

Respond, Recover, & Thrive: Aligning with Human Values

Organizations must identify where their brand purpose overlaps with what we all share: Human Values

Over the last year, we have shared a lot about our perspective on [Elevating the Human Experience \(EHX™\)](#).¹ And because we know that humans and business are inextricably linked, we wanted to use the EHXTM principles to help businesses consider how to respond, recover, and thrive during and after the COVID-19

pandemic. We're offering this through our [Values Compass](#), a proprietary algorithm that identifies what motivates an audience's behaviors, actions, and beliefs, and identifies the things humans share.² Typically, Americans are evenly spread among the 8 core values: ambition, trying new things, curiosity, sharing with others, belonging, caring for others, control, and learning new things.

First, a bit of level-setting on Values

Over the past weeks, we've been exploring the state of human values, including how values have shifted week-on-week during the COVID-19 pandemic, which cohorts and segments of the population have been most impacted, and why people may not be changing as much as we assume.

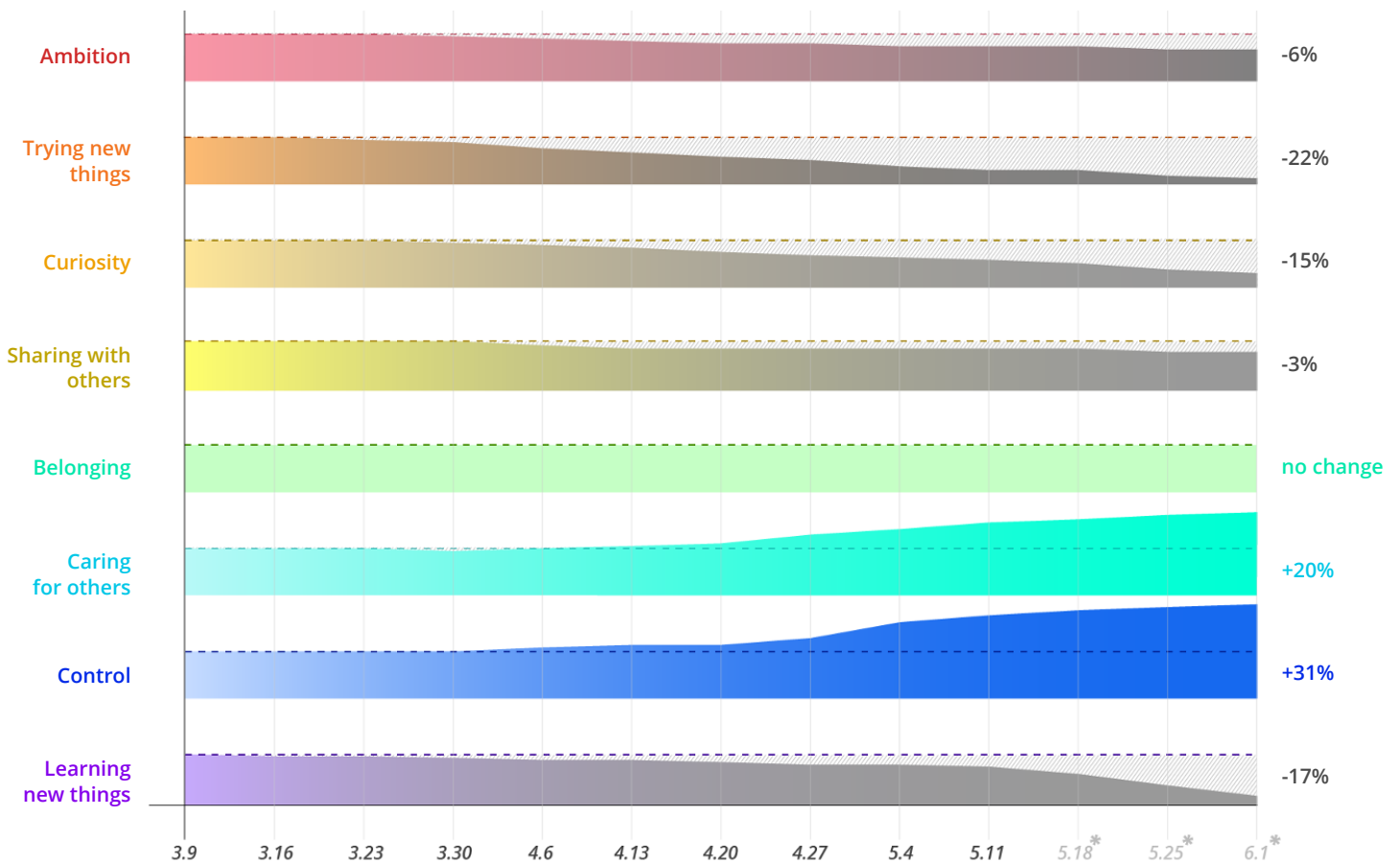
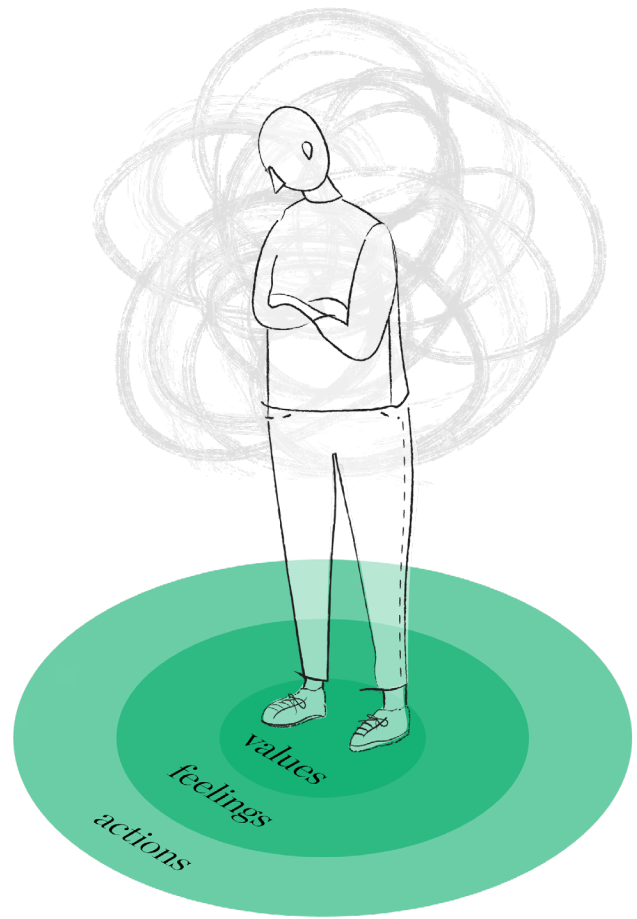
We wondered if the COVID-19 pandemic was more permanently changing the values of Americans.

We explored how things like location and population density impacted values and the way people are responding to COVID-19. We wondered about generational differences, tech comfort or savviness, or even financial security. We also questioned social conditions—things like living arrangements, household size, friendship circles, and introversion or extroversion. All-in-all, we cut the population over 100 different ways looking for the most thought-provoking and meaningful direction we might offer organizations.

