

LOOKING AHEAD AND ADAPTING IN THE FACE OF DIGITALISATION  
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Hello. It is a great pleasure and indeed privilege to be invited to address you this afternoon at such an interesting forum on Wellbeing.

It is also a great pleasure and privilege to be invited to do so here, in Incheon, and I would like to thank the Korean sponsors for their hospitality and the OECD for inviting me.

As work-life balance is one of the dimensions measured by the excellent and groundbreaking *Better Life Initiative*, I would also like to thank my husband back in London, who has given up *his* work-life balance this week to manage our family while I am here enjoying myself with you.

So. Looking ahead and adapting in the face of digitalisation.

Is digitalisation - all 250 billion daily emails, all predictions that robot automation will shrink jobs by as much as 800 million by 2030 – compatible with Wellbeing?

When there are more connected mobiles phones than there are people on the planet, when productivity stays rather stagnant, when stress has become endemic amongst the world's working population, is the aim to adapt well to digitalisation or to just survive it?

My thoughts on Wellbeing are framed in the context of what I call Social Health.

Social Health is a theory and a work-in-progress management system I have designed to look at how humans can succeed and thrive better in the digital era.

It builds on work I have written about in my book, *Fully Connected*, in my work on the board of the European Work-Force Institute, and in my journalism for *Strategy + Business* and Arianna Huffington's Wellbeing portal, *Thrive Global*, where I am Editor-at-Large.

But it builds mostly on my experience as an entrepreneur. My career has coincided with technology's advances and from my first communication on a Telex to Twitter today, I am a first hand witness to the triple revolution of the internet, social and mobile.

Unlike our daughter who once asked me, Mum, in your day, were there cars...or just horses?

I am interested in practical solutions to the digital deluge and in social progress as well as commercial success.

For me, it all hinges on noticing how we organise and behave on the axis which swings from online existence to actual offline human lives.

Today humans are islands in a digital sea. It is hard to impossible to live as a citizen without being digitally connected. Banking, boarding a plane, communicating by telephone, making a medical appointment, booking a hotel, growing a business.

But the human rhythm, scale, speed and social essence is often undermined by a fatal disconnection in the design and delivery of these digital services. You only have to see the chaos when an airport faces an outage: We have forgotten to back up our human systems.

The human system is actually pretty simple. Our default position, as neuroscience has proven, is to concern ourselves pretty much at all times, awake or asleep, talking or not, with our relationships and our social selves.

Who we are connected to.

In short, who we love and who loves us. Meaning. That's what humans want. More, it turns out, even, than trains which run on time — ideally both.

Ironically, given this moment of 'Techlash' when we have suddenly switched from blind faith to bitter disillusion with Silicon Valley, we forget that all the clever tech titans did with their algorithms was mimic the dopamine rush we get from being inherently human: from being what's call *Pro-Social*.

All of this presents enormous dilemmas and conflicts. So much so that you could call this social era a crisis of social connection.

Certainly as I see it, this is a hugely pivotal moment for policy makers and strategists.

When we look at Wellbeing in the context of digitalisation we have to answer an old and rather simple question: Who is in control, the human or the machine?

Surely today, measuring wellbeing as an individual experience and how we feel must go alongside something else: what practical adaptations to being social in the digital era must we adopt which in themselves impact on our sense of wellbeing?

## SLIDE 2: SUPERCOMPUTER

The central image here is China's *TaihuLight*, the world's most powerful supercomputer, which has a capacity measured in something I confess I had not heard of until very recently: Petaflops.

A petaflop is about a quadrillion calculations per second. That's a 1 with 15 zeros. This supercomputer operates at 93 petaflops.

The scale and speed of digital change is so staggering that it is hard, literally, to compute. Moore's Law, that ruled that computer circuitry would double every two years ran out, because of, well petaflops.

The reason why the human Hamlet in the corner is looking worried is because all of this scale is creating a disorder: Let's call it Infobesity. The small numbers below explain why it's such a Petaflops present such problems for us.

I wonder how many of you recognise them? 150, 168, 200....and 1. These numbers are very real to each and every human. These numbers, like the neuroscience fact that all brains have the same social wiring, affect us all, all of the time.

150 is known as the 'Dunbar's Number' — the anthropological maximum number of friends and relationships humans can have at any time. We see this numbers in many social contexts: A Company within an army has 150 soldiers, for example.

Then 168. For all the supercomputing capacity which network effects spread, we cannot grow this number. What it is? The finite number of hours in the week, unchanged since the Sumerian calendar.

