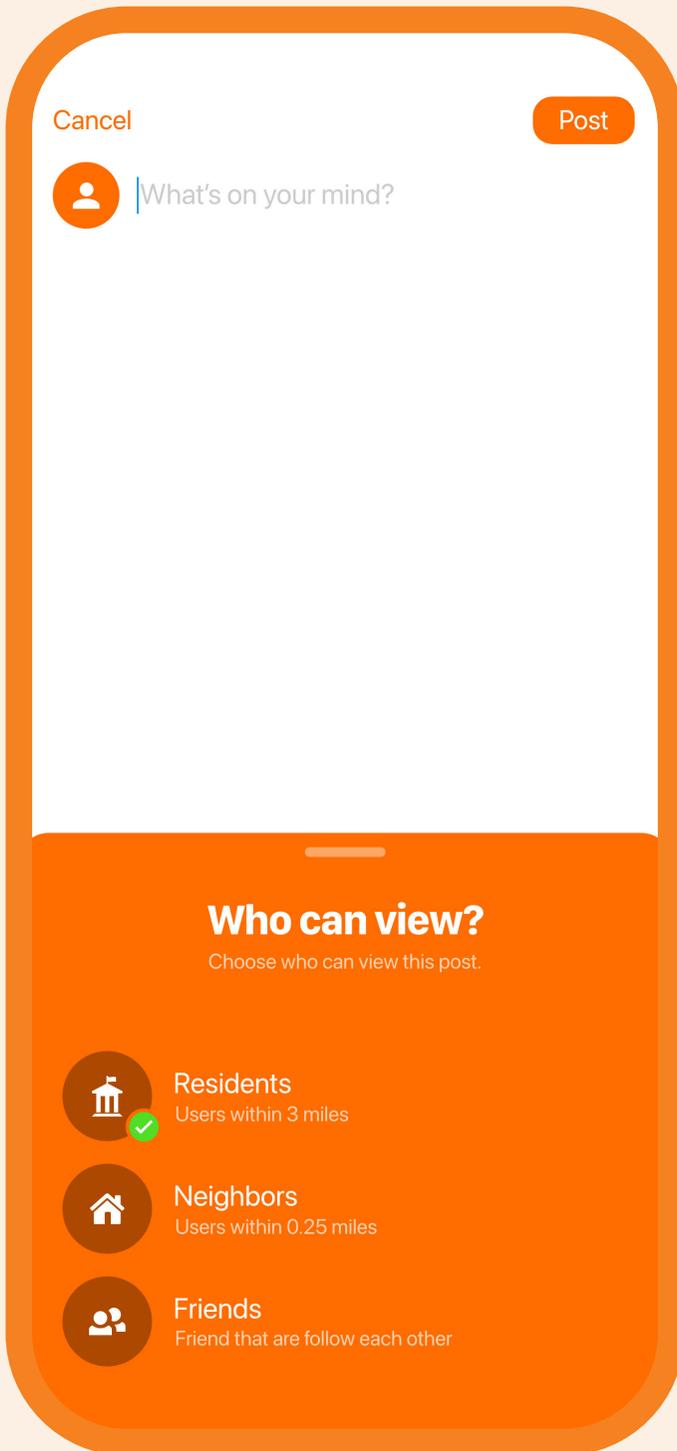
## Posts are separate into two views

Posts are divided into List and Map views. Users can change the mode based on their needs.



## Users posts will sort into tag categories automatically

Tag view helps user and their friend to see what interests them the most. It helps people to find subjects to talk about.



