

# **A Comparative Analyses of eWOM's Flow and Influence in a Social Media Setting: The Consumption-based Community and the Personal Online Social Network.**



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# Resumé

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Specialet handler om electronic-Word-of-Mouth's (eWOM) flow of indflydelse på sociale medier. Studiet tager udgangspunkt i service industrien, hvor anbefalinger ansigt til ansigt har vist sig at have positiv indflydelse på købsbeslutningen, men der endnu mangler forskning i en onlinekontekst. Case studiet er baseret på det consumer-based online community coach Matthew Hussey har opbygget omkring sin online virksomhed. Hussey har haft stor online succes med virksomheden, som han udelukkende har promoveret via eWOM uden brug af traditionelle marketings metoder. En stor del af denne succes tilskriver Hussey eWOM og det community han har opbygget på en bred vifte af sociale medier. Dette studie udfører derfor en komparativanalyse af eWOM flow og indflydelse inden for Husseys community og i community medlemmernes online sociale netværk (OSNs), for at skabe indblik i hvilken form for indflydelse eWOM har i de to forskellige netværk. Analysen viste her at eWOM har stor indflydelse inden for Husseys community, men har relativt lidt indflydelse private OSNs, hvor individers offline sociale relationer ofte hæmmer eWOMs flow og indflydelse bemærkelsesværdigt.

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## Introduction

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The incentive to examine the workings of online word-of-mouth on social media platforms arose from the success of British coach Matthew Hussey, who owns an online coaching business, [gettheguy.co.uk](http://gettheguy.co.uk), which has experienced tremendous success, growth and a large following, using online or electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media platforms.

Matthew Hussey is a motivational speaker and human dynamics coach who owns a highly successful online coaching business in the UK. Hussey started his business in 2005, coaching individual clients in London's coffee shops and cafés for free. He slowly established a reputable name for himself based on his quick results, whereby he became known as the confidence coach among London's executives. Soon, Hussey was invited to speak for brand names such as Hugo Boss, The Perfume Shop, Virgin Gyms, Proctor & Gamble, Bare Escentuals, Weil Gotshal & Manges as well as Accenture (Matthew Hussey, 2015; Hussey, personal communication, 2014). In 2008, Hussey decided to create [gettheguy.co.uk](http://gettheguy.co.uk), taking his career in a new direction. Hussey rooted his business in personal online coaching for women and created a series of online accessible coaching programs, ranging from relationships to confidence coaching. Early on, Hussey was confident that social media platforms were the best way to set him apart from others in his field and create awareness about his services (Hussey, personal communication, 2015). Hussey strategically chose social media platforms to broadcast free coaching videos, blog posts and inspirational articles to create awareness about his coaching service. Without investing in traditional marketing methods and by relying solely on the recommendations of clients, the business grew from a small one-man business into an international success within five short years (Hussey, 2015). Hussey credits his large following and success to electronic -word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the community he has created around the business. Hussey utilizes social media platforms by posting free coaching videos and articles to the community, which, he believes, creates value for community members and encourages them to share his advice among their online social networks (OSNs), hereby creating awareness and expanding the community (Hussey, personal communication, 2015). Hussey is an avid user of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, which he uses to interact with the community and share free advice. Hussey's community following, at the time of writing:

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>Number of likes/followers/subscribers</b>
Facebook	50.000
Twitter	40.000
YouTube	203.000
Instagram	20.000

Some of these might be repeat community members, but during the timeframe of this thesis the Facebook group has grown by 20.000 followers and YouTube by 50.000 subscribers.

Hussey's social media strategy has gained him a large amount of success online and offline, where he has reached millions of women worldwide; through his online programs and social media efforts and more than 50.000 women via live seminars/retreats (Hussey, personal communication, 2015).

Intrigued by Hussey's online success, I decided to look into research on eWOM, but found that marketing scholars and researchers largely had focused on eWOM processes concerning products and brands in online communities, discovering that eWOM recommendation have great significance and adds to the overall value of the product or brand (Gruen et al., 2006). Newer studies, looking at eWOM within OSNs, show that eWOM on social media platforms are just as powerful, if not more, as in product forums, because networks on social media already have a physical connection that potentially creates more trust (Chu & Kim, 2011). While most research focuses on product-orientated issues within traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) or eWOM, remarkably little research has been done on WOM and eWOM's influence on consumer behavior in service purchasing situations. This despite the fact that research shows that consumers experience a higher degree of insecurity and risk associated with purchasing a service, rather than a product, because consumers may not fully understand the service before consumption and because a service is largely nonrefundable. Consumers are therefore more likely to seek WOM information from an experienced source before making the purchase (Bansal & Voyer 2000).

The lack of research, on eWOM's effect on the service purchase decision in a social media context, in conjunction with Matthew Hussey's successful use of eWOM to promote his coaching service leads me to focus this study on social media as a venue for consumer-to-consumer related conversations about a service provider. The research will be based on the case study of

gettheguy.co.uk and the consumption-based online community that surrounds Hussey on Facebook Twitter and YouTube.

## **Problem Area**

More and more marketers incorporate social media as an essential part of their promotional mix, because social media have allowed organizations to establish stronger relationships with their consumers. This means that it is time for researchers to examine the flow and influence of eWOM within social networks platforms. Social media encompasses a variety of online information-sharing formats, including Facebook, MySpace and Friendster, creativity works-sharing sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Instagram, collaborative websites, Wikipedia and microblogging sites such as Twitter (Chu & Kim 2011). Online social networks have, according to Chu and Kim (2011), outpaced email as the most popular online activity, which has enabled consumers to connect with others by exchanging information, opinions and thoughts about products, brands and services.

The significance of WOM, when influencing consumer decision-making, has been well recognized in marketing and advertising literature (Brown & Reingen , 1987; Trusov et al. 2009), where WOM is defined as the act of exchanging marketing information among consumers and plays an essential role in changing consumer attitudes and behavior positive towards products and services (Trusov et al. 2009). Marketers traditionally try to generate WOM through advertisements that feature positive portrayals of the product, free product samples and by using opinion leaders, such as celebrities, to communicate the positive benefits of the product, but research shows that consumers find WOM recommendations more trustworthy, because WOM messages are created and delivered by consumer-to-consumer rather than company-generated persuasive messages. Social media platforms have, within recent years, become a well-used venue for consumer-to-consumer conversations and recommendations, eWOM, because products and service information are created and delivered by trustworthy sources (Chu & Kim 2011). Most theory about eWOM is based on traditional WOM theory, and research often shows theoretical WOM concepts interpersonal and noninterpersonal influences to be largely transferrable to online networks (Gruen et al. 2006; Brown et al 2007; Hennig-Thurau et al 2004), because these are made up of individuals who consciously and subconsciously evaluate and influence each other.

Scholars and marketers are particularly interested in eWOM communication behavior in the context of online communities because of the extraordinary popularity, growth and influence of such communities (Brown et al., 2007). These communities are fluid and flexible and can be based on a wide range of cultural interests, social affiliations, products, services, brands, celebrities and so on. Consumption-related online communities are those networks of people whose online interactions are based upon shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a specific consumption activity or related group of activities (Kozinets, 1999), e.g. the Hussey community. In these communities, individuals with an interest in a product or service category interact about information, such as purchase advice, in order to affiliate with other like-minded individuals or to participate in complaint/compliment interactions (Brown et al., 2007). Online social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and so on, are ideal venues for eWOM, because social media networks create an online space where consumers can freely communicate about brands, products and services in their private network of family, friends, classmates, co-workers and other acquaintances (Chu & Kim 2011). Understanding the mechanisms of eWOM in online social networks and online communities can enhance our knowledge of what drives eWOM and how it influences receivers., This will provide marketers with insight into the workings of eWOM, whereby researchers can try to optimize these processes and utilize consumer-to-consumer recommendations in communities and OSNs.

Further investigation into to the why and the how of eWOM occurs is still needed. The objective of this study, therefore, is to gather insight into the flow and influence of eWOM within a service consumption-based online community and in community members' online social networks, based on the case study of Hussey's community, which will be elucidated by the thesis statement:

## **Thesis Statement**

How do online social relationships influence consumers to engage in eWOM recommendations within Matthew Hussey's consumption-based community and community members' online social networks?



## Sub-Questions

- How do interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community?
- How do interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the flow and influence of eWOM in the Hussey community members' online social networks?
- Which differences are there in the flow and influence of eWOM within the online community and members' online social networks?

The comparative analysis of eWOM's flow and influence in Hussey's consumption-based community and community members' OSNs, show that eWOM flows with greater ease and is highly influential within the community but the opposite is true for OSNs, where eWOM is unlikely to be influential. The information seekers level of knowledge and search for information was found to be a determining factors, among others, which lead to a behavioral change if the source of the information was found to credible. The method and the analysis behind these findings will be gone over in the following chapters.

## Concept Clarification

### WOM:

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is by the Oxford dictionary defined as: "spoken communication as a means of transmitting information". Theoretically, WOM is defined as the act of exchanging marketing information among consumers, which plays an essential role in changing consumer attitudes and behavior towards products and services (Trusov et al. 2009), carried out between two or more consumers in a face-to-face environment.

#### eWOM:

Electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM) is computer mediated WOM, but takes place online in consumer forums, online communities or other social networks (Kozinets, 1999). In this thesis, eWOM is used to describe recommendations made between consumers within the Hussey community or in the community members' online social media networks.

#### Online community:

Online communities form when enough people carry on computer-mediated non-private discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to develop what are considered "social relationships" with other online participants. An online community is an online platform where like-minded people meet and discuss common interest or topics (Kozinets, 2013).

#### Online social networks:

An online social network is a network based on a social media platform, in this case Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. On Facebook, a network is made up of users who know each other and have met face-to-face, while Twitter followers often are a mixture of online and offline networks and YouTube networks largely consist of people who share mutual interests but have never met.

#### Hussey community:

The Hussey community is a network of women who share an interest in Matthew Hussey's coaching; self-development and human-dynamics coaching. The community is spread across several social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram as well as Hussey's website and blog, where community members gain access to free coaching videos, articles and Q&A sessions from Hussey on a regular basis.

#### Community member:

A community member is a woman who is a member of the Hussey community. A woman is considered a community member if she has liked/followed/subscribed to any of the above mentioned platforms. By actively following Hussey, the women indicate that they have an interest in Hussey's coaching services and follow his advice regularly. Community members also include women who have purchased a service from Hussey.

## **Delimitation**

This section will outline the delimitation of the research area. The topic of this thesis is about the flow and influence of eWOM in an online community and online social network, but due to the nature of the research topic, the thesis statement and time, potentially relevant empirical and theoretical areas have been delaminated. A few of these will be discussed in the following.

### **Empirical Delimitation**

There are an uncountable number of social media platforms that users can join to create online social networks, which would all be relevant to examine when gaining insight into the flow and influence of eWOM in online social networks. However, the selection of this particular case study naturally limited the study to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, because Hussey's community is based on these. A further delimitation of OSNs were, however, still necessary to avoid a too narrow focus and risk a shallow analysis. This means that the thesis will focus on the flow and influence of eWOM on three of Hussey's community platforms: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. By examining the flow and influence of eWOM within the social media aspect of the Hussey community, the study delaminates from including more private aspects of the Hussey community located on Hussey's website and blog. Including these aspects of the community in an analysis of eWOM would give a more nuanced picture of the flow and influence of eWOM online. However, this is not the aim of the study. The focus of this case study is to examine the flow and influence of eWOM within social media networks and find out how interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect eWOM in a social media setting. On the basis of this premise, the delimitation is well-founded.

Another delimitation made on the basis of the case study is the delimitation of males. The Hussey's community is made up of women, because these are Hussey's primary target group. Males could potentially be a part of the Hussey community, if they are homosexual or just interested in women's views on relationships and self-development. However, data collection within the community indicates that there are no male members of the Hussey community. This is not surprising, because Hussey's coaching programs are aimed at female consumers. The delimitation of males occurred as a result of the selected case study, which means that there was not an intentional delimitation made

by the researcher but rather a delimitation that occurred because of Hussey's success with eWOM and this target group on social media. Including males in a study of eWOM on social media platforms could potentially paint a different picture of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect on the flow and influence of eWOM, because males might be influenced differently than women. However, women are Hussey's target group, and eWOM recommendations about Hussey's coaching service occur between women on social media platforms, hence the exclusion of males in this case study.

### **Theoretical Delimitation.**

Beside the above mentioned empirical delimitation, theoretical delimitations have also been made. A theoretical field that could have been of interest in this study is motivational theory. A particularly interesting topic is persuasion theory, which, within the social psychological school of thought, credits belief systems as learned behavior that has been achieved through social processes. Meaning that belief systems can also be changed through social processes such as word-of-mouth recommendations. Within theories like Social Judgment theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, the relationship between the sender and receiver is explored deeper by looking into what Kelman (1961) calls the basis of the information reception. In this context, it is important for the sender to evaluate the receivers current mindset and figure out the best way to influence the receiver in a way that will make the person internalize the message and create a change. The dynamics between information sender and the receiver are complex, especially online, and could benefit from thorough analysis. However, due to the focus of the thesis statement on the flow as well as influence of eWOM, rather than the relationship between the sender and receiver, this aspect of the eWOM process has been delimited from this study.

### **Thesis Design**

The following pages of the analysis are organized into these chapters: theory, methods, analysis and conclusion. The theory and method chapters present the methodology, the theory of science and the theoretical framework that laid the foundation for the thesis. The theory chapter will introduce theoretical concepts used in the study while explaining and describing them, so that these are easily

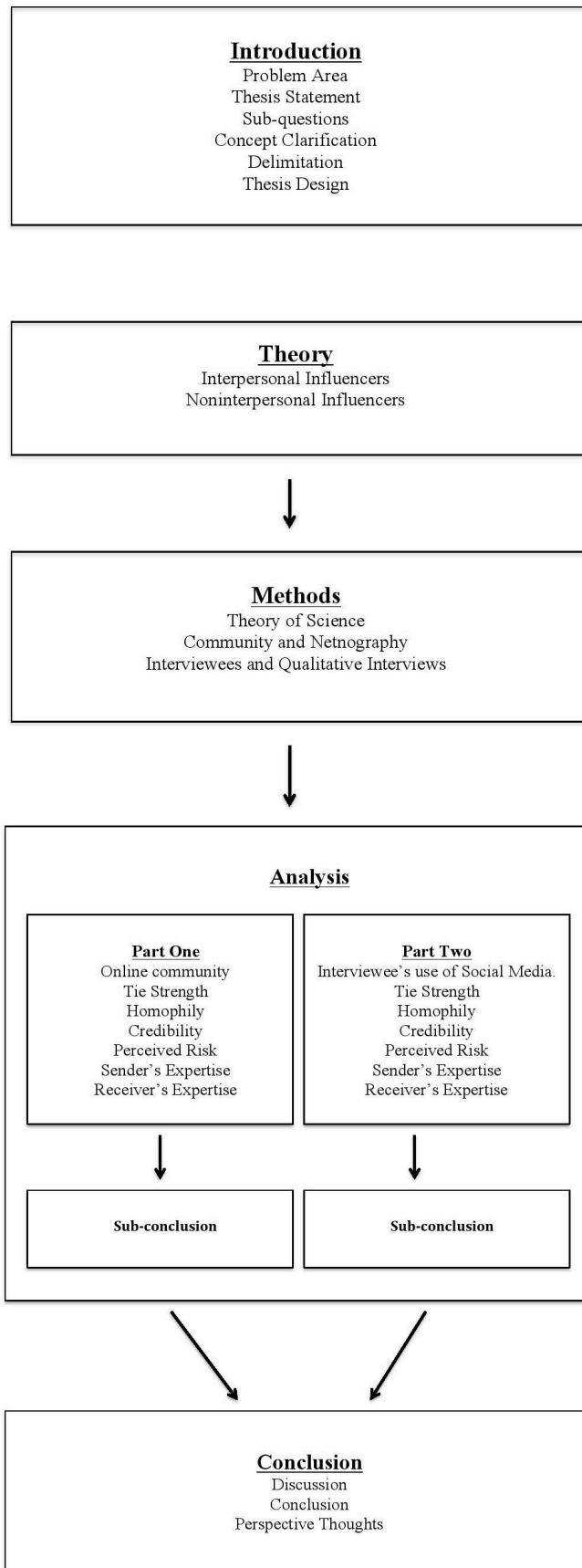
transferrable into the analysis. The method section will explain how the researcher views the general scope of our surroundings and the individuals in them. This will be viewed in connection with theory and the methods used in the data collection process, so it becomes clear how these views have affected the data collection process and the analysis. Finally, the methodical contemplations will be explained and discussed.

In the next chapter, the analysis will be presented, which is separated into two parts. The first part of the analysis will answer the first sub-question: *“How do interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community?”* This first part of the analysis will use the theoretical concepts of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers with empirical data collected via netnography to analyze how eWOM flows within the Hussey community and what effect it has on the receiver.

The second part of the analysis will answer the second sub-question: *“How do interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the flow and influence of eWOM in the Hussey community members’ online social networks?”* This part of the analysis will again use the theoretical concepts of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influence in conjunction with empirical data collected via in-depth interviews to determine how eWOM flows in community members OSNs, and how it influences the receiver.

Lastly, the findings of the two analysis parts will be held up against each other in the conclusion chapter to answer the third research question: *“Which differences are there in the flow and influence of eWOM within the online community and members’ online social networks?”*

This chapter will discuss why eWOM in the Hussey community flows unhindered and is highly influential, while eWOM into consumers’ OSN is limited in its flow and influence and how they differ. Based on the comparison of the community and the OSNs, the final part of the conclusion chapter will draw an overall conclusion and explain how this can shed light on marketers options for optimizing these processes. A figure of the thesis design on the following page will make this clear.



# Theory

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The following chapter will introduce the thesis' theoretical framework. It will be explained how the choice of theory was used to answer the thesis statement. Theoretical concepts will be introduced and explained, so that the analytical chapter can utilize these concepts when analyzing their influence on the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community and community members' OSNs.

Most of the popular managerial literature contends that WOM communication process is one of the most powerful forces in the marketplace (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). WOM has been shown to have a significant impact on consumer choice of product as well as post-purchase product perceptions (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Bansal & Voyer, 2000). WOM tends to be highly persuasive and extremely effective (Bristor, 1990), primarily because consumers frequently rely on informal and personal communication with individuals, whom they have close relationships with, built on interpersonal factors: tie-strength, homophily and credibility. Research shows that these are the sources consumers mostly rely on when making purchase decisions rather than formal sources, such as advertising campaigns (Bansal & Voyer 2000; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Brown & Reingen 1987,). Today, the Internet has emerged as a source of and an outlet for eWOM, where consumers can gather unbiased products or service information from other consumers, which have higher credibility, empathy and relevance to customers than marketing created information (Hennig-Thurau, 2004).

Whether a relationship is short, shallow and fleeting, or firmly established, deeply rooted and long lasting, we all have them with the people we surround ourselves with in our daily lives, and research shows that all WOM recommendations take place within some sort of social relationship (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). According to Kelman (1961), it is important to evaluate the influence of the relationship between the sender and receiver in order to know how this will influence the information exchange situation. The relationship between the two determines how interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the recommendation (Kelman, 1961).

## **Interpersonal influence factors**

- Tie strength
- Homophily
- Trust/Credibility

## **Noninterpersonal influence factors**

- Perceived risk
- Sender's expertise
- Receiver's expertise

Interpersonal influencers are known to have a significant effect on WOM when the sender and the receiver have a firmly established, deeply rooted and long lasting relationship, while noninterpersonal influencers traditionally come into effect when the WOM recommendation comes from an individual whom the receiver has a short, shallow and fleeting relationship with (Kelman, 1961). This study uses the theoretical concepts of tie-strength, homophily and credibility when looking into interpersonal influencers, and noninterpersonal influencers perceived risk, sender's and receiver's expertise, which will be explained further in the following sections.

## **Interpersonal Influence**

The earliest research on WOM, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that "*WOM was the most important influence in the purchase of household goods and food products*" (Brown & Reingen, 1987). The study found that WOM was seven times more effective than newspaper and magazine ads, four times as effective as personal selling and twice as effective as radio ads. Even with the invention of the television, studies through the 1960's and 1970's showed the continued importance of interpersonal influence (Brown & Reingen, 1987), which now has transferred to the Internet.

## **Tie-Strength**

Research suggests that tie-strength affects information flows. A fundamental principal of human interaction is that people tend to interact with others who are like themselves, also known as the like-me principle, whereby tie-strength and homophily become major players in the WOM process (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

Tie-strength is indicated by several variables such as: the importance attached to the social relations, frequency of social contact and type of relation (e.g. close friend or acquaintance) (Brown & Reingen, 1987). The relationship between sender and receiver can therefore be categorized according to the closeness, whereby people's relationships are essentially the force that bonds them together. This can be represented by the theoretical term tie-strength (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). "*Tie-strength is a multidimensional construct that represents the strength of the dyadic interpersonal relationships in the context of social networks*" (Trusov et al, 2009). Social relationships are, among others, made up of closeness, intimacy, support and association, which act as building



blocks of tie-strength (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Depending on the degree of the before mentioned variables, Brown and Reingen (1987) argue that there are strong-ties and weak-ties. In 1987, Brown and Reingen explored the effects of WOM from weak-ties versus strong-ties, drawing on Granovetter's (1973) theory that interpersonal relationships are either strong or weak depending on the importance, frequency of contact and social relation. Research has found that when both strong-ties and weak-ties are available as sources of information, most actors will choose the strong-tie source for information (Brown & Reingen, 1987). This means that strong-tie sources are more sought and have more influence on the receiver than the weak-tie. This is due to the fact that tie-strength and credibility go hand in hand, as the frequencies of social contact increases. Here, referrals often happen situationally or environmentally where the recommendations comes up naturally in conversation, rather than being directly solicited.

Strong-ties are perceived as more influential on purchase decision. However, this does not mean that information is more likely to flow between strong-ties than weak-ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Weak-ties provide less personalized, more objective WOM information, and an important implication of this is that weak-ties are more crucial to the flow of information from sub-group to sub-group, whereas strong ties are more influential to the flow of influence of WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

## **Online Tie-Strength**

With the creation of the Internet and virtual communities, WOM has been revitalized and has emerged as a source and an outlet for eWOM communication between customers (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). However, only limited research has been published on consumer-to-consumer communication online where users come together with the purpose of interacting with others who share their interests and passions (Hennig-Thurau et. al. 2004).

In their study of consumption-related online communities, Brown et al. (2007) found that tie-strength, individual-to-individual social ties, is less relevant in an online environment than in an offline. Subjects appeared to use websites as proxies for individuals, hereby developing tie-strength between the information seeker and the source of information, in this case the website and not an individual. Research by Chu & Kim (2011), on the other hand, note that tie-strength is positively associated with eWOM behavior. Chu & Kim (2011) found that perceived tie-strength is positively

related to consumers' intention to seek product-focused information on social media: *"How close and important a consumer feels to the source of the information can have a considerable influence on that consumer's decision to search for opinions on Social Networking Sites"* (Chu & Kim 2011). However, they also found that consumers are not affected by tie-strength when they share eWOM information in OSNs.

It is clear, from the limited research, that there is no agreement on the influence of tie-strength within the eWOM literature with Brown et al. (2007) on one hand saying that tie-strength is not relevant in an online community, and Chu & Kim (2011) on the other hand finding that tie-strength is positively related to consumers' intention to seek eWOM in online social networks. It is curious that research done on online environments turn out such different results on the same topic. This may have to do with the fact that the studies were carried out in two different types of online environments: an online community and an online social network. This differentiation may be of great importance for this thesis and will therefore be explored further in the analysis.

In a WOM context, research unanimously shows that tie-strength does have a strong effect on the flow and influence of WOM, with weak-ties being more crucial to a wide spread flow of information and awareness from sub-group to sub-group and strong-ties being influential on the flow of influence of WOM within a like-minded defined group. Research into eWOM tends to disagree on the importance of tie-strength. One research paper found that tie-strength is not relevant in an online community, while another found that tie-strength does play a role when a consumer is searching for information but had no significant influence when consumers give product information to others in OSNs. The traditional theory concept of tie-strength in an online context will be explored further in part one and two of the analysis. In the first part of the analysis, the theoretical concept of tie-strength will be analyzed within the setting of the Hussey online community and held up against eWOM research and empirical data collected from the community via netnography to determine if and how tie-strength play a role in the flow an influence of eWOM within the community. The same will be done in the second part of the analysis, this time, however, in the setting of members' OSNs and based on in-depth interviews.

## **Homophily**

As mentioned earlier, tie-strength and homophily do go hand-in-hand in literature about traditional WOM. Research shows that homophily carries great influence on WOM processes, and understanding the influence of it can provide valuable insight into the flow and impact of WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

Homophily is the degree to which pairs of individuals are similar in terms of certain attributes, such as age, sex, education and social status (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Prior studies have concluded that friends and members of social networks tend to be similar in socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, race and age, as well as in beliefs and attitudes (Trusov et al., 2009), because individuals tend to socialize with those with similar characteristics. This means that individuals who “group up” are often social-demographically alike, and the more time these individuals spend together, the closer they get, the stronger the tie-strength grows. According to Trusov et al. (2009), interpersonal communications are more likely to occur between two individuals who are alike – homophilous – as a result, exchanges of WOM most frequently occur between individuals who share common qualities (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

Granovetter (1973) and Brown & Reingen (1987) agree; the stronger the tie-strength between two individuals, the more similarly they tend to be. This increases the potential of the sources getting activated as a source of information, as described above. It is hereby clear that tie-strength and homophily goes hand-in-hand when influencing WOM face-to-face.

## **Online Homophily**

Traditional notions of homophily focus on the congruence between the characteristics of the actors in a social network, based on individual attributes such as gender, age, and education. In their study, Brown et al. (2007) found that interpersonal relationships based on individual characteristics are not particularly relevant in an online context, but rather that shared group interests and group mindset drive online homophily, which will be referred to as social homophily from here on. Social homophily is based on an interest in the content of the website, which creates group interests and a

group mind-set, making homophily entirely independent of demographical factors. Chu & Kim's 2011 findings do, however, not support this, as they found that perceived homophily had no effect on consumer's opinion seeking or opinion giving, whereby traditional homophily does not facilitate flow and influence of eWOM messages in a social media context. Chu & Kim (2011) interestingly notes that heterophilous communication seems to facilitate eWOM behaviors between diverse contacts in the online social network environment, meaning that the diversity in an online social media network actually facilitates eWOM between non-homophilous individuals and hereby potentially spreading the eWOM recommendation to individuals who would not be reached in a face-to-face. Within traditional WOM theory, tie-strength and homophily are interconnected, meaning that homophilous demographics have a great significance on the establishment of a social relationship. The more alike individuals are, the more time they tend to spend together, grow closer and strengthen the tie of their relation. These individuals tend to share more with each other, in which the tie-strength and the homophily facilitates the flow of WOM within groups who are demographically alike. Brown et al. (2007) argues that traditional homophily should be replaced with social homophily, which builds on shared group interests, while Chu & Kim (2011), on the other side, argue that homophily has no influence on the flow and impact of eWOM, pointing out that the lack of homophily within OSNs actually facilitates a flow of eWOM between different sub-groups.

This leaves many questions about the influence of homophily on the facilitation of flow and influence of eWOM unanswered. Wherefore both the concept of homophily and social homophily will be explored further in analysis. In the first part of the analysis, will the theoretical concept of homophily be analyzed within the setting of the Hussey online community and held up against eWOM research and empirical data collected from the community via netnography in order to determine if and how tie-strength play a role in the flow and influence of eWOM within the community. The same will be done in the second part of the analysis, this time, however, in the setting of members' online social networks and based on in-depth interviews.

## **Credibility**

Credibility and trust are connected. Trust is defined as "*a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence*" (Kelman, 1961). An individual possesses credibility if his or

her statements are considered truthful and valid, hence worthy of serious consideration (Kelman, 1961). Kelman further points out that Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) distinguish between two bases for credibility: expertness and trustworthiness. This suggests that a source possesses credibility if the receiver believes that the sender is likely to know the truth or tell the truth. Countless studies have suggested that trust plays a vital role in information exchanges and knowledge integration, because it gives individuals a way of justifying and evaluating the sender and the information (Chu & Kim, 2011). Trustworthiness is largely based on over-all respect, like-mindedness, and lack of vested interest (Kelman, 1961), which creates the foundation for the degree to which we have “good reasons” to know that someone will behave in a specific manner. This, in turn, creates trust in the person. “Good reasons” may or may not be rational, and each individual makes a personal choice as to what constitutes a reasonable basis for trust, based on the knowledge they have about an individual, such as competency, willingness to take responsibility, reliability and dependability or reputation (Chu & Kim, 2011). Other factors may include: personal relationship with another person; altruism; the degree to which the other person expresses care or concern about one’s situation and the reciprocity shown or promised regarding one’s situation (Chu & Kim, 2011). In other words, trust is build through an uncountable number of social interactions, dynamics and behavior and is by researchers considered a crucial facilitator flow and influence of WOM.

### ***Online Credibility***

Trust is an equally important factor in online credibility and a very influential force on eWOM online. The higher the level of trust, which users have to their “friend-list”, the greater the likelihood they will seek or give opinions within that network. Trust is an important tool in evaluating the source and the information and therefore carries critical influence on eWOM’s flow and influence (Chu & Kim 2011). Research shows that trust and credibility is equally important offline and within online social environments, because there is a positive association between perceived trust and individuals’ intention to exchange information via virtual communities. Therefore, the concept of credibility as an interpersonal influencer will be used to analyze the impact that credibility has on the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community and members’ OSN. This will be done in the same manner as with the previous theoretical concepts in part one and two of the analysis.

The first part of the theoretical framework has shown the importance of interpersonal influencers on the process of WOM as well as eWOM. It has become very clear that interpersonal influencers traditionally carry significant influence on WOM, whereby these need to be researched further in online environments. As mentioned before, very little research has been done on eWOM and even less on eWOM on social media platforms, which is why researchers have very little knowledge on the workings of eWOM within these networks. To gain more insight into this area and begin to understand the process of eWOM in online social networks, we have to test out the traditional theories of WOM within this setting. This brings us to the other half of the theoretical framework, noninterpersonal influences: perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise. These are equally important influencers on the facilitation and influence of eWOM and will be explained and described in the following section.

## **Noninterpersonal Influence**

Noninterpersonal influencers are another set of factors that are likely to come into play when information is exchanged between two individuals. These are factors that are not based on social influence but rather subjective perceptions. There was found no earlier research testing the influence of these within an online context. However, research done within WOM agrees that these factors are just as important as the interpersonal influencers when talking about facilitation of flow and influence of WOM (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Therefore, these make up the other half of the theoretical framework for this thesis. Noninterpersonal concepts, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise, will be explained in depth in the following section, but will not be discussed from an eWOM perspective, as in the first part of the theoretical framework, because none was found.

## **Perceived Risk**

Purchasing any product or services come with certain risks, but especially services bear higher levels of perceived risk. For instance, medical care would likely have a higher associated perceived risk than the selection of a favorite restaurant. Arndt (1967) pointed out that when "*word of mouth activity was higher, the higher the perceived risk*" (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), meaning that the higher

the perceived risk, the more actively individuals communicate and use WOM to make the best purchase decision and reduce their risk.

Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) especially emphasized the role of risk within service encounters (Buttle, 1998). Their research indicates that there is a higher level of risk associated with the purchase of services, primarily because services are intangible, nonstandardized, and usually sold without guarantees and warranties (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Though perceived risk can potentially block a consumer purchase, reports support that WOM is the most important source of risk-reducing information (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), and WOM recommendations can upon clarification and feedback create an even greater impact on the receiver. Still et. al. (1984) reinforces these points by pointing out that the influence of WOM on purchase decisions is less dramatic in a low-risk scenario as opposed to its more influential effects in a high-risk purchase situation (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Perceived risk originates from a completely subjective place; how risky a product, service or even social situation is depends on the individual's values, financial situation and individual experiences, whereby a service that is perceived as high risk for one individual is not necessarily perceived that way by others. The theoretical concept of perceived risk is mostly used to describe the feeling of risk that consumers feel when deciding whether or not to buy a product or a service. However, I believe that this concept can be transferred to the information exchange process as well, where it affects the facilitation of flow and influence of eWOM.

This hypostasis and the traditional theoretical concept of perceived risk will be tested and analyzed within the Hussey community and members' OSNs to see its effects. Part one and two of the analysis will explore these aspects based on data collected via netnography within the online network and in-depth interviews with Hussey community members. Perceived risk has furthermore been found to be influenced by the receiver's or sender's expertise, because perceived risk comes from a lack of knowledge and experience (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). In the following sections, I will elaborate on these aspects.

## **Sender's Expertise**

Sender's expertise as a key factor underlying the construct of source credibility is well founded in consumer behavior literature (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Studies have found that individuals, who are

highly ranked in expertise, are also likely to possess greater awareness and knowledge regarding product and service alternatives available in the market (Bristor, 1990):

*“The extent to which the source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information, and expertise is expected to induce persuasion because receivers have little motivation to check the veracity of the source’s assertions by retrieving and rehearsing their own thoughts”* (Bristor, 1990).

An expert’s WOM message will have a significant impact on the receiver’s purchase decision, because an individual’s expertise is a force that acts to shape the results of persuasion attempts (Bansal & Voyer 2000). Intuitively, one can then think that the sender’s expertise affects how actively the WOM message is sought, which is supported by Bansal & Voyer (2000). They found that if WOM is actively sought from an expert source, where the information can be expected to have greater influence on the information seeker’s purchase decision. This premise is also validated by Gilly et al. (1998), who reports strong support to the idea that the sender’s expertise positively affects the influence it has on the receiver’s purchase decision (Trusov et al. 2009). If an information seeker actively looks for information, she would believe the gain to be significantly more from a source who is perceived as being knowledgeable. (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Conversely, if the sender’s level of expertise is perceived as low, the receiver of the eWOM message will have little to none influence on the receiver (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). This reinforces the notion that behavioral influences are more pronounced when the credibility of the source is high rather than low (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Recommendations from experts or people with expertise will have greater influence on the receiver’s purchase decision, especially if the WOM is actively sought. The theoretical concept of sender’s expertise will be analyzed both in part one and two of the analysis. Here the theoretical concept will be analyzed and held up against the empirical data collected from Hussey’s online community and the members’ statement in order to determine how sender’s expertise facilitates flow and influence of eWOM within the community and members’ OSNs. As mentioned earlier, the receiver’s basis highly affects the influence which eWOM recommendations have on the receiver. Receiver’s expertise is a part of the basis that carries great significance on the flow and influence of eWOM and will be described in the following section.



## Receiver's Expertise

Research, within product has established a relationship between the level of a receiver's expertise and the extent to which individuals seeking information will be open to and engage with an active search for information, which will be described in the following.

Bansal and Voyer (2000) reports that a number of studies suggested a negative relationship between the amount of expertise an information seeker has and the degree to which he or she conducts an external search for information. Alternatively, other studies report knowledge as an encouraging factor, because it enables the receiver to process information faster and easier than if he or she possesses little expertise. However, Gilly et al. (1998) points out that "*the preponderance of the evidence supports a negative relationship for information*" (Trusov et al., 2009). Essentially saying that those with high expertise are less likely to engage in a search for information than those with low product expertise (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), because the receivers already possess a high product or service knowledge and feel little need to consult others before product selection. Consumers who have less product knowledge and experience are likely to doubt their ability to make appropriate and satisfactory product choices, meaning they are likely to seek the opinions of others for product advice. The theoretical findings within this area are, as shown above, inconsistent and call for clarification.

The process of seeking WOM is an active exposure to the WOM message, which results in the consumer being more predisposed to the WOM message (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Consequently, a message that is actively sought will have a greater impact on the receiver. The level of search and openness tends to be greatest among those consumers who are moderately knowledgeable about the product or service and least among consumers who are either extremely knowledgeable or, at the opposite extreme, not at all knowledgeable. Hence, studies have resulted in the formulation of an inverted U-shaped relationship between knowledge and how actively information is sought. The inverted U-shaped relationship indicates that active search for information is greatest when the receiver's expertise is rated moderate and lower when expertise is either high or low (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Further research into this area shows that it is a conjunction between knowledge and perceived risk. The less knowledgeable a consumer is about a product or a service, the higher their perceived risk: "*those with less product experience probably perceive more risk and, from an information economics perspective, have the most to gain from engaging in WOM information*

*gathering*” (Trusov et al. 2009), and the more likely they are to adhere to recommendations. The theoretical concept and the idea of the inverted U-shaped relationship between knowledge and information seeking will be analyzed within the Hussey community as well as members’ online social networks in order to see how this concept affects the flow and influence of eWOM.