And I have bad news for you overworkers and multitaskers: We must sleep a third of those hours, and function in basic ways like walking to the elevator or pouring coffee or getting dressed or travelling: So in practice, 56 hours in a week is about the maximum you have.

And what is the number 1? Well that's our one, unstretchable life of course.

The era of the smartphone is known as the death of distance: You don't 'leave' work anymore because it comes home with you in your hand bag – although France is to be applauded for changing its law on employees and email and here in Korea working hours are now legally shortened.

We must reframe Wellbeing to address these specific and new challenges of infobesity and the rising digital sea, because there is an explicit health cost when we do not.

You do know the numbers on stress and its impact on global health I'm sure. Here are just some of them:

60% of those working days lost in the EU attributed to stress per annum, 10 million alone in the UK. In the US, 550 million working days a year with an estimated cost to the economy of \$300 billion a year in absenteeism, turnover, lowered productivity and medical, legal and insurance costs.

So infobesity and knowledge must be managed, but what causes the stress in the first place? Is it first and foremost the technology? No. It's much more basic than that. It is bad management. Poor leadership. Impossible deadlines. Unrealistic expectations. Bullying.

In other words: Old, human problems. Not new, digital ones. We must adapt to digitalisation by not imagining that it alone is the answer. We must take a step back to take big steps forward.

Social Health begins not in cyberspace but in society.

We now know that multitasking is a myth, that the estimated eighty separate email interruptions a day fragment our attention, and that productivity and creativity thrive as much in a disconnected environment, actually, as a connected one: There is even a converted prison here in Korea for digital disconnection: To free your mind and soul from being 'always on' by voluntarily being cut off.

Mindfulness has of course been an outlier of the cures for infobesity. I practice it daily myself and find it hugely useful.

But I believe that a generation now of hard digitalisation requires a hardened approach to what wellbeing means. Rather than focus just on soothing the stress encountered by employees and acknowledging mental health as an issue, welcome though this is, Social Health takes a systemic approach and asks: What is the organisational culture doing to make everyone feel so unhappy?

I feel we are now ready, more ready than ever for a discussion about Social Health and I think it is because this is the first time since the arrival of the internet when our blind faith in technology has been shaken, by scandal, by anxiety, and perhaps by a dose of realism.

It's time to get fit for the social era.

SLIDE 3: GYM

I'd like to say that was me in the gym this morning, helping my body adapt to the jetlag. Would you kindly put your hands up if you have been in the gym today? Or yesterday? Or ever bought a pair of trainers or joined a fitness class?

Congratulations. We are part of a global Wellness industry which is \$3.7 trillion dollars and rising. That is everything from apparel and clothing – the majority – to gyms, all the way to mindfulness apps.

Globally the gym market will rise by 11% by 2021. Mental Health is now also firmly on the agenda as I'll discuss with a distinguished breakout panel here at 5.00pm.

The way we develop fitness programmes, designed to use and strengthen different parts of ourselves, is a thriving exercise in trial and error, in granular pilot programmes before something hits the mainstream.

What anyone who takes care of the health through the gym knows is that you have to make the connection between how you move and how you feel. Getting healthy is both attitudinal and actual.

#### SLIDE 4 : WHO DEFINITION OF HEALTH

I take great heart from this statement.

It was made 70 years ago at a time when two world wars had ravaged the health of the world and poor socio economic factors such as damp housing were further weakening any potential future fighting army.

At its most basic, the creation of the WHO was to improve the lives of citizens so they could function better in society should they be called up again to serve it: The conclusion was that they would need to be in better shape.

What this statement has achieved is remarkable. It simplified a complex set of interlinked problems into some unifying principles which could be acted on in a customised way.

So 70 years later we all now do understand – citizens and policy makers in the OECD nations and beyond - that physical and mental health can be achieved by a combination of 3 factors harnessed together: Nutrition and Diet; Exercise and physical movement, and Sleep.

In physical health terms we have adapted to the negative influences of postwar prosperity which brought with it a sedentary lifestyle, sugar and refined foods, the car and created an operating system and set of behaviours, from diets to park runs to gyms. We have measurements of Body Mass Index, we have weight, cholesterol, every kind of marker imaginable.

And for mental health the biggest single advance in my view has been a change in culture. We talk about mental health. We remove the stigma. And we make the causal link between poor nutrition, exercise and sleep on mental health.