## Users are separate into 3 layers of hierarchy

### Friends

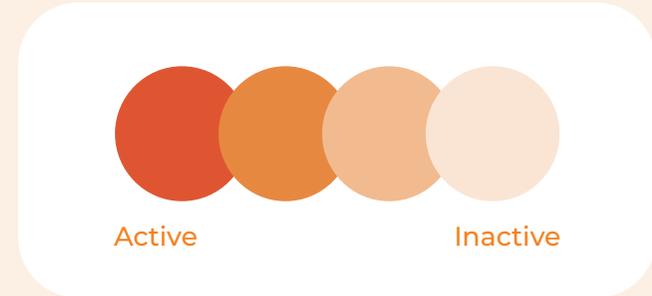
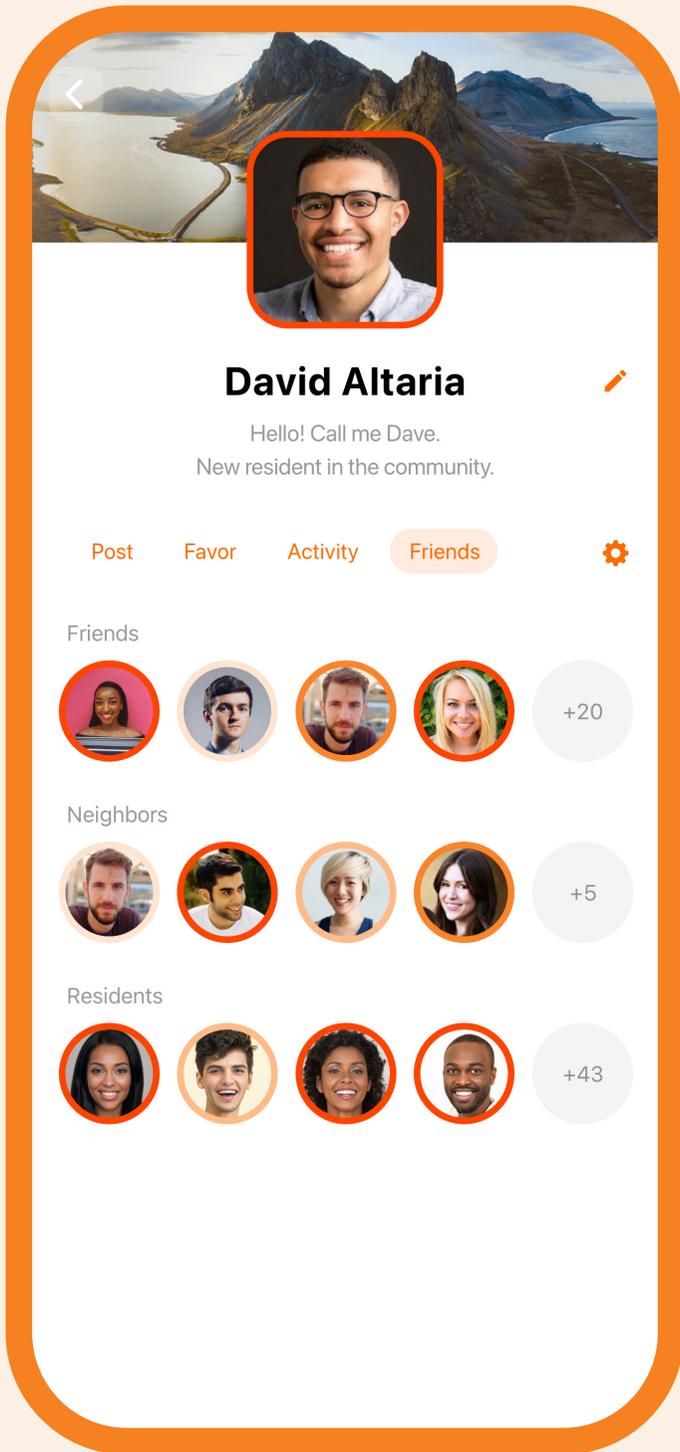
Users who followed each other will appear as the first priority.

### Neighbors

Users currently use this application within 0.25 mile of radius. Second priority.