This theoretical framework is expected to provide in-depth insight into the influence of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers on facilitating eWOM flow and influence with the Hussey community and in members’ OSNs. It is furthermore expected that the analysis of these theoretical concepts will reveal the workings of eWOM on social media, which marketers can use further understand eWOM and optimize processes that facilitate eWOM on these platforms. The following chapter will discuss the methods used for data collection and their effects on the analysis.

## Methods

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The methods chapter explains which empirical methods have been used in this case study, why they are relevant methods for this particular study, and how they help answer the thesis statement in a fulfilling manner. This study uses what Kozinets refers to as a “blended” approach that includes online data collection as well as face-to-face interviews (Kozinets, 2013). This means that the study uses two different types of methods: netnography and in-depth interviews, where netnography was used to collect data from the Hussey community and interviews as a method of collecting data from community members OSNs. Netnography and in-depth interviews will be used in combination with each other to interpret the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community and in member’s OSNs.

## Theory of Science

This thesis moves within the realm of phenomenological social constructivism as described by Berger & Luckmann in Fuglsang & Olsen’s (2009) work *videnskabsteori på tværs af fagkulture og paradigmer i samfundsvidenskaberne*. This theory of science and way of viewing the world was used in conjunction with Kozinets (2013) netnography method and Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2008) approach to interviews, both of whom build their methods of phenomenological principals. The theoretical concepts used to elucidate the thesis statement were furthermore selected based on the researcher’s epistemological and ontological views, whereby they fit in to and operate within the realm of phenomenology social constructivism. This because they address the issue of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers on the sender and receiver’s feelings and lifeworld within a social media construct.

The problem area section of the thesis makes it clear that the interest in the subject arose in a tension field between the researchers pre-understandings and the theoretical framework of the thesis. The curiosity of how interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect eWOM on social media in combination with the theoretical framework resulted in research questions to which answers were sought within the Hussey community. The sum of the research questions is expressed in the thesis statement, which is based on the researchers’ pre-understandings of eWOM on social

media. This means that the research is affected by researchers' personal pre-understandings. However, these have been made clear from the beginning, whereby the researcher is aware of their influence. This means that the researcher is not able to reach an objective truth, and the results of this research is influenced by social processes (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2009), in which the research becomes a social construction.

The thesis uses two different types of theoretical concepts: interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers. These are used to clarify how traditional WOM concepts transfers to an eWOM context, how they affect the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community and community members' OSNs. These online forums are viewed as social constructs, in which the community members carry out social interaction that makes up the members' lifeworld online. According to Berger & Luckmann (1966), this is where the prerequisite for community members' online lifeworld is found (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2009). If the researcher wants to gain insight into and try to understand this lifeworld, the researcher must, from a phenomenological standpoint, enhance the intersubjectivity between the researcher and the community member, which in this case study is attempted through netnographical observation and in-depth interviews with community members. However, a full comprehension of the community members' lifeworld will never be achieved, because the researcher from a phenomenological viewpoint will never fully understand a lifeworld that they are not living themselves (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2009).

This thesis moves within the realm for phenomenological social constructivism, because the thesis explores the flow and effect of eWOM within community members' online lifeworld and assess their feelings towards the eWOM and the sender of the message. The theoretical concepts of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers are used to create an in-depth look at the social processes that occur within an eWOM recommendation in OSNs. To understand the eWOM process the researcher needs to understand what community members are feeling during the process and gain an understanding of the community members' feelings and lifeworld. This is reached through intersubjectivity between researcher and community members through methods of netnography and in-depth interviews. However, it is important to note that knowledge and realization through this process is not a reflection of reality, but always an interpretation reached by the researcher (Fuglsang & Olsen 2009).

The following will discuss and explain the use of netnography and in-depth interviews as methods in this case study. The first section addresses netnography and the online community where it was carried out. The second section addresses how vox pop was used as a tool to create contact between the researcher and the community members at live events in London, and how the interviewees were selected. The section will furthermore discuss and explain the method of in-depth interviews.

## **The Community and Netnography**

This paragraph will introduce the Hussey community, which has been studied through netnographical observation to collect data about the community and how the members interact. Secondly will the method of netnography be presented, discussed and operationalized.

### **The Community**

The community and netnography part of the data collection process took a case study approach and explored how Hussey's consumption-based online community operates, and how eWOM flows and influences the community members. The method of netnography was applied to the Hussey community over the span of three months (February - April 2015), observing Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The characteristics of the community members are diverse and reflect Hussey's broad target group. Community members are women, roughly between 25 – 55 years old, with varied backgrounds; social, educational, professional, cultural, and national. The common denominator is not demographics but rather a common interest in Hussey's content, which will be discussed in the analysis. Community members are users of different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and have liked/followed/subscribed to Hussey's profiles on correlating platforms, of which they become community members. Communication between community members takes place on Hussey's before mentioned social media profiles via text posted in threads attached to videos, articles, a picture or a comment made by Hussey. All postings made by Hussey

on various platforms were identified and attached threads, were observed and analyzed using netnography, which will be described in the following section.

## Netnography

Netnography is participant-observational research based on online fieldwork. With this method, the researcher uses computer-mediated communication as a source of data to arrive at an ethnographic understanding and representation of cultural or communal phenomena (Kozinets, 2013).

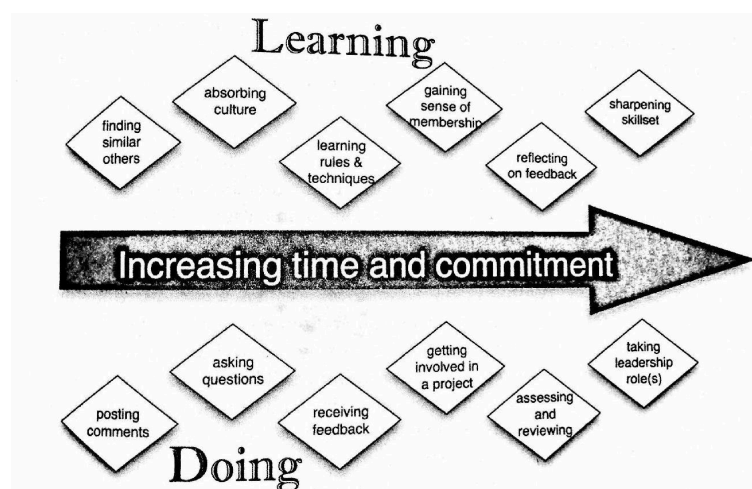
When collecting data using netnography, the researcher must communicate with members of the online community rather than just observing them. That communication can take many forms, but whichever form it takes, it entails relevant involvement, engagement, contact, interaction, communion, relation, collaboration and connection with community members (Kozinets, 2013):

*“If we want quality netnographies that can stand up to the standard qualities ethnography, filled with deep understanding and thick description, then lurking, downloading data and analyzing while sitting on the sidelines are simply not an option”* (Kozinets, 2013).

Robert Kozinets emphasizes that removing the participative role of the ethnographer from netnography also removes the opportunity to experience embedded cultural understanding. Without the profound knowledge and experience of the cultural context, the interpretations are impaired, and the netnographer is forced to engage in guesswork about cultural meanings she does not fully understand, which is in line with phenomenological views. If the researcher is not a participant in the community, she has no one in the community to turn to, to validate, dispute or expand upon interpretations (Kozinets, 2013,75).

Kozinets underlines the importance of participation in the online community and highly criticizes content analysis approaches where the observational stance of netnography is taken to an extreme, offering unobtrusive downloads without social contact. Kozinets argues that this shallow approach to netnography puts the researcher at risk of gaining only a shallow cultural understanding (Kozinets, 2013). The use of netnography, in this case study, is based on observation of Hussey’s online community, which could be interpreted as the type of content analysis approach that

Kozinets criticizes. The netnographic part of the data collection process was carried out as unobtrusive observations of communication between community members within the online community and communication out of the community into online social networks. There was no interaction between the researcher and the community, because the aim of the observation was to observe how community members interact and make online recommendations to one another. This is due to the fact that the community is a functioning social construct with communication, social processes and relationships, which is its own reality or lifeworld and knowledge is exchanged. According to the theory of phenomenology, the researcher is to use epoché: a process where the researcher is to block biases and assumptions in order to explain a phenomenon in terms of its own meaning, placing themselves in “brackets” in an attempt to avoid influencing the situation (Birkler, 2007). Based on this, it was decided that observations in combination with in-depth interviews would provide the best basis for describing and interpreting the phenomenon while gaining intersubjectivity through in-depth interviews. Hereby creating the social interactions where the interviewer can validate, dispute or expand upon interpretations made through netnographic observations of the community and their interactions. Kozinets supports the idea of blending methods depending on the kind of access, insights and disclosure of its participants in an online community to avoid partial and incomplete data about a community (Kozinets, 2013). This is because Kozinets believes that netnography works on a spectrum of engagement and involvement, ranging from reading messages regularly in real-time; following links; rating; replying to other members via e-mail or other one-on-one communications; offering short comments; offering long comments; joining in and contributing to community activities; and so on (Kozinets, 2013 96), which means that there is no set framework for participation because it happens on a scale. This is illustrated by the following figure:

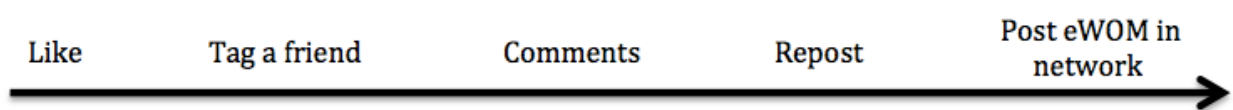


Kozinets, 2013

In reference to the figure on the previous page, learning was obtained through observation, reflection and interpretation of community members' relationships, communication and recommendations with the community online. Traveling to London and participating in two of Hussey's live seminars got the researcher involved in the community offline. Here, the researcher observed how the community interacts with each other, when brought together face-to-face, and used this opportunity to gain valuable insight in to the lifeworld of the community members.

## Execution of Data Collection

The netnographical data collection was carried out within Hussey's online community, but as explained in the introduction, the Hussey community is spread out across several different social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The collection process took place from February – April 2015 across the different social media sites. Each social media platform was observed daily for eWOM recommendations made between community members or from a community member to her personal online social network. The content of each social media platform was furthermore examined to observe and capture how members use eWOM, how it flows, and what influence it has on the receiver. This will be done by looking at social media threads attached to Hussey's posts, such as videos, pictures or comments on each platform: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Looking for recommendation of Hussey or any of his services: online courses, live seminars, retreats or his book. Taking every form of recommendation in to account, such as likes, reposts and comments:



Where recommendation appear on a scale ranging from likes to explicit written out eWOM recommendations posted on the community members Facebook-profile, as seen above. Examples of these can be found in the analysis.



Like ethnography, does netnography aim at legitimacy and seeks validity by paying careful attention to detailed and rigorous research practices (Kozinets, 2013). Netnographers can use different types of data collection practices, however, archival and field note data will be used in this study. The main method for data collection will be field notes: “*Field notes [are] subjective impression and expectation about the all-important why question we rise*” (Kozinets, 2013). A journal was kept while observing the community with notes about: observations, the relationship between members, how they interact and make recommendations to one another on each social media platform (to legitimize the observation and as reminders of dynamics within the community. To further validate the observations, archival data was directly copied and downloaded from the online community, which captures examples of eWOM recommendations made within the community or into community members’ online social networks, which will be used in the analysis.

## **Coding of Data**

The netnographical data is after collection coded for the two different parts of the analysis: eWOM within the community and in OSNs. For the first part of the analysis, data is separated into theoretical themes: tie-strength, homophily and credibility. All screen shots and quotes were organized and matched to the different themes. If a quote or screen shot could be used to support multiple themes, it was placed under several different themes. The same was then done with the second part of the analysis, which has the following themes: perceived risk, sender’s expertise and receiver’s expertise. This creates an easy overview of screen shots and quotes relevant for the different sections of the analysis, which will ensure that nothing is overlooked and strengthen the validity of the analysis.

Qualitative methods were furthermore used to gain a deeper insight into the community, members and how eWOM flows and influences within the community and OSNs. Here ethnographic observation, vox pop and in-depth interviews were used to enhance intersubjectivity. Observation and vox pop was used at two of Hussey’s live events in London as facilitators into the community whereby the researcher could set up in-depth interviews, which will be discussed in the following sections.

## Interviewees and Qualitative Interviews

This paragraph will firstly introduce vox pop as a tool to create contact with the community members at Hussey's live events and gain insight into how community members was introduced to Hussey's coaching service. Secondly, the interviewees will be introduced and the method of in-depth interviews will be presented, discussed and operationalized.

### Vox Pop

This paragraph will account for the use of vox pop as initial contact and a way to gain access into the Hussey community.

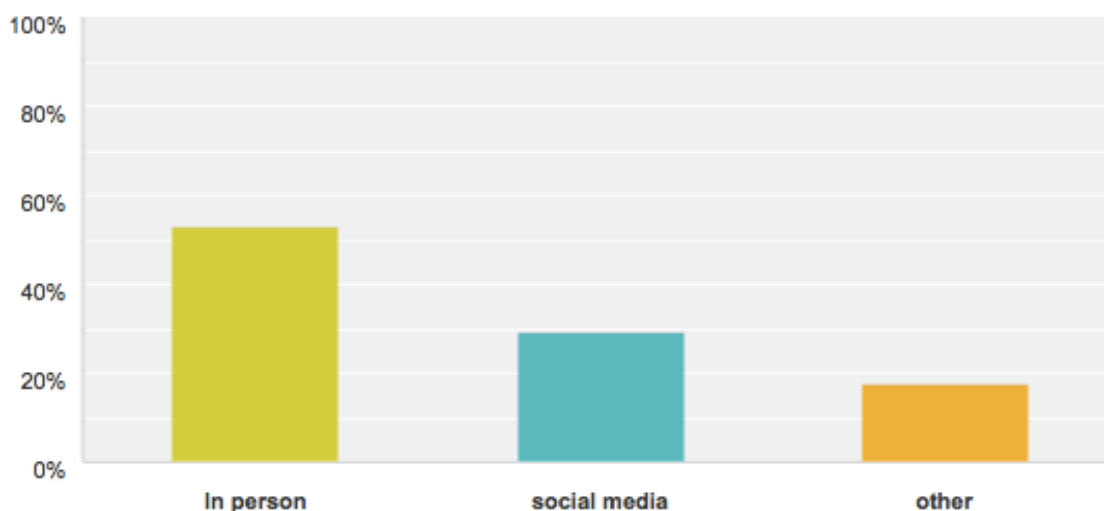
The term vox pop stems from the Latin phrase vox populi, which literally means voice of people. This method is widely used in broadcasting journalism and is often referred to as the man on the street interview: *"popular opinion as represented by informal comments from members of the public, especially when broadcast or published"* (The Oxford Dictionary, 2015). Vox pop is a short interview with members of the general public in spontaneous situations, where the respondent is caught off guard and therefore gives spontaneous unrehearsed answers. All the respondents are either asked the same question, or, in some cases, the same set of three to four questions about a specific subject that is relevant to the respondent. It is the interviewers responsibility to locate respondents who have a qualified opinion and who can express it briefly (Meilby 2004). To access interviewees with opinions on and valuable insight into eWOM recommendation, in the Hussey community, the vox pop was carried out at one of the coaching business' bi-weekly events. Based on the findings from the Hussey community, it is expected that the women who attend the event have been involved in a recommendation process online or offline. This assumption is based on observations of the community in combination with surveys carried out by the case business, indicating that the majority of attendees have been involved in a recommendation process.

Vox pop was chosen as the initial contact method because it is a quick and easy way to "test the water", within the Hussey community environment, in which the respondents felt safe and more likely to open up about their feelings because of this security (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008). To

further ensure that respondents felt comfortable and trusting within the situation, I was formally introduced by a Hussey team member, so the women knew who I was and would associate me with a Hussey team. This was done in the hope of transferring the trust, that the women have in Hussey and his team, to the interview situation. The vox pop interview is designed to provide insight into how the respondents heard about Hussey's coaching service, this to see if he was recommended to the attendees face-to-face or via social media. It is, however, important to remember that the vox pop method is used as a preliminary introduction to the community members and to gain insight into how recommendations are made within the Hussey community, not to gain knowledge about the community as a whole.

## Results of Vox Pop

Sixty people were interviewed at two different events during the attendee's one-hour lunch breaks, where the women were half way through their seminar and at a point in the event where they were eager to talk. The vox pop was done via surveymonkey.com, and three questions were asked by an interviewer (Appendix 1.) who entered the answers directly into surveymonkey via an iPad. Eighty-two percent of the women interviewed in the vox pop heard about Hussey via word-of-mouth either online or offline, the remaining eighteen percent had heard about the event via Meetup.com, which is a network of local groups, where anyone can find different social groups which meet up face-to-face.



The chart shows that fifty-three percent of the interviewed attended the event because of a face-to-face in person recommendation, the other twenty-nine percent of the recommendations were made on social media. This provides valuable insight into the division of recommendations, where face-to-face WOM makes up the majority of recommendations, in line with the findings of the analysis. The method was furthermore used to create the initial face-to-face contact with the community members that would lead to in-depth interviews. Due to the focus of this study, the women who heard about Hussey or the event through a social media recommendation were asked to participate in interviews. Ten women agreed to participate in Skype interviews about the influence and flow of eWOM within the Hussey community and their OSN's. The method will be discussed in the following section.

## **Interviewees**

There was no specification of sample size, initially ten had agreed to partake in the interview, at the live event, but for various reasons some decided not to participate. Ultimately, five women were interviewed from a wide range of backgrounds and demographic segments. In terms of age, the women ranged from 25 – 40 years old and with varied educational backgrounds ranging from high school to postgraduate degrees, with respondents' occupation ranging between student, administrator, professor and opera singer. While the demographic spread of the respondents is wide, the sample was nevertheless purposely selected within members of the Hussey consumption-based online community, to provide insight into the workings of eWOM within community members' OSNs and hereby act as key informants. The theory selected to understand the flow and influence eWOM in OSNs does not place a significant emphasis on individual characteristics, such as demographics, whereby these were not determining factors in the selection process. Respondents were solicited through means of vox pop at two different Hussey seminars in London. However, due to some respondents' drop-out, snowballing was also used to expand the sample and generate additional contacts within the Hussey community. The following respondents were interviewed for the thesis: Johanna, Mae, Bri, Lieselle and Fatima. The interviewees will not be further introduced due to a promise of anonymity and to prevent readers from making assumptions and being bias based on demographic and background information.

## **In-depth Interviews**

This section will account for the five in-depth interviews. The method of in-depth interviews will be used to uncover respondent's attitudes and motives. This type of interview is semi-structured and therefore allows flexibility for the interviewer to include or explore new themes that might unveil themselves during the interview (Kristensen, 2010).

In preparation for the interview, an interview guide has been devised. This is intended to work as a tool and guideline to clarify which themes and questions are essential to receive answers on (Kristense, 2010). The interview guide is devised to include relevant themes and hypothesis that have developed through prior personal understandings of social dynamics and prior knowledge of theoretical concepts. Initially, this goes against the research paper's phenomenological approach, where open exploratory questions lead to mutual understanding that is shaped through communication and interaction between individuals (Birkler, 2007). This open-ended approach creates the opportunity to gain insight into the interviewee's experiences and emotions regarding traditional WOM recommendations and eWOM. However, in this case study there is a need to take the interview in a specific direction, so that relevant topics can be elucidated. Though the interview guide is made up of theoretical themes and personal hypotheses, the questions still aim to be open and exploratory to honor the phenomenological tradition and allow the interviewees to take the interview into unexplored themes and areas.

The articulation of hypostasis' furthermore made process of applying epoché more tangible, so the interviewer became aware of her personal assumptions and could work actively to not let them affect the interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Theoretical themes and personal hypotheses therefore make up the framework that set out to disclose how Hussey's coaching services are recommended on social media, with questions such as: how does eWOM recommendations flow within the online community and community members OSN's? and how they influence the receiver? (Appendix 4.). The questions are phrased to encourage the interviewee to open up and share detailed answers that provide insight into the respondent's lifeworld, to see how eWOM affects them and makes them feel. This will provide a solid foundation for further

analysis (Kristensen, 2010), in which statements will be used to describe or interpret during the main analysis (Boolsen, 2008).

## **Technical Aspects of the Interviews**

The five interviews were done via Skype in the interviewees' private homes to enhance the feeling of a secure environment where interviewee freely could open up about her viewpoints and feelings. The interviews were recorded so the interviewer could focus solely on topics and dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008). The five interviews were all transcribed in full length, since these in combination with the netnographical data make up the empirical foundation for this study. Transcriptions provide a clearer overview of the information and make up the first vital step of the analytical process (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008). The transcriptions were then uploaded to the qualitative research tool Dedoose for coding. The coding was separated into theoretical themes: tie-strength, homophily, credibility, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise and a sub-category: other important quotes (Appendix 2.).

This creates a simple overview of quotes organized under relevant theoretical themes, which eases the analytical process and ensures that relevant points are made.

## **Reliability and Validity**

Kvale uses the terms reliability and validity in a qualitative perspective; these terms go hand-in-hand with the qualitative study (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008). The interviewer's presence during the devise of the interview guide will, from a phenomenological social constructivist viewpoint, make her part of the general whole. This needs to be understood in conjunction with the interviewer's role as researcher who has formulated the questions and who will also interpret them in the interviews (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2004). By using the method of qualitative interviews and netnography, which move within phenomenological social constructivism, the researcher becomes an active tool in the process: before, under and after the interview, hereby acting as a critical tool in understanding the thesis, which in a phenomenological view, is highly desirable in order to attain a deeper understanding of the respondents lifeworld. On the other hand, it is important to note that this very process is often what the method of phenomenology is highly criticized for. To further and

enhance the intersubjectivity, the mutual understanding between the interviewer and the interviewee, the first step is to address the reliability and validity of the subject matter (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2004).

Reliability is strengthened by giving the interviewees limited knowledge about the subject before the interview. The informant is only given a short introduction into the field of study and the interviewer's background to ease into the interview questions and create curiosity about the study field. There are contention for and against sharing the research topic with the interviewee beforehand. Sharing the research topic with the interviewee before the interview gives the informant the opportunity to reflect upon the subject, including their opinions and how much they want to share (Bryman, 2008). This type of reflection can get the process started beforehand and lead to a much deeper interview, but the process can also have a negative effect on the respondent's answers, if they reflect too much of what it means and how much they want to let the researcher in. The interviews are carried out at convenient time for the interviewee and in surroundings that make the informant feel secure. This will according to Kvale and Birkmann (2008) strengthen the reliability. A dilemma that comes with the use of qualitative in-depth interviews has to do with validity. There is a risk that the interviewees do not want to speak out about topics within the research area. This can be due to sensitivity of the research, which in this case is likely since Hussey's community is based on women who are unhappy and may not want to share intimate details with a stranger. This may be due to the societal prejudice towards coaching and self-development, which can have consequences for the interview whereby the interviewee limits their statements (Bryman, 2008). This is why trust is vital between the interviewer and is accommodated by tapping into the trust shared by the community members in Hussey's team.

This chapter has explained the theory, methodical and scientific basis for this thesis. The following analysis chapter will describe the analytical strategy. Hereafter will the analysis be separated in two based on: the online community and community members OSNs. Here will theoretical concepts be applied to the empirical data collected by netnography and in-depth interviews whereby the thesis statement can be answered.

## **Analytical Strategy**

The thesis will use traditional theoretical marketing concepts: interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers to analyze the flow and influence of eWOM within an social media. These concepts have been selected to examine if traditional face-to-face marketing theory is valid and useful in a social media setting, and if they can be used to evaluate and gain insight into recommendations on social media as well. The thesis utilizes theoretical concepts: tie-strength, homophily, credibility, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise to determine how senders and receivers are affected by these influencers when exchanging recommendation about Hussey' coaching service. This study is carried out within the framework of the Hussey community among the community members who are apart of his community. Here the theoretical concepts are held up against empirical findings based on netnographical observation and in-depth interviews. The analysis will focus on eWOM's flow and influence, based on how sender and receiver is influenced by interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers. These theoretical concepts focus on the processes that go on within the individual when evaluating recommendations and deciding if they are of value and worthy of passing on. This means that the theoretical framework operates within a phenomenological social constructivist viewpoint, where the researcher aims to understand the sender and receivers lifeworld – the evaluations and feelings that occurs in the individual when relating to eWOM.

The process that is being described and analyzed in this thesis is, therefore, an internal individual process, which does not take external constructions and processes into account. The sole focus of the analysis is the effect of the relationship between the sender and the receiver on the eWOM recommendation. Thus, the analysis does not try to understand the type of relationship there is between the two. By doing so, the thesis for example delimitates from looking into the influence of identity's on the flow and influence of eWOM, where interaction shapes personality, character and identify in relation to others. Another delimitation is the basis of the receiver, when they receive the eWOM recommendation, as theories show that a person's attitude towards a product is key to deciding the best way of trying to convince an individual to change her mind.



The aim of the thesis is to provide marketers with valuable insight into how eWOM flows and influences community members in a service-based community and within these community members' OSNs in order to shed light on factors that might limit the flow and influence of eWOM. This is done so that marketers can understand why and optimize processes for eWOM online. It is, however, important to understand that this case study was not carried out with the aim of being generalizable to any service category, but can enter into a collective process of knowledge within the area of eWOM.

## Analysis

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The analysis is separated into two sections. The first one will focus on the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community, based on empirical data collected via netnography and focusing on key interpersonal influencers: tie-strength, homophily and credibility and their effect on the flow and influence of eWOM. The second part of the analysis will look into the flow and influence of eWOM in community members' OSNs, based on in-depth interviews made with Hussey community members, by analyzing noninterpersonal influencers: perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise and their effect on the flow and influence of eWOM.

### **Analysis: Part One – eWOM in the community**

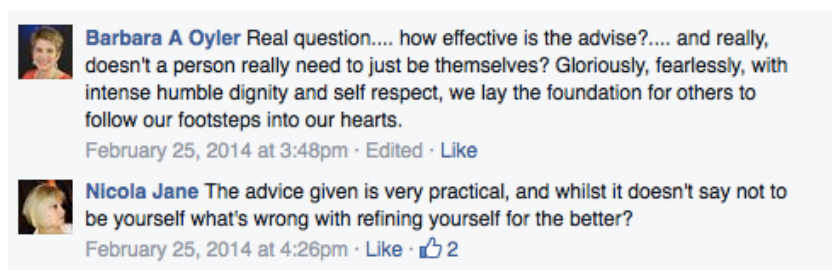
This part of the analysis will focus on eWOM within the Hussey community. Firstly, it will be determined why this union of women can be considered an online community; despite the fact they are spread across and based on different social media platforms, and how it is possible to use theoretical concepts developed for WOM interaction in an eWOM analysis within an online network. Secondly, the influence of interpersonal influencers will be analyzed based on netnographical observations from the community.

#### **Online community**

The term “virtual community” was developed by internet pioneer Howard Rheingold (1993), who defined it as: *“social aggregations that emerge when enough people carry on [...] public discussions long enough, with sufficient enough human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyper space”* (Kozinets, 2013). In the beginning, the Internet was seen more as a book, in which users sought information rather than engaging in conversation. Online conversations seemed to be fleeting and often of informational or of functional nature. However, today's online communities and social media sites carry complex markers of culture and create or manifest new connections or communities (Kozinets, 2013). The community that Matthew Hussey has created around his coaching business, on various social media platforms, is a perfect example of this. With time, it has become socially acceptable for likeminded people to connect through computer-

meditated connectivity, whereby online communities have developed as commonplace for individuals to connect and communicate about common interests, lifestyle or attitudes (Kozinets, 2013).

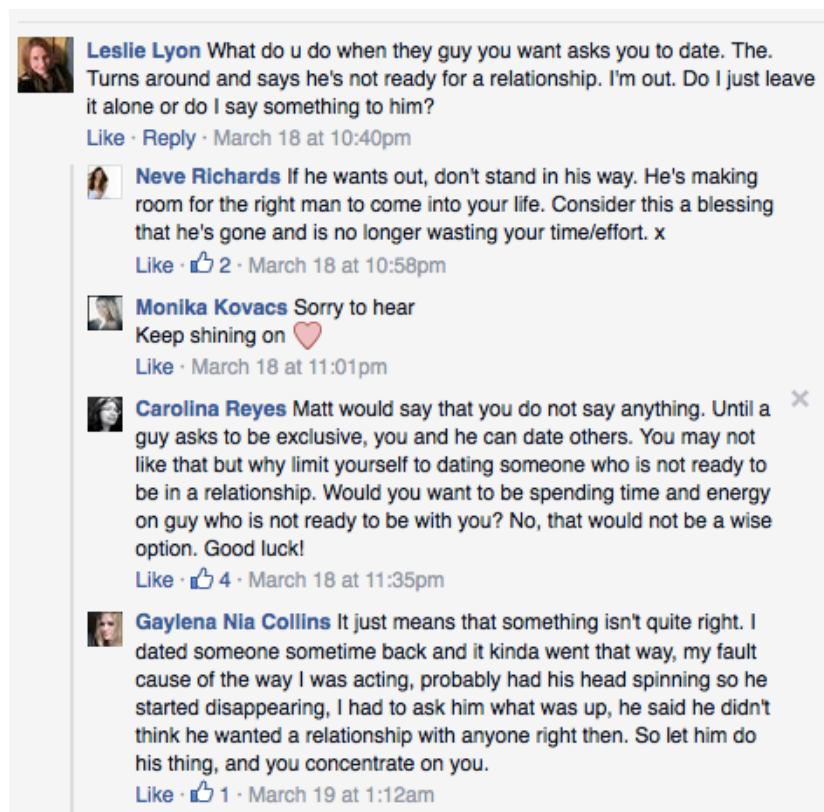
Hussey has used this societal development to create a consumption-based and likeminded community around his coaching business on social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, where Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were observed for this study. According to Kozinets, (2002) are online communities contexts where consumers take part in discussions and attempt to inform and influence fellow consumers about products, services and brands. Within the Hussey community, women discuss coaching related topics and exchange advice or eWOM recommendations about Hussey's coaching services:



Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 22.03.15

Through observation of the online community, it became clear that community members eagerly recommend Hussey to information seekers. The community members generally make a wide range of recommendations about Hussey's techniques, book, online programs or live events and carry out conversations about their experiences and the effectiveness of his techniques (Facebook; YouTube; Twitter, Matthew Hussey, 2015).

The community builds on Hussey's self-development and human dynamics coaching, where community members possess a broad range of knowledge and interest within these topics (Facebook; YouTube; Twitter, Matthey Hussey, 2015). The community members are joined together by this common interest, and members are passionate about discussing topics within the field, exchanging personal experiences and seeking recommendations from each other:



Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 10.03.15

This type of communication between the women indicates the present of an online community. It may seem odd to apply WOM theory, designed for face-to-face interaction where a wealth of social context cues are available, on online interactions. However, research focusing on the social-emotional nature of computer-mediated communication, based on principles in social cognition and interpersonal relationship development from social psychology, suggests that, when given enough time, individuals can create fully formed impressions of others based solely on the written content of electronic messages (Brown et al., 2007). It can be argued that eWOM communication within these online communities, in the traditional sense, has limited social presence, but Brown et al. (2007) argues that communities provide information along with social support and are an important supplement to social relationships and consumption behavior. The Hussey community provides members with a social circle who are experiencing the same issues, a network of women that community members might not have access to in their everyday lives. Although the community is consumption-based, it also offers its members social support and reinforcement from women who understand and can relate to each other, despite of different nationalities backgrounds.

Netnographic observations of community communication made it clear that the conversations between the women mirror face-to-face conversations. Women within the community support and encourage each other in the in same way that can be observed between girlfriends offline. Leslie, for example, asked: *“What do you do when the guy you want asks you on a date. Then turns around and says he is not ready for a relationship...Do I just leave it alone or do I say something to him?”* (Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 10.03.15) Where to Neve responds: *“If he wants out, don’t stand in his way. He is making room for the right man to come in to your life. Consider it a blessing that he is gone and not longer wasting your time/effort. X”* (Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 15.04.15). This is very casual and familiar conversation in a network where the women are strangers, have had no face-to-face contact and no traditional social relationship to tie them together. The conversations carry on as if the women were close girlfriends, strong-ties, confiding in one another in a traditional face-to-face environment, but are carried out in a public online forum between two strangers, providing each other with the supplementary social support that Brown et al. (2007) refers to. This means that interactions within the community are both socially and consumption based; that the community is used both as a source of information but also as a place of emotional support, hereby living up to Kozinets (2013) definition of a consumption-based community.

It is hereby clear that the women surrounding Hussey’s business make up an online community, despite being spread across several social media platforms, because they carry on public discussions, recommend Hussey’s coaching services and support each other emotionally. Community members interact with one another as if they have a strong-tie social relationship and carry on conversations in a manner that mirrors conversations in face-to-face situations, which justify the use of theoretical WOM. It is interesting that Hussey’s consumption-based online community generates not only consumption specific interactions but also interactions of personal and intimate character, indicating that there are interpersonal influences at stake, which is affecting the flow and influence of members’ eWOM recommendations to one another. The influence of these will be analyzed in the following.

## **Interpersonal Influence in the Community**

Individuals’ attitudes and willingness to share WOM recommendations are, according to research, influenced by interpersonal factors where the social relationship between sender and receiver, rather

than the product or service itself, influences how individuals receive and interpret WOM messages. This section will focus on interpersonal influencers: tie-strength, homophily and credibility and analyze their effect on facilitating the flow and influence of eWOM recommendations within the Hussey community.

### Tie-strength

Brown et al. (2007) found that tie-strength, individual-to-individual social ties, is less relevant in an online environment than offline, because community members form ties to the website, the source of information, rather than other community members (Brown et al. 2007). It became clear through netnographical observation that the Hussey community members do not feel tie-strength towards one another, nor is it, as Brown et al. (2007) found, between the site and the consumer, but rather between the consumer and Hussey. Traditionally, tie-strength is built between individuals determined by the closeness, intimacy and support of the relationship (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). The type of tie-strength evident, in this case study, is created when community members watch Hussey's weekly videos, read his articles and keep up with his private life via postings of pictures on various social media. This one-sided relationship, between an audience member and the media being consumed, is known as a parasocial interaction and is nurtured through verbal and nonverbal interaction cues (Thorson & Rodgers, 2006). The perceived relationship between Hussey and the individual community member creates a one-sided tie between the two, based on the individual's degree of perceived closeness and intimacy. Hussey purposely nurtures this relationship by creating weekly videos where he talks in a familiar tone directly to the individual; posting pictures from his private life on social media; and by being available on social media platforms on equal terms with other people. This perceived tie-strength is evident in familiarized messages posted by community members to Hussey:



Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 12.04.15

Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 12.04.15



**Marjorie Josaphat** Just watched your video. Great information and great advice. Taking your cue-I live in L.A. as well. Let's hang out some time.  
February 20, 2014 at 7:47am · [Like](#)

Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 12.04.15

This study does not make any assumption about the degree of perceived tie-strength felt between the individual community member and Hussey, because the relationship dynamic was not examined in the research of this paper, but the findings do, however, call for further research in order to determine its influence on the flow and impact of eWOM. Nonetheless, parasocial interaction clearly does play a role in the perceived relationship between the individual community member and Hussey, as it creates a perceived tie-strength, which opens up for familiarized communication in the community.

