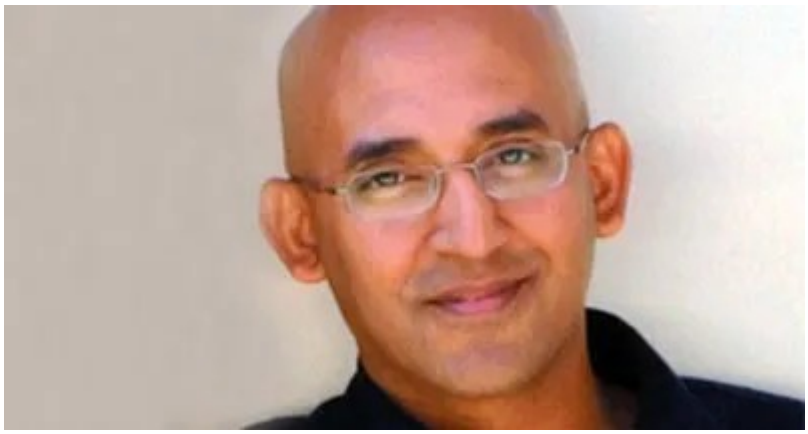
ON DESIGN AND CHANGING BEHAVIOR

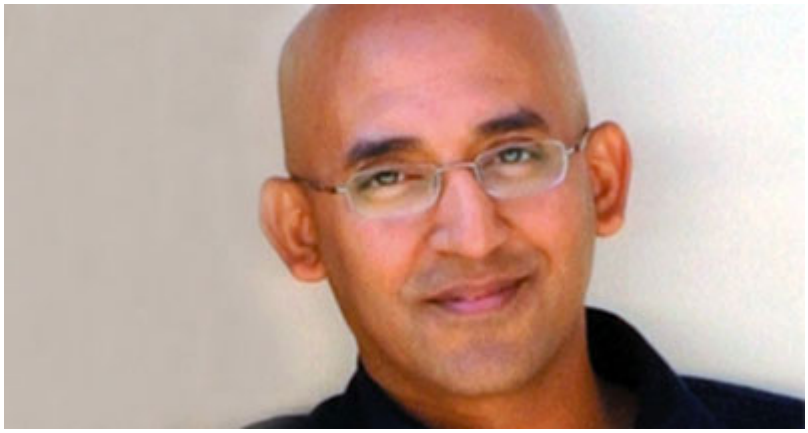


This post is in a series of commentaries on a class running at Stanford, Winter Quarter 2010 – "Transformative Design" ENGR 231 – [Link]

Stanford School of Engineering – Ask The Expert

"Our behavior is deeply influenced by the norms and frameworks that surround us and design can be used to create systems and experiences that work with an underlying understanding of human behavior and cause people to fall into entirely new patterns of behavior,"

says Banny Banerjee, director of the Stanford Design Program.



Because behavior can be influenced—not just observed—it provides an important opportunity for tackling complex challenges such as sustainability.

That opportunity is perhaps best addressed with design. Uniquely trained to simultaneously consider human factors, technology and business factors, designers can help identify a behavioral goal (e.g. reduce energy use) and then work from that to employ the best systems, ideas, experiences, and technologies to enable alternate realities in the future.

… research in which design attempts to motivate sweeping behavioral change for a larger goal can be applied to a variety of other areas, including exercise, drug adherence, and financial responsibility.

Is it inappropriate to ask who decides what behavior needs changing?

“… designers can help identify a behavioral goal”

says Banerjee. Who with? The triangle of interest he identifies as at the heart of contemporary design includes business (viability) and technology (feasibility) as well as the “human factors”.

I know that Banny is working on the most noble of projects – to produce sustainable behavior. I know that working with people on real needs is at the heart of design thinking. I just have to question the assumed authority of the designer/business expert/technologist that we read about here.

The crucial task, I suggest, is to turn *everyone* into a designer.