Design for

AUTONOMY

WITH A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

PRINCIPLES BY
LAURA KOOT
Multidimensional
Willpower
Unbalancing

Be vulnerable
Be a collector
Be astonished

Requested assistance
Freedom of choice
Trust
Autonomy Means

Give different answers to the same question.
Where there is a will, there is a way.
Be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

As a Designer

Be unexperienced between the experts.
Have a collection of examples.
Have an eye for superpowers.

The Outcome

Provide suitable help, do not aim for less help.
Create the possibility to make mistakes.
Illustrate reliable information.
Takeaways

During the journey of my graduation project, I have learned a lot about the four different themes within the scope of my assignment: mobility, autonomy, visually impaired people and assistive tools.

As designing for autonomy was the main approach, I evaluated the graduation project on what I learned about evoking a feeling of autonomy when people are in need of assistance.

This booklet - which is also a chapter in the final thesis that I wrote - describes nine principles as takeaways intended to support other designers with their design projects. The nine principles are divided into the following themes; Autonomy Means, As a Designer and The Outcome.
Autonomy Means

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Fortunately, being 100% independent with the current technologies not possible. Every person is in need of a different type of support, so a feeling of autonomy means something different in every context. So as not to design more support than required, it is essential to understand what is important for your context and which aspects should be included as autonomy.
Autonomy Means

Multidimensional
Willpower
Unbalancing
Give different answers to the same question.

Assistive tools cannot be valued based on a linear system, but rather on multiple dimensions that define autonomy. Discover these dimensions by providing multiple answers to the question - How does (current solution) contribute to autonomy? Answer this question for a collection of current solutions until you find themes within the generated answers. These are the dimensions you are searching for.
Autonomy Means

Multidimensional
Willpower
Unbalancing
Where there is a will, there is a way.

It is more important that you know what you are aiming for, then how you reach this goal. Nobody can be fully autonomous and is in need of assistance once in a while. Get to know which support(s) is suitable in relation to the goal(s) that your context wants to reach.
Autonomy Means

Multidimensional
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Unbalancing
Be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Being stuck in the comfort zone can result in being bored, whilst jumping out of your comfort zone can result in panic. Therefore, look for a challenge that has the potential for a temporary unbalance within the current situation. Find a support that encourages to step out of the comfort zone, but close enough for the context to be able to step back.
As a designer, it is essential to create empathy and understanding for the need of support within the context. Prioritize strengths and current rituals to be able to find opportunities to design for.
As A Designer

Be vulnerable
Be a collector
Be astonished
Simulations can be done easily by wearing blinded glasses, restricting the movement of your arms by using tape or using a wheelchair. It is true that you are not an expert in this practice, but it creates interesting discussions with your context. This makes the designer unexperienced between the experts.
As A Designer

Be vulnerable
Be a collector
Be astonished
Have a collection of examples.

Collect all sorts of solutions: terrible solutions, futuristic solutions, student projects, art installations, typical solutions and the newest technologies. These solutions will help to refer to and discover what autonomy means within the project. It is important not to judge the examples before evaluating them. You can get inspired by bad examples by aiming for the opposite effect.
As A Designer

Be vulnerable
Be a collector
Be astonished
**Have an eye for superpowers.**

When someone lacks the necessary obvious skills, he/she is trained with other skills and has unique strengths. Be aware of these superpowers.
The Outcome

Requested assistance
Freedom of choice
Trust

In order to design for autonomy, the assistive tool provides support rather than assistance. The characteristics - *Requested assistance, freedom of choice and trust* - should be taken into account in order to generate this support in an autonomous way. Investigate what these characteristics mean in the context of your assignment.
The Outcome

Requested assistance
Freedom of choice
Trust
Provides suitable help, do not aim for less help.

Designing for a feeling of autonomy is not about creating an ideal independent scenarios, but the outcome should create the type of support that suits the context.
The Outcome

Requested assistance
Freedom of choice
Trust
Designing support does not mean facilitating THE right support. The outcome should include a freedom of choice and create the possibility to make different decisions for different reasons: the practical, the impractical, the wrong one or the special one. Freedom of choice facilitates making all these decisions and creates the possibility to also make the wrong decision.
The outcome

Requested assistance
Freedom of choice
Trust
Choosing between support that is recommended by a salesperson or by a good friend depends on the context where this decision has to be made. Due to the need for the type of expertise for that moment. Be aware of the reliability of support for your context.
Notes
This booklet is a part of the thesis

Walkmen:
A mobility tool that supports visually impaired people to experience a feeling of autonomy.