Even though tie-strength traditionally is an important influencer on WOM recommendations, the case study shows that it is of very little importance in this online community, as eWOM flows smoothly between community members despite their lack of social ties. Members share both recommendations about Hussey's coaching services and offer each other emotional support on topics related to Hussey's area of expertise. The community members display a great deal of closeness and intimacy in their communications, but observations of the community showed no signs of friendship or social relationship between community members (Facebook; Twitter; YouTube, Matthew Hussey, 2015). One would think that social relationships would develop between community members when they share private personal problems, concerns or issues with another people. However, observations of the community showed that members are seemingly strangers who communicate as if they are close-ties, but do not share social relationships. This means that information is solicited, not from weak-ties or strong-ties, but from people with whom the information seeker has no ties. Though this finding makes the theoretical concept of tie-strength obsolete in facilitating flow and influence of eWOM in communities, it is not surprising that women solicit a recommendation from an individual with whom they have little to no social relationship with. Traditional WOM research shows that the WOM flows with equal ease between weak-ties and strong-ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987), meaning that the degree of social tie carries

very little real impact on facilitating the flow and influence of WOM, but adds extra influence on purchase decision. In traditional WOM theory, there is a strong correlation between tie-strength and credibility, where credibility is built through the relationship individuals have with each other, which is why the receiver is more influenced by WOM from a strong-tie (Brown & Reingen, 1987). However, the study of the Hussey community surprisingly showed that trust and credibility between community members, who are not socially involved, is articulated in the personal and private conversations as well as the recommendation between community members. This trust and credibility is one of the main forces that leads women to seek recommendations and advice within the community.

It has become clear that tie-strength has no effect on facilitating the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community. However, community members do experience perceived tie-strength between themselves and Hussey, which is linked to the concept of parasocial interaction. This means that women solicit eWOM from individuals with whom they have no social tie, hereby displaying a great deal of credibility and trust in the community members. Credibility and its effects on facilitating the flow and influence of eWOM will be analyzed further in the analysis of interpersonal influencers.

## Homophily

As mentioned earlier, the online community is based on an interest in Hussey's self-development coaching; a joined interest in self-development and the creation of a meaningful life. These common interests create the social homophily referred to by Brown et al. (2007). These interests can be observed in the communication shared in the community, where Hussey, as well as members only, post communication related to self-development and personal growth:



Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 12.04.15



Despite Chu & Kim's (2011) findings that homophily has no effect on eWOM in online social networks, observation within the Hussey's community indicates that homophilous interest plays a significant role in facilitating the flow and influence of eWOM among members. This type of homophily is, as Brown et al. (2007) found, not homophily in the traditional sense, age, sex, education and social status, but a social homophily on the basis of a group interest, which is created when a group of people share an interest. The findings of this research does not disprove Chu & Kim's (2011) findings, because the women within the online community are, from what can be obtained through social media profiles, of quite different backgrounds; racial, cultural, social, and educational backgrounds and belong to different age groups. Therefore, the women appear heterophilous in the traditional sense, whereby the eWOM in the community is not influenced by homophily. However, by redefining homophily as socially based, rather than demographically, it is clear that the Hussey community is homophilous qua shared interests in Hussey's techniques on self-development. The fact that the community members are homophilous positively influences the flow and influence of eWOM messages in the community, because, as research shows, individuals, who are homophilous, are more likely to share information with one another (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

Chu & Kim's (2011) findings, that eWOM flows further among different sub-groups when exchanged between heterophilous individuals in OSNs, are to some degree supported by the findings of this thesis. The women in the Hussey community are, as shown earlier, heterophilous in the traditional sense, since they do not share common demographical markers and do not necessarily move within the same social circles. This means that the Hussey community members are also members of other social sub-groups both on and offline, making them largely heterophilous. When eWOM flows out of the community and into community members' OSNs, it does reach a wide range of people and sub-groups, whereby eWOM can be said to flow further and better between heterophilous individuals. However, the question is whether it has any influence on the receiver? This aspect will be discussed further into the analysis.

Within the Hussey community, social homophily, shared group interest is a key player in facilitating flow and influence of eWOM, because recommendations are likely to occur and be relevant to the receiver, when two or more individuals have common interests (Brown & Reingen,

1987). Community members share advice and recommendations with each other, because they have similar interests and are experiencing the same issues, which possibly creates a pre-conceived notion of trust that allow community members to be vulnerable and open to the influence of a eWOM recommendation. Traditional WOM theory indicates that tie-strength and homophily go hand-in-hand, where the degree of homophily is in direct relation to how much the individuals interact, share and spend time together, which affect the amount of tie-strength the individuals feel between each other. Such a relationship does not exist in the Hussey community. Here, social homophily, group interest, is the force that ties the community together without social relationship and tie-strength between them.

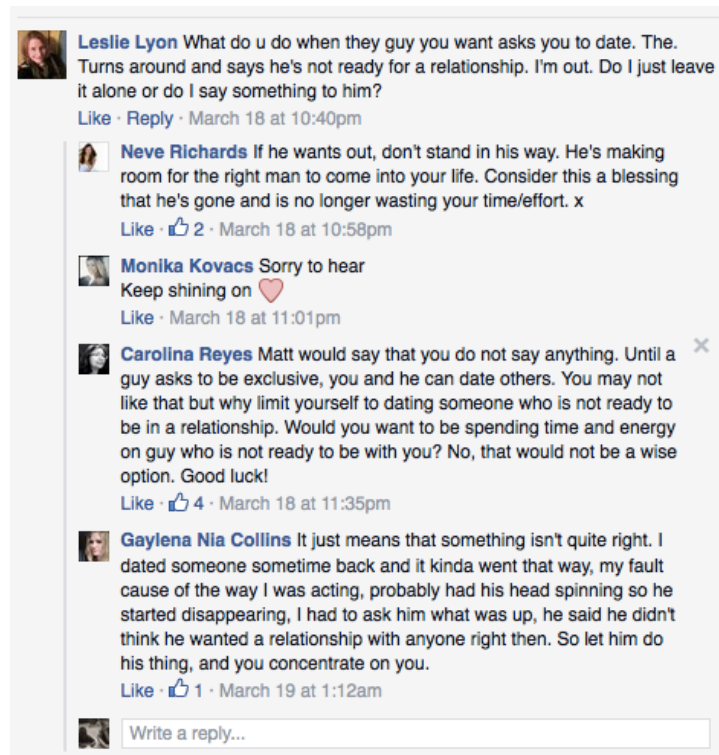
This means that traditional homophily has no effect on facilitating flow or influence of eWOM, while social homophily carries great influence on the facilitation of both flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community, not because community members are heterophilious, but because they share a group-mindset that gives them something to talk about. This indicates that homophily is a key element of successful facilitation of eWOM in the Hussey community.

The influence of WOM is also closely related to credibility and trust between individuals, which will be analyzed in an online connection in the following.

## **Credibility**

According to Kelman (1961), does a source possesses credibility if his or her statements are considered truthful and valid, and hence worthy of serious consideration. Based on the analysis of tie-strength and homophily, it became obvious that credibility and trust are key influencers on the facilitation of flow and influence of eWOM. Trust is the foundation of any social relationship and credibility as well as trust is strengthened through social aspects, such as respect, likemindedness, reputation, competency, reliability and lack of vested interests (Kelman, 1961). These are also the elements, among others, that have been found to create social homophily and the degree of tie strength between individuals. Kelman (1961) distinguishes between two bases for credibility: expertness and trustworthiness, which are both present in the Hussey community; one between Hussey and the individual, and the other between the members. The credibility between Hussey and the individual member is based on his expertise. Hussey is an expert in his field and is therefore perceived as credible. His expert status suggests that he is knowledgeable and knows the overall

truth (Kelman, 1961). This makes Hussey credible in the eyes of the community members and provides the community with a united credibility. The other level of trust is between the community members. Members of the community have, by following Hussey on different social media platforms, indicated that they perceive him as knowledgeable and trustworthy. Community members, on the other hand, are brought together due to their shared interest without sharing a social relationship that ties them together and creates trust. This type of community would presumably, based on traditional WOM theory, display little to no trust between community members. However, Hussey community members display a great deal of trust in each other when inquiring about Hussey's coaching services, but especially when they turn to each other for relationship advice:



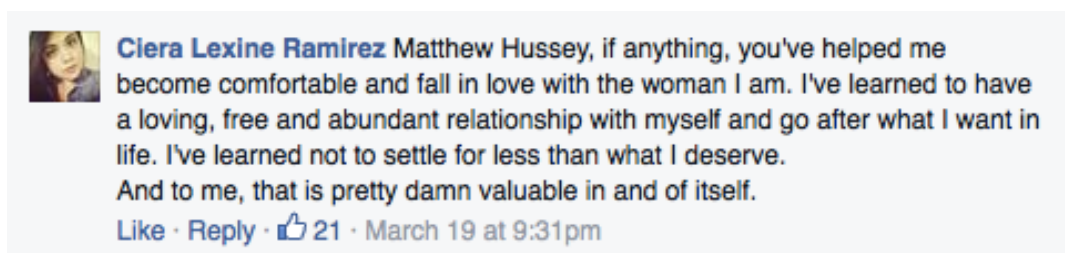
Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 16.04.15

As mentioned, Kelman (1961) found that trustworthiness is related to over-all respect, like-mindedness, and lack of vested interest, which also seems to be factors in the community trust. Since community members do not share a traditional social relationship, where individuals usually evaluate each other's trustworthiness and create "good reasons" (Pigg & Crank, 2004) for trust, they have to base their trust differently. The combination of trust in Hussey, combined with like-

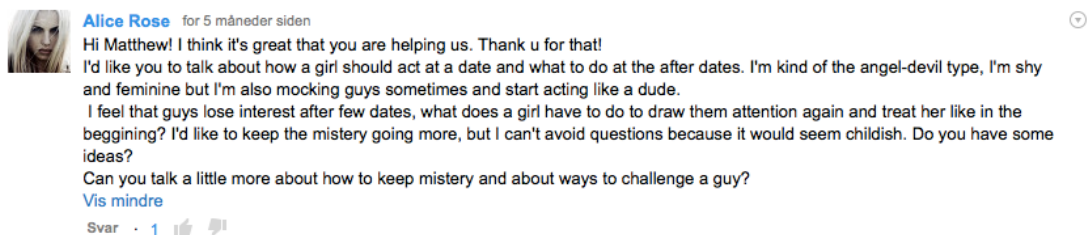
mindedness, over-all respect and a lack of vested interest (Facebook; YouTube; Twitter, Matthew Hussey, 2015), is the base on which community members create trust and credibility among each other without social relationships.

Hussey's expertise and credibility is the overall source of trust throughout the community, where community members' faith in his coaching techniques, knowledge and expertise is strong enough to be transferred to members who utilize his techniques and advice. This interesting development will be explored and analyzed further in the noninterpersonal section of the analysis.

The above-mentioned trust between community members occurs on a scale, because not all members experience the same degrees of trust in the transferred expertise of other community members, whereby some community members only communicate to Hussey, rather than the community:



Source: Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 12.04.15



Source: YouTube, Matthew Hussey, 19.03.15

This does not diminish the feeling of community, which can be seen above in Alice's use of the collective-word "us" that displays the presence of a group-mindset and indicates unity and trust (Brown et al. 2007). This shows that throughout the community members trust each other on different levels, in which the community trust-level is high enough to generate credibility that facilitates the flow and influence of eWOM within the community.

The analysis of credibility within the Hussey community shows that the degree of credibility is high. The credibility and trust is overall based on Hussey's expertise and knowledge, which is carried over to community members when they gain insight in to his knowledge via coaching sessions. However, the trust levels vary between the members, but an over all group-mindset indicates unity and trust that translate into credibility.

## **Summery**

Netnographical observations of the community showed that social homophily and credibility are key influencers on the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community. Homophily makes it more likely that individuals share eWOM with each other, because it creates an environment where community members feel that it is safe to share recommendations about Hussey's coaching service and related topics. Credibility, in the Hussey community, is closely related to Hussey's personal trustworthiness, which is based on his expertise knowledge. This credibility and trust transcend to the over all community and create a basis for trust between community members, which is strengthened by like-mindedness, over-all respect and a lack of vested interest. This confirms that traditional interpersonal theoretical concepts, homophily and credibility, can be transferred into an online context, but homophily needs to be adjusted to the online environment. Social relationships and tie strength, on the other hand, has shown to be obsolete influencers within the Hussey community. Though interpersonal influencers, homophily and credibility, have strong influencers on the flow and influence of eWOM, noninterpersonal influencers also play a role. The second section of the analysis will analyze how noninterpersonal influencers affects eWOM within the Hussey community.

## **Noninterpersonal Influence within the Community**

Noninterpersonal influencers have been proven to influence the flow and impact of WOM on equal terms with interpersonal influencers, but are even less researched in an online context. In this half of the first analysis, key noninterpersonal influencers, perceived risk, sender's expertise and

receiver's expertise, will be analyzed to determine their effect on the flow and impact eWOM in the Hussey community.

### **Perceived Risk**

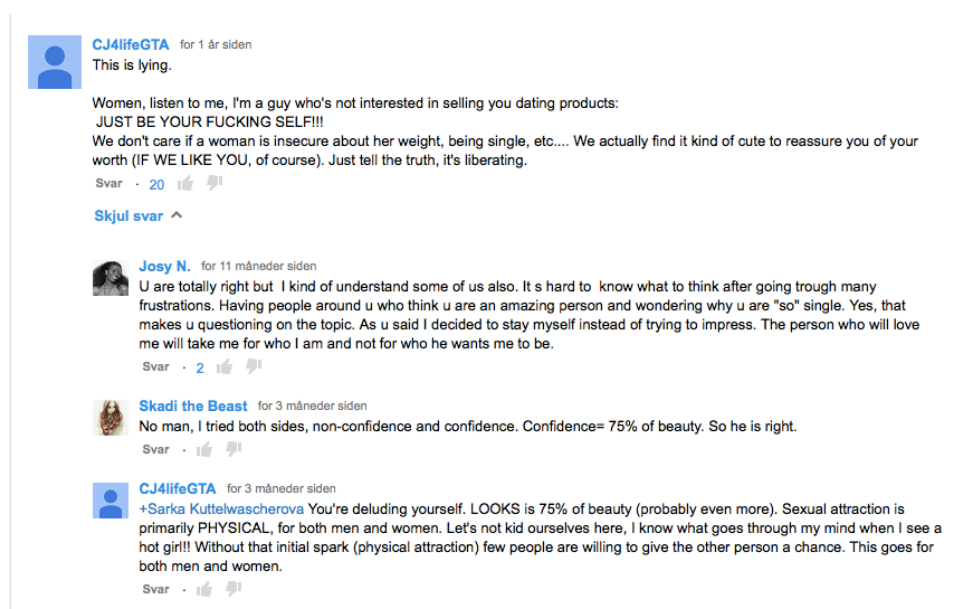
Purchasing any product or service comes with certain risks, but certain services bear higher levels of perceived risk (Arndt, 1967). Hussey coaching services range from forty dollars to six thousand dollars, extending from a day seminar to online programs to a weeklong retreat. These prices can seem overwhelming to the consumer, especially because they upon purchase do not know if the service will fulfill the indented goals and values. This can create a perceived risk, where the consumer is not sure if the price of the purchase is worth the value it gives. According to Arnt (1967), this will make consumers seek WOM more actively.

The point of creating a consumption-based community is to offer something extra, a free taste of the business' product, service, a platform, where consumers can communicate with like-minded people. This is often done in closed communities, where consumers gain access by signing up for the company's mailing list. Others, like Hussey, create tutorial videos, showcasing their product or service in an open forum on social media. This approach can eliminate initial perceived price/value risks, because there is little to no perceived risk linked to joining the community. Once the individual is a part of the community, the perceived risk of the purchase can be reduced by eWOM recommendations from fellow community members.

There is, however, a more influential perceived risk in being an actively participating member of the community. Observation of the community showed that though many women have liked/followed/subscribed to Hussey's social media profiles, a minority of them actively participates in conversations and recommendations - the majority are passive observers. Research shows that perceived risk has the potential to block a consumer purchase (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), but it also has the power to block information seekers and givers from partaking in conversations and eWOM exchanges within the community. Individuals create an image on social media, an image of what they want their network to see, and if an interest in self-help is not a part of the image the individual wants to communicate, then the perceived risk of breaking this image might keep community members and information seekers from utilizing the community and engaging in community interactions and eWOM exchanges. Individuals can also have a perceived risk about

sharing their opinions in a public forum, such as OSNs, due to the risk of social judgment, ridicule or confrontation for their opinion or recommendation.

This becomes evident through observation of communication on the different social media platforms. Hussey's Facebook page is at the core of the community on social media; here, community members and information seekers share converse and share eWOM recommendations in a polite and friendly tone with respect for others' opinions and viewpoints. YouTube and Twitter are different, because users can hide behind anonymous profiles, resulting in a different communication etiquette from platform to platform. On YouTube, for example, interaction between individuals is noticeably longer, the volume higher, the tone harsher and critique volume greater:



Source: YouTube, Matthew Hussey, 24.03.15

The type of the social media platform influences community members' perceived risk, as interaction on Facebook might seem risky for an individual who does not want their online image to be related to coaching. In this case, Twitter or another anonymous platform might ease the person's image concerns, but the anonymity of the platforms' come with a considerable risk of critique because the tone is usually harsher on these sites. This means that the type of social media platform, which the community is based on, effects the perceived risk experienced by the communicator,

which then influences the flow of eWOM. Perceived risks therefore have the potential to block the flow and hereby influence of eWOM in the community.

Perceived risk has a strong influence on facilitating the flow of eWOM in the Hussey community, because it can potentially block eWOM recommendations completely. The price and nature of Hussey's coaching service has the potential to create a high level of perceived risk with consumers based on price /value, image or social judgment. Research shows that the greater the perceived risk, the higher the activity of WOM. This means that consumers will actively seek recommendations before purchasing. However, the perceived risks of image and social judgment will keep some consumers from doing so online. Others, who is mainly concerned with the price/value aspect, will according to WOM theory seek information in the community to ease their concerns from a credible source, which is evident when potential clients ask the community about the value of Hussey's coaching services. This results in a positive influence on the flow and influence of eWOM in the community, while the perceived risk of image and social judgment will create a negative effect that has the potential to block eWOM in the community. When a recommendation actively sought by the consumer,, sender's expertise and credibility, according to traditional WOM theory, will carry great influence on the impact of this recommendation. This will be explored in the following.

### **Sender's Expertise**

There is no clear definition of an expert in connection to eWOM. However, Bansal & Voyer (2000) found that a receiver is more likely to seek information from a person, who they perceive as more knowledgeable within the topic. In the case of the Hussey community, there are two levels of expertise: Hussey is a well-known coach, considered an expert by television shows and endorsed by celebrities, whereby he is viewed as an expert in his field. This is a very traditional way of viewing expertise, which, as discussed in the credibility section, contributes to the overall credibility of Hussey and the online community, because he is likely to know the truth (Kelman, 1961). Hussey's expertise is what initially attracts information seekers, but the community also possesses expertise. Information seekers, who come to the community looking for information, can take advantage of the expertise and knowledge that members have about Hussey's coaching services: Angie: *"How is Matt's book? I love his videos, but I'm not sure buying the book will add anything"* (Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 20.03.15). To which Melissa replies: *"The book is so awesome!!! It has helped*



*me so much and what is really great about it is that it unlocks more videos, which puts the advice into practice*” (Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 20.03.15). This interaction shows that information seekers find the community trustworthy, because members are likely to tell the truth about Hussey’s services (Kelman, 1961).

However, observations of the community shows that community members give more than just traditional purchase evaluation, they are seen as a source of information about Hussey’s coaching service as well as coaching advice, because they are perceived as knowledgeable qua their coaching sessions with Hussey. This means that Hussey’s knowledge and expertise transcends to the community, which happens because of the coaching nature of Hussey’s business. As a coach, Hussey’s aim is to teach his client’s techniques and knowledge that will give his clients new knowledge and help them reach their personal goals. When a community member shares their success stories or experiences with the techniques, they essentially endorse Hussey’s coaching service and confirmed that it adds value. Purchasing Hussey’s coaching services does not turn the clients into experts themselves, but provides them with insight that makes them more knowledgeable than prior to the purchase. This adds “expertise-value” to the eWOM recommendation, hereby making the eWOM recommendation more influential on a receiver with similar goals and values. According to Kelman (1961), an individual will be influenced by a recommendation when sender’s and receiver’s goals and values are similar. Women who join in the Hussey community are, as shown earlier in the analysis, socially homophilous, which means they share a group interest in self-development and hereby have common goals.

The analysis of expertise shows that Hussey is perceived as knowledgeable and an expert in his field, which in turn makes him likely to know the truth. This credibility transcends and makes Hussey, the business and the community credible. Hussey’s expertise transcends to the community, because clients are perceived to have gained further knowledge by purchasing his services. This means that the community members’ level of knowledge adds expertise-value to their eWOM recommendations, whereby eWOM becomes highly influential within the community. The following will look at receiver’s expertise.

## **Receiver's Expertise**

Research within the area of receiver's expertise has been conflicting, showing either that there is a negative relationship between a receiver's expertise and information seeking (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), while other research shows that prior knowledge encourages an information search (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Based on netnographical observations, it is safe to say that the community members seem fairly knowledgeable about self-development and personal growth, this becomes evident through community conversations about Hussey's techniques, whether or not they differ from others, and on which principles he bases his coaching (Facebook, Matthew Hussey, 2015). This suggests that the receivers possess knowledge within the field, but are attracted to the community, because their knowledge has limitations. The degree of knowledge varies from individual to individual within the community, but overall it seems that community members are moderately knowledgeable, whereby information is actively sought to gain more knowledge.

Research shows an inverted U-shaped relationship between knowledge and information seeking (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), which indicates that active search for information is greatest when the receiver's knowledge is moderate, rather than when the consumer possesses high or low expertise. This means that the level of search for information, hereunder eWOM, is highest when the information seeker has moderate knowledge about a service, which in turn makes the information seeker highly susceptible to eWOM recommendations (Arndt 1968; Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Hussey community members and information seekers, who are actively engaging in conversation with the community, seem to be perfectly placed on this inverted U-shape between knowledge and information seeking, because they actively seek out information from reliable sources while being open to information, which heightens the flow and influence of eWOM in the community.

The flow and influence of eWOM in the community is strengthened when information seekers have prior knowledge of self-development and are actively seeking eWOM, encouraging the flow of eWOM while making the recommendation highly influential on the information seeker. However, information seekers' perceived risk have the potential to block the active search, which limits the

flow of eWOM. The findings of part one of the analysis will be summarized in the following paragraph.

### **Sub-conclusion**

The first part of the analysis made it clear that the women surrounding Hussey's business make up one consumption-based online community and use it both as a source of information but also as a place of emotional support. Active community members interact with one another as if they have a strong-tie social relationship and carry on conversations in a manner that mirrors conversational face-to-face situations that build on a social relation. This means that the group of women can be classified as a community and WOM theoretical concepts can be applied.

The first part of the analysis focused on the influence of interpersonal and noninterpersonal concepts on the flow and influence of eWOM within this community. The interpersonal section analyzed following factors: tie-strength, homophily and credibility, where netnographical observations of the community showed that social homophily and credibility are key influencers on the flow and influence of eWOM within the Hussey community. The social homophily of the community increases the likelihood that individuals share eWOM with each other, because homophilous individuals are more likely to communicate with each other. Social homophily furthermore creates an environment where community members feel that it is safe to share recommendations about Hussey's coaching service and related topics without judgement, ridicule or confrontation, which means that eWOM flows freely. Credibility, in the Hussey community, is closely related to Hussey's personal trustworthiness, which is based on his expertise, knowledge and overall ability to know the truth. This credibility and trust transcend to the overall community and create a basis for trust between community members, which is strengthened by like-mindedness, overall respect and lack of vested interest, making the influence of the eWOM message more influential on the receiver. This confirms that traditional interpersonal theoretical concepts, homophily and credibility, can be transferred to an online context, but needs to be adjusted to the online environment. However, the concept of tie-strength has shown to be an obsolete influencer within the Hussey community.

The noninterpersonal section of the analysis shows that noninterpersonal factors, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise, further affect the flow and impact of eWOM within the Hussey community. The analysis found that the consumer's perceived risk plays a fundamental role in the flow of eWOM in the community. It was found that both the service and the price of Hussey's coaching can potentially be perceived as a risk, because consumers can not be sure of what they get and if the service creates the desired value, which make it worth the investment. This will, however, have a positive influence on eWOM since consumers tend to seek out information before making a purchase decision. This information will assumable be sought in the Hussey community, because it is perceived as a reliable source of information with members who are homophilous to the information seeker. This means that perceived risk can have a positive influence on the flow of eWOM in the community. On the other hand, the nature of the social media platform can create a negative effect on the flow of eWOM, because individuals may associate perceived risk with active participation in that particular forum, which will block the flow of eWOM. This means that the nature and price of Hussey's coaching service might increase the eWOM inquiries within the community, if these are not blocked by the perceived fear of active participation on social media platforms. The analysis of expertise shows that Hussey is perceived as knowledgeable and an expert in his field, which in turn makes him likely to know the truth. This credibility transcends and makes Hussey, the business and the community creditable, whereby the community becomes a credible source of eWOM for information seekers. Hussey's expertise also transcends to the community, because clients assumable receive gained knowledge by purchasing his services, which means that the community knowledge-level adds expertise-value to their eWOM recommendations making eWOM highly influential within the community. The influence of the eWOM messages increases further when an individual, who possesses a moderate level of knowledge about self-development and human-dynamics, actively seeks information. However, information seeker's perceived risk have the potential to block the active search, which then limits the flow of eWOM because the information, which the individual is seeking, will then be attained through passive observation of conversations and recommendations in the community, which makes the eWOM less influential.

## **Analysis Part Two - eWOM in OSNs**

The second part of the analysis was approached in a sequential fashion with the first, this with the primary aim of exploring key aspects of the interviews. However, I did not rule out reproaching the interview data in light of emergent findings from the community analysis. In this way, I can reap some of the benefits of a cyclical approach to qualitative analysis (Kvale & Birkmann, 2008). Part two of the analysis is comprised of a qualitative interview study, designed to explore the potential differences in the flow and influence of eWOM in online communities and online social networks. My approach is here to analyze eWOM when it crosses over into members' online social networks, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

The first section of this part of the analysis describes how interviewees use social media platform and how they view their relationship with their "friend-list". Hereafter, the analysis will explore how community members' relationship with their online network affects the flow and influence of eWOM in members' OSNs. This is done by looking at key interpersonal influencers, tie-strength, homophily and credibility, in order to determine their effect on the flow and influence of eWOM recommendation in online social networks. The second section will look into noninterpersonal influencers, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise, and analyze their effect on flow and impact of eWOM out of the community into members' social media networks.

### **Interviewee's Use of Social Media**

The interviewees are all active users of several social media sites and members of Hussey's online community, where they follow Hussey's postings on various platforms social media platforms. Four of the five women identify Facebook as the social media site they are most active on and use as their main online social network. They also have YouTube and Instagram accounts, but are not active communicators on YouTube and have private Instagram accounts, where they only communicate with a few, selected people with whom they have close relationships (Lieselle; Mae; Bri, personal interview. 2015). The fourth interviewee is only active on Twitter, where she communicates with people she does not know or have met face-to-face, but follow Hussey's video

postings on YouTube. The four women describe their online social network as a group of people who they have met face-to-face at one point or another, having had anything from short conversations to life-long relationships with them: *“I’m very close to some and not so close to others. [I have the] complete range”* (Lieselle, personal interview, 2015). The range of people in their online network include family members, close friends, friends, acquaintances, coworker, friends of friends and so on, hereby covering a broad range of relationships that have varying levels of intimacy, tie-strength and homophily (Lieselle; Mae; Bri & Johanna, personal interview, 2015). Johanna describes the relationship: *“I’m kind [off] a part of their lives without being there”* (Johanna 2015). Facebook creates the illusion of having a close relationship with people, where you know what is going on in their lives, while at the same time you do not really know the person.

The women see themselves more as information receivers rather than communicators in their social networks. That being said, the women do use Facebook as a private communication tool and on occasion share important messages with their entire network. These posts are, however, done with a lot of consideration and thought to image and social judgment. Lieselle and Bri comments below on their feelings about posting an eWOM recommendation for Hussey’s services:

*“I don’t post much about my life on Facebook, because I have a completed range of people on my page [...] it’s not necessarily something that would be received positively from everyone and I don’t really think it’s anyone’s business...it’s not something I would share with a group of people at once. I would share with one person at one time”* (Lieselle, personal interview 2015).

*“I don’t let myself be very vulnerable [like that] on Facebook”*  
(Bri, personal interview 2015).

Through conversations with the women, the researcher has developed an understanding for their lifeworld and how they feel about social media. The women especially feel that Facebook creates the illusion of close relationships to people they have no physical relationship with. The women mainly use Facebook to stay in touch with people who are not in their close circle of strong-ties but who have been, or are in other ways, a part of their social network. When communicating with

strong-ties, the women use devices such as phone, Skype and direct texting to create a feeling of face-to-face interaction (Lieselle; Johanna and Bri personal interview, 2015).

*“The friends that really matter to me, I keep in touch with in real live”*  
(Johanna, personal interview, 2015).

*“I don’t actually communicate with the people I care about the most on Facebook”*  
(Bri, personal interview, 2015).

The fifth interviewee, Fatima, does not use Facebook but Twitter. She uses the social media platform slightly different than the other women: *“[it is] more about venting for me rather than connecting with friends”* (Fatima, personal interview, 2015). Fatima has created an anonymous profile where she feels that she can speak freely about topics that are of interest to her and like-minded people. Hereby, Fatima is creating an online forum with people who she speaks to and connects with on a regular basis without knowing them in person. Fatima made a deliberate choice to be anonymous and never meet with the people she knows from Twitter, so that she will not be influenced by their opinion of her and vice versa. However, through lengthy conversation it became clear that she is influenced by the same interpersonal and noninterpersonal factors as the other ladies, whereby I found her insight relevant for this case study.

The five interviewees express an over all disinterest in social media despite being active on several platforms on a daily basis and actively using the platforms to communicate with and follow people, organizations or businesses of interest (Fatima; Bri; Lieselle; Mae; Johanna, personal interview, 2015). The women commented on the overall information flow on social media, indicating that the volume of information can be overwhelming to the point where it is hard for receivers to relate to it (Johanna; Mae, personal interview, 2015). Lengthy interviews with the women made it surprisingly clear that the interviewees try to use interpersonal factors as filters to evaluate if the eWOM message is of value, relevance and importance to them. In the following sections, I will analyze how interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the before mentioned filtering process.

## **Interpersonal Influence in OSNs**

As mentioned earlier, are individuals' attitudes and willingness to share WOM recommendations often influenced by interpersonal factors where elements, not related to the service itself, influence how individuals receive and interpret WOM messages. In the interpersonal influence section of the analysis, the influence of key interpersonal influencers, tie-strength, homophily and credibility, will be analyzed to see how they affect the flow and influence of eWOM when the recondition is made outside of the community in members' OSNs.

### **Tie-strength**

As talked about in the first part of the analysis, tie-strength is the bond that forms between two individuals based on social ties, such as frequency of social contact and type of relation (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Here closeness, intimacy, support, and association are identified as the foundation of tie-strength (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). In the first part of the analysis, we found that tie-strength did not exist between the individuals of the community but between individuals and Hussey. In OSNs, where the community members have offline relationships with every individual on her friend-list, tie-strength does presumably play a role in the flow and influence of eWOM.

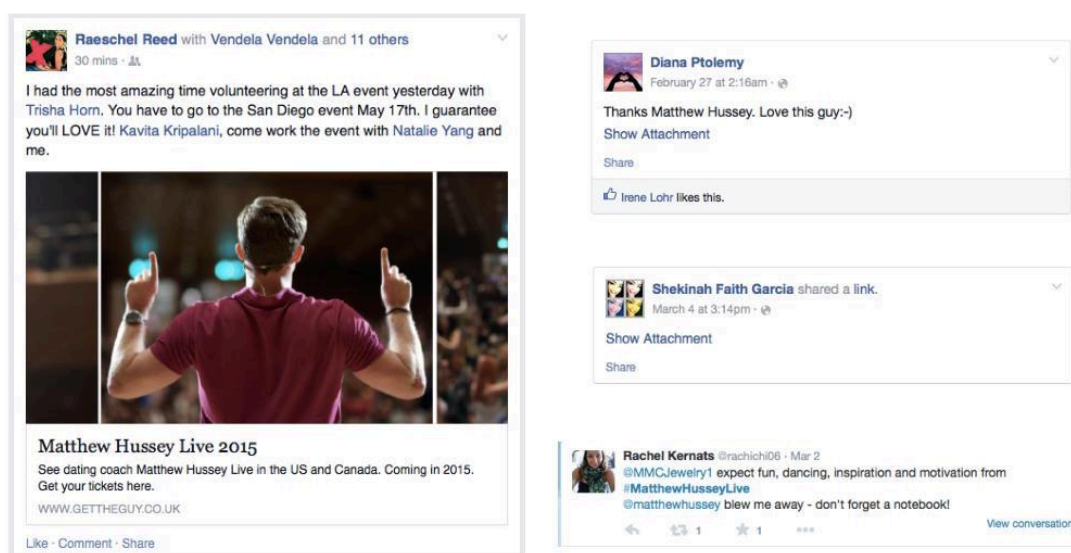
Ties can be split up into strong-ties and weak-ties, depending on the importance, frequency of contact and social relation (Brown and Reingen, 1987). When Lieselle (2015) states that she has the whole range, this is what she is referring to. The interviewees have, except for Fatima, met and have had some type of social interaction with all the people in their online network. This means that the women have different levels of tie-strength between them and every single individual in their network. Some are close and strong-ties, such as friends and family who the interviewees connect with and confide in on a regular basis, others are weak-ties; people who they see once in while, for example friends of friends or colleagues, while other are people they do not have any physical contact with any more, be that former classmates, distant relatives or people they have drifted away from. From this it becomes clear that the basis for the community members' OSNs and the Hussey community are completely different, since one is a collection of strangers and the other a network of social relationships.



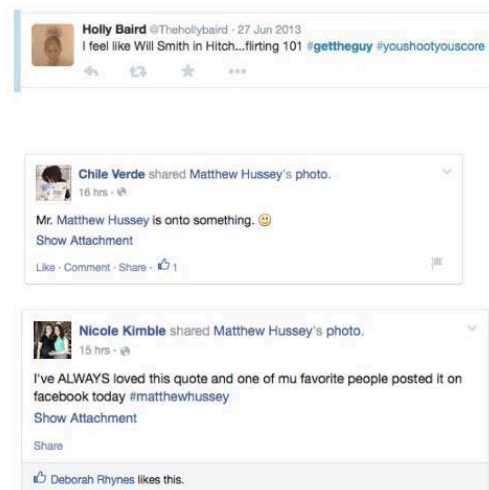
As mentioned in the theory chapter, tie-strength and credibility traditionally go hand-in-hand, because of the repeated physical proximity between individuals (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Interviews with the community members showed that close offline relationships are also meaningful in OSNs: *“I have had experiences with those people, they help me and are good for me”* (Johanna, personal interview, 2015), and *“It means that I go to them when I need help or go to them when I need advice”* (Bri, personal interview, 2015), whereby credibility as well as tie-strength is carried online. The strong-ties and trust from offline relationships make the women, as they explain, more inclined to notice eWOM information from individuals who they have close relationships with, while they dismiss or filter out eWOM recommendation from weaker ties. This because the interviewees feel that weak-ties are weak for a reason, and they believe that weak-ties lead very different lives from themselves - that they are less homophilous. Making eWOM recommendations from weak-ties seem irrelevant. That being said, the interviewed community members did also express an overall lack of interest in recommendations posted to an entire network rather than to them directly, even if the information came from a strong-tie (Leiselle; Mae; Bri; Johanna, personal interview, 2015). The women pointed out that if a friend really thought the recommendation would be relevant to them personally, the sender would communicate it to them directly, preferably face-to-face rather than in an open forum (Leiselle; Mae; Bri; Johanna, personal interview, 2015). Their reason being, that if the sender makes a personal direct WOM recommendation they have thought about whether or not it is relevant and useful to them. Johanna puts it this way: *“[I value recommendations from those close to me] because I have had experiences with those people, they helped me and are good for me”* (Johanna, personal interview, 2015), Bri agrees: *“I would rather hear [a recommendation] from somebody I know”* (Bri, personal interview, 2015), indicating that they value and trust recommendations from strong-ties more than weak-ties, because weak-ties are less likely to know what is right for the receiver.