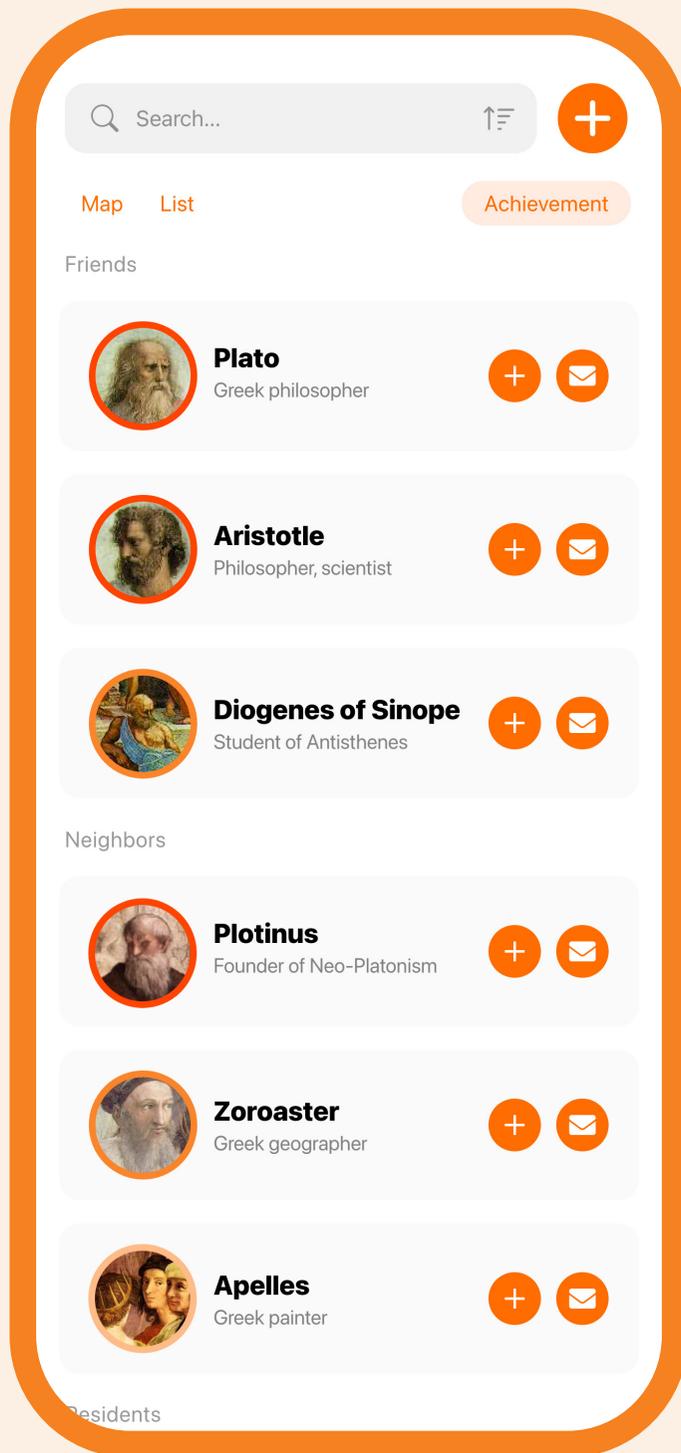
### Residents

Users who use this application in your county within 3 miles of radius will appear as third level.



## Contact with one that are most active

Circle around profile photo indicates the user's level of activity



## Achievement tab allows you to establish the network near you

Users who are most active on Neighbor app will be displayed on the achievement tab. Which allows you to build social networks in the community nearby.

## Favors



give a favor to neighbors to create a better neighborhood



### Dog sitter for one day

From May 20 afternoon to 21

I need a sitter to look after my dog for one day! I will be back the next day asap. DM me if you are interested!



### Borrow a lawn mower

May 22

My lawn mower was broken last week. I order a new one, but the delivery takes 2 extra days. I cannot stand the messy lawn anymore! Can someone borrow me a lawn mower if it's not too much trouble?



### Focus group participants needed!

May 30

Hello! I am a graduate student major in sociology. For the final project, I need some participants to join my focus group. The event will be on May 30. If you can't join, fill a google survey will also help!



## Jobs



Seek help by add in some compensation



Electrician needed  
I want to change the Florence light to LED. I have the light at home. But the starter needs to

## Receive a favor Give a favor

Have you ever encountered a situation that you need help from people near you?

Receive a favor, give a favor in your community to create a friendly environment,

## Jobs



Seek help by add in some compensation



### Electrician needed Flourence light to LED

\$35

May 10

I want to change the Florence light to LED. I have the light at home. But the starter needs to change as well.



### Babysitter From May to August

\$35

May 30

I am currently looking for a babysitter for my child. Since I have a conference by the end of August, I need a helper to look after my child.



## Looking for more professional help?

## Set up the amount you are willing to pay!

Too much to ask for a small favor? Post the hire information to jobs that may be suitable for you.

Set up the amount you are willing to pay to attract candidates!

## Event



Browse events that are happening around you



### Beach Cleaning

June 20 2021

Please spread the word! We will do the beach cleaning at [#TillinghastPlace](#) this Sunday afternoon. It's our 5th time this year. Please come join us to protect our beautiful beach.



### Neighbors Gathering

June 23 2021

Hello all! I'm graduating this summer. It's been a pleasure living in such welcoming [#neighborhood](#). I want to host a gathering events this weekend to celebrate. Hope you all have time to join. See you on the weekend!



