

A1: Needfinding

Exploring Fulfillment in Young Adults

The Team



Hallie Xu

Symbolic Systems



Jillian Chang

Symbolic Systems



**Katherine
Sullivan**

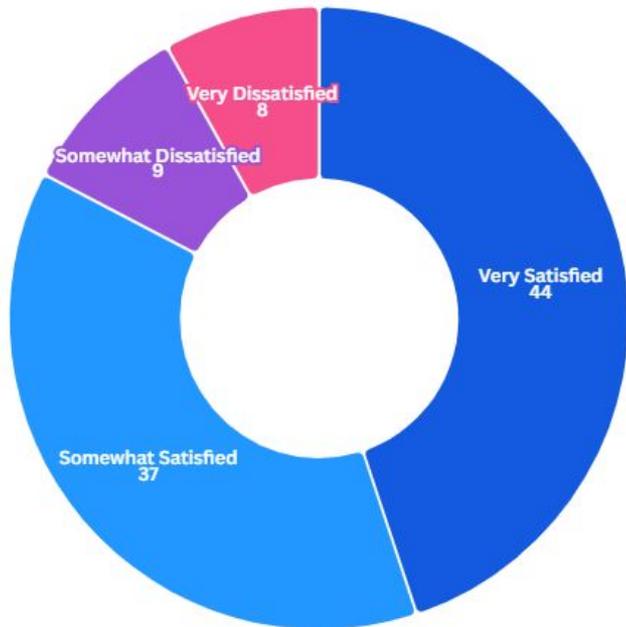
Computer Science



Leo Sui

Design

Our Problem



According to a report by Gallup this year, **44% of Americans are “very satisfied” with their lives.**

Though this percentage does not seem particularly poor, it is an all-time low since the data has started being tracked in 1979.

Satisfaction also tends to be higher for older, high-earning individuals and lower for younger adults.

What Will We Explore?

Based on the data as well as our own experiences searching for purpose and fulfillment, our needfinding aimed to explore:

- 1. How young adults navigate their life trajectory**
- 2. The obstacles they face as they pursue life goals**
- 3. How career, personal interests, and relationships shape their overall sense of purpose**

We also felt that the domain of life satisfaction has not yet been explored in technology, as opposed to domains like finances, housing, or transportation.

Our Strategy

Since we hypothesize that people still finding their footing in career and life may struggle more in finding fulfillment, our target demographic is young adults (ages 20-35).

We decided to host some of our interviews on the Caltrain, where people often have around 40 minutes of free time. We also sought out interviewees in cafes and parks at San Francisco, as they are more relaxed settings. In addition, we scheduled interviews with non-Stanford individuals referred to us by friends.

To provide additional incentive for interviews, we provided complimentary snacks.

Our Strategy

Since we hypothesize that people still finding their footing in career and life may struggle more in finding fulfillment, our target demographic is young adults (ages 20-35).

We decided to host some of our interviews on the Caltrain, where people often have around 40 minutes of free time. We also sought out interviewees in cafes and parks at San Francisco, as they are more relaxed settings. In addition, we scheduled interviews with non-Stanford individuals referred to us by friends.

To provide additional incentive for interviews, we provided complimentary snacks.

Key Questions

- ? What are the biggest obstacles preventing you from reaching your goals?
- ? Could you tell us a time you ever felt unsure or lost in any area of your life?
- ? Can you tell us about your daily support systems?
- ? What are your goals for this year? For the next 10 years?

Tools Used



For interviews in quieter locations, we used **Otter.ai** to create a transcript of the conversation.

Other tools were standard: Google Docs for note-taking and video/audio recording on our phones.

Who did we talk to?



Stephen, 26

Software Engineer



Jamie, 32

Optics Engineer

These two were our “standard” users. They are young adults who come from ordinary backgrounds and standard industry jobs.

These individuals give us a representative baseline of the types of struggles young adults face with regards to finding fulfillment.

Extreme Users



Moe, 24

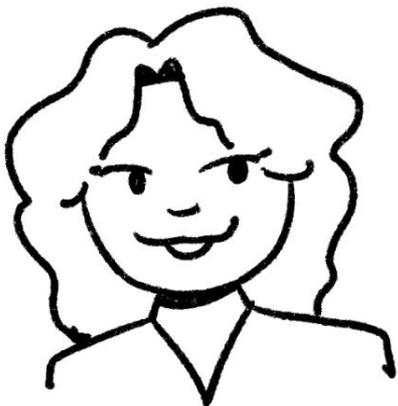
Flight Technician

Our first “extreme” user was Moe.

He’s a recent graduate with an aerospace engineering degree.

Moe comes from a very wealthy family. By interviewing him, we hoped to find what aspects of personal fulfillment **could not be bought with money.**

Extreme Users



Allie, 25

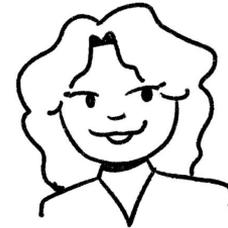
AI Engineer

We found Allie in a cafe in SF. Just a few minutes into the interview, we realized we had found an extreme user in the wild.

She's a recent graduate currently on sabbatical from her role as an AI engineer.

Allie is unique due to her unconventional career aspirations: to eventually create AI girlfriends, paternal figures, and the sort for people who struggle to find those kinds of connection.