Although interviewees strongly underline that they prefer recommendation to be face-to-face from strong-ties, however, conversations with the interviewees let to an understanding of their lifeworld, which led the interviewer to see that the women are susceptible to eWOM recommendation by weak-ties in OSNs as well. This type of recommendation was not as influential as one from a strong-tie, but can potentially prompt the receiver to do further research. (Lieselle; Mae; Bri; Johann; Fatima, personal interview, 2015). This means that although tie-strength is important in an OSN setting and individuals do favor eWOM recommendations from strong-ties, eWOM

recommendations from weak-ties can override this, if the information is relevant and of value to the receiver. Brown et. al. (2007) found that social ties are less relevant in an online social environment, because individuals see the webpage, or in this case Matthew Hussey, as a proxy for individuals and create a tie relation with the page instead. Though this was true for the online community, tie-strength does play a role in the flow and influence of eWOM in OSNs, in line with Chu & Kim (2011) findings. However, Chu & Kim (2011) also found that social media users easily share product-related eWOM with everybody in their network, because their offline social relationships create trust between the sender and the receiver. The contrary was found in this case study, where interviewees displayed a strong resistance to share eWOM in their online social networks, because they do not have overall trust in the OSN as a unit. This may have to do with the sensitive nature of coaching, that interviewees expressed a strong sense of unease by the thought of recommending Hussey's service to everybody in their online network: *"I would never recommend Matthew Hussey on Facebook! No way!"* (Lieselle, personal interview, 2015). This will be examined further in the section about perceived risk. Looking strictly at the empirical data collected via interviews, one might be inclined to think that all WOM recommendations about Hussey are carried out offline or within the community. However, this is on an inaccurate picture to paint. During the netnographic data collection process, several types of eWOM recommendations, posted directly into community members' personal online network, noted:



Source: Facebook; Twitter, Matthew Hussey, 27. 05.15



Source: Facebook; Twitter, Matthew Hussey, 27. 05.15

As seen on the previous page, some community members do use eWOM to recommend Hussey's services in their OSNs, despite the different levels of tie-strength within their networks. It is, however, a minority of the community members who do this, which indicates a limited flow of eWOM in community members OSNs.

Tie-strength is an important influencer on eWOM in OSNs, because these networks have so many levels of tie-strength. The interviewed community members use tie-strength, among other interpersonal influencers, as a filtering system to determine whether information posted in the

network is relevant and of value to them. However, if an eWOM message from a weak-tie is found to be of value, and the source is credible, then the receiver will be likely to pursue further information. Strong-ties have a stronger impact on the receiver, but both strong and weak-ties carry the possibility of facilitating eWOM's flow. Interviewees strongly pointed out that they do not post eWOM recommendations about Hussey's coaching services, or any other product or service in their OSNs, while other community members were found to do just that, despite the diversity of tie-strength throughout their networks. The majority of the community members do, however, not make these recommendations, whereby it seems that the diverse levels of tie-strength block the flow of eWOM. Interviewees further strongly indicated that homophily is a vital part of recommendations, whereby its influence on eWOM's flow and impact will be analyzed in the following section.

### **Homophily**

Interviews with the five community members indicated that there is a great degree of homophilous diversity within their online social networks. The women repeatedly pointed out that the range of people in their network, i.e. homophily and tie-strength, varies greatly.

Chu & Kim's (2011) study of eWOM on social media found that perceived homophily has no effect on eWOM, arguing that eWOM might flow better and further between heterophilous individuals, despite the fact that traditional WOM research suggests that homophilous individuals tend to share information more with one another. The opposite was found to be true for the Hussey community members' OSNs. Here, the heterophilous nature of the network limits the flow, because the community members believe that recommendations should be directed at an individual who finds value in the recommendation, caused by homophilous interests. The Hussey community members felt that eWOM recommendations posted into entire OSNs, with diverse degrees of homophily and tie-strength, are likely to be lost in the crowd, because it is not directed at anybody in particular and therefore might be filtered out and viewed as irreverent. For example, if a woman posts a recommendation about Hussey's seminar in her OSN, and the eWOM recommendation is to be influential on the receiver, then the receiver must have an interest in coaching or self-development. Otherwise, the recommendation will carry no value. The influence of social homophily is further supported by the study's empirical data, which shows that a recommendation from a weak, but homophilous, tie can influence the receiver to further research the topic, showing that homophily

does play a role in facilitating the influence of eWOM in OSNs, contrary to the findings of Chu & Kim (2001).

Brown et. al. (2007) found that homophily does not necessarily influence the process of giving information, because the information giver does not have to consider the degree of homophily between himself and the receiver in order to make the recommendation. However, if the sender wants the recommendation to influence the receiver and not just create awareness, then the receiver has to be able to see the value of the information.

*“I know my friends and I know their taste and their preferences. One of my friends, not all of us share similar taste or similar preferences, so one of them might recommend a stylist or a hairstylist or a make-up artist or of some kind, that she thinks is amazing. I wouldn't go for this person, because I know her taste and her style, which is not... my taste”* (Bri, personal interview, 2015).

In OSNs, homophily is not a must for the sharing of an eWOM recommendation, but if the recommendation is to have influence on the receiver, rather than just creating awareness, then there has to be some degree of social homophily between the sender and the receiver. If there is social homophily between sender and receiver, then even eWOM recommendations from weak-ties can be influential. Homophily alone will not facilitate a strong influential recommendation; credibility is a key factor as well in this relationship, which will be analyzed in the following section.

## **Credibility**

Trust and credibility are some of the most important influencers on recommendations, when an individual's statement is considered truthful and valid and, therefore, worthy of serious consideration, then the individual becomes credible in the eyes of the receiver (Kelman 1961).

When talking about eWOM between individuals on OSNs, trustworthiness is a determining factor on facilitating flow and influence of eWOM. However, the interviewed community members show very little trust in their online networks: *“In general, I don't trust things from Facebook ...I don't trust other people's impulsive post”* (Bri, personal interview, 2015), which limits the flow of eWOM in their OSNs.

*“[eWOM] just wouldn’t mean anything [in OSNs] because people can post things that are great for a lot of reasons, it could be their life situation ... sometimes when you feel excited about life, you can attribute that to a service that maybe doesn’t deserve it”*

(Johana, personal interview, 2015).

In this way, the lack of trust in community members’ OSNs affect and block the flow and influence of eWom negatively within their OSNs. This lack of trust and credibility can potentially block the flow of eWOM completely, which may be the reason that the majority of the community members do not make eWOM recommendations about Hussey in their OSNs. However, a minor group of community members do post recommendations, which indicates that the level of distrust expressed by the interviewees may not reflect community members overall trust in their online network.

### **Summery**

The interviewees assumed that their strong homophilous offline ties know them best and wants what is best for them, which means that they favor recommendations from these individuals and find their face-to-face recommendations most influential. However, the empirical data indicates that it is possible for the women to be influenced by eWOM from weak-ties in OSNs as well.

Homophily was found to have a strong influence on the flow and impact of eWOM, because it creates a common ground of values and goals. This results in easier flowing eWOM, because the receiver can see value in the message, which can override the initial apprehension of the weak-tie if the source is perceived credible. This means that eWOM from weak homophilous creditable individuals in OSNs can influence the receiver, whereby credibility and homophily comes across as the determining factors of the flow and influence of eWOM in OSNs. The interviewees display very little trust in their networks, which results in a reluctance to share eWOM. Netnographical observation, on the other hand, shows that this is not true for the entire community, since some community members have been shown to recommend Hussey in their OSNs. The second part of this analysis will analyze how noninterpersonal influencers can facilitate the flow and influence of eWOM, as seen in community members’ OSNs.

## Noninterpersonal Influencers in OSNs

Individuals' attitudes and willingness to share eWOM recommendations is not only influenced by interpersonal factors, it is also influenced by noninterpersonal influencers. This section will analyze how key noninterpersonal influencers, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise, affect the flow and influence of eWOM in community members OSNs.

### Perceived Risk

As mentioned, purchasing any product or services comes with certain risks, but especially services bear higher levels of perceived risk. Arnt (1967) noted that the higher the perceived risk the more actively WOM is sought. Services are perceived as a higher risk, because they are intangible, nonstandardized, and usually sold without guarantees and warranties (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), which is why it makes sense for consumers to ask around and confirm the validity of the service, especially if the service comes at a high price:

*“[The online courses] was 200 dollars as opposed to 6000 dollars [for the retreat] and plus flying across the country plus paying for a hotel. I mean 200 dollars, if it turned out to be crap I can get over that, but 6000 dollars is, you know, I’m still paying for it”* (Lieselle, personal interview 2015).

*“Investing an amount of money would require something [extra] for me [...]so before I make an investment it’s important to know if it’s going to be worthwhile or not”* (Fatima, personal interview, 2015).

Lieselle and Fatima point out the importance of recommendations as the service price increases, as both express concern whether or not the service will bring them value and get them closer to their goals. WOM is the most important source of risk-reducing information, as it also becomes an influence on the consumers due to clarification and feedback opportunities.

The interviewees confirmed that word-of-mouth played a significant role in reducing their perceived risks when considering purchasing one of Hussey's coaching services. The women had all gone to great lengths to get WOM or eWOM recommendation within the Hussey community before purchasing any of Hussey's services (Lieselle; Mae; Br; Johanna, personal interview, 2015). This supports the theoretical claim that the recommendations reduce consumer perceived risk. There is however another type of perceived risk, which is evident to be very influential on the flow of eWOM, both in the Hussey community and community members OSNs; judgment by the network and/or image:

*"I would recommend Matthew Hussey to the right people but wouldn't go ahead and tell everyone [on social media] about it because it's not for everyone"*

(Fatima, personal interview, 2015).

*"I would never recommend Matthew Hussey on Facebook! No way!"*

(Lieselle, personal interview, 2015).

As discussed in the previous part of the analysis, this perceived risk may very well have to do with the nature of the topics addressed by Hussey. Some individuals experience perceived stigmata when talking about coaching, self-development and human-dynamics, which may effect the degree to which community members want to openly associate with the community. Individuals may fully believe in Hussey and his techniques and internalize them. This does, however, not mean that the individual will invariably express these opinions regardless of the social situation. It only means that the individual will consider expressing these values in a social situation, if they feel it is the right place to do so (Kelman 1961):

*"I don't [want to] have to explain why I like it or why it's something that... my friend-list could be [interested in]"*

(Lieselle, personal interview, 2015).

Interviewees indicated that they do not want to have to defend or explain an eWOM recommendation in a public forum. It is clear that the perceived risk is based on a fear of getting an



unfavorable reaction from the network and having to defend a recommendation or an opinion. Instead, most community members make the recommendation face-to-face (Johanna; Lieselle; Bri; Fatima, personal interview, 2015). Another perceived risk that can block the flow of eWOM in community members OSNs is online image. As discussed earlier in the analysis, does social media users often create an online image, which communicates what the individual wants the community to see. Some community members may not want their online network to associate them with self-development and coaching, whereby community members will not recommend Hussey in a public forum like OSNs, blocking the flow and influence of eWOM in OSNs.

Perceived risk has the potential to block the flow of eWOM completely, both in the community and in OSNs. This is due to one of three perceived risks: price and value, confrontation by the network or image. Perceived risk in the form of price and value can be reduced by information and recommendation from other consumers, which would positively influence the flow of eWOM in the community where the consumers assumable would turn due to the community's credibility and homophilous nature. However, if a community member sees a perceived risk in the form of judgement from the network or image issue, then perceived risk will block the flow of eWOM. A factor that has the potential to lessen some perceived risks is sender's expertise and the credibility that comes with it, which will be discussed in the following section.

### **Sender's Expertise**

As discussed in part one of the analyses, there is no clear definition of an expert in connection to eWOM. However, knowledge is often perceived as a form of expertise, whereby community members are more knowledgeable about Hussey's techniques, because they have access to his expertise and completed various Hussey programs. Theory within this area suggests that expertise is very influential in persuasion attempts (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). The interviewed community members agreed that expertise, in combination with homophily and credibility, makes a significant difference when receiving a recommendation. Conversations with the women also supported Bansal's & Voyer's (2000) findings that if an expert's WOM is actively sought, then it has a significantly larger impact on purchase decision both in an online and offline setting: *"If I'm confused about something, [if] I'm not sure or [if there is] something that I don't know and I think*

*that [somebody] may have expertise, then I will reach out to them”* (Mae, personal interview, 2015).

Interviews with the community members further showed that this expertise is largely not utilized to make credible eWOM recommendations in community members’ OSNs because of the before mentioned perceived risks. If the community members were unaffected by perceived risks, felt free to share their experience and success with Hussey’s coaching service and recommended the service in their OSNs, it is likely that some will be influenced due to sender’s expertise, homophily and credibility. This, however, is speculation the fact is that most community members prefer to recommend Hussey face-to-face and utilize their expertise in that setting, which blocks the flow of eWOM recommendations in their OSNs. The interviewees did, however, indicate that their expertise and excitement for Hussey’s coaching services carry great value in face-to-face WOM.

Expertise in combination with homophily and credibility create a solid foundation for a highly influential eWOM recommendation in OSNs. Community members confirmed that recommendations from experts carry greater influence on them, especially if they sought it out themselves. This is why eWOM in Hussey’s online community flows so well and has a very high impact; information is solicited where eWOM recommendations in OSNs are unsolicited. In OSNs, the sender might be able to communicate expertise within the area of the recommendation, but this information is not actively sought, which decreases the influence of the eWOM. However, the influence of the recommendation increases if the sender is perceived to be homophilous and credible to the receiver. Receiver’s expertise is significant in how the message is received and will therefore be analyzed in the following section.

### **Receiver’s Expertise**

According to research, there is a strong relationship between the level of receiver’s expertise and the extent to which individuals are seeking information, which means the more knowledgeable an individual is, the less likely it is that this individual will seek WOM information. The first part of the analysis found that existing knowledge about coaching, self-growth and human-dynamics has a positive effect on information seeking and results in highly influential eWOM recommendations.

This is because pre-existing knowledge indicated an interest in the subject, which makes the receiver more open to recommendations within this area, hence the significant impact eWOM has on individuals who has a pre-existing interest in Hussey's coaching service. In OSNs, eWOM is communicated to individuals who most likely do not have pre-existing knowledge about Hussey's coaching business. They are furthermore likely to have little knowledge and/or interest in this field, which makes the eWOM recommendations less influential. It is clear that the receivers in the community and on OSNs possess different levels of knowledge and interest in self-development and coaching. There is also a clear difference in the level of search between individuals who actively seek information in the community and individuals in OSNs who get the recommendation trusted upon them. These differences have a significant effect on how the receiver is influenced by the eWOM recommendation. A lack of search and knowledge makes individuals less susceptible to recommendation, whereby receiver's expertise is significant and very influential when talking about the flow and influence of an eWOM recommendation. OSNs are as a, in this case, result negatively influenced by the receiver's lack of knowledge and interest, which means that eWOM is unlikely to have an effect in OSNs. The findings of part two of the analysis will be summarized in the following.

## **Sub Conclusion**

The first section of the second part of the analysis examined the interviewees' social media habits. The interviews communicated an overall disinterest in social media, despite owning several profiles on social media platforms, some of which they all use on a daily basis to communicate with their network and follow people, organizations or businesses of interest. The women commented on the overall information flow on social media, indicating that the volume of information can be overwhelming to the point where it is hard for receivers to relate to it. The interviewees then explained that they use interpersonal and noninterpersonal factors as filters to evaluate if the eWOM message is relevant and valuable enough to be considered.

The second part of the analysis focused on the influence of interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers on the flow and influence of eWOM out of the community and into community members' social networks. The interpersonal section analyzed three factors, tie-strength, homophily

and credibility, and found tie-strength to be very influential within the OSN setting. Firstly, the interviewees use tie-strength, as mentioned above, as a filtering system to determine whether information posted in the network is relevant to them. This is based on the assumption that the closer strong-ties will communicate something of value in a higher degree than weak-ties. However, in-depth interviews unveil that eWOM messages from weak-ties can ignite further research in to the service if the source is perceived creditable. This means that eWOM flows with equal ease from strong-ties and weak-ties if the message is not discarded by the receiver before hand, while an eWOM recommendation from a strong-tie will be favorably perceived and therefore more valuable and influential on the receiver. Interviews and netnographical observations revealed that the majority of the community shares their recommendations offline. Nevertheless, netnographical observations show that some community members do post eWOM recommendations about Hussey and his coaching services into their OSNs, which indicates that the flow of eWOM into OSNs is influenced by other factors such as homophily, credibility and perceived risk rather than tie-strength. Homophily was found to have no influence on the flow of eWOM, but if the recommendation is to have an effect, the receiver has to find it interesting and relevant, as eWOM recommendations in OSNs carry greater influence if the sender and the receiver to some degree are socially homophilous. Credibility further strengthens the influence eWOM has in OSNs. Credibility is, in the offline world, build through social relationships, and since these relationships are directly brought online in OSNs, this is also true for the level of credibility between the social media user and the individuals on the their friend-list. This means that the degree of trust and credibility varies greatly in an OSN, whereby eWOM recommendations made by strong homophilous creditable ties carry the greatest amount of impact on the receiver. This means that tie-strength, homophily and credibility have a positive influence on the flow and impact of eWOM recommendations in OSNs, if the sender possesses them and can potentially block eWOM flow and influence if the sender is not perceived this way.

The noninterpersonal section of the analysis shows that noninterpersonal factors, perceived risk, sender's expertise and receiver's expertise, further affect the flow and impact of eWOM out of the community and into community members' OSNs. The analysis of perceived risk found that if a community member perceives a risk, in the form of social judgment, when posting eWOM recommendations into the OSN, then this has the potential to block the flow of eWOM in OSNs. Another risk has to do with perceived image; an interest in self-development and human-dynamics

might not be in agreement with the image the user is creating on social media, where eWOM is then blocked by the perceived risk of breaking the image. This results in community members choosing to make the recommendation face-to-face to avoid these risks.

Sender's expertise in combination with homophily and credibility was found to create a solid foundation highly influential eWOM in OSNs, especially if the information is actively sought.

Senders expertise and sub sequential credibility was further found to be especially important for the influence of eWOM if the recommendation is not actively sought and the information comes from a weak-tie.

## Conclusion

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This final chapter will reflect on the findings of the analysis. The first section will discuss and compare findings from the community and community members' OSNs. Here, the influence of the theoretical concepts will be held up against each other and discussed in order to evaluate how the interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers affect the flow and influence of eWOM in the community and community member's OSNs. Secondly, the finding of this discussion will be concluded upon in relation to marketing efforts and put into perspective.

## Discussion

Analysis of tie-strength in the Hussey community as well as community members OSNs made it very clear that the bases for these two are very different, because one builds on a collection of strangers with no tie-strength between them and the other on a network of people who have social relationships offline and therefore many levels of tie-strengths within one network. This means that the effect of tie-strength on eWOM recommendations affects very differently. The analysis of tie-strength in the Hussey community found that there was no degree of tie-strength between community members due to their lack of social relationships. Tie-strength was only detected in a one-sided relationship between individual community members and Hussey, which has an overall effect on credibility. Tie-strength was therefore found to have no direct effect on the flow and influence of eWOM in the community. In an OSN setting, interviewees indicated that tie-strength has a significant influence on the flow and influence of eWOM, because the interviewees use it as a filtering system to determine if a recommendation is relevant and has value to them by consciously dismissing recommendations from weak ties. However, it becomes clear through an intersubjective understandings of the community members' lifeworld that the influence of tie-strength is rooted in homophily and credibility, because community members assume that the stronger the tie the more like-minded and more trustworthy a relationship they have. The degree of tie-strength is therefore found to be an expression of the degree of social homophily and credibility between individuals, which affects how influential an eWOM recommendation is and how well it flows between individuals. Nevertheless, the study shows that a social relationship is not a prerequisite for

homophily and credibility between individuals, because these are created within the Hussey community with the presence of social relationships. This means that social relationships and the degree of tie-strength is not the determining factors on the influence and flow of eWOM in the community or community members' OSNs.

The analysis furthermore underlined the importance of social homophily, when shedding light on the unimportance of tie-strength in online networks. Homophily was found to be one of the most important facilitators of flow and influence of eWOM both in the community and community members' OSNs. However, the concept needs to be adjusted from a demographically focused to interest focused in an online context. The group-interest within the Hussey community facilitates the flow and influence of eWOM in the community, where similar interests between the sender and receiver create an incentive to share information. The diversity of community members' OSNs, on the other hand, also diversifies the degree of homophily in the network, which limits the flow of eWOM in the OSN. This happens because the community members assume that individuals in their network will not be influenced by a recommendation that is not aimed at any one in particular, whereby the community members express a concern for the lack of common interest or homophily between sender and receivers. This concern can be an explanation for the limited flow of eWOM recommendations in community members' OSNs, however, the concern about homophily does not seem strong enough to completely block eWOM recommendations, as is the case with perceived risks. This is based on the fact that some community members do recommend Hussey in their OSNs, regardless of the homophilous diversity and despite of the fact that the message is likely to only influence receivers who are homophilous and perceive the sender as credible. This comparison shows that homophily is a determining factor in facilitating flow and influencing receivers in the community as well as the OSNs.

Credibility is another determining influencer on facilitation of flow and influence of eWOM online; without credibility there would be no recommendations. Credibility builds on trust, which is formed very differently in the community and OSNs. In the community, trust and credibility builds on Hussey's knowledge and expertise, because there are no social relationships between community members. In OSNs, trust and credibility is build off screen through social interactions and relationships. This does not influence the effect that trust has on eWOM recommendations; even though they are different types of trust, they are both instrumental in the flow and influence of

eWOM. The major difference between the two types of trust is the effect they have. The community shares an overall trust in Hussey and varied degrees of trust between community members. On the other hand, OSNs also include varied levels of trust due to the different social relationship, but has no unifying trust as the community. The overall trust in Hussey creates uniformity in the community, which opens up for free flowing recommendations and intimate conversations in the community, where the diversity in the OSNs creates an overall lack of trust, which limits the flow of eWOM.

Perceived risk has the potential to block a purchase and eWOM recommendations. A consumer will always evaluate the risk of purchasing a product or a service based on price and value. This is also true for Hussey's coaching service, even though the Hussey community has a way of nipping this in the bud. The community gives consumers a taste of Hussey's knowledge and expertise through his weekly videos, articles etc, while at the same time providing consumers with access to a group of like-minded consumers who can offer credible feedback on the value of Hussey's coaching service, whereby consumers can ease their concerns and eventually make a purchase. In a way, the community caters to the perceived risk of price and value, whereby the perceived risk becomes a facilitator of flow of eWOM recommendations within the community, which can furthermore be very influential if the community members are perceived credible. However, when talking about eWOM on social media sites, other perceived risks are also present, while the community does offer a platform of credible consumer insight, it can on the other hand also be a source of perceived risk. These risks have to do with the individual's image on social media as well as the fear of judgment and ridicule for posting ones opinions in an open forum. Hussey placed his community on social media platforms to ease access. This, however, exposes the community members and information seekers to public critique on their opinion and/or person, which has the potential to keep individuals from engaging in eWOM. If an individual perceives such a risk, it might block the flow of eWOM, and could potentially be carried out face-to-face instead.

Sender's expertise is not a determining facilitator of flow and influence of eWOM. It can, however, add extra credibility and make the eWOM message more influential. The analysis found that community members possess expertise, which can increase the influence of their eWOM recommendations. They gain their expertise through Hussey's knowledge, which they acquire through his coaching sessions. Within the community, this expertise is fully utilized and highly



influences the receiver, because it, in combination with the community's homophily and credibility, forms a strong influence on eWOM recommendations. Community members can also utilize their expertise in an OSN setting, where the eWOM recommendation can influence the receivers, if the message is homophilous and the receiver finds the community member credible. Empirical data, however, shows that the majority of community members do, presumable due to perceived risks, not recommend Hussey's coaching service to their OSNs, which means that this expertise is not utilized and becomes worthless. Overall, the community members' expertise does have the potential to be highly influential on eWOM recommendations in both the community and OSNs, while community members' perceived risks block the expertise's influence in their OSNs.

Receiver's expertise is another significant influencer on eWOM. The case study found that the women who actively seek Hussey and the community are very susceptible to the community recommendations, because they possess an interest in and knowledge about self-development and coaching. This, in combination with active search, makes the information seeker very susceptible to eWOM, whereby the influence of eWOM is increased. Receivers of a Hussey recommendation in community members' OSNs are, on the other hand, likely to not have an interest and/or knowledge about Hussey, self-development and coaching, creating a boundary, which is hard to penetrate and carries therefor no influencer on the receiver. This means that the receivers of eWOM in communities are very likely to create a behavioral change, while eWOM in community members' OSNs, at best, increase the awareness about the topic of the message, if it not ignored.

## **Conclusion**

It is not possible to make one overall conclusion for the flow and influence of eWOM in the Hussey community and community members' OSNs, because eWOM is a dynamic process, which is influenced by different interpersonal and noninterpersonal influencers depending on the social media platform and social relationships.

It is, however, clear that homophily and credibility are key influencers in facilitating flow and influence of eWOM, if an eWOM message is to create a change in the receivers attitude. In the context of consumer-based communities and OSNs, this means an adjustment of the concept of

homophily from being demography to interest-based. Credibility is the other determining factor in facilitating flow and influence of eWOM. It is not important how trust is created within an online network, but it is crucial that it is a uniting trust, where the network shares an overall trust in a person, the website or something else. Otherwise the network will experience different levels of trust, which will create an overall lack of trust towards the group as a whole and block the flow of eWOM. If homophily and credibility is further supported by expertise, then the recommendation will carry an even more significant influence on the receiver, regardless of tie-strength.

The influence of tie-strength was found to be founded in homophily and credibility, which is created between individuals within a social relationship. However, analysis of the case community as well as community members' OSNs found that social relationships are not a prerequisite for homophily and credibility, because it was not the concept of tie-strength that had a facilitating influence on the flow or influence of eWOM, but rather homophily and credibility. The analysis of sender's expertise further showed that sender's expertise makes homophilous and credible eWOM recommendations more influential or gives a homophilous message the credibility it needs to become influential. Additionally it became clear that a service provider's expertise and credibility can be transferred to their communities, where it further facilitates the flow and influence of eWOM messages, hereby making a community an optimal source for information seeking.

A lack of homophily or credibility will block the flow and influence of an eWOM message completely. Perceived risks have this capability as well. The traditional idea of perceived risk, in the form of price and value, is found to have the ability to be a positive influence that can facilitate eWOM within a consumption-based community and be highly influential if the community is viewed as credible. On the other hand, new perceived risk rises in an online context. These are related to the nature of the social media platform. Information seeker and giver can be blocked from communicating on social media platforms because it is a public forum, where they open themselves up to social judgment and criticism.. This can overpower the intent to make a recommendation, whereby these perceived online risks can block eWOM in communities as well as OSNs.

These concepts all carry different levels of influence on facilitating the flow and influence of eWOM in communities and OSNs, but the ultimate deterring factor on the effect of eWOM is the receiver's expertise. The case study showed that individuals who actively seek information are likely to already have a moderate level of knowledge that leads them to seek information. This, in turn, makes the information seeker more open to eWOM, whereby knowledge and solicitation lead to a facilitation of eWOM's flow and influence within a community. In OSNs, knowledge is likely

to be low and the eWOM is unsolicited, creating a poor point of departure for eWOM recommendations. The eWOM message in OSNs is therefore only, at best, able to create awareness and not behavioral changes.

The analysis found that the Hussey consumption-based community is considerably better at facilitating flow as well as influence of eWOM than community members' OSNs. The reason being that individuals who seek information in the community are knowledgeable, active seekers who are open to recommendations. At the same time, the community possesses credibility and expertise within an area that is of interest to the information seeker and provides the individual with a like-minded group of peers, which creates a strong base for eWOM. Online social networks, on the other hand, were found to have diverse levels of homophily and credibility, made up of individuals with an individual mindset rather than a group-mindset, likely to have little to no knowledge and interest in the topic of the eWOM recommendation. This indicates that OSNs are extremely hard to influence as a whole, whereby eWOM's flow and influence is limited in this type of network. This means that, in an online context, social relationships are not necessarily the best facilitators of credible and relevant service provider recommendations, because the influence of the social relationship loses their meaning in online communities as well as OSNs. Here, it is influencers' credibility and homophily that make individuals engage in eWOM recommendation, whereby the flow and influence of information is intensified. The conclusion of this study is, based on the theoretical framework and empirical data, is that consumer-based communities are the best venue to focus on when marketers want to facilitate credible and highly influential eWOM recommendations about a service provider.

## **Perspective Thoughts**

The result of the analysis showed that a consumption-based community is a terrific venue for facilitating flow as well as influence of eWOM. The analysis further demonstrated the importance, of the receiver's point of departure, showing that an interest in and knowledge about the topic of the recommendation enhances the influence of eWOM messages. Kelman (1961) states that in order to understand the concept of influence you have to look at the individuals basis for accepting or

rejecting it. The thesis focused mostly of the source of the information and how this can influence and facilitate influential eWOM, whereby the receiver's basis for receiving the information and the manner in which this is done is left out on the analysis. The influence of these and their effect on the influence of eWOM will be discussed here briefly.

When Kelman (1961) talks about the basis, he is referring to the basis and the importance of the eWOM recommendation on the individual's values and goals, posing the question: what motivation system is activated in the influence situation? Kelman (1961) further talks about the process of internalization, where the individual adheres to the recommendation and internalizes the message, because it is relevant to the receiver's problems and/or congruent with the individual's value system, hereby highlighting the importance of the receiver's preconceived notions, which affects the degree to which the receiver internalizes the influence. This is in line with the finding of the thesis, which concluded that the receiver's interest and knowledge about the eWOM topic influence how open the receiver will be to the recommendation. Once the individual's values are known, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides us with two ways of influencing the receiver: the central or the peripheral route. The central route is used when the receiver has the motivation as well as the ability to think about the message and its topic, where the motivation to process the message may be determined by interest in the topic of the eWOM. The peripheral route is used when the receiver has little or no interest in the subject and/or has a lesser ability to process the message. This indicates that because the receivers in the community and the OSN, have different bases when receiving the message, they need to be communicated to in different ways. The ELM is formulated for traditional marketing efforts, however future research could benefit from examining this in an online context. Where an analysis of this approach has the potentials to reveal how an eWOM recommendation about products or services can become more influential and flow better within OSNs.

## Appendix

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### **Appendix 1. Vox Pop**

Did someone recommend Matthew Hussey or the event to you?

Who recommended it?

Was it in person or on Social media?

Would you like to take part in an interview about eWOM at a later date?

## **Appendix 2. Interview Guide**

**Name**

**Age**

**Nationality**

**Occupation**

**How did you Come across MH?**

### **INTERPERSONALE INFLUENCE**

#### **WOM actively sought - Opinion seeking**

In what ways do you gather WOM about a service before you buy?

In what way do you gather WOM, if you can see the a service has had a positive effect on another person?

In what types of purchase situation do you seek help from other to make purchase decision?

Why do you seek help from other people?

How does their opinion affect your decision?

In what ways do you seek WOM recommendation about a service?

In what ways did you seek WOM recommendation about MH's service?

#### **Tie strength**

What makes you feel close and connected to a person?

Why is that important to you?

How do you stay in contact with the people are closes to?

Why?

Do you have Facebook and Twitter?

Describe your relationship with your Facebook/Twitter friends?

How are your contacts on Facebook and Twitter important to you?

Why are they important to you?

#### **Homophly**

How similar are you to the people who are closest to you?

In what ways do they differ from you?

What does this mean in regards to you closeness?

What does their opinion mean to you?

How similar are you to your Facebook/Twitter friends?

How do you feel your Facebook/Twitter friends are different from you?

How close are you to your friends on Facebook / Twitter?

What does the opinion of your friends on Facebook / Twitter mean to you?

## **Trust**

How would you explain the degree of trust (believe) between you and the people closest to you?

What is your level of confidence (faith in) in your friends?

Why do you trust and have confidence in them?

What does trust and confidence mean for the relationship between you and your close ones?

### **FB/TWITTER**

what is the trust level between you and your friends on Facebook/Twitter?

How much confidence do you have in your Facebook/ Twitter friends?

Why is your relationship the same/different from the one offline?

In what way does trust and confidence play in when someone is recommending a service?

## **Normative influence**

In what way, does buying something create a sense of belonging?

In what way do you consider the opinions of other people, when considering to buy a service?

How does it influence you, when you know, that people will not understand or approve of what you are buying?

How does it influence you to buy something, that you know that people will approve of?

If somebody close to you have bought a service, and love it, how does that influence you ?

## **Matt Hussey**

In what way did you consider the opinion of the people close to you, when deciding about MH coaching service?

## **NON INTERPERSONAL**

## **Informal influence**

If you only have very little experience with a service where, do you then gather more information?

*Internet - Friends - Family - Face-to-face - Social media*

Why do you go there to get information?

*knowledge - experience*

When is a persons WOM the most valid in your opinion?

## **Matt Hussey**

How did you first come across MH coaching service?

### **YOURSELF**

How did you go about finding out more?

What did you consider when reading other

women's comments?

Why did you end up...

### **WOM**

What was your prior knowledge of his coaching service?

What did you consider after receiving the  
recommendation?

What was your next move after getting the WOM  
recommendation?

Did you end up taking her WOM recommendation?

## **Perceived risk.**

What will make you have concerns about buying a service?

How would you feel better about these concerns?

Why does that help?

## **Matt Hussey**

Did you buy a coaching program from MH?

What concerns do/did you have about buying one of MH coaching programs?

What role has those concerns played in you purchase decision?

Where did you look for help to make your decision?

What influenced your final decision and why?

## **Senders Expertise**

Who's WOM recommendation are you most susceptible to?

People who has expertise.

why?



What makes a person seem like they have expertise?

How does this expertise influence your purchase decision?

If a person has gained results with a service, and recommends it to you, how will that affect their recommendation?

How does celebrity status influence your buying decisions?

How does MH celebrity/appearances on TV affect your purchase decision?

In what way does MH seem like he has expertise?

How does/ what will make MH be able to influence your purchase decision?

## **Receivers Expertise**

How does it influence you when a person recommends a service within an area where you already have a lot of knowledge?

How does it influence you when a person recommends a service, that you have no knowledge or prior interest in?

In what purchase situations are you most susceptible to WOM recommendations?

In what purchase situations are you least susceptible to WOM recommendations?

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

### **Opinion seeking**

In what types of purchase situations do you seek WOM recommendations?

*came across something - somebody recommended it.*

Why do you seek out WOM recommendations?

(Where do you seek out WOM recommendations?)

What do you value higher: face-to-face opinions or Social Media opinions and why?

### **Opinion giving**

When do you become an advocate for a product or a service?

Why do you persuade people about a service or a product?

What do you consider before making a recommendation about a service/ product?

Where/how do you make your recommendation or persuasion?

*person - social media - internet*

To what extent have you been successful in your persuasions?

To what extent do you try influence your Facebook / Twitter friends to purchase something?

### **Matt Hussey**

What experience do you need to have to recommend MH coaching service?

Why would you Recommend it?

How would you recommend it and why?

**Opinion passing**

In what cases will you pass on a recommendation made by someone in your network?

How will you pass on that recommendation?

*personal - repost*

What are your feelings about passing on recommendations about a service?

What are your feelings about passing on recommendations about a service Facebook / Twitter?

*ex. Repost*

How do you feel that passing on a recommendation reflects on you?

What do you consider before passing on a recommendation Face-to-face?

What do you consider before passing on a recommendation on social media?

## Appendix 3. Interview Transcriptions

### Lieselle

Interview Lieselle 86 min 36 sec

Interviewer: Helene / H.

Interviewee: Lieselle / L.

H: Okay, so for the purpose of this interview I need you to say your name and your age.

L: My name is Lieselle Shenadad and I'm 36 years old.

H: Okay and your nationality?

L: It's American.

H: An occupation?

L: I'm a college professor.

H: All right, thank you. Nice t-shirt by the way.

L: Thank you. I wear it just for you.

H: You got to keep it?

L: Yes. Did you guys get to keep it?

H: No.

L: And I think that that is so awful like, I didn't read that in an e-mail and in the end of the day I just kind of left and then the next day I had my viewing party and one of the girls said "Oh yeah, did you see how originally we weren't supposed to keep the t-shirts but then they let us keep it" and yeah. I just couldn't believe that like, they couldn't even get us water.

H: No, it's like, come on guys. You got all these people helping you, come on.

L: Yeah exactly. Like you can give us a t-shirt? And that is gross like, are you recycling them?

H: They are, they washed them because she went and talked to me about it, like where she was going to was them and I was like "umm, I don't know. A hotel." All right, let's get back to this.

How did you come across Matthew Hussey?

