Tinkering is thriving today because a global system that makes people and resources highly connected and mobile enable areas of social innovation and work to integrate it into the formal innovation process. Organizations should encourage individual tinkering and social tinkering that builds on the experiments of others. Instead of characterizing tinkering as a “weekend activity,” we should consider it a core practice for experimenters and change makers. 

From the testing the definitions and accepted measurements of health and well-being, to targeting and treating networks of people who share health affinities. These experiments must be built on new choices, not on defaults. Not all tinkering is taking place at the level of the body. People are experimenting with social and technological interventions directed at networks of people who share health affinities. These experiments must be built on new choices, not on defaults. Not all tinkering is taking place at the level of the body. People are experimenting with social and technological interventions directed at networks of people who share health affinities. These experiments usually make use of new product offerings will serve as additional tools and resources for an expanding population of individuals pursuing personal interests, these efforts collectively represent a new source of innovation from the bottom up, from the perspective of those individuals who are the beneficiaries of the intervention. 

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Rachel: What are the barriers to encouraging more social solutions?

Josephine: Our critical problem lies now in our organizational structures—the pyramid, fairly authoritarian, command-and-control, top-down, highly-bureaucratized kind of environment. In the more linear mechanistic world of the 20th century, we had a funnel model of technology. We could, in a way, make it linear and think that we could predict it. Now, people have come out of their boxes and technology has come out of its box. [People] are increasingly moving from the back end to front end of innovation and creating their own everything—movies, films, political movements. What we’re seeing—and this on a global scale with six billion and growing—is that we have nothing that’s predictable or linear. There are too many touch points. We have chaos and we have complexity. We have constantly emerging, complex evolving systems.

If you try to [capture this innovation] in a funnel model, or a hierarchical top-down model, you lose so much knowledge and information. What we’re seeing is the big word, decentralization, to cope with the complexity. And that means decentralizing innovation. It actually means taking innovation and decentralizing it in terms of moving it to the front lines of the system. There are certain companies now looking at the decentralization of strategy. All because these companies know that they’re not getting the creativity, they’re not getting the innovation they need, because of the bottlenecks and the hierarchies and the politics and everything that we know about.
In an effort to move beyond purely biomedical models of health, tinkering is developing new ways to understand and measure health and well-being. In the United States, Gallup and Healthways have teamed up to evaluate their current life situation, emotional and physical health, and government policies. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index measures “what people believe constitutes a good life.” In the United States, Gallup and Healthways have teamed up to evaluate their current life situation, emotional and physical health, and government policies. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index measures “what people believe constitutes a good life.”

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is a comprehensive and validated measure of well-being. It includes four key dimensions: life evaluation, emotional well-being, physical well-being, and work well-being.

The index is based on the premise that well-being is a multidimensional construct that includes both subjective and objective factors. It is designed to capture the subjective experience of well-being, as well as the objective conditions that contribute to it.

The index is also designed to be used by organizations to track the well-being of their employees or customers, and to identify areas for improvement.

Innovations

Innovations in the field of well-being are taking place all over the world. Some examples include the use of technology to improve health outcomes, the development of new models for delivering healthcare, and the use of social media to promote health.

In the Netherlands, for example, the use of mobile technology to improve adherence to medication is being studied. In the United States, the use of social media to promote health is being explored.

Innovations in well-being are not just limited to healthcare. They are also taking place in other fields, such as education and the workplace.

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The Aravind Eye Care System

The Aravind Eye Care System is a not-for-profit healthcare provider in India that provides cataract surgery to those who cannot afford the cost. The system has transformed the provision of eye care services. Finding a solution to the problem of cataracts, which affects millions of people, was a challenge. Aravind Eye Care System approached the problem by experimenting, testing, and learning.

In 2003, Aravind Eye Care System became the largest single cataract surgery provider in the world, without losing cost-effectiveness. Its approach is now being applied to other health conditions, such as diabetes and tuberculosis. The Aravind Eye Care System is a model for improving healthcare delivery in low-income countries. Its success is due to its innovative approach, which includes partnerships, community involvement, and a focus on outcomes.

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Instead of hoping for the next big breakthrough in healthcare, tinkerers are placing their bets on incremental improvements to existing technologies. By enabling faster, more accurate analysis of patients, these “micro-innovations” are advancing patient care. These “micro-innovations” are advancing patient care.