So the WHO's definition – though I am in discussion with them about a change in time for the Sustainable Development Goals when they crystallise in 2030 – has done pretty well. It has spawned a huge shift in how the world protects its people.

Now we need to complete the triangle and make social wellbeing, Social Health, as easy to understand, for all of its complex interface with other issues, and just as easy to act on.

It is the concept of 'social well-being' which has been neglected, which has not yet got a thriving market or culture in behaviours to address it. None of this particularly mattered for fifty years postwar when improving basic resilience and resistance to disease mattered. When 'social' meant socio-economic class.

Social seventy years ago did not mean digitally connected because there were no computers.

I want us to know precisely what we mean by healthy connection. I want us to have a model or a framework, just as we do around our physical and our mental health.

And I want that framework for Social Health to make a functioning society a marriage between the individual who has to take responsibility for their own behaviour, and their state and employer too.

Social Health, to use a digital analogy, is really Wellbeing 2.0: it's a reboot to refocus our attention on functional management of everything to do with connection.

Because whether you measure endemic hate on social media, or epidemic absenteeism through stress at work, or stagnant productivity, you see that our social health is being neglected.

That is, and I must repeat, not just how we feel, vital though that is, but how we function. If you are overweight, or if you are starved of nutrients, or if your arteries are blocked, you function less well.

If your social health means you are infobese, with too much information to know where to look to find what you want, or if your social networks are shrinking to selfies, these are just some ways to notice that you are doing the equivalent – at a corporate or at an individual level – of, frankly, being a couch potato.

Isolated. Depressed. Eating the wrong food. And not looking to great on it either.

#### SLIDE 5: HIERARCHY OF COMMUNICATION

To be social as a human does not mean connecting with as many people as possible at a so-called 'networking event' – in fact quite the opposite.

Small is better than big when it comes to humans.

I have created an echo of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to highlight how inverted our true Connection needs are: We spend more time these days posting selfies to reach the most people, when in fact the biggest impact on wellbeing is likely to come from small, micro connections.

At tonight's supper if you are lucky you will have one conversation where, for a moment, you connect with someone you are speaking to: Your interests align, you look at each other's face's and you make an intimate connection

I'm not talking about measuring that value by open rates or numbers of business cards exchanged. No, I'm just talking about face to face connection in a Facebook world mattering a great deal.

Why? Because trust is transacted with intimacy.

Because ideas are exchanged when there is trust.

Because people follow you if they believe you.

Because you can share what you know and help people more when you know them than when you don't.

What we are doing in the room here has greater intimacy than those watching on webinar. The next time you are tempted to hit 'reply all' on an email, it might be worth picking up the telephone and inviting one of the people for a coffee.



If you don't think connecting face to face is groundbreaking, you should look at the work of Sandy Pentland at MIT. His Human Dynamics Lab has developed a social physics theorem. He has demonstrated how productivity literally jumps when you schedule coffee breaks at the same time.

Over in the UK, Space Syntax has repeatedly mapped how information connects architecturally, in the way productivity in office spaces correlates with the flow and congregation of people passing the baton of information from one to another.

What I am describing is of course network science. Networks seen not as digital nodes but as relationships. There is a rich and beautiful science and literature on networks and only a fraction of it has been applied to policymaking. Networks form the central point of social health.

In our rush to all things modern and technological we overlook something as simple as relational analytics, and could look at the social habits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to inform how to create and manage intimacy. Not in siloed coffee shops of Starbucks generation but a new coffee house culture of the Social Health age.

There is a risk that the 4th industrial revolution of Big Data, AI, The Internet of Things and The Cloud mean that we have made a decision at some level that machines are better than us, that we can outsource basic functions, and remain productive, creative, engaged.

I do not believe this is the case. Social Health can help us reclaim the space in which we take a different trio of factors, no less important to our connected health than diet + exercise + nutrition does for general health, and turn it to our advantage.

I am, if you like, a pessimistic optimist. Yes, we are deluged by the digital. Yes, the disruption is immense and for every advance and equal and opposite risk emerges. But we remain in the driving seat.

## SLIDE 6: SOCIAL HEALTH DEFINITION & K.N.O.T

Social Health strategy and behaviours coalesce around three components.

Just as we do our Nutrition, Exercise and Sleep, let us measure, monitor and manage Our Knowledge, Networks and our Time.

I call it the Social Health K.N.O.T

Our access to information, and information we trust to be truthful, our ability to know people who can help us achieve our goals and who we can build communities with, and having the right time and – crucially – the right timeframe all, I believe, indicate good joined up connective tissue and impact positively on outcomes.