### Sunday Worship

June 35 2021

Truth! An Easter Message | Pastor Jim Cymbala  
In this day and age, when everyone claims to have their own truth, Pastor Cymbala delivers an Easter message about the real truth that Jesus came to bear witness to.



### Providence Marathon

July 3 2021

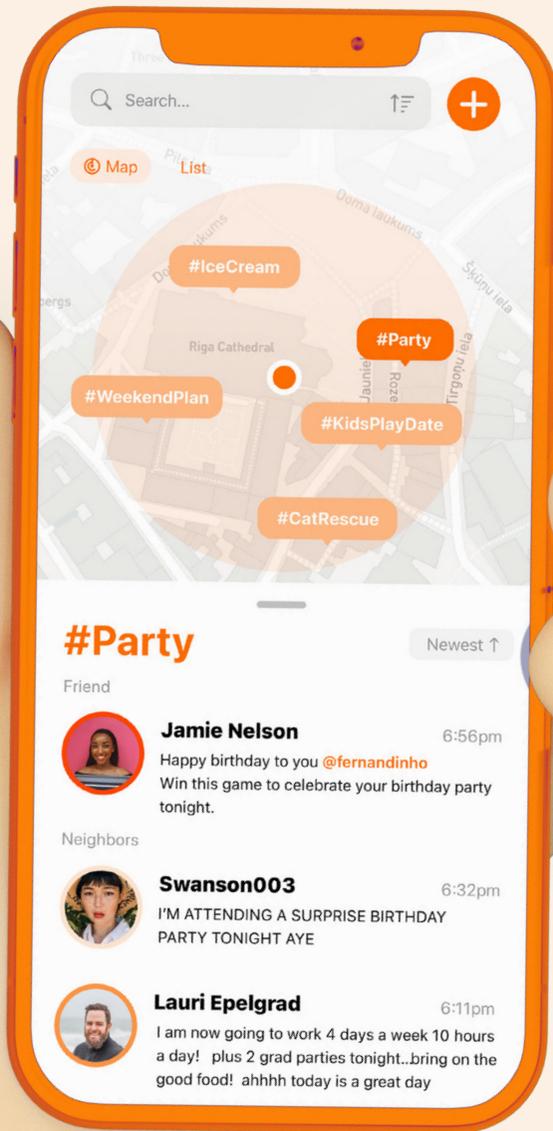
The Providence Marathon is returning on May 2, 2021, for another fun day of running through the heart of beautiful Providence, Rhode Island! We can't wait to welcome you back to spring running, where you'll take in the sights of turn-



# Invite your neighbor or friend to attend local events with you!

Want to participate in a local event with someone?

Share the event to your neighbor or friend directly as an invite.



## Try the prototype on your phone!

Turn on the camera of your phone. Scan the QR code below to open the prototype link on your phone!



## PERSONA #1



### Person Detail

#### Kelcey Augusta

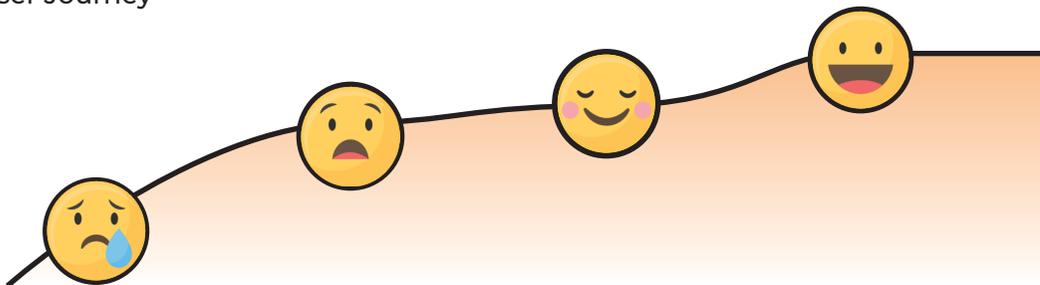
58 years old  
Move to Providence over 20 years  
Retired nurse

### Barrier

#### Wants to make friend

Kelcey recently retired from the hospital she worked over 30 years. She's bored at home. Kelcey is looking for a way to make friend in her Neighborhood. She also willing to help others nearby. Kelcey is determined to change the neighborhood culture to a friendly environment.

### User Journey



#### Bored

Kelcey become bored at home. Since her children lives in New York, and only meet her on the weekend every other week.

She wants to make new friends in the neighborhood, but didn't know where to start.