L: It was about, I would say like March of last year, 2014, I was working at getting a matchmaker and I was just feeling like I needed to do something different and online dating wasn't working and I just felt like I never met new people and new guys and I wanted to figure out how. And a friend of mine actually Brie said that her friends had suggested looking at Matthew Hussey's videos and stuff

and so she said you should take a look at him. He seems to be making a lot of friends, like you know, she just kind of started getting in to it. So I just started to kind of like, I looked up his videos and some of his stuff and so I went ahead and took the money that I was going to use for the matchmaker and I ordered his program “Fast-track to Mr. Right program.” And then I, you know, I started watching his stuff and meet a lot of friends and then something that he mentioned, like I saw somewhere about the retreat and I was just curious what that was about and how much it would cost and I just assumed that I was never going to afford it. So I just kind of ... I like, went to the website or something that they said and I had to put in your name and your e-mail to get any information and so I did that and then I immediately got something more back from the .. and then I made an appointment to talk to him the next week.

H: All right, we'll go into that more a little bit later but great. In what ways do you gather word of mouth about a service like Hussey's service before you buy?

L: I usually do a lot of like, online work like, reviewing so like, I love app ... What people have to say, you know like, I try to find like negative stuff really because I feel like the positive ... you know, you never know who's writing the positive stuff and you know, whatever, but I just try to ... mostly I try the online refer that I can find, like because there is always like, reviews. For a Hussey type of, I didn't find too much it's sort of hard to find comments, you know, obviously he has a Facebook-page and stuff but ... to video and you know, just wanted to see the general feeling.

H: All right. In what ways do you gather word of mouth if you can see that a service has had a positive effect on another person?

L: Mostly like, my biggest influence was, you know, I trusted Brie and I trusted that, like her and I, you know we're really good friends and we talk a lot about stuff and we understand each other and we're sort of in a similar. We have a similar kind of cool guys as our boyfriends in a way, sort of. Not necessarily because her and I are very different but in terms of like we both have p.hd.'s in mechanical-engineering and we both have kind of similar ideas to what we want in a guy and what we want ... like the, role we want to play in a relationship. If she was suggesting it then I also, that was a high like, a big factor for me someone that I trust is recommending something.

H: Is that always how you feel when somebody is recommending a service to you?

L: It held a lot of weight, yeah. So it, like, the person who is recommending it, you know that'll recommending or not recommending something that is going to pull a lot of weight depending on how they fit in to my life and how my I trust them.

H: Okay. In what type of purchase situation do you seek help to make that purchase decision?

L: I don't understand that question.

H: Okay. So I'm asking in what type of situation will you ask for other people's advice before deciding to buy a product or a service?

L: In what type of situations?

H: Like what are you thinking about a product or a service you know what ... Is it when you don't know anything, is it when you have a little knowledge, is it when you don't think you trust what's on the internet?

L: I think all of those situations. Yeah, I don't usually make purchases of that sort without at least consulting with trusted people.

H: So why do you seek help from other people?

L: I like to bounce things off of people so I guess I probably don't necessarily ... I like to get perspective. So for me sometimes, like if I keep something in my head and I think about it sometimes just saying it out loud to someone else I get perspective and I'm like "oh, I was thinking about this all wrong" or "oh, I didn't even see that aspect of it" or yeah. A lot of times I bounce things off with my sister because she is really like, logical and very practical.

H: So when you do this does their opinion affect your purchase decision?

L: Yeah. Sometimes, most of the time. Well it depends because sometimes I just need to like articulate and verbalize it and sometimes ... so then like after doing that sometimes their opinion isn't necessarily what I'm asking and sometime – yeah. I think, yes. Their opinion is going to ... I would take their opinion into con because I normally only confide and I wouldn't just, like I know that some people just talk to everybody about things but I target specific people, that I know I would value their opinion.

H: All right. In what ways do you seek word of mouth recommendations about a service?

L: well if I'm looking for a service or something in particular I might look at friends or acquaintances or people in my life that I know have either been in the same situation or might have someone in their life who's been in the same situation and I might do some online digging first. If they like have any relations too anything that I'm sort of looking into and then I might just ask them.

H: Why would you go online first?

L: Because I'm like a private person, like I'm probably like ... I might you know. I don't know maybe I don't know how to ask or I don't trust that I might, you know, I don't trust that I'll be able to articulate what I want to say and I'll research the rest.

H: In what ways do you seek word of mouth recommendation about Matthew's service his coaching?

L: Yeah, I mean it was just recommend to me by Brie and after that I just looked it up and I kind of took it from there. I didn't necessarily seek word of mouth. I mean that came about because I was feeling a certain and so I was looking at going the matchmaker route and I was talking to Brie about it so she suggested Matthew Hussey.

H: Did you look at the comments at all? You know, you mentioned that you saw his videos?

L: Yeah.

H: So did you look at the comments people left or anything on Facebook?

L: Yeah, I didn't look on Facebook I looked at some of the comments on Youtube and I looked at just kind of anything I could find of like, maybe people writing a blog of some sort or something like that. I think I could find that was like, someone I mean as neutral as they can get. Like, you know trying to look for neutral ..

H: Did you find anything on him?

L: I think I did, but at this point I don't think I remember. Like I don't remember finding anything really negative that's why I ..

H: Do you remember if it influenced you at all reading all of those comments on the Youtube video?

L: I don't read too much because I don't read too much into the positive stuff like, really .. will report if there's anything negative or anything saying his a scammer or it's the same old stuff, you know, and also I did end up looking that much because I wanted .. while reading his stuff, that he made a lot of sense and I didn't really care what anyone thought because immediately I felt like it made sense and I wanted to know more.

H: What makes you feel close to a person and connected to them? Like friends or family members.

L: I think when I can feel like I can be myself and when I feel like they are also hiding behind walls in every sense.

H: Why is that important to you?

L: Well that is what makes me feel close to them. So it's, you know if I feel for some reason that I can be myself it's because I probably feel judge and so I am hiding behind something or I feel that there's a part of me that needs to hide and same for the other person. If they feel like they need to hide behind walls with me then it means that there's something about me that's making them feel

uncomfortable and either they feel judge or they are judging themselves or they, you know, whatever it is.

H: How does that affect your connecting or relationship?

L: In what kind of relationship? In every relationship?

H: Yeah, not necessarily an romantic relationship but a friendship relationship f.ex.?

L: How does me feeling that way? I don't' think I have a hard time ... I think I have a lot of really close, like good friends because I do try to be open with people. You know my birthday just passed so I especially ... I'm reminded of what great are and the number of close people I have in my life.

H: And how did you get close to these people?

L: I had different ways. Probably sharing something. There is something that we shared that we went through an experience so I have a lot of good friends from swimming. I grew up as a competitive swimmer and then have really good friends from swimming in college, I have a lot of good friends from my courses in college and I have a lot of good friends from travelling that I have met just from travelling. I have really good friends that I have worked with, when I have worked the different places that I have worked. I have really good friends from grad school. I have good friends in the retreat. You know I think going through an experience as some sort with someone helps you get really close with them. I mean yeah. I also have good friends that I have met through other people.

H: How do you stay in touch with them? How do you stay connection with your close friends and family?

L: Anyway ... whatever suits the situation so some people I send .. you know I will e-mail. Like if they're obviously within my close vicinity I try to visit and I try make sure we get together, you know often. If they are far away I regularly Skype with some people overseas or I have a group, you know, we might have like a works app group or I send e-mails or I plan regularly type of get-togethers you know, so like re-unions. Like I have a re-union for my swim team every year that I plan. I use every form providing letters with an ink pen which I use for every form of communication out there.

H: So which one is more important to you if you could choose? Which one would you rather use?

L: Well I love like the video chatting because I get to see the person and I – well okay, most important obviously it's face-to-face so seeing with them, you know, getting together like with a person, in person. And then probably a cross between texting and video chatting

H: Why?

L: Texting is really convenient and you can kind of do it anytime and you can stay in touch with someone quickly and easily on a regularly basis and not be too intrusive on their lives or on your life and video chatting you get to see their face, you know, if in person isn't, you know. You get to like see into their life in some way so you can like plan, you know, some sort of ... you know, you can be like "look I just moved and here is my apartment" or you can, you know, have it on your phone and you can be like, this is where I live now, like this is my city, you know, or you can kind of like have an in into a persons life without having to there.

H: Do you have Facebook and Twitter?

L: I have Facebook. I just joined Twitter so I'm not very good or knowing anything about Twitter yet

H: Do you talk to your friends on Twitter?

L: No.

H: Okay

L: Actually I joined for professional reasons so I'm trying to keep it ... like mostly I'm just following professional organizations and stuff like at the moment and I follow some friends but I haven't got to the friends yet.

H: But you have Facebook?

L: I have Facebook.

H: Do you have a lot of Facebook-friends?

L: I do.

H: So can you describe the relationship there is between you and your Facebook-friends?

L: Oh yeah! I did forget Facebook that is also one of my favorite methods of keeping in contact because once again you get a little zip-in into people's lives like I love the fact I get to see a lot of my friends that I don't live near. I get to see like, you know, they have babies or when they get married and like or whatever .. relationship they are in or you know, things they might be doing without ... especially people who I might not necessarily have stayed in contact with, where it not the Facebook. So like, you know, friends that I might have across the country or overseas that are dear to me but aren't necessarily someone I will call one phone or e-mail or write a letter to regularly. I get to like keep in touch with their lives pretty regularly.

H: How are you contacts on Facebook important to you?

L: They are very important and I only have friends on my Facebook that I actually know. So I don't like just accept anybody people, as Facebook friends. If someone request to be my friend I'm like,



do I know this person, you know, or are they just requesting me because they, you know ... If I had that actually met you in person or met you through someone else or, you know, something like that. I have to actually know you to accept you as my Facebook-friend, like you're my actual friend.

H: So do you have any relationships on there that are like old friendships when you're not really communicating like video chatting or face-to-face anymore but they are only on Facebook?

L: Yeah, I have a lot of relationships like that.

H: How close are you to those friends?

L: It just depends on, there're some that I don't communicate with anymore. I just kind of keep with them on Facebook that they were dear to me at one point in my life but not so much anymore but I would still like to keep up how they're doing and then there's some that like, for instance that I have some Facebook-friends that I went to high school with but I didn't really necessarily know them in high school and I don't necessarily like, I didn't know them well. You know, I know their name I know who they are and I didn't know them well and I don't really have any reason to keep in touch with them but every day I kind of like think "should I befriend with them?" you know, I don't really have any reason to. Like I think a lot of those got on my page from like 10 years ago now .. 10 year high school reunion, you know, I have like a ... My high school has a page and then, like through that. So in a sense I value a connection that I don't care to really keep up with those people on an individual basic.

H: So why are the people on Facebook important to you?

L: Well I guess that – I mean they are friends most of them. My community in some sense.

H: What about the ones that are not really close to you anymore? Why are they important?

L: I think they represent a part of my life at a time when they were important to me.

H: So how similar are you to the people who are close to you?

L: I think I connect to them in some way because we have some sort of connection. You know, whether it was, you know, I have a lot of good friends from junior high school, that we went to junior high school together and, so we kind of like grew, you know, together. The school was very small and it was very and it was very , it was a specialist school for talented kids. So we have that connection or it is the swimming, you know, the way I felt the connection. You know, we share something we share some kind of connection.

H: So the people who right now are the closest to you, how would you say that they are different?

In what ways does they differ from you? Not necessarily on Facebook, you know, just kind of person, family or friends who's the closest to you right now?

L: How do they differ?

H: Yeah.

L: I mean in every way possible. I'm close to people that not really possible and I differ from people that is really possible it could be our backgrounds where we grew up. It could be, you know, the point where we are in our lives and it could be financially. It could be educational. It could be cultural. It could be, you know ...

H: How does that affect your closeness?

L: I think it gives the relationship something like a deeper connection because we can share on like, we can share like our differences and we can also like have different perspective on things because we have certain different experiences.

H: What does their opinion mean to you? Like people who are closest to you – how do you regard it?

L: Very highly.

H: Why is that?

L: Because they are close to me for a reason. I respect them and I love them and yeah.

H: How similar would you say that you are to your Facebook friends?

L: I mean the same answer. I have similarities and differences that vary depending on how I know them.

H: How would you describe the closeness to your Facebook friends then?

L: I'm very close to some and not so close to others. I have a complete range.

H: And what does the people on ... like you friends on Facebook what does their opinion mean to you? About you or your life. If they any kind of comments to anything that you post or?

L: It depends on the person.

H: Why is that?

L: So another aspect of Facebook is that I have some family members that I'm not necessarily close with but they're you know, like my mom or my dad's half-sister's and their kids and there are some you know, parts of my family that I'm not super close with. So you know, it depends. If it's someone that I'm close with then sure you know, I regard their opinion highly but I don't actually post a lot on Facebook of my personal self.

H: What do you mean when you say someone you're close with? Who is that right now? Are they people you see and talk with everyday right now or are they old friends? Who are they?

L: Yeah. I mean they are people that I see and talk too. Right now there are old friends and new friends. I have a lot ... I don't know how to classify them, you know, I don't know how to – because they are all different. You know all my friends are all different for all different reasons and the ones closest to right now just happens to be the ones that I'm closest to right now but they don't necessarily replace the ones that I was closer to before. Do you know what I mean like, when I get a new friend that I feel close with it doesn't mean that someone else has to go.

H: What does trust mean in your close relationships? Can you explain the trust level maybe?

L: I'd say it's high. I'd say it's that if I feel someone is close to me or that I feel close to them it means that I trust them. If someone is not close to me anymore but used to be it probably means that there were some breach of trust in some way.

H: How do they gain that trust or how do you establish that trust between you?

L: I think that when you start to feel a connection with someone and the relationship starts to grow and you start to feel close to someone. Personally they just start out with trust. Like I just assume that I can trust ones all those things are coming together and then if they break that trust then that's when they sort of like lose, you know. They lose that automatic, you know, full jar they lose that depending on how they broke it, you know, and how intense or deep that was. And in terms of getting it back that's the hard one.

H: What is your level of confidence in your close friends and family?

L: My close friends and family, 100 percent confidence.

H: Why do you have that confidence in them?

L: Because they are close to me for a reason.

H: can you explain how they have gained the confidence or is it the same as with the trust?

L: It's probably similar with the trust and there have probably been situations where they've come through for me. So like, where maybe I needed someone or I've needed I felt a certain and they either comforted me or supported me or you know, basically we haven't only gone through good times together. We've gone through bad things and they've been there for me in some way?

H: How is trust and confidence meaningful for your close relationships?

L: How is it meaningful?

H: What does it adds to the relationship?

L: Oh! It adds depth. It adds, like it strengthens the bond. It adds ...

H: Does it makes you feel closer to them in any way?

L: Yeah, that's closeness. Yeah.

H: What about on Facebook? If we that trust onto Facebook-friends? What is your level of trust with your Facebook friends?

L: I mean, we're kind of pulling from the same pool of people because like I said my Facebook-friends I know them and the ones that are trusted and that are close are also trusted and close to me in real life too. Like to separate.

H: So if we take the people that are not ... well I don't know how you separate your friends on Facebook but most people have you know, some that are like all friends that are not people that they're not talking to that much anymore and then they have, you know, their friends that they still talk to and are connected to now. If we talk about the ones that you don't have the like, real life contact with. The ones you only have on Facebook. What is your trust towards them?

L: I don't really, like I said I don't really post much about my life on Facebook and I don't really care much for those people. Like the people that I don't necessarily keep in contact with I don't care as much about their opinion or I probably don't trust them. You know, I don't necessarily have a great deal of ... if I had all of those things for them then I would also be keeping in touch with them more regularly and not just through Facebook.

H: And what if they post something on Facebook like a recommendation about a service or product? How does your trust level play into that kind of recommendation?

L: It depends on who it is. So right now you're talking about Facebook only friends not someone you keep in touch with in your life.

H: Yeah! Facebook only Friends. Do you think about it at all?

L: I mean maybe but not very. It depends on who it is. If it was someone ... probably wouldn't think about to much.

H: Okay. In what way does trust and confidence play in when someone recommends a service to you? Either on Facebook or in real life?

L: It plays a big role. Yeah, it plays a big role. Like I said I take those recommendation from people that I trust and confide them very highly.

H: Okay. So let's move on a little bit. In what way does buying something create a sense of belonging? That can be either product or service.

L: I think it does. Especially in a service.

H: How so?

L: A service is typically an experience that you'll have and so someone who's had a similar or the same experience feel, you know, a bond and a connection and some sort of community sense with

that person. I guess that's also the case for products too, you know, you buy a product or wins it. You buy like, to satisfy a specific reason.

H: So how does a product or a service reflect on you as a person who buys it? Does it say anything about you, you think?

L: I think it does but I guess it would depend on what you're buying. Yeah, I think it does.

H: In what way do you consider other people opinion when you considering buying a service? Like, not just you know asking for their advice more, you know, in the sense of what will they think or will their response be if I buy this?

L: I don't if that plays into me necessarily buying it or not but it will play into how much I share with people later on and/or how I share ...

H: Why does it not affect if you buy or not?

L: Why doesn't it? Because like I said, I like to do a lot of research and I like to go into something well informed and if I've made the decision that it's something that is going to add value to my life then it's important to me and it doesn't really matter what everyone else thinks. Like I have decided that. Who else has to live my life.

H: What if you're unsure, you know you're kind of on the rocks, you're like I don't know but then you think about the fact that some of the people close to you might not approve. Does that affect you in anyway?

L: I'm unsure.

H: All right, let's try the next one. How does it influence you if you want to buy a service but you know that your friends and family will not approve of it. They will think maybe that it's stupid or waste of money or .. ? Is that something you take into consideration?

L: I mean I'm sure I do but I'm trying to think of a time where that would have been an issue. You know I'm trying to think of a time when I didn't do something because I felt like my family might not approve.

H: Maybe it will come to later.

L: Yeah. I mean, yeah I guess I does. Yeah.

H: What if you're standing there you're considering a service or product and you know the people in your network the people who are closest to you they will you know, approve of it. They will applaud you for buying it how does that affect you?

L: Yeah. I mean either way it's going to affect. Like what I do and that would probably push me. Giving me enough of a push to buy it or you know, or the other way.

H: What if someone really close to you buys a service and they absolutely love it how does that influence you?

L: It would probably influence me greatly. Like it would probably ..

H: To do what?

L: I would probably take it very seriously and look into how it could, you know, if it was right for me.

H: In what way did you consider other people's opinion when you were choosing whether or not to go to Matthew Hussey's retreat?

L: I talked to my mom. I talked to my sister. I talked to my aunt. I talked to Brie. It was a big investment for me and wanted to make sure that is a was the right thing so definitely talked to – I talked individually one-on-one with people who I felt really cared about my best interest and knew what the things were that I wanted to work on.

H: And what were their opinions on it?

L: Everyone said “absolutely, you should go.”

H: Okay and how did that influence you. Was that what pushed over to actually trying buying it?

L: Preventing originally I was like, I can't afford this. There's just no way and then, you know, my sister said “If had the money I would give it to you”, like you need to do this and my aunt offered to like, take money out of her retirement for me to go and my mom was like, I think you should go for sure and then I think what kind of hit the nail in the head was my cousin was having a wedding the same week and it was going to cost just as much to go to the wedding and I would've made it work. You know I would've figured it out and I said “well if I can figure it out for her then I can figure it out for myself”.

H: Okay. You talked about buying the fast track to *Mr. Right*. Did you talk to anybody before buying that?

L: No. That was just from like talking to Brie because she hadn't bought it but she had a friend of hers had it and so she had watched the videos through her friend's account and since she had, you know, suggested it.

H: Why was that an easier purchase to make than the other one?

L: Because it was 200 dollars as supposed to 4000 dollars and plus flying across the country plus paying for a hotel. I mean 200 dollars, like if it turned out to be like, crap I can get over that. But 6000 dollars is, you know, I'm still paying for it so.

H: If you only have very little experience with a service where do you go to gather more information?

L: The internet.

H: Why do you go to the internet first?

L: I don't even know where else I would go.

H: What is it that you're looking for when you search the internet then?

L: People's opinions or what people have to say about it.

H: Why do you value their opinion?

L: I don't necessarily value their opinion but I look for, you know, certain things. Like I said you don't know who is writing it so like, I look for patterns, you know, if a lot of people in a lot of different places are saying the same things.

H: When is a person word of mouth most valid to you?

L: When I trust them.

H: Okay. So you first came across Matthew Hussey by you know, your friend made the recommendation face-to-face. What was your prior knowledge about his coaching service?

L: I'd never heard about him before.

H: What did you consider when she made that recommendation to you?

L: What did I consider or what did I think?

H: Yeah, what did you think?

L: I thought it sounds interesting and let's check it out. Let's see if he's just the same old buy, you know, every other dating coach or whatever it is out there or if there's something different about him then I can actually, yeah.

H: What was your conversation like? What was it about her recommendation that tipped you towards going to find out more?

L: She said he's different and that she was really learning a lot you know, from him and it change her perspective on a lot of things.

H: So after the recommendation what was the first thing you did? Was it the videos? Was it the website?

L: Yeah, I went to the website and that automatic video pops up where he's talking about ...

H: The welcome one?

L: Yeah.

H: So that was the first one you've watched?

L: I think so. Maybe I went to Youtube. I didn't see much of his Youtube videos until after I knew who he was.

H: Okay.

L: I don't really remember.

H: Do you remember what you thought about him, you know, when you watched the videos?

L: I first thought "oh, he's hot". I mean that was just the first, like, thing that I stopped but then I just thought he makes a lot of sense, like yeah, that makes sense. That's a different way of looking at it and it makes sense.

H: What will make you have concerns about buying a service, like the one Matthew provides?

L: If I'm paying money for the same-old-same-old.

H: Okay. So money is an important factor?

L: Well yeah! I don't want to waste my money. So like, if I feel in any way that it's a waste of my money and time.

H: So is money the first thing you think about or go to, you know, to consider. Is that like your first, I don't even know what to call it but, you know, maybe there is a row of things that you go through and then money is the first one and then maybe other things?

L: I think it's definitely one of the things to consider especially because I'm not living very comfortable yet. I definitely have another paycheck to pay out. So everything that I spend that I don't need, you know, anything extra I have to consider whether it's worth the money or not and then probably my time. If it's going to be a waste of my time, that is also pretty precious to me right now, because I don't have a lot of that.

H: So if you had to choose one, which one would you consider first money or time?

L: I mean if it's going to be a good investment in terms of my time then I would consider money but if it's not even going to be a good investment of my time then I don't even have to think about the money, right.

H: What will make you feel better about, you know, the two concerns? You know if somebody is trying to sell you a service and you have those two concerns what makes you feel better about and actually leaning towards buying?

L: I would say some sort of guarantee or like hearing an experience from someone that I know and trust and knowing that they had a positive experience and it wasn't a waste of time and money.

H: But with the Matthew Hussey retreat you weren't able to talk to anybody who's done it and as far as I can gather you had the same concerns. Time and money. So how did you feel better about having those concerns, you know, how did you finally end up going?



L: I spoke to Billy one of the coaches but I also took into account that he is trying to sell me something and so he was not necessarily a neutral person to go to but, you know, I was definitely open about expressing my concerns and I was kind of meditated on it and decided to take a chance.

H: Do you have anything that you can say that helped you, like tipped you over the edge and say “I’ll just do it”?

L: Well I felt like I needed to do something for me, for my life. Like I said my cousins wedding was going to cost me the same amount it would’ve cost me for the retreat and I said I want my own wedding. Like I want to have my own wedding so I need to choose me.

H: Was that before or after you talked to Billy?

L: After

H: Okay. Did Billy say anything about money? Like what was his argument?

L: He said that it would be an investment in me and he said that, you know, if I needed to work out any kind of payment plan of anyway they would be than happy to work with me. So that he understands that money is a limiting factor for a lot of people and in anyway, you know, how I would get help figure it out.

H: Did you use a payment plan?

L: Sort of. I did the 800\$ deposit and then I did 1200\$ and then I did 2000\$.

H: Right and did that help you make the finale decision?

L: The payment plan? No. For me it’s money out of my pocket regardless. So for me I look at the big picture, so like you know, if in the end it wasn’t worth it that’s 4000\$ or more than that 6000\$ or whatever it is that I no longer have. Like it doesn’t matter if I paid it in installments. It doesn’t matter if I paid it in a loan sum. Like it’s 4000\$ that I don’t have that could have gone to and I probably list all the things that I could’ve gone too, that I don’t have.

H: Okay. Who’s word of mouth recommendations are you most susceptible to?

L: Friends that I know, trust, love.

H: Is that because of the trust?

L: Yeah.

H: What about their expertise within what they’re recommending?

L: Yeah, I would say so is expertise too.

H: What makes a person seem like they have expertise? Like Brie f.ex. when she recommended the Hussey’s videos?

L: Well her in that sense, like I said that her and I were going similar struggles and we were in similar places in our life and I knew that we shared that, like we talked about that for years. So I knew that she understood the point I was in in my life.

H: What makes a person seem like they have expertise within an area?

L: If it's something that they have either put a lot of their time and energy into it could be they have some sort of degree or went to school for it or it could be something they have a lot of passion for. So they have been doing it for a long time and you can just tell from talking to them. Or reading something that they write that they love and they have a lot of passion for it and so that in itself it's like well you love it so much then I hold you in the highly, you know, let me see who else have to say about it. Yeah, could just be someone who is in that industry who like, knows who has a lot of education on it and you know, knowing that they know, they have a lot of education in this area and they have chosen this route/this thing.

H: How does expertise then influence you in a purchase decision?

L: I'd say it influences me medium-a lot.

H: Why is that?

L: Because you want someone that knows what they are talking about. I mean want to take advice from someone that know what they are talking about but that's also not the end all be all.

H: What is more important, if somebody has expertise or they're close to you and you trust them and you are connected with them?

L: It'll probably be a combination of the two. I'd say though probably expertise. So if someone I know and trust says "oh you should try this work-out plan" you know, it depends on the person. It depends on, you know, like it would just depend on ... it would have to also depend on how much they actually know. That if someone that I'm not that close with said, but I know that they are an expert in the field and they said you should try this workout plan, then I would probably take that higher.

H: What about celebrity status? Does that influence your purchase decision in anyway than somebody who is well known?

L: Depends on why they are a celebrity and how they are a celebrity and how that celebrity is connected to that product or service.

H: Can you explain to me a little bit more about that, like give an example?

L: So like for instance Jillian Michaels is where I work but she's a celebrity because of you know, health and fitness in general. So if he was recommending something than someone who, I don't

know. If Eva Longoria was recommending health and fitness program just because she's Eva Longoria that doesn't mean anything to me.

H: How does Matthew's celebrity or let's say his TV appearances affect your decision to buy his retreat?

L: Well I didn't know that before I bought it but it does, I think it gives him a little more credibility because it's not just word of mouth and it's not just this person and that person that has recognized that he has something to say that add value to a lot of people. You know, it's also these cheesy executives and networks and radio shows that believe that he has something to say that is worth listening to. So that does influence.

H: Did that make you feel better in anyway about having spent all that money?

L: Yeah! It did.

H: In what ways does Matthew seem like he has expertise?

L: Well just from reading his bio and hearing his bio in person and getting to know him. I would say even though he has no formal education, like he doesn't have a degree in people he was being studying it for a long time and it is something that he is really passionate about and like interested in and he's extremely intelligent and he is kind of a genius in the way that he picks that information and is able to pass it along and share it with people in a way that is practical.

H: Did Matthew Hussey himself in anyway influence your decision to buy them or go to the retreat?

L: Yeah, I went for him.

H: Okay. So would you say you went for his expertise?

L: Yes, for his expertise.

H: Okay. So how does it influence you if somebody is trying to recommend a service to you where you already know a lot about this area? I know you know a lot about fitness so if somebody is trying recommend within fitness to you but you already have a lot of knowledge on it, how does the recommendation affect you then?

L: It'll probably have to be based on their expertise.

H: Why is that?

L: Because it's something I already know a lot about and I know probably more than the average person.

H: How open would you say that you are?

L: Oh, I'm always open. Like I would probably listen, especially if it was a trusted friend I would listen to what they have to say and I would probably just find out why, they were recommending it

and I would probably look into it. You know, to see what it is about even if it's just to be supportive.

H: So how does it influence you if somebody is recommending something to you that you've never even considered, an area you never even thought about something that you never even could be important to you?

L: How does what affect me?

H: What is your reaction when somebody is trying to recommend something, a new service to you within an area that you nothing about?

L: Sure, I want to know why they were recommending it first if it's something that I've never considered than then I definitely look into it and you know see what it is about.

H: Why would that recommendation make you want to look into it?

L: It it's someone that I know and I trust that is recommending it to me then I would want to know why. So if they're recommending it to me I would think that they were recommending it for a reason. If it's something that they feel like can improve my life then sure. I'm always up for growing and .. you know.

H: In what type of purchase situation are you most susceptible to word of mouth recommendations?

L: Probably dating and relationship types of or like ... probably I would say like, self-help ...

H: Is that when you've come across something on your own or when someone has recommended it to you?

L: Probably recommended.

H: Why more when it has been recommended to you?

L: I guess it depend on how I like came across on my own. If it's something I'm looking for then ... if I came across it on my own then I would also have to do research and figure out, you know, what it's about and how what other people are saying about it. If it's recommended to me then it's already has a positive endorsement.

H: Why do you seek out word of mouth recommendations?

L: I don't know how else I would get information on a service.

H: What do you value higher than face-to-face or social media recommendations?

L: Maybe just actually seeing prove for myself. Whether if it works and whatever way it's going to work.

H: Okay, no. Maybe I'm not saying it right but I was asking which one do you value higher?

L: Oh! Face.

H: Face? Sorry it's cutting out a little bit.

L: Face-to-face.

H: Okay. And why is face-to-face more important than social media?

L: Because, I'm mean ... I don't know, you can hide behind a computer screen. Anyone can say something, write something but you can actually see in person what they mean about it and what it means to them and the level everything, you know, commitment, enthusiasm, all those different things for the final decision.

H: When do you become an advertiser for a service?

L: When I've done millions of hours of research that I do and I've found that it's something that's one unique and that it's something that has added value to my life and can truly someone else's life.

H: So why is it that you try to persuade somebody to buy that particular service?

L: Because I think you could help them and usually I would only suggest something if they are looking for something in that area and if it's something that I have experience with and that I know that they will get a positive result or get what they are looking for.

H: So what do you consider before you make that recommendation?

L: I can consider what they are looking for. I consider what their situation is and I consider what their reaction is going to be.

H: Where or how do you make this recommendation?

L: Typically face-to-face.

H: Why would you choose face-to-face?

L: Because I'm probably talking to a good friend of mine and I wouldn't ... I mean, I might e-mail it depending on if we were in an e-mail conversation.

H: Let's take Matthew Hussey as an example. Why didn't you just, you know, I know you're really excited about the retreat when you came back why didn't you just put a recommendation on Facebook and throw it out into your network?

L: Oh no! Hell no! I would never do that. I would never ever do that.

H: Why?

L: Like I said, first of all I don't post much about my life on Facebook because, like we talked about I have a completed range of people on my page that I talk to and it's not necessarily something that would be received positively from everyone and I don't really think it's anyone's business. I think that if someone is in that, like, if that's an area of their life that they're looking to improve then I will reach out to them personally and one on one but it's not something that I would

just post on my Facebook page or like in any public form. I wouldn't even stand ... it's not something I would share with a group of people at once. I would share with one person at one time.

H: Does that have to do with the nature with of the service?

L: Possible. I think it have to with a combination of my nature and the nature of the service an if they gets really, like a personal thing and it's a very sensitive thing.

H: To what extend have you been successful when you've made recommendations?

L: I would say 97 percent of the people that I have .. in.

H: That's pretty accurate.

L: Actually I would say 100 percent of the people that I have recommended the service to have looked into it and on to the webpage and watched the videos and, you know, even if they only do the free stuff.

H: And that has all been face-to-face recommendations?

L: Face-to-face, yeah. Or on the phone.

H: I know you say you don't post much on Facebook but have you tried to influence your Facebook friends to do or buy anything?

L: No.

H: Okay. So what happened at the retreat that made you recommended Matthew?

L: It was a life altering experience that I feel that everyone could benefit from no matter where they are in their life or what they want or they're looking for. His principles are fundamental principles that everyone could use out there.

H: How many people have you recommended it to?

L: I guess maybe like 10.

H: And as you said before you've been pretty successful. How many of those are going to the retreat?

L: I'd say 4 or 5.

H: 4 or 5 wow. You're a good adverkit. What?

L: They trust me.

H: In what cases do you pass on recommendations made by somebody else in your network? So if a friend of yours says this service is really really great but it's not something that u want to use but then you meet someone else or have another friend that could use it, would you pass it on?

L: Yeah. I think that's something I'm really good at also is connect to people so I'm like, yeah. If I know that someone else is interested in something and it doesn't really interest me I know that .. and I do make that connection.

H: What is your feeling about passing on a recommendation?

L: My feeling. I feel good about. I mean I do it all the time.

H: Do you feel that it reflects on you in any way when you make a recommendation?

L: Yeah. Like I said before even that in itself also will depend on, like I said, my personal connection to the person and the expertise in the person. So like, I only have to pick something that if I was in that position it could've been useful to me I would've, you know, looked into it also. I don't just pass on any old thing.

H: How do you think that a recommendation reflects on you? No just where you have personal experience but if you pass on a recommendation, how does it reflect on you?

L: I mean, if it doesn't work out for the person or if it's like a terrible service then I feel bad that I recommended it. You know, I think it reflects, you know, just as bad as if I recommended something ... you know if I ever did it myself. You know I take that seriously. I don't just recommended something.

H: How about reposting on Facebook? How do you feel about that?

L: Yeah, I would do that. I've done it.

H: So why is that different than posting something yourself?

L: I guess it depends on what it is and also think, like if that I don't really share much myself and part of that is probably feel very articulate as some people. If someone writes something up and they're, you know, really ... so I have an example. I have a friend a good friend of mine who I grew up with and she's also one of those people that I don't necessarily I keep in touch with outside of Facebook. But I went to junior high school with her and I grew with her and she's an anchor I think on CBS and she just wrote a children's book and, you know, posted about it and you know she's looking for people to buy the book before it's printed. So I posted that. That was my way of supporting it's, you know, it's a 5\$ children's book. I feel like that's not something that'll offend anyone. It's not something that's personal to anyone. It's not something that, if someone goes out and buys the book and spends 5\$, like it's not something a big deal of it's end being crap. But I also trust her enough that I feel like that it's going to be a good product.

H: So what do you consider before passing on a recommendation on social media?

L: That it's going to be a good product. That it's something that's neutral that's not going to be personal to anyone or to myself and that, you know, benefit a lot of people. Just 1 or 2 people then I would just ... it's not that I'm personal but if I think it's something that 4 or 5 people aren't interested in then I won't.

H: How about likes? Do you feel that a like on Facebook is a recommendation?

L: Can you repeat that?

H: Yeah. I said How about likes? If you like something on Facebook is that a recommendation?

F.ex. if you like that someone is recommending something is that you re-recommending it?

L: Oh okay. Yeah, I think so. If I like, like a fan page or something.

H: Yeah. So like, you like Matthew Hussey's fan page or?

L: Yeah, I guess that would be recommendation.

H: Why is that?

L: I don't know. We'll look at that though. I don't really look at that but maybe other people do.

H: Is that why you feel better about making that type of recommendation rather than actually you sitting down and writing something or posting a video?

L: Yeah. I probably don't have to like, explain why I like it or why it's something that, you know, my connection could be ... there's millions of reasons why I'm connected to this particular thing that I like.

H: So you don't have to reveal anything about why you like it?

L: Right. I don't have to reveal anything, yeah.

H: Right! That's it!

## **Bri**

Interview Bri 43 min 45 sec

Interviewer: Helene Zacho / H.

Interviewee: Bri / B.

B: Hi!

H: Hi! How are you?

B: Good how are you?

H: I'm good. It's nice to meet you.

B: I can't ..



H: Can you hear me?

B: I can't hear .. It's a little soft.

H: Is it better? Did it help?

B: Yes. I also have my dishwasher going and I wonder if it's too loud?

H: Oh, I can't hear it but if you can't hear me it's a problem.

B: I can hear you now better I think.

H: Okay.

B: .. the computer positions

H: All right sorry, I'm just trying to like make everything so I can see it. How do you know Licelle?

B: I know her from grad school. We were in the same program and she was a couple of years older and she sort of helped me get through.

H: Oh good, that's nice!

B: Yeah!

H: The interview is about word of mouth and I don't know if she told you anything about it?