I have found in my research and my work that where we have a functioning system, with good outcomes, these elements in healthy ratio is usually in operation. And that were we don't, it is often glaringly out of sync or absent.

Let me give you some examples of what I mean:

## SLIDE 7: KHADIJA SAYE AND 'WILD BOARS'

On the left is a photograph of a beautiful young Gambian artist I had the pleasure of mentoring through my business, Khadija Saye. Khadija went to the Venice Biennale to show her work and was due to present her thoughts at a conference I convened but four months beforehand she lost her life In London, in Grenfell Tower.

This national event has riven communities, was, second to Brexit, the biggest risk to Theresa May's premiership and a Public Inquiry is ongoing. But one thing is already clear: There was a complete collapse in communication between different agencies and interested bodies in the management of the building and its risks, and that Knowledge, Networks and Time all worked against and not for the 200 who were injured and the 72 who died.

Information about fire risks were known about but buried in mountains of bureaucracy; there was no trusted network in operation between any of the interested parties such as the Council or with the residents; and time, well time is of the essence in a disaster and time ran out: the fire engines were in the wrong place, it seems and because of poor information flows an unthinkable set of events happened which meant the fire overtook the building too fast to save people.

This happened in London, in 2017. It happens all over the world. Social Health is a factor, and we need to start looking for the signals.

On the right is a team of football players called The Wild Boars. Their lives were saved, against incredible odds, but a wonderful example of Social Health in action, earlier this year:

Twelve young boys and their coach became trapped 1,300 feet inside deep caves in Thailand near the border with Myanmar, in Monsoon season. The situation was desperate: rising water, falling oxygen, no clear sense of where the boys were, and knowing that several could not swim, it looked hopeless.

What happened over the next ten days is not miraculous, it is a wonderful story of social health. A network of 10,000 people convened with different knowledge from over 20 nations. They had caving skills. Scavenging skills. Medical skills. Military skills. They deployed old Hey phone technology for caving and the latest sonar mesh technology.

They worked together, in an evolving, fluid, responsive formation. They used technology but they usurped it. In fact, the image that most people have of this incident is that of Elon Musk, technology billionaire, whose well-meaning solution of building a rigid mini-submarine was politely rebuffed.

SLIDE 8: OUR BRAINBANK and BE THE BUSINESS

Can Social Health be measured, monitored and have impact outside of disasters? Yes it can. Here are two brief examples.

The first is OurBrainBank, a non profit and an app set up in the US by my good friend Jessica Morris, who suffers from a Glioblastoma brain cancer and whose response is to campaign to turn what she calls 'The Evil Fucker' from being 'terminal to treatable'.

Remarkably, there has not been an initiative like this before. But to take the KNOT in reverse order: time is of the essence. Many Glioblastoma sufferers die rather fast, so gathering data from them and their families is critical. Technology helps this.

Then Networks: Jessica found great solace in Facebook groups, because it is such a specialist condition, but, as per the Hierarchy of Communication, has broadened out to in-person meetings and where geography is a problem, Zoom or video calls.

And it all hinges on prioritising Knowledge, sharing knowledge, curating it.

Then on the right you see some large company logos who have partnered with a new UK initiative called Be The Business. This is a mentoring programme, one in which all we know about the power of collaborative networks, of the challenge to unlock institutional knowledge and pass it along an organisation in a timely manner works its way out in a programme matching senior business leaders with SME or Small, Medium Enterprise managers from their own and other companies.

In the corporate world of Be The Business you can see the way that mentoring itself is moving up the ladder of diversity & inclusion networks, breaking down specialist interest silos and forming cross-sectional, inter-generational efforts aimed not so much at personal development alone as something else: Productivity.

There are in fact many corporate examples of social health in action, but it would be good to call it out, to create an index of it, so that we can begin to record what works and what doesn't, who is harnessing knowledge, networks and time to their advantage.

We should emulate our Brainbank and create a Brainbank of Best Practice in Social Health.

Seriously, I see no reason why we cannot call out, name, measure and evaluate these three components of modern digitalisation as they impact on all of us, all of the time, in a similar way to the precedent set by the WHO in 1948.

I might even suggest that it is the OECD which picks up the baton of measuring Social Health within the Better Life Initiative, of we creating an Index together.

The global workplace itself will be a key beneficiary from a new focus on functional connectedness around Knowledge, Networks and Time, the three permanent features of digitalisation: Half the world's population works, and does so for at least a third of their lives.