#### Browsing

She found neighbor App when browsing the app store.

Kelcey never thought this type of app exist. She's attempting to try.

#### Easy to navigate

Kelcey thought the app was easy to use.

She found the function called favor. Kelcey wanted to try to give favor to her neighbors in order to build the first connection.

#### Happy

Kelcey is going to help her neighbor Joseph to look after his dog for the weekend.

## PERSONA #2



### Person Detail

#### Joseph Cheung

23 years old  
Move to Providence for 1 month  
College undergraduate student

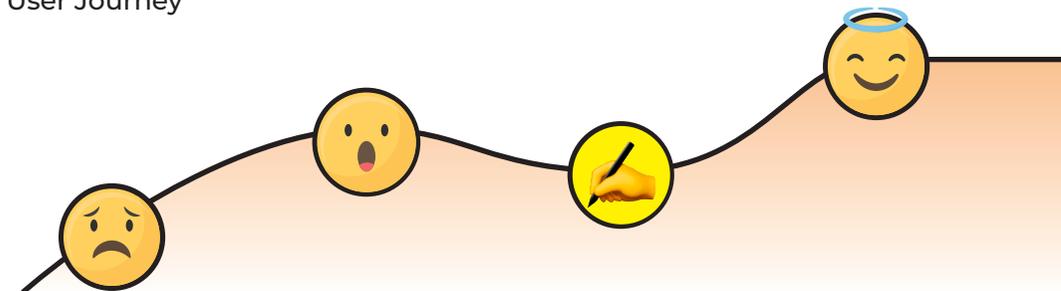
### Barrier

#### Looking for a dog sitter

Joseph recently started his ungraduate study. He move to a new city where he never been to previously. Jo will be gone for the weekend to complete a group projects with his classmates.

Jo wants to hire a dog sitter for the weekend. So his dog, Tommy, will be okay when he works on the homework with his team.

### User Journey



#### Concerned

Joseph didn't know where he should post the info to hire a sitter.

#### Surprised

He was surprised to see favor/job function on the App.

Joseph decide to post the need for dog sitter under favor's tab. Since lots of users are utilizing this function.

#### Description written

Joseph wrote the detailed description. He expressed his concern about the weekend.

He also offered a favor to who is willing to help him.

#### Satisfied

Joseph is happy to use neighbor's app for the first time. He was glad that the app has option to ask/give a favor to each other. This could be a great way to build local connections.

Jo felt become a part of a community.

# 07. The Answer is in the Vicinity

In the journey of my thesis, I've met many obstacles. However, whenever I feel frustrated I will take a walk in my neighborhood. I walked by the Brown library and there is a sentence engraved on the wall

***“Speak to the past and it shall teach thee”.***

I believe there are no better words to conclude my thesis journey than that.