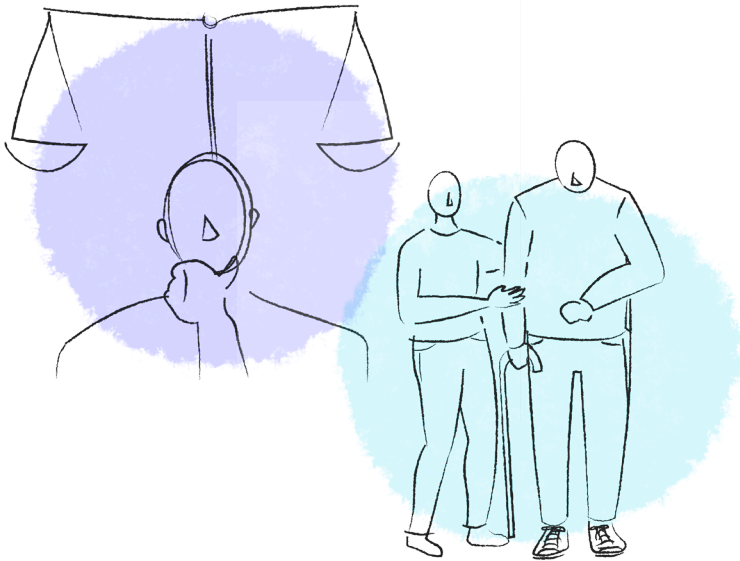
TL/DR: here's what we now know

We are all constantly under forces that shift our values and how we view the world. The COVID-19 pandemic is no different. But surprisingly, values are not changing more rapidly today than they were at this time last year. Instead, they are changing more consistently, and in a similar direction for all Americans.

Normally, people's values shift slowly to respond to unique circumstances. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans are sharing a universal experience that is shaping them as one, increasing their values of control and caring for others.



Americans' values are shifting towards control & caring for others.



Here's a bit more about what this collective shift towards **Control & Care** values might mean for how organizations can respond, recover, and thrive.

Control: Show me I can trust you

This week, we discussed the shared human desire to [make sense of uncertainty](#), and the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a massive amount of uncertainty.³ Americans have been rapidly forced to change behaviors and actions in unprecedented ways, bear the weight of job insecurity, and the fears of an economic downturn, while ensuring loved ones stay safe and

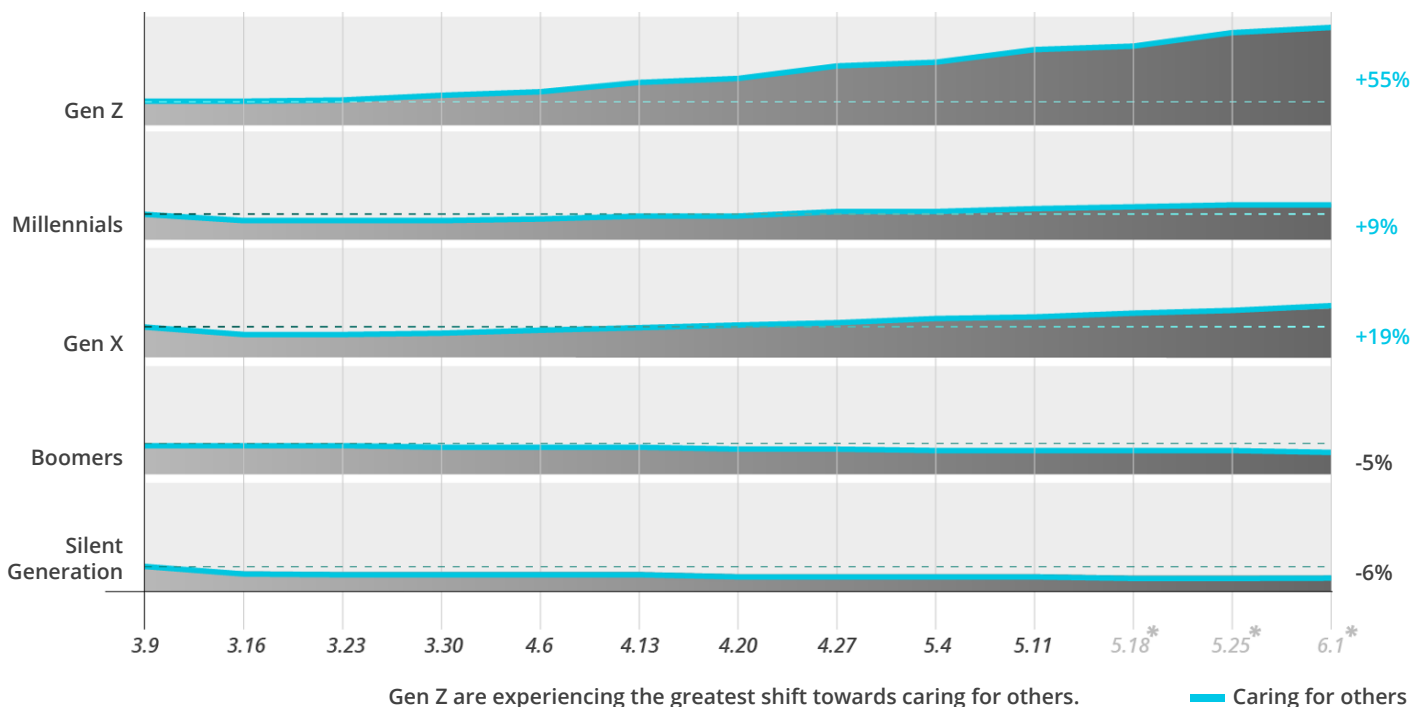
healthy. At the time of writing, nearly 56% of the population say they are more anxious (overall) than they were a week prior.⁴ The stay-at-home orders are driving consumer mobility to a historic low (82% decline in trip length) primarily due to concern for safety. Meanwhile, consumer confidence wanes as the unknowns of the pandemic persist. The conflicting messages and changing guidelines are leading to increased mistrust of institutions.⁵