The workplace, despite its shifting features, despite the fact that 40% of the world's workers will be temporary, zero hours, freelance by 2021 is still a functioning, pumping, beating heart of the world system as we know it.

Even the doomsayers of automation know that some new jobs will be created, that new skills will overlay upon the old.

#### SLIDE 9: JAZZ ENSEMBLES

The jazz ensemble image you see here reflects an interesting development which happened in the literature of academic organisational behaviour at the dawn of the internet, a different pivot moment.

Around 1997 a sudden spontaneous rash of papers appeared looking at the behavioural differences between rigid, siloed 'orchestra' formations and the more fluid, dynamic, agile ones of jazz.

This flow behaviour, how people connect and move to exchange information, to form relationships, is critical to social health.

It is easy to blame the computer, the technology, the overwhelming, overloading, ever-changing digitalisation as the cause, and it is just as easy to continue to evangelise that it is basically the cure, that automation and improved machine learning will help the human more than the human can, ultimately help him or herself.

I believe something else.

I believe that we have overload like bad computer code, bad management and behaviours around the way we connect and communicate and have outsourced our faith to digital solutions instead of forming robust, micro shifts in behaviours which will make substantial improvements.

## SLIDE 10: HIERARCHY OF COMMUNICATION / BMI

I had the pleasure of dining with Jean-Paul Fitoussi last night who, together with Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen produced the seminal Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report which is being updated one decade on.

What was so groundbreaking in this report was declaring new measurements of wealth and prosperity and growth which were social as well as economic, indeed by asking candidly 'what if our measurements are flawed' in order to reframe and refocus on what matters now.

I want to look briefly at that idea of measurement as I bring my remarks to a close.

What if we measured the hierarchy of communication, who we are connected to, just like we measure Body Mass Index? Given the data about the value of diversity in network in everything from biodiversity to human social mobility, I would say, why not?

Let me conclude with some concrete suggestions for a way forward. If you believe, as I do, that Social Health both belongs to the overall definition of Health but stands alone, dedicated to the specifics of this era of digitalisation, and if you believe that in the same way it is related to, a cousin, certainly a descendent of, Wellbeing as it has been developed in the last fifteen years, but which needs its own measurements and its own metrics.

Incidentally, whilst I have been talking about humans, I want you to hold in your mind the idea of bees, the most productive species on the planet, and in the insect world, the most social. The honey bee lives and works in the same place, as, thanks to the smartphone, so do we most of the time.

But the shape of where the bee lives and works, from where it goes to forage, and returns to dance, is also useful for us. The bee lives in a six-sided hexagon, the hive. The structure is interlocking and crucial to building, cleaning, and storing its core product: honey.

The framework I use is called Hexagon Thinking, which happens to tie in neatly today: This is of course the 6<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum. And 6 is within the cognitive limit of our capacity for ideas, and there are six core parts of the human brain.

So here are my six thoughts on measurement of Social Health.

#### SLIDE 11: HEXAGON THINKING

How about we:

- 1        Audit trusted and diverse knowledge flows. Are they blocked? Are they open-minded? Are they accessible?
- 2        Measure diversity and depth of social networks: Do we have Groupthink? Have we taken advantage of all our team can offer by the way we organise who is in the room?
- 3        Research Timeframe and Deadline: Time is perhaps the most overlooked aspect of social health. If I could make one radical change it would probably be – wishful thinking I know – to remove quarterly reporting from the banking and corporate system: There is no wellbeing in evidence from meeting impossible deadlines.
- 4        Ranking the Hierarchy of Communication: What would happen if a Pareto's Law of 80:20 were imposed on the ratio of face-to-face versus electronic communications you had?
- 5        Assess productivity with good social health. The management thinker Frederic Laloux has begun this with Teal Organisation thinking. Is there a link when knowledge flows, networks and time work in better synchronicity? I believe so, passionately, but let's measure it now.
- 6        and finally, Evaluate Disconnection.

#### SLIDE 12.

This is the view from my house in Wales. It is a 4-5 hour drive from London but we go there as often as we can, to disconnect. Not even literally, but to stop being speedy, to stop thinking it is normal to behave like superfast supercomputers.

In an overconnected era the safe and sensible thing is to plan downtime. They do have a word for it with computers: They call it putting them to sleep.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to building a network with you and to sharing our knowledge together.

#### SLIDE 13:

Thank You.ENDS