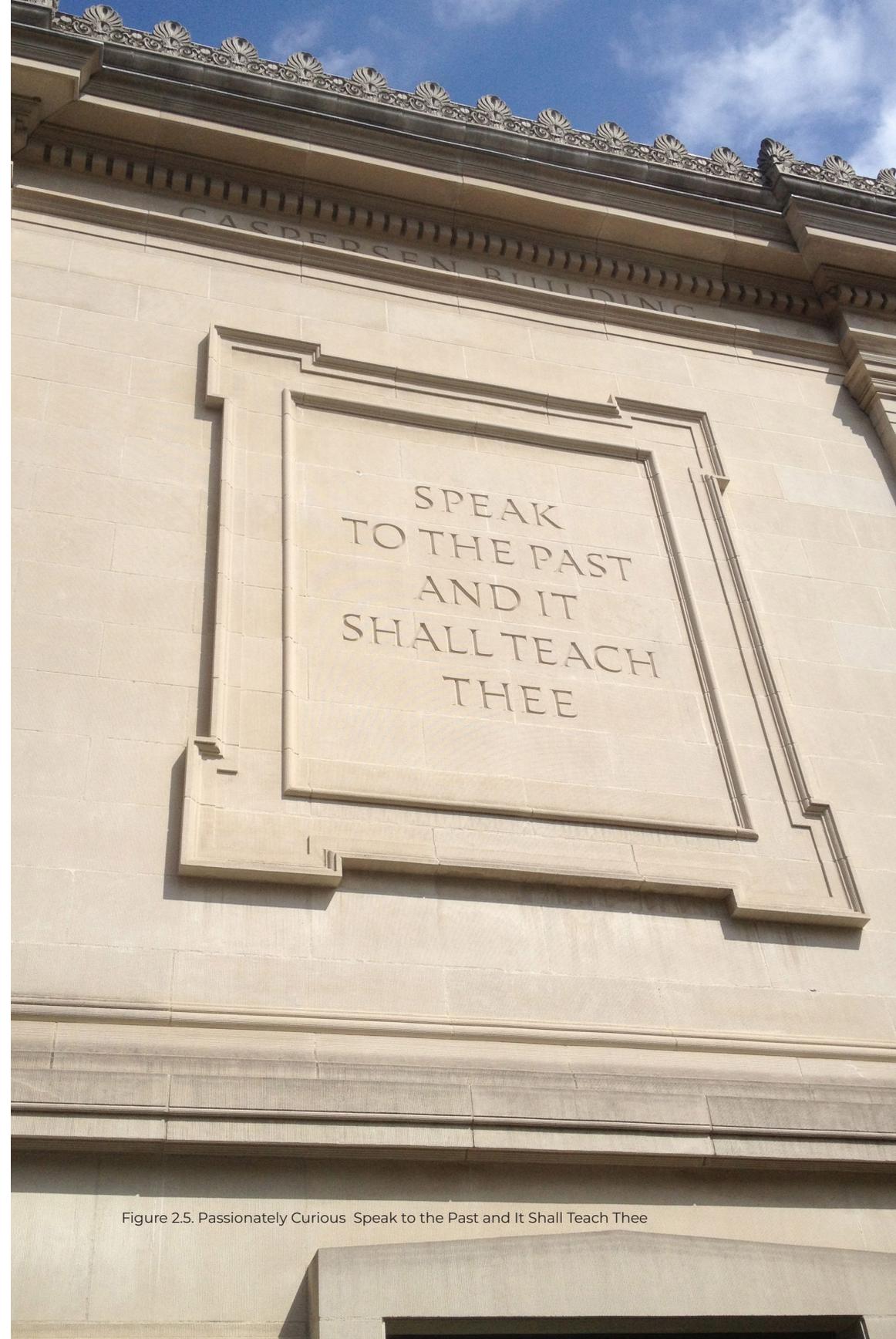
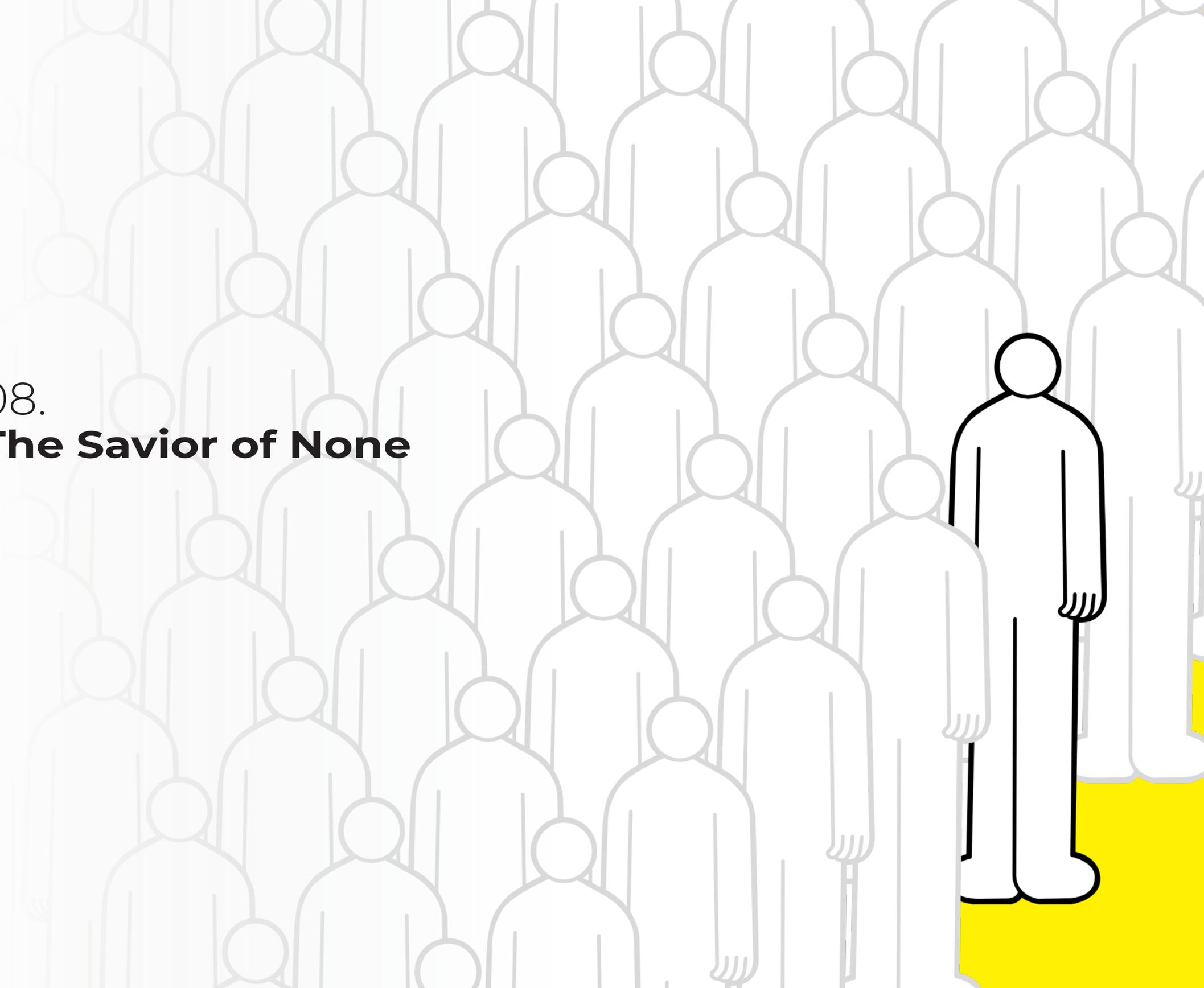


