



# FJORD TRENDS 2021 WITH MARK CURTIS

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Empathy challenge

Our 6th Fjord Trend for 2021 it's called the empathy challenge. This trend is really driven by the fact that awareness of inequality went up massively during 2021. Partly because of but actually not entirely because of COVID and it has forced to focus on how we manage the narratives brands, and we believe that the at the heart of the empathy challenge is a requirement that we're going to have to spend a lot of time balancing and blending pragmatism and empathy because we cannot be empathetic to everybody all the time.

So what's going on here? 2020- the rise of focus on inequality, the use of the word privilege. COVID has massively exacerbated all sorts of inequalities. If we just take women for example in the U.S. are doing 15 hours more household work per week I'm ashamed to say than men but many other inequalities have been exacerbated.

Then new ones of arrived as well. New kinds of joblessness or people being newly jobless in careers they didn't expect to be. School closures putting pressure on young parents working from home with children. Young workers not being able to go into work and build their networks. All of this is all about narratives and truth, and social media report narratives and truth front and center.

Culture wars are things that everybody can create, everyone can participate in. Information is easy to access, but also easy to use people to mislead and really we have this tremendous problem now about how do you handle the polarities between different ways of thinking about the world. Empathy is a design tool and we've used and talked about empathy a lot over the last 10 years as design has come front and center in business. But polarities make empathy a lot harder because there is a fierce social media scrutiny on everything that companies do and the results of that is are we really are unable to be empathetic to everyone all the time. You think about the range of inequalities and issues of concern us whether that how to care workers manage their work-life balance, mental health, sustainability, black lives matter, gender issues with the new inequalities I mentioned already, and managed business survival at the same time.

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The solution we think is increasingly companies will have to narrow their focus of empathy and root that in purpose as a guidance system for where they place their empathy. In addition to that work much harder to bring design and communications together. They can no longer live apart. The message in the detail have to be as one because that way we deliver empathy as behavior rather than simply a design tool we used to imagine that we're getting closer to our customers and all of that that is up to managing stories much much better than we've done in the past. Companies will devote way more time to narrative and stories and are already doing so in fact.

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