The data shows that Americans' value of control means they are simply not satisfied with what an organization promises—they want proof of action. Organizations who took action to build morale, demonstrate care for employees, partners, and customers, and assumed responsibility are seen as potential "winners."

This means **trust & transparency** will be a key growth driver in the future. Americans' values are shifting—they want clearly communicated decisions, ethical practices, and actions over words.

Care: I want a human connection

While the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated comfort with digital engagement, it has also put pressure on the need for real, human interaction. Even as technology seemingly connects us more than ever via video calls, curbside pick-up, online concerts, and digital happy hours, isolation still leaves its mark. Americans' personal responsibility and accountability continue to rise as initial frustrations have been redirected toward an emboldened care for communities. And while there is a desire to get back together, we found conversations and actions remain focused on staying



connected and looking out for one another while separated.⁶ We were most surprised to find the generation that has grown up with the most technology is craving the most human connection: the “Caring for Others” value has increased almost 55% among Gen Z (see above)—evidence that comfort with technology alone likely won’t make digital-only connections feel human.

This means digital experiences should get more caring

Americans still want to minimize the mundane with digital experiences (e.g., morning commutes, heavy highway traffic, difficulty making reservations), but the COVID-19 pandemic has shown they also need them to maximize the humanity (e.g., watching the ball game, collaborating with colleagues, getting help on a mortgage). How organizations care for and connect with their customers, partners, and workforce in a post-COVID world will likely be central to their success.

So, what does this all mean?

Individuals’ values are going to drive their feelings and actions in a post-pandemic world. And while Americans’ collective values are shifting toward caring for others and control, it’s important to remember that values are built over a lifetime. The makeup of each person’s experiences carves them into shapes that may be unlikely to change from a few weeks or even months in isolation.

Organizations will be better positioned to thrive in the “new normal” by identifying, communicating, and acting upon a brand purpose that overlaps with what we all share: human values.



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End notes

1. <https://www.deloittedigital.com/us/en/blog-list/2019/we-re-only-human--exploring-and-quantifying-the-human-experience.html>
2. Ibid, [1].
3. <https://www.deloittedigital.com/content/dam/deloittedigital/us/documents/offerings/offering-20200518-human-experience-uncertain-times.pdf>
4. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/consumer-behavior-trends.html>
5. Ibid, [4].
6. <https://socialsensing.deloittedigital.com/>

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