Figure 2.5. Passionately Curious Speak to the Past and It Shall Teach Thee

08.  
**The Savior of None**



What's the meaning of saving something? Are there things that need to be saved by humans or from humans?

I am a plant lover and I grow many plants in my little apartment. I enjoy spending time doing indoor gardening. I love the company that plants offer to me. Those interactions are so nuanced but also strong enough for me to alibi the growth of life.

I feel bad sometimes when I forget to water my plants. They can't move and can't talk. By taking care of my own plants, I start to care about nature and "wild plants" along the street that don't belong to a specific person. How could a life belong to another life? This year, before the winter came, I saw some moss in my parking lot. No one bothered to look at the moss because

they are not as magnificent as a tree that is so tall and offers shade for pedestrians. Is there any life/thing that needs to be saved or preserved? If so, how to decide? By the scale of life? By the value they can give us?

I found a jar and transplanted some moss inside of it. They are so small just like millions of other small things that are

ignored by us most of the time. I found some online tutorials about how to take care of moss. I'm glad there still are many people who care about the moss like I do.

Unfortunately, my moss withered 2 months later. It was a harsh winter for the moss and for the world as well. We all quarantined at home using isolation to fight against the virus. It seems like we didn't lose much with the assistance of the internet tools. The world is still running fine. Do we live like the moss in the jar at this period of time, and we just haven't noticed yet?

Do I feel bad about the death of the moss I once tried to save?

Yes and no. It is the circle of life and death. Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote in the philosophical concept called "eternal return" — "Everything has returned. Sirius, and the spider, and thy thoughts at this moment, and this last thought of thine that all things will return" I look forward to seeing some more moss in the parking lot this time when spring comes. And I know I will.



# 09. Work Cited

Figure 1.1. "IBM Simon 1993 cellphone". pngarea. (n.d.) [https://www.pngarea.com/view/e5e062c9\\_smart-phone-png-invented-the-touch-screen-phone/](https://www.pngarea.com/view/e5e062c9_smart-phone-png-invented-the-touch-screen-phone/)

Figure 1.2. "Listen to music while running". paragon. (n.d.) <http://www.paragon-hf.com/blog/2017/11/17/should-we-run-with-music-the-pros-and-cons>

Figure 1.3. "Family with laptop, tablet and smartphone, everyone using digital devices". leszekglasner, Adobe Stock. (n.d.) <https://stock.adobe.com/images/family-with-laptop-tablet-and-smartphone-everyone-using-digital-devices/193830515>

Figure 1.4. "5 Facts About Neighbors In U.S.". Pew Rearch Center., August 15, 2019. [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/15/facts-about-neighbors-in-u-s/ft-19-08-13\\_neighbors-3\\_2/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/15/facts-about-neighbors-in-u-s/ft-19-08-13_neighbors-3_2/)

Figure 1.5. "Those Most Concerned about State of Interpersonal Trust Worry about Social Breakdown." Pew Research Center, 18 July 2019, [www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/the-state-of-personal-trust/prc\\_2019-07-22\\_trust-distrust-in-america\\_2-03/](http://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/the-state-of-personal-trust/prc_2019-07-22_trust-distrust-in-america_2-03/).