B: Not much more than that.

H: okay, so it is about word of mouth and do you know Matthew Hussey right?

B: Yes.

H: yeah okay. So I'm using Matthew's Hussey's business as a case studies so I'll be referring to Matthew Hussey at some point since and some points it'll just be general word of mouth when you want to recommend a service.

B: Okay.

H: And I'm going to be recording it so I can transcribe it later and analyze, is that okay?

B: Yes.

H: Okay.

B: The connection is not the best but I'll try to do my best

H: Okay good. First of all I'll need your first name it doesn't have to be your full name, age?

B: Brianna, I'm 28.

H: And what is your occupation?

B: 02:10 Kan ikke høre hvad hun siger

H: Okay.

B: But i work for ... right now i'm making "colasee" 02:17 kan ikke høre det sidst ord.

H: Okay. And how did you come across Matthew Hussey?

B: From a friend from College who had always struggled with dating and she had a friend who took his online course and she gave me the password so that I was watching it for free and tried it out a little and really liked it. Then I told Licelle about it actually and I just knew immediately that it worked because – just dooring the first couple of videos. Word of mouth between friends who were getting good results.

H: All right, we'll get into that a little bit more later, I just wanted to know how you heard about him. Let me start out by asking, in what ways do you gather word of mouth about a service before you going to buy it?

B: In what ways do I hear about it?

H: no, so if there is a service you want to buy, you're not quite sure, and you need somebody to tell you whether you should. How do you go about getting word of mouth recommendations?

B: I ask people I trust and each service would be - I probably ask different group of people so maybe people that I know that have had a certain result.

H: So is that just word of mouth – you know you go to a person face to face or do you also go online?

B: I usually call them. Yes but I would rather hear it from somebody I know. You mean online like random peoples opinion?

H: Yeah! Because that is you know a recommendation as well.

B: I guess if I'm buying a product sometimes I do that. First I try to see if I know anybody that know I personally and if not, then I would read online.

H: Okay. In what way do you gather word of mouth if you could see that a service have had a positive effect on another person?

B: I feel like – I pick up on how genuine they are and I'm very open person and if they're genuine about their experience, I can usually tell.

H: So you don't ask more about it? So if they are really excited about something they've done – how do you go about finding out more?

B: From them or from other people?

H: That depends on what you usually do?

B: If they are really excited and I trust them I am sometimes impulsive and I don't need to find out anything else, which is not always the best but then I guess I'll read online reviews.

H: Okay. So in the cases that you do seek the advice from other people, why do you do that?

B: Just to get more data. Just in case there was an accident that that person was really excited.

H: Okay and how does their opinion then affect your decision?

B: I'm trying to think of it because I'm thinking of specific example but in general, strong.

H: Maybe if you think about Licelle when she came back from the retreat. Because that's you know a service.

B: Sure yeah. I also hired a career coach, it was actually a pretty big investment multi-thousand dollars. I often just go with my gut feeling if I really want it. I think I look for the things that I want to hear sometimes but – I forgot your question.

H: How does their opinion affect your decision to buy?

B: It's strong.

H: Why is it strong? What does it makes you think?

B: Well, if I know that we are similar type of people then I'm pretty sure I'm going to get something out of it even if I don't get the full experience and it all comes like a cost benefit right – so I know I will get something good if she got something good. Now if it's worth it or not that's when I sort of have to take time and maybe look at more reviews and ask more questions from the service but ... I usually can know from the people that I trust asking them if it's going to be good or not, it's just figuring out of the value is high enough to be worth it.

H: In what ways did you see good recommendations about Matthew Hussey?

B: From myself or from anybody?

H: From anybody. You got an recommender from somebody else and then tried the product and then you recommended it to Licelle.

B: And then she loved it to. She was having more frustration with her love life than I was so she went to the retreat and then she came back and I was having frustration and so I knew .... My level of pain or suffering was increasing and so the value of the retreat was increasing me because I felt like I needed it more and so then she said it was great then I contacted the vendor, then I contacted Matthew's people. I'm not afraid to go to the service and ask question. I didn't get any other opinions beside hers.

H: And not in the beginning either? Because when you got the program you just went ahead and tried it?

B: Well when I listened to most of his videos, I did it for free, so that was cheating. Then I listened all of his youtube videos and - so those are for free and I don't have any question. I'm pretty sure that I like it and then I'm having enough trouble with my life that I know this is the point at which it becomes important to do something further.

H: Well you knew about the retreat when Licelle went.

B: Yeah!

H: So what was it that held you back from not going?

B: Time and money ... and I wasn't sure that I needed it.

H: Okay and you didn't go talk to anybody or see anybody else was saying about it?

B: No. I watched I his video, his promotional video about the retreat.

H: What did you think about that?

B: It's good ... I mean, I didn't know, I just never had any question about how the value ... like I didn't have any question about if it was going to be good or not because I already watched all his stuff and I had been following him for over a year. So I already knew that I liked him with his book and you know.

H: So it's not a question of value but more a question of money and time?

B: Yeah and things started to fall apart in my love life, where I had a guy already. So I don't know I was like, I don't know if I need it but then I realized, which I didn't know before Licelle went in the retreat, that it was not specifically for love life. Then I was like that made a difference to me because I had other issues that I would like to fix.

H: What makes you feel close and connected to a person not necessarily in a love sense but in a friendship sense?

B: I think if they want to dick deep ... I like to get very vulnerable in conversations and I want to hear a lot of honesty because that's what I like to give and so that's how I can feel connected. If I see you're willing to share things that make you vulnerable that's good.

H: So why is that important to you?

B: because that's what makes up real life and real people's issues ... that's what also is interesting and I like people who have opinions. I like also to dick deep into what people think and that's part of being vulnerable, saying I have an opinion about this and I'm willing to say it even if it might not be right and that is important because I think that is what life is about and what else there to talk about gossip?

H: But how does that create closeness?

B: Because it shows level trust that you're willing to be vulnerable and share about something personal and I think that is a connection.

H: In what way do you stay connected with the people who are closest to you?

B: I call people all the time, I mostly call ... I have a core group I call every week and then I have a bigger group that I text every couple weeks.

H: Why do you use those means of communications?

B: Because I like talking – I love talking and I like to tell stories so that's easiest and I'm kind of animated in the way I like to talk. Texting I like to use a lot of emojis.

H: What about a face-to-face meetings?

B: Oh! Most of my people are not nearby. I guess that was the most important thing to say. Most of my people ... my family is all the country and my friend is all over – I move a lot.

H: But you're in New York City now?

B: I'm in Washington D.C.

H: Okay. I know you have facebook but what about twitter?

B: I just joined twitter two weeks ago ... actually because of my job. My job now requires me to stay really current on the news and so I find that I was missing things "14:46 kan ikke høre hvad hun siger" .. I use twitter for work.

H: So you don't have any friends on twitter?

B: I do. I don't actively seek out my friends. I seek out news things.

H: Okay so let's talk about Facebook then. Can you describe your relationships between you and your Facebook-friends?

B: I'm trying to use Facebook less because I find get really jealous – I tend to get jealous when I'm not happy with my life. So a lot of my friends are ... most of them I got when I was in college and I probably don't care much about them so I have been unfriending people lately just so I wouldn't have them on my news feed. So I don't actually communicate with the people I care about the most on Facebook.

H: So the majority of the people on your Facebook are they people from your past that you don't really talk to anymore?

B: Yes.

H: Okay. If these people are people that you're not talking to really, so why are they important to have on Facebook and how are they important to you?

B: They're not very much. That's why I'm sort of deleting them. They used to be important and then they stop for some reason. Or it used to be I was like collecting friends to see how many I could get but now it is not an interest of mine. I keep up with my mom a little bit. I like to share things that

are uplifting or fun on Facebook. I have untagged or stopped following people that I find posting that brings me down and really just follow people ...

H: SO people who post random stuff like recommendations, do you like that sort of thing on Facebook. Do any of your friends recommendation on Facebook like, you need to go here or I went to this restaurant and it is really nice ...

B: Not really because my friends are all over the country and it is rare that someone will say something that applies to where I live.

H: How similar are you to the people who are closest to you? How much alike are you? Maybe it is easier if I say which way are you different from the people who are closest to you?

B: You mean like friends or family?

H: Friends and family.

B: Gosh, it's just I have a really wide range of friends. I guess most people I'm friends with, I'm close with, lean the same way politically. I find it pretty hard to be friends with republicans because we have so many values that are different but I have ... generally people who are somewhat spiritual and I can even be friends with very religious people even though I don't believe all of what they do. I like to have ... that's part of what make me feel close, is having sort of a spiritual conversations. Yeah! I think generally my friends are upbeat and excited and they're driven people.

H: Would you say that they are like you in many ways?

B: I think so yeah, now that I'm thinking. Yeah.

H: What does that mean in-close in terms of closeness? That they're like you?

B: We can related. We shared common experiences and we can laugh at each other's stories because we can understand them.

H: So what does their opinion mean to you?

B: What does what?

H: Their opinion about anything. If they have an opinion that they share with you about anything that you're doing or buying or anything, what does it mean, how do you value their opinion?

B: To high. I generally value people opinions ... I would say to high and let it affect what I do sometimes?

H: Okay, you let it affect you. In what way do you let it affect you?

B: I think I don't like to let people down. I don't like to disappoint people so even means that my friends don't like who I am dating, that is a problem. That's actually a part of why I wanted to go to the retreat. Sometimes I think let other peoples opinion matter to much.

H: What about your friends on Facebook then?

B: I don't let myself be very vulnerable on Facebook so I don't ask for opinions on Facebook.

H: But what in the way does their opinion affect in the way you edit what you post or how you are received on Facebook.

H: I just asked that if their opinion matter in the way that you think about how active you are on Facebook and what you do on Facebook

B: Not really, not too much. I was dating a guy who didn't use Facebook and during that period I didn't go on very much but ...

H: Why is that?

B: I don't know, I can think of a good example. I used to care more about people's opinions and I would try to be cool or like, if I want to post anything it has to be like really funny. I used to be like kind of cool on Facebook but I am not really worried about that anymore.

H: Why did that change?

B: can you hear me? Prob. med forbindelsen 22:31:7

H: How similar are your friends on Facebook to you?

B: They are all over. I don't know, they come from the same places, most of them are the same political as me. I don't like seeing opinions really, that are far from mine. It frustrates me.

H: So I'm guessing that they are like college and high school and different types ..

B: Yeah! No not high school because it wasn't there in high school but. Well I guess a few people from my high school but ... I left home to go to college and so I didn't keep track of them. But yeah, mostly college people.

H: I'm guessing at one point you were close to them, that's why you became friends on Facebook – is that right?

B: right! Or you just meet casually, you are not necessarily close.

H: Like that you were alike at one point? Like you are with your close friends now?

B: No.

H: Okay. How would you explain the degree of trust between you and the closest people to you?

B: Very high!

H: what is trust you then?

B: Trust is, I can share pretty much anything with them and I know that they will ... I trust that they'll have my best interest at heart when they give me advice and when they listen to me.

H: And what is your level of confidence?

B: Personal about myself?

H: No in your friends – between your friends.

B: High.

H: Why is it high?

B: Because we've maintained a good trusting relationship over many years. Guess those are the friends I am talking about, the ones that have been around for a long period of time and through many ups and downs then I start ... you know then you ... have tested out how you can get through hard times.

H: So what does trust and confidence mean for the relationship between you and the people who closest to you?

B: It means that I go to them when I need help or go to them when I need advice or when I'm on the happy side that I want to share things with them.

H: What kind of things would that be?

B: What?

H: type of things would that be?

B: Relationship problems or family drama or big life decisions like where to move or what career, like what jobs to take.

H: What about smaller things like recommending stuff that you bought or products of services

B: I don't know, I usually go to ... I don't know I ask my grandma. I ask sometimes people who have been around who have time to check things out. I often ask my grandparents about things like appliances that I want to buy. I guess ... I just can't think of a lot of good examples ... I guess like, no. I guess like Rosetta stone, the language program that is kind of expensive, I ask friends and ...

H: Close friends?

B: Yeah! Close friends and family.

H: And how in what they say influence your decision?

B: Well it made me buy it. Because I did ... you trust their opinions and if it fails and you don't like it, I don't know you can tell them or you can be held as responsible because you had that opinion.

H: If we move on to your Facebook friends again, what is your level of trust and confidence in them?

B: ... It is hard to say Facebook friends because it is so broad, it's like a very ... in general I don't trust things from Facebook because anybody can post, there is no "kan ikke høre hvad hun siger 28:58". There is just a lot of crap.



H: So you don't trust anything from Facebook at all?

B: Well if I see something I'll go check it out myself, if it's something that I am really interested in, then I'll go check it out then I'll go do my own research but I'm not going to trust it – Face's value.

H: What if the recommendation about Matthew had come from Facebook?

B: I would not likely have picked it out.

H: Why do you think that is?

B: Why do I think so?

H: Yeah!

B: Because he looks young and what does he know.

H: What about ...

B: And there is so many people who claim to have secrets ideas at work, it's like an over exaggeration of people who claim to be awesome.

H: Yeah! What about the message itself, the fact that somebody from your network would actually say "he's great", what would that mean to you?

B: If it is someone that is actually a close friend I would pay attention.

H: But if it's someone from your college days?

B: No. It just wouldn't mean anything because people can that it is great for a lot of reasons it could be their life situation ... maybe, you know sometimes when you feel excited about life, you can attribute that to a service that maybe doesn't deserve it. So ... I know I do the same thing.

H: How so?

B: If I loose some weight and I have been going to yoga, I might say "Oh my god, this yoga class is awesome"! But it is not really the full reason why, like it could be like I have just been in a good mood and able to you know, not ... you know, I having been overeating and it's pared with the yoga, so I know I'm guilty of it. I think that is why I don't trust opinions like that on Facebook.

H: Because you don't know what else is going on in their life that could've contributed?

B: Yeah and I know I'm guilty of the same thing.

H: Okay

B: It is probably because I know that I can do that, that I don't trust other people impulsive post. Like if it's just a post ... like if I'm getting a call from a good friend, that is very intentional and if they are telling me "this is good" "it'll change my life" that is intentional. If someone is posting it to their whole network, that is not directed at me, that's not personal in anyway. So why do I care.

H: How are you relationships on- and offline different?

B: Hun roder med sit kamera 32:19. Forbindelsen ryger 33:16

Interview Fatima 70 min 18 sec

Interviewer Helene Zacho / H.

Interviewee Fatima / F.

F: Hello.

H: Hi.

F: Just a min I'll turn on the camera. Hello how are you?

H: I'm okay how are you doing?

F: I'm fine how are you? You can see that I just woke up. Oh my god I look terrible.

H: It's no problem. How has everything been since the event?

F: It's been great actually. I haven't had to really approach guys but it's been going actually quite well. "00:32.0 Kan ikke gøre hvad hun siger I starten" ... like it's more responsive, to I'm more aware then I have been previously been but I've been working on it so hopefully it is going to alright.

H: Good! So let me explain a little bit to you about this interview. First of all I am going to record it. Is that okay with you?

F: Okay, yes.

H: So you know I can transcribe it and go back and analyze

F: I know the deal.

H: Okay and then ..

F: Are you going to record with video or?

H: Just audio.

F: Aww, its okay no problem

H: No problem nobody is going to see you

F: Sorry I am using it as my mirror right now.

H: It is okay. So I am not going to explain to much about the questions so we are just going to jump right in and then we'll see if you have anything that you don't understand, just let me know and I'll try to explain to you what I mean.

F: Okay!

H: Okay, so it's mostly about, you know, word of mouth as I told you before. So I would like to know to what extent do you gather word to mouth about services before you buy them?

F: From me as a user?

H: Mmhmm!

F: I think it really depends – for an example it depends on the purchases. Sometimes I will go online and look for reviews but I would say about 85% of the time I would go out and actively look for word of mouth, would their terms offer views and if it's for an example something on the high street I would go actually and ask people I know my friends or my associates. 02:17.7-02:20.1 kan ikke høre hvad hun siger"... and to an extent are they happy or unhappy with it. So think it is quite important.

H: What about the visit service? So it is not actual product but a service somebody is offering?

F: I think it is more important then. Especially if it requires some subscription. For me it is definitely more important because sometimes if it requires subscription or a specific "Kan ikke høre hvad hun siger" then you are obliged, for an example, a product you can always return a dress or a shoe if you don't like it but if it's a service sometimes you are obliged, especially by a contract avoiders and this is why it's important to look for abuse. So now that I am thinking about it pretty much all the services that I have been having, my land line, my broadband service even the electricity I all haven't checked their reviews before I already committed my thoughts to any of that. So I think they are very important.

H: So to what extent do you gather word of mouth to see if it has a personal effect on another person, so if the service is positive for somebody else is that what you are looking for or what is it that you're looking for?

F: I'm looking for whether it's positive or negative but also I'm looking into the ... mainly to ask their sale service. Like for an example if it's service that I have subscribed to with a person it's fine. But then how they are going to deal with what the customer want, they have an issue. So that is quite important for me. I would like to see if they have positive or negative feedback and what more does it take. There have been some episode in the past where I have looked into ... where the service weren't quite good but the topic or the issue they were complaining about was irrelevant to me and didn't affect my purchase on the service decision.

H: Okay. In what types of situations is it that you go looking for help to make the purchase decision?

F: I would say most of the services especially if I have time and if it requires a financial commitment especially. Not that I want off commitment but a financial commitment over longer period of time, fx. a few months or a year I'll definitely go and check their services and check their reviews. It's just because in the past I have had some negative experiences and I don't want to have that repeated so I think at least it's better to look into others and to what they have done.

H: So how does other people opinion affect your decision?

F: If I'm having, fx. I'm having between to month between going with the service provided or not to having. Someone who has been obviously exceptional negative experience with them and this person detailed it then it would make me not buy their services. On the other hand if someone went there and had it, a positive experience, that would make me encourage to explore more and check out their services.

H: In what ways do you seek word of mouth?

F: Either on ... like news. Just literally ... service reviews or people I know or people have already used the services so this is the primary source.

H: What if we take Matthew Hussey's service as an example, in what way did you seek word of mouth recommendation about him?

F: Nothing. I didn't know anything about him before I actually went there to the event so it's just literally on meetup and just ... he was curious just to know and wanted to prove purp and love life.

H: So why didn't you go look for any recommendations about this service?

F: I don't know maybe because it was free so once it's free you don't really bother yourself because if it's good it's okay, if it's not good then, hey whatever. What can you do. But as it turns out it was really good. So I think price has a high importance because the higher to price the higher financial commitment especially for me as a student. Investing some amount of money would require something from me especially because I don't have an income right now, per say. So before I make the investment it's important to know if it's going to worthwhile or not – hence I think the word of mouth.

H: What makes you feel close to somebody/connected with somebody?

F: In general in life or ... ?

H: Just in life, you know, family, friends, people that you have in your network. What makes you feel close to them?

F: Shared connection, shared values perhaps and trust. Maybe shared outlooks and perspectives for life and, yeah, just basically shared experiences.

H: How are they important to you?

F: Well they are important to me especially my family. It's very important that you share a set of values and experiences and especially in the relationship where it's romantic or as friends. Having friends who value similar values is very important because it is going to reduce the clashes that might happen from having different sets of opinions or priorities or ...

H: How do you stay connected with the people that you are closest too?

F: Like phone. Not really on social media but mainly by phone by applications like Whatsapp and Viber as they are outside of the UK. In the UK it's mainly by Whatsapp and just calling them and just going out. So basically when I was in my home country I would just connect with Whatsapp and we would also meet over a coffee or go to the cinema or to restaurant, like the normal places. Here it's a similar story but since I'm abroad the going out is not ... so that's why connecting by phone by Viber or by Whatsapp.

H: What is your home country?

F: Bahrain.

H: Sorry?

F: It's called Bahrain.

H: Okay. How long have you been in the UK?

F: For about 13 months.

H: Okay. How old are you?

F: 30

H: I just needed to get that out of the way. How close are you with your Facebook and Twitter. Do you have Twitter?

F: I do have Twitter yes.

H: Facebook?

F: Facebook no.

H: No. How close are you with the people that are on Twitter? Your friends on Twitter?

F: Okay the way the thing is. My Twitter account is anonymous so nobody knows, like, the main purpose for me for Twitter is like a private venting for my ... for life for sharing things. I don't want anyone to know who I am and for, I think this is the main reason why I put it because I don't want to put my name on my face because something you want to talk about things without offending people. So f.ex. if I'm talking in general about a friend or about a situation that has happened about me so is more about venting thing for me rather than connecting with friends. I had

some friends over Twitter, some of them male friends who wanted to do things outside of twitter but it's just because I made the Twitter account to be private and anonymous for a reason. It's just I don't want someone to know the face of the person behind this Twitter account.

H: So the people on your twitter account, they are like online friends that you don't see in reallife?

F: Yeah!

H: Okay' and how important are they to you in your daily life?

F: Not really important. Maybe we connect once every few weeks, every few months but that's it.

H: So how similar are you to the people who are close to you?

F: I will say about 50 percent. I think everyone have their own multifaceted personality and there are some sides of my personality that work well with some other people, while some other sides works with other peoples. So I have my friends who I knew from high school and I have my friends who I knew from university and the then I have my work colleague's and then I have my friend here in the UK. Each group of them I share very different characteristic things, that because ...

closer f.ex. my school friends are very different from my work or my from my friends here in UK.

F.ex. here in the UK I have met through the meetups so they are more likely minded – f.ex. I met some really nice friends through a meditation practice, meditation groups and .. so these women are very much inline with who I am right now. Rather than my school friends who I love dearly but we don't share as much because we aren't as connected as we were 13 years old and people change a lot since they were 13 I'm sure you know.

H: How are they different from you now then?

F: Different interest, most of them are married and have children and sometimes they just go on and just like sit together and talk about their children and their nursery and their school and I can't relate to all of that. I feel like *"My god you used to be a person before you became a mother"* so I can't relate to them on that level but I do relieve them for a purpose as some of them have different experiences some of them are more negative than others some of them are more positive, so yeah.

H: How does that affect your closeness?

F: It does affect it actually. It does affect the closeness because we weren't as close – we are not as close today as we were like when we were teenage. So back then we were a lot closer, as alike and as interest and things started to drift apart. Maybe we will meet once a month or sometimes a little more or less. It depends on their commitments because they have families so one of them her child is sick the other one she has to prepare for her school exams their lives is just like, commitments,

basically just life. So my single friends definitely have more time to do whatever they want to do rather than my married, coupled and children friends.

H: So when you take all of this into consideration what is their opinion about a service or product mean to you?

F: I think it's objective. F.ex. if I'm purchasing something and they having a good experience about it, it's relevant because I don't have to relate to them and connect to them on a personal level in order to buy into a product. However if it's a service it will affect it. F.ex. I know my friends and I know their taste and their preferences. One of my friends – not all of us share similar taste or similar preferences so one of them might recommend a stylist or a hairstylist or a make-up artist or some kind of .. that she thinks is amazing. I wouldn't go for this person because I know her taste and her style which is not, not saying that it's bad, but it's just not my taste. Purchasing a product might not affect it but purchasing a service does affect it because I know my friends and I know their taste, style and preferences so I am aware of that when making the decision to know whether it will suit me or so.

H: What about youse friends on Twitter then. How similar do you feel to them?

F: Not really. It's just some of them I share like some aspect of my views about certain things in life and that's about it.

H: what about differences? What are the differences?

F: I don't know them in person so.

H: So you have no ? .. okay. What about their opinions about? I don't know what you talk about on Twitter but what about if they have an opinion about a service how does that affect you?

F: It might make me think twice about getting the service or committing to it especially if someone has a really negative experience, sometimes I would go and ask actively about their opinion for the service. If I knew that they have purchased it or got it before to know whether it's going to be good for me or not. It's like engaging me to, it doesn't has to be 100 percent right all the time.

H: Okay. What degree of trust is there between you and your closest friends and family?

F: Good degree of trust.

H: What about your level of confidence in your friends and family

F: I would say it depends f.ex. my confidence in my closest relationship which is my relationship to my sister is very high so I'm confidence with her and talk to her about anything and everything I want to. Some members of my family it would depend. Some of them I know that they have my best interest at heart but they are either controlling or manipulative or want to do things their own

way so my confidence level with them, I love them, but they don't have to know about everything and I don't have to take their values into consideration. So this is the main thing.

H: Okay. What does trust and confidence mean to the relationship between you and your close ones? What does it mean?

F: Trust in that person's loyalty. Trust that they won't use the information, you know, that they know about me against me, that they wouldn't go and talk behind me back. Have confidence in their own, as a person, and integrity and basically trust worth loyalty and faithfulness as a person, like they are good people and I am confident that they are good people and have my interest at heart.

H: What about the trust between you and your Twitter friends?

F: I would say on the medium/low side because I don't know them in person. So can't be 100 percent trusting for someone that you don't know in person.

H: So why is the relationship different between ... is that that you don't know them in person?

F: I don't know them in person plus when greeting anonymously and some of them are actually – many of them are also anonymous Twitters. So you can really know the person who is behind tweets and more than sometimes people will portraits an image about themselves that is not exactly inline with the truth or the reality of the situation. So it's important to know the person in person before judging them whether good or. Because sometimes you might get of a person on tilt, saying, but if you get to know them in person you will know that this person is really good and they have your interest at their heart and in reverse aswell.

H: So in what ways does trust and confidence play in when somebody is offering an opinion or a recommendation about the service.

F: I would make me think, what is in it for them especially if they are recommending a service are they getting something in return because if they are getting something in return means that their opinion and whatever they say is irrelevant and it's not valuable for me and I would immediately discard it. Because if it's an promotionally thing then you are getting something in return. It might not be as honest it might just be scripted ... scripted something about the product or service just to make sure that the sale gets done.

H: Okay but what if it's from your friends or family?

F: Of course it would depend because I know that there is nothing for them in person and that they just like it and they have had a good experience with the service. So yes it might have a positive influence.



H: What if your where to find out that, lets say your sister recommended a service to you and then when you got there you found out that the reason she really recommended it because the next time she went she would get her whatever free?

F: My sister would never do that. I know she loves me and she values me so much more and even if she would get something like that she would tell me, like, if you're going and I will get something. But if something bad happens because of someone I know, I know that would destroy and put it .. on the actual trust on the company and the relationship like you are supposed to be my friend. Someone who is supposed to be your friend and they should really have your best interest at their heart regardless of whether they are gaining something from it and – you know, you just made me remember something. One of these friends, we are no longer friends, from my school we were really close and we wrote musical art all the time. There was something called a QuestNet, basically it's like a company multilayer marketing, basically it's a scam and somebody had got her and her husband into, that was a few years back, and she was trying to bring me to this and to sign up because when I sign up I would bring my friends and she would benefit supposedly. But when we meet and talked about it I thought "hmmm, somethings isn't right" so I went and I googled this company and I googled the founder and I found that this person and actually it was a fraud, that it was a ponzi scheme. It was a multilevel layer of marketing and the founder was actually wanted by interpool for financial crimes and I told her that. When she called me again to like, "are you going to subscribe" I told her the information I got from the internet. I told her if you don't believe me just go ahead and google it. I think that they are not trustworthy people and you shouldn't really put your time and put your money into it. She was really offended and she was – she did get offensive out of it and she never ever contacted me again despite of me going out and get contact with her and when we, like met, like accident or something she would go the other way and she just wouldn't talk to me. And I knew that a year after that, that this scam was exposed and she has lost money with her husband. But now even then the relationship is strange. She wouldn't talk to me although I have warned her before, so got very personally. It wasn't aimed at her it was just basically .. she wanted me to subscribe to something because she would get the money. However it was something illegal, it was a scam so. She put the money before the relationship even though I warned her about it. She caught me off completely and I knew that immediately she wasn't my friend she was just basically someone who was a go-getter, get something.

H: But you had trust and confidence in her but still you went ahead and researched the company?

F: Yes because there was ... and because I didn't had an easy feeling about it. When something sounds too good to be true ... think about it and especially if you feeling something about it. I'm not the type of people who will commit right there and then on the same spot. I would never do that even for companies that offering and they tell me "go ahead" no, because I have to give myself at least a couple of hours and see how it goes and do my research on it. If it's something that involves me in subscribing financial and they would require bank details so I was very apprehensive. Let's say they want financial details and financial banking and they would pay me whatever they have to bring friends. It's like "hmmm, something is not right" so my alarm bells went off. I trusted her at the time but I didn't trust the people that she was going to bring and recommending them to me. So that's I went ahead and I did my research and I was horrified when I knew that this is just a scheme and this person was wanted by the Interpol. Yet she was promoting their service and she was extremely offended to the point where she would cut me of ones I told her that I'm not going there and this person is not who they are claiming to be and she loves money because of that. So it's sanity and plays a major roll basically, keeping things.

H: In what way does buying someone create a sense of belonging?

F: If you are buying something that is belonging to a community but not necessarily exactly. In the sense of belonging that would make you closer to the group. F.ex. if someone or all in the group has particular something or going to a particular service so it makes you more belong to this person or belong to this sure.

H: Do you think that's true? Do you feel that that is ... because people always say, you know, that some people may buy a certain brand or a certain thing or a certain service because it makes them fit in to whatever social group they are trying to fit into? Do you think that is true?

F: I think that's true for many people and I have seen people who go into incredible amount of debts just literally buying of brands and living in way above their means. Just to try to appear in a certain way that they belong to that particular community that they would try to get into.

H: In what way do you consider other peoples opinion when you buy a service?

F: Up to a degree but then my own opinion matter. I would have to evaluate it but it's not 100%. ... what I want with whatever I'm inspired to or desire then it is okay if it's not I wouldn't even if the opinion is good.

H: How does it influence you if know that what you're buying, let's say you're buying a service that you know that other people will approve of? F.ex. a stylist or a hairdresser or something how does that influence your decision?

F: It might increase my confidence about the stylist or this hairdresser. If it was off-service f.ex. like a hairdresser it's okay I think it's less risky. When you hear a really good review about them it might be tempting to go ahead and just try their services. I didn't feel that I liked them that's one and I can go back again but if it's something that requires subscription that's quite a different story for me personally.

H: What if you're considering to buy a service and you know f.ex. let's say that you were going to buy a product of Matthew Hussey's and you know that the people in your family and close friends would not approve how would that affect you?

F: It wouldn't affect me because I've been to his session and I know him in person so it doesn't matter what their opinion is going to say because I know what is right for me at the end of the day. So if it's something that I have already tested and tried and I found it to be good and affective for me I would go ahead and I don't care about their opinions.

H: What if you hadn't been to the free meat-up?

F: An they were disapproving? I would check it out.

H: Okay. Why is that?

F: Because I know that not everyone is on the same page and as personal development as me. So when it comes to personal development my family are very apprehensive from these but for me I value it very much and I would definitely recommend and invest in something like that.

H: Okay. If you have a little experience with a service where would you go to gather more information about it?

F: Online or from other users.

H: What about family and friends?

F: If they know about it yes and if they don't know about it, why ask them.

H: So you said online or what?

F: Online or going ask people who already know.

So why would you gather information from there, from those 2 places?

F: These are the most feasible, like they are easily accessible. I can actually google it at any time and at any point and you can get a wider range of variety of people who have actually purchased a service whom I may not know in person so.

H: When is a person's word of mouth most valid in your opinion?

F: If someone I know whom I trust and have great confidence in and would recommend something for me because it made a huge stress formation in their own life and then I would go ahead online

and find some positive about it and ... with my values and me as a person and my personality then it would definitely be a good thing for me to explore.

H: So let me just try to clarify. You would first go look in your personal network and see if anybody knew about it?

F: Yeah.

H: And if nobody there would know about it you would go online?

F: Yes.

H: And then you would trust in people who have the same values as you?

F: Yes.

H: Okay. How did you first come across Matthew's coaching service?

F: Meet-up. Literally meet-up. Wouldn't know about him or anything. I actually went to one of sons Biju a few months ago I just realized that because watched it again and the funny thing it was about getting the guy you want with the all-night programs. I felt although it was quite convincing but I found it to be very apprehensive of their approach maybe because it was very hard selling and aimed at American-styled selling of approach. It was the biju at the top of selling that he was made for his program. That...

H: On the website?

F: Sorry?

H: The main one on the website?

F: I think it is on the main website. So didn't subscribe to it. It was only months and months and months later that I accidentally went into this course and now I'm just actually getting a subscription to the program itself.

H: So first you were just surfing around on the internet and you came across the website and saw the ...

F: I don't even remember what I was searching, it's just somehow I had this video, the person I now remember but I remember it was a really, like hard sell type that, okay I wasn't really convinced it wasn't selling me, I don't like this type of hard selling, not me personally.

H: What about it made you apprehensive?

F: The main start of selling was just basically, like a hard sell american style. Selling what I have seen used by other people in different things and which made me "hmmmm, is this for, you know, this is not". Because I have seen the same style being used by other people creating videos similar, almost exactly the same style but for a different content and that made me think "hmmm, not for me

I'm not going to do that." I have seen something about weight loss and about something like that. I have seen something about changing your life. I have seen something about numerology that were using the exact same style that Matthew Hussey , not Matthew, Steve his son was using in the same video so that made me "erhh, no!"

H: What about that puts you off?

F: The hard sell and using the same sale mechanism that's used by others people exactly but for different things. So it made me thing "hmmm, are they all the same, is it true, is it just someone trying to get some money online while doing xyz." I didn't know but all these things that they would do and I think that this is something they have to consider because last time I worked in America but it doesn't necessarily work for other people around the world with the online event.

H: So what made you go was the meet-up group?

F: Maybe because it was free and I ... about him. I even forget the name of that person of the "get the guy" in the video I saw long time ago and yeah it's just like, literally just go ahead and check it out. See if it works.

H: When you found the meet-up group, did you then look into anything about the company or the person?

F: Yeah. That's how I remembered I saw, like a video by Matthew Hussey because I wanted the .. side again and I checked it out and I listened to it and it made me think that "hmm, there might be something actually good into it after all."

H: Okay. So did you only go to the website or did you go to other places as well?

F: So far, I just go through the website. It's just because I've been quite busy and wanting to apply the concept and to see how it works before deciding if I'm doing something else.

H: What did you consider when you went to the website?

F: Check if it works, see what they have and just like literally go ahead and see what problems they have, what it's all about.

H: So on the website there is a blog where there is a lot of videos, he does a video every week did you look at those?

F: No. Honestly I don't have time to do all of that.

H: I just wanted to see if you looked at the comments because under the videos there is a lot of comments from other women and I just wanted to see if they had any influence on your decision, should you go?

F: No, I didn't check that.

H: What will make you have concerns about buying a service online?

F: It's value for money. Value for money, the commitment, the involvement that is required, whether if it's going to make an impact or not. So is it worthwhile my money investment and is it worthwhile my time. Is it worthwhile my commitment to it, if it is then yes I would definitely go ahead and just ...

H: If you do have concerns, like you said you had concerns about Matthew's product or service. How would you feel better about ... if you have concerns about a service, how would feel better about them?

F: I think the concerns about Matthew's services in particular were eased of when I attended this session. So I think if I did not attend this session I would definitely not have ... want to head any further than just outside and just leaving, literally.

H: Okay. So why do you think that helps?

F: Because having a personal experience is very important. It's having like a taste of the same product of the same person to see whether there is an actual value or are there then just empty marketing advertising work. Because I work in marketing, I work in advertising and I know the types of things that would go into it and how to make something lousy where it doesn't have really much content or much depth into it.

H: Did it create any value for you to go to the event?

F: Oh, yes.

H: What kind of value did it create and you know, you don't have to talk me about personal value but in general sense did you get from the event?

F: Values about myself and about what I want and the important, f.ex. of sitting. Up-valuing myself first before I value other people so these are quite the things that's important and I think that there are they quite actually good and needed ... and value of trust have increased for Matthew and his program.

H: Okay. Did you, have you bought any of Matthew Hussey's coaching programs?

F: Did I, sorry what?

H: Did you buy any of Matthew Hussey's coaching programs.

F: No, not yet but I am considering buying.

H: Okay. So what concerns do you have when considering to buy them?

F: My time and my commitment so I have to evaluate my time and my commitment to them. So I know that the service is going to be good but would I be committed myself to do it. So I know the services I good but would I actually do them, so this is something for me.

H: So my next question is what role does your concerns play in your purchase decision?

F: Does what?

H: What role does your concerns play in your purchase decision?