Tinkering with social innovation

The dominant engines of growth for the 21st century will not be the automobile, technology, telecommunications, or energy businesses. Instead, the 21st-century growth engines will be the not-for-profit sector and the tech industry, which are both driven by a desire to experiment, to make existing technologies more useful and to customize them to better suit users’ needs.1 Yet, most social innovation will come from individuals not working alone or in networks, tinkering with existing systems—testing, probing, and making incremental improvement to build the narrative of what’s wrong with them, to create a response or a treatment, or to manage a disease with modalities suit users’ needs.”

In the health and well-being space, tinkerers tend to be people motivated by a desire to optimize their personal health and well-being. They are driven by a desire to experiment, to make existing technologies more useful and to customize them to better suit their needs.2 The dominant engines of growth for the 21st century will not be the automobile, technology, telecommunications, or energy businesses. Instead, the 21st-century growth engines will be the not-for-profit sector and the tech industry, which are both driven by a desire to experiment, to make existing technologies more useful and to customize them to better suit users’ needs.1 Yet, most social innovation will come from individuals not working alone or in networks, tinkering with existing systems—testing, probing, and making incremental improvement to build the narrative of what’s wrong with them, to create a response or a treatment, or to manage a disease with modalities suit users’ needs.”

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Tinkering with with product innovation

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Tinkering with with care systems

Across the globe, health practitioners have begun tinkering with methods and approaches for improving community health and delivering better care. These “micro-innovations” are advancing patient care.
In addition to the child's biological and emotional health, micro-innovations are advancing including improvements to pill-bottle design to generating new knowledge of biology that will bring safe and effective treatments to patients.

Instead of hoping for the next big breakthrough in pharmaceuticals, researchers are tinkering with product innovation. Simplicity is key—emerging products and models of care are focused on improving health and enhancing the experience of well-being while solving a social need.

The dominant engines of growth for the 21st century will not be the automobile, technology, telecommunications, or energy industries. Instead, the engines of growth for the next several decades will be fruits of the human brain—specifically, the human brain as a biological, social, and cognitive system.

A true sense of well-being depends on more than our physical health; it depends on our psychological, social, and physical environments. According to social scientist and researcher Dr. Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, “People who engage in tinkering do so because they want to improve what drives tinkering in health and well-being?”

Dr. Pang researchers the social and cognitive mechanisms that support innovation and well-being. These proposed projects tinkier with existing infrastructure to improve people’s relationships with local communities and offer alternative health care models.

**Linking to well-being**

To find a formula to move beyond purely biomedical models of health, researchers are developing new ways to understand and research well-being. Eventually, these projects may lead to new interventions aimed at improving long-term health as part of broader efforts to improve psychological, social, and environmental well-being.

**Tinkering with care systems**

Across the globe, health practitioners have begun tinkering with methods and approaches for improving community health and delivering better care. These “micro-innovations” are advancing long-term health and understand social innovation.

The non-profit Brazilian Institute for Innovations in Social Healthcare (Instituto Brasileiro de Inovações em Saúde Social—IBISS) is examining many of the critical social determinants of health, including well-being, social class, and community formation. Partnerships are working under this model.

**Tinkering with product innovation**

Nevertheless, the project is successful, lobbies the government to adopt it on a wider scale. Currently, about 62 active projects are working under this model.

**Tinkering with informal**

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In an effort to move beyond purely biomedical models of health, clinicians are developing new ways to understand and treat well-being. Eventually, these approaches may lead to new interventions aimed at improving long-term health as part of broader efforts to improve psychological, social and environmental well-being.

According to social scientist and researcher Dr. Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, “People who engage in tinkering do so because the social innovations—new tools, concepts, approaches, and organizational structures—will be generated in policy and structures, and parental mental and physical health), and possible determinant factors in childhood obesity. The Cape Area Panel Study is a complex undertaking, extending far beyond diet and consumption, crime, social connectivity, family formation. Some researchers are now tinkering with the definition of obesity, whether or not we have been diagnosed with a medical condition. Of course, this is not to say that we do not have more impact on our sense of well-being than whether or not we have been diagnosed with a medical condition. For instance, in a large study of the effects of cancer treatment, children undergoing treatment had significantly lower levels of social well-being compared to children undergoing treatment for other conditions, and their parents also reported lower levels of social well-being.

Tinkering in health and well-being?

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Tinkering is thriving thanks to a global system that makes people and resources highly connected and mobile. (Short-term capacity building response) Not all tinkering is taking place at the level of the body. People are experimenting with social and economic systems, and the results can be tremendous. The next successful health or wellness product or service. While the tendency is to look at this practice as isolated experiments, the reality is that most of the social solutions from the 19th and 20th century were the result of a diverse experimentation repertoire. (Long-term illness response) 

Foster a culture of tinkering within your organization. 

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