Figure 1.6. "The generation gap is large when it comes to views on respecting others, helping those in need, accepting elections." Pew Research Center, 18 July 2019, [www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/the-state-of-personal-trust/prc\\_2019-07-22\\_trust-distrust-in-america\\_2-10/](http://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/the-state-of-personal-trust/prc_2019-07-22_trust-distrust-in-america_2-10/).

Figure 1.7. "Young adults are less confident in the military, business, police, religious leaders." Pew Research Center, 18 July 2019, [www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/how-americans-see-problems-of-trust/prc\\_2019-07-22\\_trust-distrust-in-america\\_1-03/](http://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/how-americans-see-problems-of-trust/prc_2019-07-22_trust-distrust-in-america_1-03/).

Figure 1.8. "Most young adults in U.S. see others as selfish, exploitative, untrustworthy." Pew Research Center, 18 July 2019, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/06/young-americans-are-less-trusting-of-other-people-and-key-institutions-than-their-elders/ft\\_19-08-02\\_youngadultstrustselfish640px/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/06/young-americans-are-less-trusting-of-other-people-and-key-institutions-than-their-elders/ft_19-08-02_youngadultstrustselfish640px/).

Figure 1.9. "Drawing of a Tulou." LUNA, [images.lib.ncsu.edu/luna/servlet/detail/NCSULIB~1~1~88274~147627:Drawing-of-a-Tulou?qvq=w4s:/when%2FAsian&mi=3015&tr=3345](http://images.lib.ncsu.edu/luna/servlet/detail/NCSULIB~1~1~88274~147627:Drawing-of-a-Tulou?qvq=w4s:/when%2FAsian&mi=3015&tr=3345).

Figure 2.0. "我的土楼记忆." 即时, 新华社, 15 May 2015, [www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-05/15/c\\_1122837311.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-05/15/c_1122837311.htm).

Figure 2.1. Jordan, Franz. "Applying the Amazon Flywheel to Your Online Business." Sellics, 14 Feb. 2020, [www.sellics.com/blog-applying-amazon-flywheel-to-your-online-business/](http://www.sellics.com/blog-applying-amazon-flywheel-to-your-online-business/).

Figure 2.2. 朴之原. "寻根夯土墙, 致敬中国土木建筑." 朴之原, 29 May 2020, [www.puzhiyuan.net/hyxx/493.html](http://www.puzhiyuan.net/hyxx/493.html).

Figure 2.3. Lennartbj. "China Fujian Yongding Hongkeng Tulou Zhencheng Lou." Wikimedia, 22 Jan. 2019, [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China\\_Fujian\\_Yongding\\_Hongkeng\\_Tulou\\_Zhencheng\\_Lou.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_Fujian_Yongding_Hongkeng_Tulou_Zhencheng_Lou.jpg).

Figure 2.4. Yamashita, Michael. "China's Remote Fortresses Lose Residents, Gain Tourists." National Geographic, 2 Jan. 2015, [www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/150102-hakka-china-tulou-fujian-world-heritage](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/150102-hakka-china-tulou-fujian-world-heritage).

Figure 2.5. Passionately Curious. "Speak to the Past and It Shall Teach Thee." Pinterest, [www.pinterest.ch/pin/294282156881799304/](http://www.pinterest.ch/pin/294282156881799304/).

Infantini, Jude. "Brown Tree Trunk in Close Up." Unsplash, 14 Sept. 2020, [unsplash.com/photos/m1535-v6pg](https://unsplash.com/photos/m1535-v6pg).

"Staying in Touch Doesn't Have to Be Hard." Fabriq, 5 Mar. 2021, [www.ourfabriq.com/](http://www.ourfabriq.com/).

Kirk, Russell. *The Conservative Mind: from Burke to Santayana*. Martino Publishing, 2015.

Donne, John. *No Man Is an Island*. Souvenir Press, 1988.