F: My major role. If I'm concerned about myself or the product itself or the service or some aspect of it if I have some strong concerns they might deter me from actually going ahead and like buying the service or something. But if the concerns are like minor or superficial - they weren't really like make an affect.

H: Am I correct in understanding that you at the moment, so you're considering ... at the moment. You still don't know which you're going to go. So where are you going to look to make a decision?

F: This is not about word of mouth per say but this I more about myself whether I would know that in the next few months f.ex. I would have the time and the financial resources to commit myself to it and I utilize this investment to make something good to myself.

H: So would anything that anybody could say either online or in person be able to influence your decision?

F: No, because I know it's good so I don't have to go ahead and just seek other opinions.

H: Okay. Who's word of mouth recommendation are you susceptible to?

F: I would say my sister.

H: Why is that?

F: Because of the closeness of the relationship and similarity of our interest and values so that's why it's quite important.

H: What gives her a form of expertise?

F: Maybe having growing together and her expertise, it's just this personal knowledge, the trustworthy, the confidence, that I know she has my best interest at her heart. That to do something just to gain a financial thing of me or something. It's just pure interest. If she should come and need something just recommending it because she knows it should be of value rather than because you would get something out of it or any other thing.

H: So she has an expertise in you? She knows you?

F: Exactly, sure!

H: Okay. So how does expertise in general influence you purchase decisions? If someone is recommending something and they know a lot about it?

F: That would influence it pretty great. But I always check with myself if it works or not but sometimes you some great people recommending great things and sometimes it might be great for them but not great for me. So an expert recommending something might be good, they can do it, check further into it but it wouldn't affect my decision 100 percent, no. I would say it's about 50 percent but it could go either way.

H: Okay. If a person has bought something online, a service online and they've got great results and you can see it how does their recommendation affect you then?

F: That would sway me to actually go ahead and get the service.

H: Why is that?

F: Because I can see the results. If it's something more temporarily they can see the effect of that particularly service then it's definitely a stronger motivation, a stronger preference than just hearing them talk about it rather than something real.

H: How about celebrity status and I'm not necessarily talking ... a celebrity but the fact that somebody is famous or well known for their expertise does that affect you in any way?

F: Not really. I'm not into celebrity culture I really don't like it and it doesn't one bit and most of them when they talk about something they're getting a cut at the end of the day so their opinion is totally down the drain for me. That wouldn't influence me one single bit, sometimes it will do the exact opposite. If someone of celebrity is endorsing someone and I really ... this person for whatever particularly reason are their individual lifestyle that make me go ahead and not buy this service even if I was considering going ahead and buying it.

H: Okay. What about Matthew Hussey's, I don't know if I can call it celebrity, but he is pretty well-known and he has made appearances on TV does that influence your purchase decision at all?

F: Yes, I know. I didn't know he was on TV until I went to that lecture so having him on TV is a good thing but it's not an influencer. At whatever he says and the value that he brings and whether it .. or not isn't the biggest influencer. It's not his celebrity status per say.

H: Why is it a good thing that he is on TV or that he has been on TV?

F: Just to spread the message nothing about celebrity culture. It might help build his credibility for people who put more influence on celebrity status. For me I don't put any value over that status, not to me at all.



H: So, does it make him more credible to you that somebody in the TV business has chosen him to be on TV?

F: No, not really but to some people it might be. I thought about connections being in the TV and then .. media it's about money, it's about connections, it's about who you know and sometimes who are really good aren't put into TV and sometimes the opposite is true and sometimes really good people go on TV so whether on TV or not really an influence for me.

H: Okay. So in what ways do you think Matthew is an expert in his field?

F: I think his an expert because he has coached a lot of people. That makes him knowledgeable. It's the experience itself rather than him being celebrity status.

H: So it is his experience?

F: Yeah.

H: How does or how can Matthew Hussey influence your purchase decision if, you know, not you personally but what can he do to influence you or somebody like you to buy his products?

F: That's a good question! I don't know maybe put like a test or like a free-one-day or –one-hour or something like you can test and that would perhaps make people more influenced by it.

H: So hear you're talking about the online programs?

F: Yeah, online programs. So yeah, something like that.

H: Okay.

F: That's all I can think of right now.

H: That's all right. How does it influence you when a person recommence something they know a lot about?

F: It definitely influence me because I know that, okay they are experts in this field but then again I have to check whether if it's true or not, or it's valid or not.

H: So what if they recommended something that you know nothing about? You know, you have never even considered this service or this area or this thing before?

F: I would go about to learn more about it to see whether it would be good for me or not. I wouldn't just go and rely on their word of mouth.

H: Why would that be your reaction?

F: I don't know it's me. I'll have to know more about it rather than just go ahead and just ...

H: Would you ever just ride it off because you're like, no that is not for me?

F: It might be the case for certain things but for most of the things I would actually have to go and see whether, like if it's true or not for me.

H: IN what situation are you most susceptible to word of mouth recommendations?

F: In what situations ... Perhaps in social situations.

H: But what kind of purchase situation?

F: Purchasing a service that has transformed lives or made a huge difference to other people.

H: And in what purchase are you least susceptible to word of mouth recommendations?

F: If I'm feeling uneasy about the service or about the product or if something make me suspicious about it.

H: Okay. In what kind of purchase situation do you seek word of mouth recommendations? Is it when you come across something or is it when somebody recommends it to you?

F: It's when I want to go ahead and buy something or get something. It's not because they recommended it, no because if I want to go ahead and buy it I would go ... before I buy it I would go and actually check about it.

H: Okay, so it's you who gets an idea about something that you want and then you go and check it. It's no so much somebody comes and tells you something about something ..

F: No.

H: Okay. Why do you seek word of mouth recommendations?

F: To see if it's of value of the person who bought it. Didn't I get asked that before?

H: Well, maybe. What do you value higher face-to-face opinions or opinions given on social media?

F: It depends. Sometimes face-to-face would have more value sometimes online would have more value. Depends on who is the person and what situation and what context. If it's been given online ... sometimes if an opinion has been given online are more credible than opinion given by face-to-face I don't have much confidence in.

H: So it depends on the sender?

F: Yeah.

H: When did you become an adverkit for a service or a product?

F: If I experienced it myself and so the information and affect that it has on me I become a fully blown adverkit for it. It's when I experience it I know the depth of the impact it has made on me and if see this service or this product to be of a good impact and a good match for this person who might benefit from it.

H: How would you make the recommendation?

F: I would talk to them about it, like the benefits and ... yeah just talk to them about it.

H: Would you only recommend it if you were asked or would it more of an you believe in this product/service so much that you would just be sharing it with everybody?

F: Both actually.

H: What does it depends on?

F: It depends on the person and it depends on the situation, it depends if I know this person may feel bad if I just like, stormed and started to talk about stuff so ... I don't know. Like my personal relationship with this person would also depends. Like I know f.ex. some certain people don't like to be told of immediately what to go or what to buy. So these people I would ask for either, like a good situation arises , you just like talk about it or something like that.

H: To what extend are you successful when you try to persuade somebody?

F: Since I'm not ... actually adverkitting something for them to go and buy but I might successful if it's positive impact. If not, even if they got it or not sometimes they can get it but it's not beneficial for them so it's not really being successful either.

H: So when you recommend something by word of mouth your aim is not to sell it, it's more to influence them?

F: It's more to share positive experience that I've had. Rather than selling something because I'm not a sales person for this. I'm not like a person or adverkit for this.

H: So to what extend do you influence people on Twitter?

F: I have no idea.

H: Do you ever try to influence people on Twitter?

F: No.

H: You don't share any recommendations or ..?

F: No. It's just a personal brand it's not about influence either way. There is nothing commercial or anything to it.

H: Okay. But what about if it's an article or anything like that?

F: I just share it but that's it.

H: But do you write anything to persuade them?

F: ... great article or something I wouldn't. Go ahead and just check it out whatever this is amazing because sometimes it has exact opposite effect for me at least so that's why I just ... interest that their going to get out but that's all.

H: Do you think that if they're anyway like you that you friends on Twitter will read it, that that's the reason for them to like it?

F: I think, maybe.

H: Would you recommend Matthew Hussey?

F: Yes, I would recommend Matthew Hussey to the right people but wouldn't go ahead and tell everyone about it because it's not for everyone and it is the way I got it. I get to know about him and his work is through something very specific which is "Get the Guy". So I might recommend it to someone who I know is in the same place as I am but I wouldn't go around and just telling everyone "I went to this and I went to this and I went to Get the Guy event". Not everyone is going to receive it in a nice way and some people might judge so why put myself in this position.

H: What about the experience makes you want to recommend him?

F: It's about the feeling and the benefit that I got.

H: Okay. In what cases will you pass on recommendations made by somebody else in your network or somebody close to you?

F: Have some what?

H: I said in what cases will you pass on recommendations made by somebody else in your network. Not necessarily online but you know, in your personal network as well?

F: If I think it's relevant and it's of value of the person or to the situation that it might add some value or might mean something I would recommend it but other than that, no.

H: How would you sort of present it when you pass it on?

F: I don't really measure to think about it. It depends sometimes I would recommend a lot of things to someone who I know would benefit of it sometimes I wouldn't recommend anything to anybody else. It's just depends whether it's right for the person or not.

H: But let's say your sister made some recommendation about something that she thought was great and you have another friend who's interested in that area how would you convey that recommendation?

F: I would tell her about my sister experience and her recommendations but other than that, no. So just like tell her from when my sister went there and she had a great experience and this is what she said but I would also mention I didn't go there and didn't experience it myself and I can't really say whether it's worth or not but this is my sister and this is what she thinks about it.

H: So what are your feelings about passing on recommendations?

F: Again it depends on the person. I know some people who would take things and they are fine other people might feel either apprehensive or some other people might get offended or like she is trying to push her agenda on me. So I guess it really depends.

H: It depends on who the receiver is?

F: Yes.

H: Does the same thing goes for Twitter, like sharing and re-posting and things like that?

F: I don't care much on Twitter anyway or post articles on Twitter anyway so it's very rare when I do that and yes I would definitely consider the audience, who am I passing it to. Is it of value, if it's of value to them and it might be important then yes, and if it's not I won't.

H: How do you feel passing on a recommendation reflects on you?

F: It does. Especially for us .. because it reflects me as a person, it reflects my preferences and reflects my like my dislikes and my values in life. It also reflects me so if they went and they had a bad experience and not necessarily have a negative view about me, not true but.

H: Even though it's not your experience?

F: Exactly. So it's my personal brand that is on the line here.

H: Okay. What do you consider before passing on a recommendation either on Facebook or face-to-face?

F: Whether if it's valuable, whether if it's true, whether it's of value, whether if it's relevant to the people I am sending it to and whether it would make actually a positive impact or influence.

H: What about in regards to yourself? Do you consider yourself at all?

F: When I am passing a recommendation?

H: Yes.

F: In what way am I considering myself?

H: What will they think of me, you know, how will this reflects on me?

F: Yes. F.ex. I don't have a Facebook account but if I had it I would never ever put "I went to Get the Guy even by Matthew". No way, there is no way on planet earth that I would do that.

H: Why is that?

F: It's a perception. That's what people think. They think she is .. thinking that she wants to go ahead and get the guy. This is what people will think and so it's not something that I would ... I wouldn't like, I share that. Definitely. For people who would share the same values as myself, in the end but for others .. I consider this to be a private thing.

H: Yeah, is that ... so you said you wouldn't post it on Facebook is that because of the name or is it because of the nature?

F: It's the nature. Part is the name but it's the nature as well. People who doesn't understand and make fun and they might judge me a certain way. I don't need to put myself that situation so that's why wouldn't share it.

H: How does judgement influence you in your purchase decision then?

F: Not basically, but ... f.ex. I would go ahead and buy the service if I know that it is valuable for me and I don't have to do .. when I purchase a service but I wouldn't share it actively with people that's the difference. I would buy it, it wouldn't affect me but when I share it actively with people on Facebook or Twitter, no. ... like the service isn't valuable but it's just because .. judgement and mentality that goes on when purchasing a product or a service or a .. I want to .. myself with that, that's why I wouldn't do it

H: Good. Well, that was all of my questions. So ....

## **Johanna**

Interview Johanna 118 min 05 sec

Interviewer: Helene / H.

Interviewee: Johanna / J.

H: What's your name?

J: Johanna

H: And how old are you

J: I'm, let me think, I think I am getting 30 in March

H: Where are you from?

J: I am from Germany from Frankfurt

H: So that's just background information I needed. To what extend do you gather word of mouth about a service before you buy it?

J: In general?

H: Yeah just in general. Like if you want to buy a service, like a hairdresser or something like Math's event or something like that.

J: Yes that's a good example, because I am looking for a new hairdresser in Frankfurt and I really give much on it, at least I have been, out dancing on disco 3 weeks ago and there was a

guy and he had a great haircut. So I went to him and told him, hey may I ask you something and your hair looks so great, who is your hairdresser?

H: That's a Hussey technique.

J: But I needed a new hairdresser

H: Okay and what did he say?

J: He was really surprised, but also impressed and yeah he was, I don't know if it's the right word enchanting and he told me who his hairdresser is and where he is in Frankfurt – and I tried to reach them. So he says they are good, I see his hair is looking good and I want to go there.

H: So is that something you do a lot, when you need to buy a service, fore example you ask people about it?

J: Yes. I usually ask people. So even when I have to buy a new washing machine. We went to a store and there was a service man and we looked at the washing machine and I asked him, which one could you say is good, to be honest, so yeah that's one way, I ask people and the other hand I like to use the Internet. There are some websites 5.46?? and there you can say, if you are looking for a good restaurant. There are people who have been there and have written how they liked it.

H: So how often do you look for peoples recommendations either face to face or on the Internet – how often do you do that? Is it like always some of the times or?

J: I think it's depends on how often I do need things, what I do actually I am thinking of find a new notebook, I thinking about buying an Apple. If I meet somebody who has an Iphone or a tablet from Apple, I ask them, do you like it?

So I think maybe at least 4 times a month

H: So is it every time you need to buy something?

J: I would say so

H: So you always go looking on other people opinion on what you are buying?

J: Ask people or I do research on the Internet.

H: So why do you go to other people for help about a product or a service?

J: Because of there is a lot of commercial out there and everyone is saying my product is the best product, so nobody would tell if there is something wrong or not so good with it, so I ask people I trust. If they has experience with it. To have a good recommendation I can rely on.

H: So how does there opinion effect you? If you ask somebody face to face or you find someone opinion online, how dos that effect you?

J: I think mouth to mouth has a bigger effect on me, because I know the person, and maybe the person tells me that the product is shitty. And I know the person has a different style than I

have and yeah, I can measure it what he is saying. In the Internet, I don't know who is writing it. So I trust people more than the Internet, I think. Does it answer your questions?

H: No. so if someone gives you there opinion face to face, how dos that affect whether or not you are going to buy the product?

J: I think I will ask some more people and do more research. I just wouldn't decide by asking one person.

H: Are you more likely to buy the product, when you get positive feed back, when you ask? Like they say this is really great.

J: Yes. If everyone would tell me that MacBook's are the best things in the World, then I would say, okay I want one too.

H: In what way did you seek recommendations about Mathew Hussey?

J: In no way – I just think by YouTube – who told me, maybe you like this video.

H: YouTube told you?

J: Yes YouTube told me.

H: Okay, did you read any off the comments? Or did you just see the videos?

J: I think first I watched the video and sometimes he tells please wright your comment under this video, but then he tells that he appreciate if you write on his website. Then I think, I don't know where the video is on his website to comment there. I think he doesn't read the comments on YouTube, so I didn't read them at all.

H: Did you comment on his videos?

J: No

H: But you read them?

J: The comments?

H: Yes

J: Just from one video, where his mom was in it. He said if any one comments here, they likes my mom better that me, you got banned – so I became curious. But otherwise I usually don't read the comments.

H: What makes you feel close and connected to a person?

J: Oh.

H: Not like romantically, but you know friends or family or something, what makes you feel close to them?

J: I have the feeling I can trust them and relay on them, like when we where in London together and I ask you or said it would be great on Sunday to meet and you said yes of course. And I thought okay when we wrote on Sunday morning over telephones and you said okay lets meet



up, then I feel more connected because I had the experience, you told me, we can meet and now we are really doing it. So yeah to experience I can trust someone. What he says is true.

H: The people you are close to your friends and family or who ever you are close to, how are they important to you? Why are they important to you?

J: Okay, because I can tell them everything I want and I can be angry and I can speak sometimes, oh yeah bad things about people and yeah usually I shouldn't say this, but, and they say, so why shouldn't you say this? I can open up and feel safe with them and what I tell them is safe. Does that make sense to you?

H: Yeah it makes sense. So now we talked about it from your side like why they are important. But I what way can they contribute to you, your close friends or family or close network? Do you understand?

J: No, I just looked the word contribute up, but I don't get the connection.

H: Don't worry about it. The people who are closest to you, how are you in contact with them?

J: Must of the time by telephone because they don't live where I live.

H: Okay, how close do you feel to your friends on, I know you have Facebook – do you have Twitter?

J: No just Facebook.

H: So how close do you feel to your friends on Facebook?

J: It's strange I think, because sometimes Facebook pretend to be closer than you are in real live, because I think you see pictures of their lives and you are some how in there live by just watching it, but when you meet it's so different. So I Think Facebook is pretending to be close.

H: So how close do you say you are to the people who are on the Facebook with you? Would you say that somewhat close or not close?

J: I think some are close, but fore example I really have friends who are wondering how I am doing, they don't wait for me to make a Facebook post. They write me or give me a call, but what's funny now was me moving back to Frankfurt and I am posting a photo of Frankfurt I am being back in town. Some people use this to write, how are you doing, why did you come back, is everything fine with you and I thought okay that's nice, but they didn't write me other times. I was a little bit confused by this.

H: So how are your friends on Facebook important to you?

J: I think not that important, because the friends that really matter to me, I keep in touch with in real live and on Facebook maybe from, let me guess 300 friends I have there maybe 10 maximum 20, I really have a good connection with.

H: Why do you have them on Facebook?

J: Why I connect with them? It's a really good question. The connections are always good to have.

H: So it's like a networking tools?

J: Partly it is and I think a great parts of the friends I have there, I have from my last job I was working with a seminars, they said oh you are working there and I want to stay in contact with you. And staying in contact with me often means, we are getting friends and that's it. But fore example great pictures, somebody is a great Photograph and I say I like this photo and this, this, this, and he writes me oh thank you so much and we start a conversation and get more I touch – so that's an other way to get in touch and being friends.

H: So it's just a different way?

J: Yes

H: How would you explain the degree of trust between you and the people closest to you?

J: From 1 to 10 or?

H: No just with your words

J: Then please repeat

H: How close are they to you?

J: Can you give me an A,B,C Answer?

H: That's the thing about this form of interview, I am not suppose to give you the answers, but it could be like, you are very close with whom ever or not so close to those people or so

J: Okay, so I think I am very selective whith whom I am close with and even those who I have selected out of it, I am care full with

H: So who are you closest to?

J: I think my mom

H: Just your mom or your family in general?

J: No, I would rather say my mom

H: Okay.

J: Because there are things I wouldn't tell my dad or sister

H: Do you know the word confidence?

J: Yes

H: What is your level of confidence in your friends? Real friends, real live friends?

J: On a scale from 1 to 10 I would say 7 – if 10 if the highest.

H: Why is that?

J: Because they don't always have time, but I know if there I an emergency they will help me and I am afraid to trust or to be close 100 % because people can hurt. So I am a bit a yeah, let me look ... I give attention, I don't want to get blue eyed.

H: Yeah I get it. I know the same. We have it in Danish but it doesn't exist in English – but I understand it.

J: Okay. So I like to trust them but I am care full at the same time.

H: Why do you have trust and have confidence in them?

J: Why or?

H: Yeah why?

J: Because I have had the experience with those people, they helped me and are good for me.

H: What does that trust and confidence mean in your relationship?  
What does that mean for the relationship? That you have that with somebody?

J: I am just wondering because trust and confidence means almost the same for me in German.

H: There is a slight different. So trust is something you have in a person you trust, trust that you wont or they wont tell your secret or what they are saying is true and confidence is more of a trust in them as a hole. You can look it up. It's okay I knew that it might , because these are written for English speakers and you are not the only foreign I am going to interview – so I new that it was going to be a problem, but you go ahead and look it up

J: Maybe you can help me to ..

H: okay, then take trust, tell me why trust is important in the relationship?

J: Why trust is important in a relationship?

H: Yeah relationship between you and your close friends or you and your mom anybody I your family, why is trust – what does that mean for the relationship?

J: I think trust makes relationships special.

H: How is so?

J: Because of experience you can't trust everybody, and of course I think everybody gets hurt sometimes in there lives and so they are cautious who they can trust so it's yeah, I need to have it in good relationship to somebody.

H: How much do you trust your friends on Facebook?

J: Not that much.

H: Why?

J: I think because Facebook is a website and I think maybe you can say, oh how can tell it? A lot of years ago, we used to write letters, so there was no Internet or no e-Mail or things like this and I think when you are writing a letter, you are sitting down, you are thinking what you are writing, you are thinking what you want to ask. You are polite, friendly – and I think now a

days when you have whatsapp and Facebook you write things without thinking about it and maybe being less cautious or I know people who say, what did person A,B,C tell you, please send me the conversation and things like this and that doesn't make me feel safe about it.

H: So how is your relationship, the relationship you have on Facebook how are they different from the ones you have in real life? Offline

J: Okay the once I have in real live I share with what I am experiences right now, it's different to me to hear a voice, you can hear the emotions and I feel really connected and enjoy to be with the person. When I am on Facebook now I am there maybe the other person is offline, I see pictures of there lives , I am kind a part of there live without being there. I don't know if some people is using it as commercial for them self being on Facebook. Nobody tells bad things on Facebook – they say oh my new car, oh my new horse, oh my new boat – and les people say oh this day I slept at the floor – That's what I tell my friends and I say oh how are you, so it's 26:12:0 with my friends in real life.

H: What do you think that trust, no let me rephrase that. In what way does trust play in when somebody is offering there opinion about a product or a service?

J: Can you repeat it?

H: Sure, it's quite long. So I am asking how trust plays in, so how does trust effect the situation when someone you know is recommending a product or a service?

J: How? If I have a friend saying he is using a MacBook and he is happy with it and I know he is a person who knows a lot about technic I just trust him. Dos it fit to your question?

H: Yeah, but that's trust in his ability, what about the level of trust between you too at friends or not friends how dos that play – what dos that mean? If you have to listen to somebody recommendations ?

J: I think on the one hand I show him that his opinion is important to me and I hope that he is honest by answering me this questions.

H: Okay, don't worry about it, it's fine. You are doing great.  
In what way does buying something create a sense of belonging?

J: Let me look up belonging. Belonging between me and the person who is recommend it to me or?

H: No in a group setting, so if I ... let me give you an example. So in Denmark everybody owns Samsung Smart TV, so by buying a Samsung Smart TV myself I create a sense of belonging – a social situation.

J: Yeah, I think in Germany it's like do you have an iPhone or not

H: Do you think that's true, that it create a sense of belonging to buy something to fit in or to be a part of a group?

J: Yes, sure. Because if you have the same mobile phone you can say – you can see the people sitting together and talking about do you know this app and what can I do to do this and they are in there own world and I am sitting outside with my phone and I have no idea what they are talking about at sometimes. Oh yeah of course there is a case of belonging if you have the same product.

H: So what do you think about it, if you think in a service situation – so instead of a phone we are talking about a seminar, a class or something, do you think that that can create a sense of belonging as well, buying into the right service?

J: To buy a seminar?

H: Yeah so do you think you can get the same sense of belonging by fore example if all your friends was going to the Matthew Hussey retried, do you think you could create a sense of belonging but also ...?

J: Yes totally, I can tell from my experience from my last job I worked at a seminar company and they had a club and seminars and yeah. It's like a community and they are talking about one of the people is called fight and when you are on a seminar or somewhere else they are talking – but fight said ha,ha,ha, and then fight did this ha,ha,ha, if you don't know fight, you are outside. And if you know him, you are in the club of the knowers.

H: In what way do you think about other people's opinion, when you are thinking about buying a service?

J: A service like a seminar? Or?

H: Seminar, a class or hairdresser – something is not a physical product. A doctor anything where somebody offers you not a physical product.

J: Yeah, what was the main question?

H: In which way do you think about other peoples opinion when you are deciding on whether or not you are buy a service?

J: I don't get the point to be honest.

H: Okay, I am asking if when you are considering to buy something, a service like a class or a seminar – something. Because of one point you are thinking whether or not are going to buy it. When you are at that point do you think about what other people in your social circle will think? If you buy that service?

J: Yes, I do think about this and I am selective who I tell bought this and that. So I know maybe I guess with influence some people when I tell them – Oh I am going on an other seminar, and they say all right – so I really choose carefully who I am telling what I am buying.

H: But dos it effect whether or not you buy?

J: It doesn't effect if I buy it but who I tell about it.

H: Okay. So how does it influence you if somebody you know, you know of the crew from the seminar you are buying for example.

J: Can you write me the question – is it possible?

H: Yeah I can write it. Hold on.

J: That would be awesome. Prove of ...

H: Yeah, it's supposed to say approve. Do you know the word approve?

J: No.

H: So when you buy something and you know that someone in your close circle of friends or family, if you know that they will think that it's a good idea to buy it. How does that affect whether or you're going to buy like a seminar?

J: I think it effect me while I am deciding if I would do it or if I don't do it because I am thinking about the consequences when other person say okay you bought and it's crab then I think oh it's hard.

H: Will it stop you from buying it?

J: Maybe, it depends on what it is, I think it's a difference buying chewing gum and then a seminar – but funny thing, I have a friend she is vegan, is it the right word? She don't eat animal – and we have been into the bakery and I wanted to eat something with eggs and I looked at her and I know she I vegan, and this made me not buying it – the bread with eggs. Later in the day I thought , it's crazy why did I do this

H: Do you know why you did it?

J: I think I want her to like me, but I am not sure if she likes less if I buy a bread with eggs. Maybe it's a crazy idea.

H: Yeah but that's thing, you never know.

J: Yeah could happened.

H: So what if somebody close to you , somebody you consider as a friend or family member, if they bought a seminar and they came back to you and they really, really loved it and they recommended it to you, how does that influence you? What does that makes you think about the seminar?

J: If they are very euphoric, I will be skeptical and I will watch them for maybe 2,3,4 weeks if they are still that euphoric because of there seminar , people go to and the come back aarrhh and maybe one week or two weeks later they come back down where they have been before. If they are euphoric about a seminar and say oh it's so awesome and it changed my live, I will watch them maybe 1 or 2 months and then I think you can see if there is a really change in there lives or it just was a daily flue.

H: Okay, so why do you think like that? Because most people would be like if somebody is really excited then it's must be really good – what experience do you have that tells you to wait?

J: Maybe it's German genes, skeptical. And I think in Germany there are many, many, many seminars and the market is so full and a lot of people are talking about I have been chaka, chaka seminar and yeah I ran through fire but nothing change for me. They came back euphoric and so and so, yeah just ...

H: Why is there so many seminars in Germany you think?

J: Maybe but I just.

H: Yeah you are guessing, but it's your personal opinion.

J: I think Germany is well known for quality and to have good quality you have to learn and get better and better and so you go learn further and further.

H: Are people very open to that in Germany?

J: I think right now they are kind of fed-up, because there are so many coaches, so many seminars maybe back in time 30-40 years maybe there had been 10 company's and up to today there are over 1000 company's and they say let me learn. I don't want any more commercial from this so I think if you want to make commercial for a special seminar you have really, you really have to know who is your goal.

H: Yeah your target?

J: Yes right. To find them and to talk to them – yes.

H: I am just thinking it is interesting, because in Denmark people are very closed-off to the thought of coaching, they are not open to it and in Germany you know our closest neighbor, so it's interesting that you guys are so open to it and are people openly talking about going to these things?

J: About going to a coach or?

H: Yeah a coach or a seminar, anything like that

J: Depends on I think I wouldn't tell my colleagues, I think I would tell them oh I am going to a retreat to the USA and if they ask, I would say it's about communication because I wouldn't like to tell them that it's about coach confidential, because I feel insecure. Maybe it would make an other connection with the colleagues and maybe it would be positive but I don't know. So because of sometime you show your vulnerable it can be positive.

H: What is it that makes you not want to tell your coworker?

J: Somehow it's kind of personal, because I want to get better in a thing I don't want anybody to know I have a leg off. So I try to fix it before someone see this. So I don't want to tell them. Look here I have some problems.

H: Because you decided to go to the retriend. When you decided that you want going to Matthew Hussey retriend. What did you think about your friends and family, what was your thoughts about them, when you decided to do this?

J: What they would say? Or?

H: Yeah what they would say, what they would think, how would they react ?

J: Yeah I was thinking about it and I wasn't 42.11 ?? them directly. Like ohh an other seminar aha, uhum, great and 1 week ago I had a chat with a friend and he said, I didn't speak to him for awhile and he called me up and we were talking and he told me oh you was the girl who attend so many things? Yes I guess I will always be.

H: How do you feel about that part of your identity? Hallo?

J: Because I have been and I was prepared for their questions and reaction. So I thought okay, who is important to me who will I tell this and how can I explain to them this is good for me and to say this is - this seminar are different from all the others and that why I want to go there.

H: So they didn't have any effect on whether or not, you should buy it?

J: No, I bought it anyway and I just was thinking how to explain it to them.

H: Okay, great. If you only have a little bit of experience – let say you know a little bit about a seminar and you are interested but you want more information, where do you get more information from?

J: From the Internet but I think it's depend on what kind of seminar it is. If I have friends who have attended it or know the people who are doing the seminar – I will ask them but if I don't know anybody I have to ask the Internet I think. Yes, and the same thing with buying things, I think everyone will tell my seminar is the best one. So I am looking for real people's opinion on it.

H: Why do you go to the internet to look?

J: Because it's a tool where everyone can write his or hers opinion like he wants to.

H: Do you think that the people ... or did you use the people on the internet or your friends and family because they have knowledge about something or experience. Is that what you're looking for?

J: Can you write me the question?

H: No, there is no question. This is just me thinking right now. So I'm just trying to figure out who you're trying to find when you look on the internet or you ask a person. Are you looking for somebody who has knowledge or knowledge and experience or experience more that knowledge?



- J: I think it's more experience because if I'm looking for a new doctor in Frankfurt. There are so many and I really use internet portals where people have written their opinion about his doctor and I think there are people who also have a problem where to go and now they say this is a gorgeous or this is a great doctor or they tell you oh, I waited over 2 hours and it was just shitty here and I will never come back again. That maybe if there are hundreds opinions on a doctor and two people are writing it's very shitty or a hairdresser. These two people won't affect me if the other 98 people say it's great, it's the best thing I have ever done. So I can't judge their knowledge because I don't know them. So I think doctors don't go to doctors and write about it or hairdresser to hairdresser.
- H: When is a person's word of mouth most valid to you?
- J: If you know the person or he can show me something. Like the guy in the disco he had a great haircut and he said "my hairdresser is fine" and I've seen his haircut. So I think I can rely on it.
- H: So that's face-to-face. What about on the internet or social media?
- J: Pardon me?
- H: What if we go online and I ask the same thing. When is word of mouth most valid for you on the internet?
- J: In one hand if I know the people who are writing or if they have a 49:05 maybe. So if the people don't say "oh it's so awesome and gorgeous" or "it's some damn crap" if they are more thinking about. Just not posting anything, they are just at this moment thinking. You know what I mean?
- H: Is that people who you don't know? So if it's just a random person on the internet recommending something. How does it need to be written for you to think that that's a valid recommendation? Hallo? Oh, there's echo. Let me call you back.
- H: So I forgot what I was asking you. Oh yeah! If somebody you don't know is writing a recommendation online how do you figure if that's valid or not?
- J: To have an example. Maybe on amazon if you want to buy books or things. If there's a person who write a lot of details and maybe did some research and said "okay, I read a lot of books and this is the best one to this topic" I think it's more valid than somebody writing "oh, the books is old" or is emotional attached to it. So just writing to write something, you know?
- H: Yeah. So you told me this before but just for the interview, how did you come across Matthew Hussey?
- J: I was in the internet and I was looking for Youtube videos and spending my time on Youtube and yeah. Youtube had on the right sidebar telling me maybe you like this videos and I just clicked on one of them and it was about a tour he did last year, I guess. And he said "okay, for

all the people who couldn't be there you get a taste of my seminar by watching this video” and yeah, he answered some questions and the quality of his answers and yeah the 53:02 and charming kind of way. He has many thing that gave interest and so let me watch another video and watch another video yet I won a ticket so I went to London.

H: Can you explain to me a little more about this video because I don't think I have seen it. What was it about?

J: It was about I think “get the guy”-tour and women asking men with men-topic questions and for example, why do I always have the assholes and his answers was so funny and yeah it made sense what I was telling and that yeah, women thinking in a strange way. Everything is fine and he makes me breath, like okay okay. Yeah and it was funny that's very important.

H: So you saw this video and then what did you do? Did you go with the more videos?

J: I think so that I clicked on some other videos and I think that there was a commercial maybe with tape messaging and you can subscribe to a newsletter and I thought ahh interesting and I thought I shipped to you own ... at the information if you subscribe and I was skeptical because the first time I heard about Matthew Hussey and nobody else knew him and so I masked my email address as a skeptical german ...

H: You changed something in it or what?

J: No, there are special programs. I think it's a kind of add and they ask if you want to mask your email address but I have to email addresses. One for formal things like job applications and contracts and one email address for games and if you can win something or newsletters so your important email account isn't spammed. So I used the spam account because I didn't what it was about.

H: So once you found out that he was something that was interesting, how do you go about finding out more?

J: I watched more videos and I went to this website but on his website I think there're mainly his videos so it was the same for me a to be on Youtube and sometime later I added is site on Facebook. Yeah, because I think the Facebook site is more different to his website. It doesn't have so many things on his website.

H: Have you ever read Steven, his brothers articles?

J: Yes maybe two or three of them.

H: So do you get anything out of them?

J: The only thing I remember now was a conversation. He was writing about a girl and him arguing reading *get the guy* book and he said “no, give it back to me” and she said “no, I want to read it” and he said “no, 57:06 it”. To be honest that's the only thing I remember.

- H: Okay. How did Matthew give you value? Was the through his videos basically? Is that why you kept coming back?
- J: Yes is was basically watch his videos because they are maybe just 10 minutes long and have a topic or a main question and he answers this question. So I can go on Youtube or go on his channel and look just for 4 questions that I'm interested in or which are important to me and that gives it value.
- H: Did you at any point read any of the comments?
- J: No, just the one video where he told he would ban everybody who tells his mom is more likeable than him and yeah, I just was curious.
- H: Why don't you read the comments?
- J: Because I think it's a time waste reading what other people are thinking and yeah. I haven't ever read comments that gave value to me.
- H: So what is the difference between comments that people leave on Matthew's video and for example a reveiew on something on amazon?
- J: Because I think on Youtube the comments are "ah, I like it", "ah, he is looking tired" they are just opinions, I don't know. Like I want to go to have a shower. So informative you know and if someone is writing something on amazon I think they have thought more about it and what they want to write and I guess they have other goals. Just to leave a comment or to help somebody on a decision like amazon does.
- H: For me after starting this project I had to read a lot of the comments and the pattern that I see is that people are talking to Matthew Hussey rather than to the women. So if somebody or if these women would start to talk to each other rather than talking to Matthew Hussey. Do you think that would give you value in f.ex. choosing whether or not his products are worth buying?
- J: Good question. I remember a comment of a woman writing "Oh, Matthew you are so looking tired" as you said yeah, they are writing to Matthew. Yeah maybe like guru-thing, you know and as we have been in London and he said "okay, the first 15 who sign this can come up to the stage and some women ran and I said "Okay, let them run". I don't know because when I watch a video I think I have a problem or question and maybe Matthew answers it and what should another woman write to get in a conversation with the other women.
- H: You don't think that other women can add any value to you? The value you're looking for is something Matthew is providing and he is pretty much giving you the answer that you need so that the other women are redundant.
- J: Maybe. I was just thinking, maybe people or women are coming there to get advice and maybe if some women wrote "Okay, and I tested this tool and what happened to me was this,

how are you women dealing with it” or kind of this that I think it always goes back to asking Matthew. There are women looking for solutions and advice and Matthew is giving it. And if they don’t know the answer I think they will ask Matthew again.