Team Member Roles



Interviewer 1

Leo

Leo

Katherine

Hallie

Interviewer 2

Jill

Jill

Leo

Jill

Notetaker

Katherine

Katherine

Jill

Leo

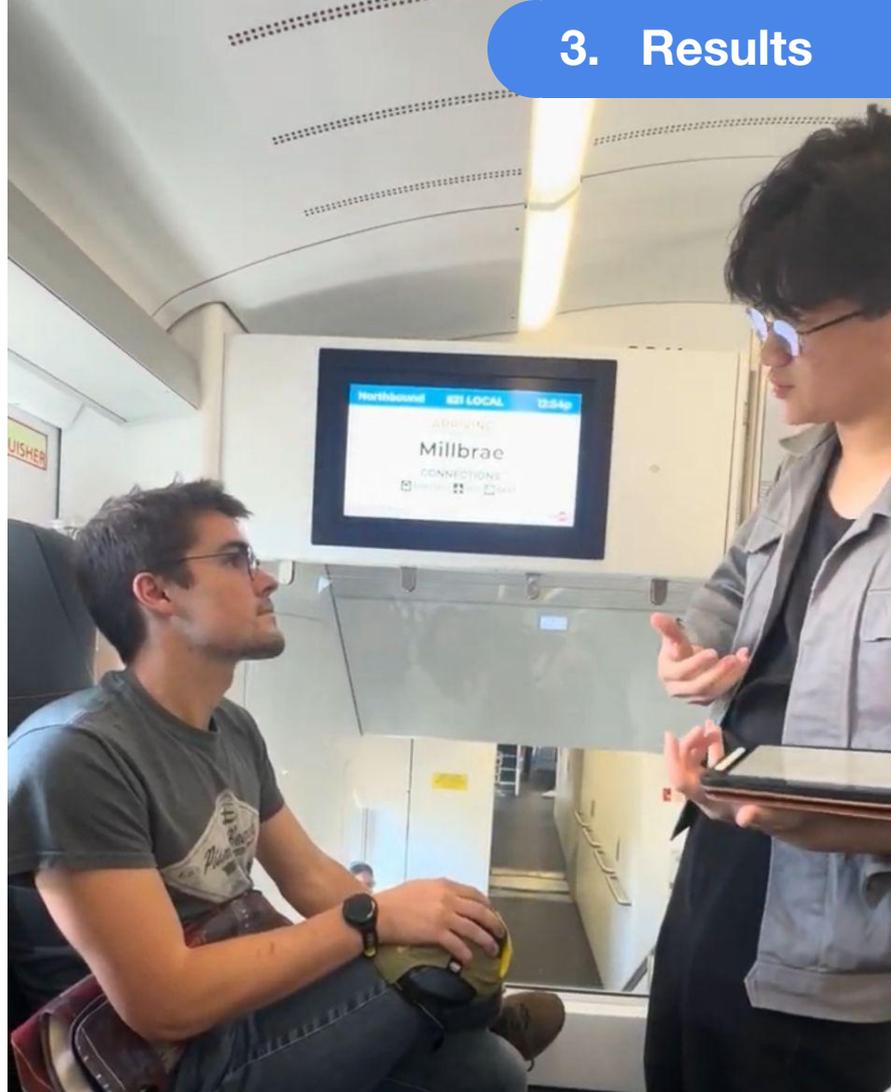
“**I lost myself** because the only thing I had left was work.”

“I make decisions based on what makes me feel most **alive right now.**”

“Fulfilling **work**, fulfilling **mission**, fulfilling **people.**”

“The key to resilience is finding some aspect of **empathy** in your day to day.”

“I want to **own my skills.**”



Surprises



Despite identifying as a lifelong introvert, Stephen is very reliant on **time spent with friends** for his well-being, even citing it as a key reason for not pursuing his goal of conservation and ecology.

Part of the reason Jamie loves his job is how little monotony there is, constantly experiencing new things. **However, his time spent outside of work is highly routine.**

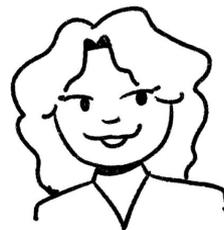


Surprises



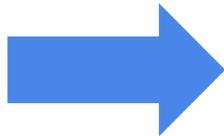
Although Moe came from wealth, his unique experiences still fueled a passion for **solving human problems**, like developing firefighting drones after family members lost their homes to fires.

Though highly open about her life goals and philosophies, Allie was **strangely defensive and avoidant** when speaking about her relationships.



Key Insights

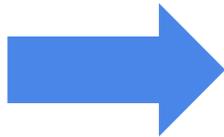
Although Moe came from wealth, his unique experiences still fueled a passion for **solving human problems**.



Material success validates hard work, but contributing to a cause we have emotional investment in fulfills us by **reconnecting us to meaningful memories** or giving us **control over past struggles**.

Key Insights

Despite identifying as a lifelong introvert, Stephen is very reliant on **time spent with friends** for his well-being, even citing it as a key reason for not pursuing his goal of conservation and ecology.



True fulfillment requires both **inner progress** and **outer belonging**. Fulfillment falters when personal growth and social connection pull in **opposite directions**.

What did we learn?

1. Fulfilling Work

Am I becoming a more capable person each day?

2. Fulfilling Mission

Am I working on something that aligns with my values?

3. Fulfilling People

Am I supported by people who understand and accept me?

Next Steps

We have identified three critical elements contributing to fulfillment.

We aim to define one of these elements as the focus for our next round of interviews and our project scope.

We will continue to talk to young adults of various careers and backgrounds, but tailor our questions to one focus area.

1. Fulfilling Work

Am I becoming a more capable person each day?

2. Fulfilling Mission

Am I working on something that aligns with my values?

3. Fulfilling People

Am I supported by people who understand and accept me?

Thank You!