H: Do you think that if there was a community on his website where women could talk to each other and help each other and if somebody had been to the seminar they could maybe help somebody who’s having a problem. So they didn’t have to wait for Matthew’s answer. Do you think that that could work?”

J: Yes! I think that could work if you have somebody who is one step further than you are, you can trust in. Because they are telling thing of Matthew give you paper written, you have been here and you have done the seminar and so I know, okay you have been there and you can help me now because you’re near or close to me and you it’s 1:03:31 and maybe better 1:03:36. If it’s real English.

H: It’s fine. So I was thinking. If it’s like an online community for people or women who have been one the retreat then you would listen more to them? Let’s say it was like a Facebook for women who’s been on the retreat and you had a problem, would you then forum to look because you know that these women had all been on the retreat?

J: Yeah, I think that would be an option for me to ask them because we have been there together right?

H: Yeah. They had been there with you or they had been on a different retreat before you or even after you. It’s just a community where all the people who are there have attended Matthew’s seminar.

J: I think that would be a great idea because the seminars are similar to each other so you have a group feeling and I think everyone is at a different point at it’s life and if you aren’t in a seminar you don’t get it all. So you can ask “Oh we did this exercise. Does anyone remember this and that” so I don’t have to write Matthew and I think that could help totally and I think the community feeling would be nice or sharing experiences. So for example half a year after the retreat in my life this and this happened and then people can say “Oh great” or “I have a problem there can you help me” or if you’re lonely you can speak to somebody or someone and I think this would be of value.

H: Okay. What will make you have worry about buying a service or a seminar? Let’s stick with s eminar so what would make you nervous or uneasy about buying a seminar?

J: I get uneasy if I don’t know what is happening there. If I know it’s an English course, I know we’re talking English. If they say it’s retreat I say “okay, interesting” I don’t really know what’s happening. Maybe you get naked, you never know, yeah.

H: It’s a good example but yeah.

J: Okay, I'm looking forward to august. Okay that concerns me a little bit

H: You're not naked.

J: I hope so and yeah, another thing about the seminar is the money thing. If it's very very very high price, yeah I'm thinking a lot if I'll do it or how can I pay it.

H: So what makes you feel better about these concerns?

J: I'm a little bit nervous because of the naked thing and you smiled.

H: It's because it was funny.

J: I know seminars where this happens so ...

H: There is not people that is going to be naked, I promise.

J: Okay great. That reassures me now and makes "oha". The money thing for example, it makes it better for me talking to people saying "yes, it is expensive and I tell you it's worth it" and maybe they can tell like you did Okay this and that happened in my life and I feel so much better than I did before. I have to trust you by telling this but this makes it easier for me to say "okay".

H: So why does it helps that I told you those things? Because at that point you didn't really know me, so how did it help or why did it help?

J: It made it much more within reach for me or concrete, talking to a real human. Not just reading a paper or commercial but to get in touch or to get in relation with somebody. Even if I don't know you but I see how you are talking about it and I think everyone has a kind of intuition and so if you were talking about it and so "hahaha" and yeah. I wouldn't say euphoric but happy about it and that gave me a good feeling.

H: Did it help that it was a long time ago that I had gone, that it wasn't like to weeks ago?

J: Yes, as a tour I am skeptical about the euphoric ones.

H: Yeah, I know. Didn't realize that until now. So you've actually bought, you made a commitment to buy or go on the retreat?

J: Yes.

H: And your specific concerns about this program was money and the fact that you don't know what really goes on there.

J: The only thing concerning is the money thing at this point.

H: Okay. So when thinking about this specific retreat how did the money play in. You know, your worries about money, what did that make you think? What train of thought did you have?

J: What I'm thinking about the money thing and with the seminar.

H: Yeah how did that make you think I shouldn't do, I should do it. You know what was your argument in your head?

- J: The argument my head was ... it sometimes still is. Maybe, but I can learn there. Maybe I can learn it in Germany or in books and it's now that expensive and what if I learn it before I go there. Then I have pay all the money and not knowing what kind of worth is in there for me. So I know I just can know it if I attend it, you know. But it's very difficult for me to pay this big sum I don't have right now. Other thoughts, I'm in a new flat and it's not comfortable and there are furniture missing and so I think I could make it really pretty here but then I don't have the money for the seminar. First I have to save the money for seminar, then I buy furniture but then it's uncomfortable here until then. It is in august and I'm living here now and it's chaos.
- H: So how did the retreat win that argument?
- J: I think it's not only the retreat in this argument because I want to attend to the retreat and fulfill a really big dream of me with visiting the national parks. So it's a combination of the seminar and reaching a real dream and thinking about "okay then, maybe I live happy in a flat without all that furniture maybe when I come back and I don't care there aren't old furniture's and yeah I hope will be very very very happy.
- H: So what helped you make the decision? What helped convinced yourself?
- J: I think the imagination of how happy I could be.
- H: And how did imagine that, what helped you imagine?
- J: On one hand I think it's the some kind of pain motivation. I wanted to go to the USA since I was a small child and I'm going to be 30 this year and I haven't been there so it's time too. And I learned from London I'm going to do things if there's a connection between learning and doing something new, I'm afraid of maybe. So in august I have high faith of learning so I can feel save and I say "okay I can go there and learn something" and then I do something crazy watching national parks. Still don't know how and being excited about this.
- H: What was the finale thing, what was it that influenced you so you were like okay I'm going to do it.
- J: Hope.
- H: Hope? How so?
- J: Having the hope to overcome insecurities or what I experienced last year. People treating me badly and I let them do it and not walk away in time and the hope somebody teaching me to be attended, how to see it at the right time and how to react. I don't know, there is somethings you learn like walking by yourself using other people and maybe somebody knowing how to do it and watching and yeah, talking to him helps with it to.

H: How does influence you if a person is recommending something and they seem like they really really know what they are talking about, how does that make what they are saying more or less valid?

J: Has more impact on me? When I think okay they know what they are talking about.

H: Why is that?

J: Because if I have the feeling that they are expert on this topic and they recommended. Okay maybe there is a skeptical part because they could be getting money by recommending this thing to you. So you should be careful.

H: So what about if somebody is trying to recommend something to you and you know a lot about it already but they are trying convince you to go to a seminar, how does their recommendation affect you then?

J: I think then maybe they don't know me. If I'm good at writing books and they tell me go to this seminar.

H: But maybe they thought you would get better by going to this seminar?

J: I would ask them what can learn there that I don't already know. What is so special about this one? Maybe I would listen to them.

H: When do you think you're most open to word of mouth recommendation? In what buying situation?

J: If I have time and fun. If there is no pressure.

H: Okay. In what way are you least likely to listen?

J: When I'm sick or I don't have time or I'm aggressive because I'm unhappy and somebody comes to tell me this is a good camera I just want to say "fuck you and your camera".

H: So is it more if you don't have an interest?

J: If I have interest, yes. And I have to have time, so maybe I go to a camera store and they show me Nikon and Canon and different cameras and I can try them on and they are experts on cameras. I really like to listen to them, I think they have great tips for me. But if I'm hungry and have no time it's no good point to give me a recommendation.

H: Okay great. What buying situation do you go look for recommendations?

J: When I don't know enough. If I don't think I'm an expert on it.

H: So is that if you come across something on your own or if somebody else recommended it to you?

J: I don't understand this question.

H: I'm just saying that if you don't enough about a thing that you want to buy. What situation are you in? Is that because you found something for example online that you think you want to

buy but you're not sure or is it more like somebody recommended something to you but you are still not sure, so you go look for more recommendations?

J: I think I look for more recommendations but I need something. For example I need a washing machine or maybe my notebook I getting old and I know I have to buy new one and technic have improved. So I'm looking for advice which are the best one to buy right now.

H: Okay, but when is the advice something you actively go look for? Is that if ... do you go looking for more advice on the thing if somebody recommended it or do you go and look for more advice if you research something yourself?

J: Okay. Even if somebody recommended it to me, I'm going on more research for me.

H: Why do you seek out recommendation either online or face to face, why do you do it?

J: Because just product information isn't enough for me.

H: Why is that not enough?

J: Because as I told you everyone one is saying I have the best product and I think well yeah. If you buy a camera everybody is saying it but there are special camera for this and special camera for this and I have to find out to be happy with what I'm buying. It's so hard to make decisions, I hate it.

H: I know, it's like every time you have to get something unless it's a tiny little thing that you pay very little for then you have to go ask people or find out research of something. What do you value higher a face to face recommendation like I recommended it to you or somebody raving about something on social media, let's say Facebook?

J: It depends on who is raving there on Facebook but I guess I'm more the real life person that, like you are.

H: Why is that?

J: Because I ... I'm not sure if it's more an emotional thing to be in connection to a real person. Not just on an internet platform going it's way.

H: Let's say that we're on Facebook and you see somebody recommending let's say a restaurant. Would you trust that recommendation or would you try to look into other people's recommendations on the internet or would you maybe contact that person to get a more personal advice, or how would you go about it?

J: I think that it is only a restaurant and if it's a friend of mine I think I just go there and try it out, if it's my taste. Because what would happen – it's one or two hours and if you don't like it, then you don't go there anymore. But it doesn't sack up your whole life, you know.

H: What if it was something like the Matthew Hussey retreat?

J: Then I would do more research because it's just a bigger thing and with a bigger thing I really mean the price.



- H: Okay. What would be your first thing to do? Let's say that you hadn't come across Matthew's videos but somebody had posted it, let's say his video in your Facebook network and you had watched it. Would they have written something like, great video you have to watch this and you have watched it and you have liked it, what would be your next move? Would you try to get that person to talk to you about it or what would you do?
- J: No. I just would watch more videos because I have my own opinion about it and he or she who recommended it to me and I think "okay, that is interesting and a good advice from this person" but I'm interested in the video, so I don't contact the person who gave me the advice or posted it. Except if the person would make a posting like "oh, I have been at the Matthew Hussey retreat" then I would be more likely to ask "oh, how was it. What are you thinking about it" because it's a real life experience. Something different from me than watching a video.
- H: So if somebody says that this event is amazing and you can't find anything about it on the internet yourself. Then you would go and ask the person about it?
- J: Right.
- H: Okay, interesting. When do you become an advertiser for, let's say for a coach?
- J: When I would consult the coach. Is this a question?
- H: No. The question is when will you start to recommend a coach or a seminar or something like that? What do you need to experience to start recommending it?
- J: I need the experience that it served me in my life and that it has a real value. Because if I recommend something then I'm not sure about it and somebody is spending their money on it and saying "Oh, bad advice" it's not good for me.
- H: Why would you try to persuade somebody to buy a service like that?
- J: Because sometimes I see people having problems in relations and if you know somebody who knows a solution and you could like "go there and everything is getting easier" but I'm kind of careful with it because not everyone complaining about relationship wants solutions. So I would check if they want a solution and if they want to then I would recommend it. Otherwise it wouldn't go on their nerves.
- H: Can you explain to me a little bit deeper about what you think about before you recommend something to somebody. You said that, you know, you wouldn't necessarily recommend it to anybody who had a relationship problem. What would you think about before recommending it, something like that?
- J: Good question. If I think it would really help this and if I'm really convinced by it. If I know there, it's just an example. If there is an event techno music in it right and my grandma uses it. Maybe I would be hesitating telling grandma going there because she doesn't like techno

music. So I am looking for what this person maybe be looking for and what is the seminar like and does it fit together.

H: How do you think that it reflects on you to make a recommendation? Do you think about yourself in that situation? Let's say you recommend something and it turns they're like "pfff, that's bullshit". So do you think about things like that before recommending?

J: No, I wouldn't.

H: Okay, all right. So let's say that you want to recommend an event to somebody. How would go about recommending it? Or let's not say you want to recommend it to a specific person you just ... you went to this festival, music festival and you thought that it was amazing and you want everybody to go and have the same experience. How would you communicate that to people?

J: I guess I would start like "do you like techno? Yeah you like techno, then I just have to tell you I have been there and you should go there too because ..."

H: So how about posting it on Facebook?

J: I wouldn't.

H: Why?

J: I think it's similar to the egg, bread and the bakery thing because I don't think everyone likes what I like and I don't like it when people say they don't it.

H: Oh yeah, I get it. I definitely get it. So when you've been to something an event or service or something and you really like and you want to tell somebody about it. How successful are you in actually convincing somebody to go do the same thing? Do you think it a lot that you get people to go to something because you recommended it?

J: First, what you're thinking about is when I really have a good recommendation for friend and would post it officially on Facebook because if I know problem as a friend I wouldn't post it to their 1:31:57 and everybody seeing "oh, haha. So you have problems in you relationship" but maybe I would write it in a private message or tell them personally about it.

H: In a situation like where it is like a personal one to one relationship, how successful do you think, let's say, I don't know if you have a friend, but let's say you have a friend who this is relevant to and after going to the retreat you go to her and you say this is amazing. This is exactly what you need. How successful are you in your persuasion?

J: I think I would say it's up to 50/50 because my target is never to convince somebody but to show them an option and to let them choose them self. I don't like people putting things over you.

H: How often would you say that you share things like this on Facebook?

J: Recommendations?

H: Yeah, recommendations. “I’ve been here. It’s amazing. You should go” you know or “great coffee here” whatever.

J: Once a year.

H: So pretty close to never.

J: Yeah.

H: Why is that? Why don’t you?

J: I think I do it more mouth to mouth. If I’m living here in Frankfurt I have a favorite bistro, and it’s a turkey bistro and I love it. And if I’m talking to people and I say “yeah, I’m back to this place where I’m living it’s called Boenhide and I said “yeah, here is a better restaurant, have you been there? It’s called “The Soshahine” and they make so tasty food but I wouldn’t post it on Facebook. There is so much information on Facebook so I don’t know if anybody cares about it. I like their page from the bistro on Facebook but I wouldn’t say “now every single day I’m at bistro Soshahine eating this and that” and I think that would deny people and I know people doing this every Sunday posting at 10 o’clock I’m here with this friend eating. And I think fuck you don’t you have a personal life than posting I am here eating.

H: So that recommendation, if they say, you know, I’m here I’m having the brunch it is great. That does not affect you that does not make you want to go to that particularly restaurant?

J: No. It does annoy me and I prefer to block this comment.

H: Why does it annoy you?

J: On the one hand they didn’t want me to come with them, to be there on Sunday breakfast or brunch and maybe I am kind of sad being on Sunday at home to view the others are being there having fun and I’m sitting at home. So it’s not a positive feeling for me to read “ah, all the people are there and I’m lonely at home with nothing tasty to eat” so it doesn’t make me “oh, I follow you” no. Could be an option but it doesn’t happen to me.

H: What, okay let’s move on. What kind of experience do you need to have at the retreat to recommend the Matthew Hussey retreat to somebody else?

J: I really need the experience for an emotional inner change. So if somebody ask me, did it work for you I can honestly say yes from deep within. So that I am convinced.

H: Okay. So it has to work for you personally for you to recommend it?

J: Right, otherwise I didn’t know. If all the women around me would be happy and I weren’t I couldn’t recommend it. I would ask me what is wrong.

H: So what would be a feeling of success for you at the retreat?

J: For me personally goal I can measure it and would be, maybe if after I come back I would be posting anything shit on Facebook. Don’t caring about anybody and buying eggs, breads and bakeries without worrying what the others think. That would be a miracle.

H: Let's say that that happens, you know, you come back and you do all that you were afraid to do before and you really feel like it's change you. You're free now. How would you go about recommending it? If you're at a place where you don't care about anybody, would you post it on Facebook then?

J: Yes, totally. I would say "my life changed so much" maybe I would .. after I've been there. So because my own rules to watch these people and then to write "okay, it's been two months and this thing have change and this is so great" and maybe too also write "yeah, I have been skeptical myself but now time has gone and I'm still feeling good. So I think this is a good recommendation or a better one than being euphoric "woohoo, I just came back".

H: Would you do that even if people didn't ask for you opinion, would you just pass it on?

J: yeah maybe on my page but not on theirs

H: okay so you just make a post on yours that would a pair on their news feed?

J: Yes, yes.

H: How about now if you would – the way you are now. If you came across something, would you recommend it to people without them asking you, about like can you recommend a good coffee place?

Would you just you know, let's say in a conversation you are talking about coffee and this person is saying I need a good cup of coffee with so and so – and they don't ask you where to go, would you say oh there is this great coffee place on, on

J: Yes totally – if I have a taste of, they are interested in that what I do know – I will give it to them. And if they say they are not interested, then I'll say okay. It's their choice.

H: what about passing on information, so lets say you have a friend who also want to go to the retried, right? And you have not been to the retried your self jet but you know that I went and I had a great experience you know all the thing that I told you that made you want to go. Would you pass that on to somebody in your network?

J: From whom I know that she wants to go there to?

H: Yeah, if it's a person you know, that wants to go there. Or could need something like that. The you're like hey I am going to this thing I got it recommended by so and so. She says all of this, would you pass on? Because in that sense you are passing my recommendation.

J: I think I wouldn't because I don't have experience with it by my self. If I would know – okay maybe there are some more things I would think about. If it would be a person or woman having a lot of money, having a lot of time, I would say hey you're bored or maybe you need advice here and there – I go there do you want to joint me if I like her, you know. But if I know it's a woman working really hard, having less time, then I wouldn't recommend a thing

I am not assure of. I am hoping it will work out well, but I didn't experience then I wouldn't recommend it.

H: So let say that you got it from me – you got the personal recommendation and I also posted it on my Facebook – that Matthew Hussey retried is amazing – everybody should do this once in their life. Would you then choose to pass on my recommendation face to face? Or would you repost my original recommendation?

J: I think I would repost yours and just write – look here maybe it's interesting for you, just have a look on it.

H: Why is that okay – why dos that makes you feel okay to do that?

J: Because the person would make a choice of them self, because I post the responsibility to them. I say look here maybe that is interesting to you – you can read it here and they can they can contact you

H: You say this person is saying this – you don't have an opinion.

J: Just having the opinion that it might be interesting but I can't be convinced without experience it but I can tell “look here maybe this is interesting for you but I really like to let them their own responsibility on it. So they can't blame me.

H: What are your feelings about passing on a recommendation about a service in general?

J: If I has the experience of a really good service ..

H: No, not you. If somebody else has the experience and they've talked about great, you know, how great this thing is, what are your feelings then? About passing it on.

J: with out knowing it myself. I am concerned because okay the person is telling it, but I think it depends on different factors. If it's the same for the next person you know maybe Eskimos , you know Eskimos they like to eat animal eyes or a kind of this, oh you have to taste it, it so great, and yeah you know not everyone like to eat fish eyes and things like this. You see want I have about it. Yeah I would be a little bit concerned.

H: So lets get back to how recommendations reflect on you. How do you feel that a recommendation, that you make face to face, you say to somebody, that I really like something, if you say that to a friend, does that reflect more on you, if you repost something on Facebook? Hallo, are you there? What I was asking you before is, how do you feel that it reflects on you differently, you know if you make a personal recommendation. If you do it face to face or if you just repost it on Facebook?

J: It was a long sentence.

H: Okay, so you say that you can repost in Facebook, something I say with out reflecting on you, right?

J: Yeah

H: But how is it different if you just – if you tell somebody else about my recommendation face to face, because you said earlier you wouldn't give my recommendation to somebody else because you didn't have the experience. Why are those two different?

J: I think it's different because on Facebook. I kind of have something physical I can give to them and if I am talking to somebody it's just mouth to mouth. And maybe they are interested in and then it would also take me time to say okay I look it up and I send it to you and oh I like this. Maybe if it would be important to me or to the other person I would do it, of course but with casual things I wouldn't do it, I guess.

H: In what scenario would you repost like a video from Matthew?

J: I have posted 1 video of Matthew.

H: Oh you have! What made you do that?

J: It has been a video not, without topic about relationship. It has been – let me see – called something with hero – unknown hero or I am not sure about it. But the video is about hmm

H: Oh I found it here – there is one - Meet my dad.

J: Yeah and the topic is they are talking about somebody working on the hotel on the service.

H: That's funny, because that was my retired. Okay – so what made you feel that it was okay to post that video?

J: Because they are talking about appreciating people doing great service and doing a job, loving it and maybe you are not the head of a country but you are doing something so good and be a secret hero. I think and in this video they are talking about the service person and I really liked the idea to focus on people making your daily life better, just with yes small things, but when I am here in Frankfurt and somebody is running after the bus and the bus driver stops. That's for me also a secret hero, you know, and I just like to spread the idea and yeah maybe change people's focus.

H: Okay, but still do you feel the same way of Matthew's relationship advice? But you said that you wouldn't post a relationship video – where is the difference?

J: I think the difference is what the video is telling about me. Because yeah I think everything you do say and have you react is telling a story about you and yeah. If I am posting videos of relationship advice, I think what the people may think and they would think maybe, I need advice, I am not sure have to do it myself and I don't want the people to think this. But when I post the secret hero video it's just, oh she has posted this nice video and she is a kind girl, yeah you know.

H: do you have the same concerns about talking about Matthew's relationship videos, with face to face, as you do on Facebook?

J: No

H: Why is that?

J: So it's a different thing to post on Facebook where people really don't know, than I meeting a friend of mine and telling I have been In London to this friend and there are interesting videos and I really send some of them videos from Matthew – but in a personal way of contact. So I am reassure they have interest in it. No just giving away information because there are so many information to day.

H: Yeah it's true. What, and this it is more of another thing because part of this theses is going to all that is written about Matthew Hussey on the Internet. And I came across his Instagram and people, I have found out, do you have Instagram?

J: No

H: Do you know Instagram?

J: I guess it's an iPhone thing. Isn't it?

H: No, it's just an app, a picture app. It's kind of like a Facebook thing, except you don't have a profile but you do have a profile, but all it's says about you is like the pictures you post.

J: Okay, no I don't know it.

H: Anyway, Matthew Hussey has one and he ever now and then, you know, he posts quotes or links to videos or photos of himself, you know any kind of stuff. But I have found that women will tag there friends in it, so underneath ... so you don't tag in the picture but in the comment section, you can tag a name.

J: Okay

H: As they say this, this might be of interest to you. Is that something you consider doing?

J: I think it's the same thing when it is a relationship thing. I wouldn't do it officially so everyone can see it.

H: okay.

J: So I like to be more personal with the people and their private fear.

H: Would it be different if, you were like he is cute. Or both of you had talked about him being cute and you just want, you know. You had a conversation with a friend about him and you just this Matthew Hussey guy he is really cute and then you so a picture on his Instagram and you kind of like put her name on there, so that picture would pop up on his or in her profile. So is it different if it's not personal like that. It's more like, oh he is nice?

J: So I would just write for example Helene and nothing more?

H: yeah just a name – so it wouldn't say anything, you just write my name and by you writing my name – I would get notified – that my name was written on this picture and by getting this notification I would actually look at the picture.

J: I think it's a crazy idea – maybe I would write Helene this is a smart guy we have been talking about, but I think I just – just writing a name – no. what happened to people?  
H: yeah, I just wanted to get your opinion on it. I'm sorry I stopped recording by the way.

## **Mae**

Interview Mae 61 min 07 sec

Interviewer: Helene Zacho / H.

Interviewee: Mae Carrington / M.

H: Is it okay I record you?

M: Sure

H: Thank you.

H: All right. I need you to say your name and age?

M: Mae Carrington, 39

H: Your nationality and occupation?

M: Afro American and paralegal and a opera singer

H: How did you come across Matthew Hussey?

M: Well, I found out about Matthew Hussey actually thru Lieselle and I was at an event with her family, and we were talking about dating and relationship and she said, oh there is this great guy, you should look him up. So I googled him and read about him and listened some off his YouTube video's and regards to little clips he had on relationships advice or online dating or first date miss action, different things of that nature. So I was quite interested and she told me that she had a group that would meet at her house and watch his modules, so I met her one time over at her apartment for the group meeting and we watch one of his modules together.

H: So that was how you introduced to him?

M: Right.

H: Okay. All right let's move on, I'll keep going back and forth between like - what you think of word of mouth general and then tying it back to things with Mathew's Hussey's products, Okay?



M: Okay.

H: So in what ways do you gather word of mouth about a service before you buy it?

M: Usually I - goggle is my best friend, so usually I use Internet availability and tons off researching and reading about the products and you know looking at the review to see what comments are made in terms of what peoples dislikes and likes are or also I think sometimes it's like the better business bureau. For a lot of different things here in the United States it's where you can read about it if this company is really valid or it's a fake company or stuff like that.

H: All right, so if you ... in what way do you get a word of mouth if you see that a service has had an positive effect on a person that you know?

M: Into witch way do I gather it in terms of how do I use it?

H: How do you find out more? How do you gather word of mouth? You know, for an example if you saw that Lieselle had been on this retreat and it really works for her and she was really exciting about it and she told you about it. How would you go about getting more word of mouth about that product.

M: Oh, basically would trying to talk to her more and see what stuff I can do in similar things to what she did, I might want to get information about some of the live seminar or retreat or some off the products he has and I might want to buy it or go there my self, because even - I actually went my first live seminar . A couple of weeks ago actually I saw him live in a seminar, so that was a way me hearing through her through word of mouth and I was able to put it to use, really use and to spread it to someone else, you know. It was kind of like a chain and spreading it around.

H: In what time of purchases situation do you seek help from others to make a decision, to buy or not buy?

M: Say that again, I'm sorry.

H: In what type of purchases situation do you seek help from others – to decide whether or not you should buy?

M: I guess maybe like a lot of talking with someone, a lot of conversations and also if they are doing things, try to get to go with them when they are doing it then I can find out more about the information that way to. Making better connections with them, maybe.

H: Why do you seek help from other people?

M: Because someone ... obviously we're living here in New York City and there is so many different options to things that are available here for us and we may not be aware of everything, like, you know, if you meet people, you networking, you are going out to different events. You are

going find out about a lot of stuff that you don't normally hear about or even maybe something that you may never even have heard about. Like, you know, for an example Matthew Hussey, I never heard about him, in terms of his seminar or stuff like that. So it was kind of new for me in terms of that.

H: How are you effected by other peoples opinion? Have does that effect your opinion?

M: Well just so much to hear what they have to say both positive and negative. I try to get ... I ask a lot of questions in terms of trying to figure out if some of that is going to work for me and in terms of asking how it benefitted them. What it did and what dislikes and likes that they have and you know - see if something can be down with, then usually it's, you know, it's obviously a choice and opinion that each one chooses to have, but I think we can all come. You know, all that wants to actually take pride in the product and just go try it out to see if it's something that you want to get involved in, then you know for yourself.

H: Did you seek word of mouth other than Lieselle before going to see, Matthew Hussey?

M: No

H: No. Can you explain the process to me of, you know, of her ... she recommended ... what was the process of her recommending and you ending up at the event?

M: The process of that I think was I went to her house, for the modules were talking and the other girls that was there as part the group they also were was a part of Matthew Hussey's retried. Someone of them went to retried and someone had done his live seminar – so from hearing their stories and I was able to interact with other peoples, not only Lieselle and hear both negative and positive stuff as to way it can benefit you, in terms of that. That's how I got involved to going to this seminar, because she had told me that there is a seminar coming up. Do you want to go, and I was like “sure” and you know we got the tickets, to whatever, then we went and I end up telling one of my friends about it, she ended up coming to.

H: All right! What did you say to her?

M: I explained to her that, because she knows Lieselle as well, and I was telling her what I did - had she ever heard about this guy and she never heard about him herself either. So she did some research herself. It was just like yes I'm interested in learning because, you know, just to have more information that can help to in terms of the process of finding new relationship, so whatever. So, yeah, she did her research and she was interested in coming.

H: Alright. What did she think of it?

M: I thought the live seminar a lot, was at lot of information, a lot of valid points made in terms of the technique that he uses some of his thousands of dating and how to meet guys things that, you know, teach you things to say in a text and what does text make me, I a certain situation. So it had a lot of valid points and just in terms of likes being you know, also it's more like, I guess his ifs more like a life-coach, as well. More or so than overall relationship-coach but just being able to be happy with you self, first. Before you find anybody else and just be able to, even if you don't meet, it's not like you looking to God and need a boyfriend but you're looking to just meet different people. Then you can say "hey" to someone in the street and having an conversation about this great "hat" they have on, "Oh I love this hat", and then you are going back and forth conversation about this hat, but it's at least helping build your sense of security and wellness in terms of meeting other people and then once you do have relationship you communicates better.

H: All right! Lets move on. How do you, what makes you feel close and connected to a person? Not in a relationship way, but in a family of friends kind of way.

M: I think in terms of having the quality time with that person makes feel close. I think quality time is important in terms of, you know, whether we may watch a movie in the house or cook dinner, like with my friend, he is like my best friend but we call each other sister and brother even if we just are having fun at the apartment, cooking food, telling jokes, watching a movie, you know. Just being able to have that quality time, in terms of developing that connection you have with someone, in terms of getting to know them and, you know, you just enjoy their company.

H: All right. So if you think of your closest friends and family, how do you stay connected with them?

M: A lot of times over the phone, do you mean like, technology stuff?

H: Yea technology, face-to-face.

M: Okay a lot of time it is over the phone and face to face, maybe like a lot of time like family event, like Christmas, thanksgiving, birthday party, we will come together and family reunions we may have, so a lot of face-to-face as over the phone. Not so much I wouldn't make texting. More face-to-face than over the phone.

H: What about social media?

M: Social media will have to be number one Facebook. In terms of like with cousins that live a far or in terms of that, seeing pictures of their kids and their family we are able to spread word of mouth with pictures, in messages. I, we may even, I know one of my cousins created a family page

thing, where we can chat and talk. If we want to plan different things, we can do that, through that particular page.

H: What about your friends? Are they all close by, are they all in New York? Do you have them spread out?

M: Most of my friends are close by, primarily here in New York city as well like inner states likes New Jersey, I have a couple of friends that lives in the Maryland, Baltimore area.

H: Do you also use Facebook to stay in touch with them?

M: I would say more over phone.

H: Do you have Twitter as well?

M: No, I don't have Twitter. No.

H: So can you describe the types of relationship that you have on Facebook?

M: A lot of them are like, I have them with my close friends obviously but a lot of them are with people that I don't really talk to on a regular basis. So let's say for an example a friend of mine, is a friend of my best friends and her husband became ill recently, so I was able to reach to her through Facebook, you know just to give her some encourage words and stuff like that. Rather than having a phone to phone contact with her, because we don't have that type of relationship to do that, but we are still friends, just to let her know that we are thinking about her. I think that's a great way to reach out for some people, you may not be able to talk to over the phone.

H: What would you say that majority of your Facebook friends? Are they close friends or are they more the like of friends you just described?

M: More like usual friends, my close friends are on there, but majority are usual friends, yeah, or friends of other friends, you know.

H: In what way are they important to you, the contacts you have on Facebook?

M: In terms of like networking, they are there for jobs, specially for being a singer and getting the gigs outside. A lot of times people say, oh I am looking for a soprano "sing this Sunday for Easter Cantanar" are you available. So then I can say "oh yeah I am available", you know stuff like that. It's a way to get things you may not have so easily done by just picking up the phone and calling 15 million people, when you can send a big message on Facebook and people can respond that way.

H: Is it more like business relationship you have with them or?

M: Business and pleasure as well. Yeah, both.

H: So if you have to describe how similar are you to the people who are closest to you? How much alike are you?

M: How much alike, I think we all have the same goals and mindset of what you want in terms of, you know. A lot of my friends are singers, even though I don't, not majority, but a lot of them are singers so a lot of them do sing or they work and sing or what ever so we have a lot of goals and things in common. In terms of that and then there are other friends that are not in the music business as well, it's totally opposite, but I am still close with those as well. They may be in to arts but just not in music.

H: What about differences?

M: Differences, I would say ... maybe ... I don't know, I can't think of anything, sorry.

H: It's all right. Don't worry. So if you think in regards of closeness what is differences and likeness mean in your relationship?

M: Differences and likeness means?

H: Yeah, you know what does it mean when we are talking about closeness, does it bring you closer to be more alike?

H: Can you hear me?

M: Okay you said – no I missed some of it probably – you were talking about closeness?

H: Yeah I am asking if the more similar you are to a person if that will bring you closer to a person?

M: Usually yes, sometimes it can be opposite, usually closer.

H: Okay, and what does somebody who is close to you, what does their opinion mean to you? How do you regard it when somebody offers there opinion?

M: What does somebody? You said?

H: I said if somebody offers you an opinion or something or you have an opinion on something, how does that effect you? What does that mean to you? Their opinions.

M: How does that affect me? You said how does that affect me?

H: I said, let me see what I exactly wrote, what does their opinion mean to you?

M: It depends on what it is, I mean if it is something I agree with, then it can be a valid opinion or if it's something we have differences, then we may have different view points in what that may be.

H: In what way do you feel that you are similar to the friends you have on Facebook?

M: I think I am similar to a lot of them in terms of career stuff or what we are looking for or stuff that happens in our lives. We may view different on religion and politics stuff, you know, just like wary decrements may happen or whatever.

H: What about, how important is your Facebook friend's opinions?

M: My Facebook friend's opinions, how are they important to me?

H: Are they important to you?

M: Sometimes, it just depends on what it could be like, let's say ... I don't know ... I Guess it just varies depends on what it could be. I usually am pretty strong in my opinion or what ever, so if I agree with them that's fine, but we can agree to disagree in certain areas. Usually most of my friends are, most of my friends usually, we have a sort of the same view point.

H: How would you describe the degree of trust between you and the people who are closest to you?

M: How would I describe?

H: The degree of trust

M: I guess in terms of that most of the people like me, sorry are you there now?

H: Yeah I am here

M: Okay you were saying in terms of trust?

H: Yeah.

M: I think a lot of people are like mutual friends, not really like acquaintances, because they are not close close friends on Facebook. You know it's kind of like you know if I know them and I have been around them and hung out with them enough, I maybe would be able to trust them. I have not really been around them and heard stuff about them and stuff seen them do to other people that I know, you know, ?? 19.33 to me.

H: Are these the people on Facebook? Can you hear me?

M: On Facebook, I think sometimes you have – can you hear me?

H: Yeah.

M: I think sometimes on Facebook you can have like over thousand friends but, you know, obviously you don't know all of them, you know, know all of this thousands friends you may have, some of them you may know closer than others. But I think just by the networking, if people that know you or heard your name or, you know, know that person through someone else. I wouldn't really know to trust them but just people I am close with.

H: What is your level of confidence in people who are closest to you?

M: Do you hear me?

H: Yeah.

M: Say it again.

H: What is your level of confidence in people closest to you?

M: What confidence, I am sorry!

H: I am just asking for the level of confidence in the people who are closest to you?

M: Okay, level of confidence. I would say majority of them pretty confidence. From 1 – 5 I would say 4.

H: What do you think that trust and confidence in a person means to the closeness of a relationship?

M: I think it comes from the beginning of building a relationship in terms of you being able to talk to the person and spend quality time with the person communicates with the person, be able to build your sense of trust and to see who the person really is and who they say they are.

H: Why are your relationships different from Facebook to face-to-face? Why are they different?

Are you there? Can you hear me?

M: Yeah, now I can, but if you said something before that, then I couldn't hear you .

H: I did, let me repeat. I asked you why do you think that your relationships face-to-face and the ones online are different?

M: That's because the people I talk to on a regular basis, I do that via the phone and people I don't talk to in regular basis ... may have your contact information, but we don't always have that communications level like that.

H: Can you repeat the last part, sorry, sorry, it was cutting out on me, I didn't hear the last part of it.

M: Oh I was saying, can you hear me?

H: Yes, I can you hear me?

M: Can you hear me now?

H: Yeah I can hear you.

M: I was saying that, oh I think, I was saying about the face-to-face and using online. Well yeah, sometimes you may talk through a text if you are not that close rather than face-to-face.

H: Okay, what would you say that your level of trust is in your Facebook friends?

M: My level of trust is pretty in the middle, I mean I don't trust all of them even if I know all of those people I don't trust all of them, no way. But my level of trust to some of them are between 1-5 I would say about a 4.

H: Why do you not trust some of them?

M: Just because I know them doesn't mean that I trust them. Because I have seen some of them, you know, some of them I have work with some of them and I hung around with them before and I know like, they are not really like positive people or sort of a negative energy, some of them you don't want to be around in terms of that. You know, so you keep them in your little box or whatever for a little bit, let them go and come back whatever, a kind of like that.

H: Yeah, in what way do you think that buying a product or a service create a sense of belonging?

M: Just because you are the one that's taking time to invest in the product, so if you are investing in a product, such as a Matthew Hussey's, I am taking the time and energy to go to the seminar, maybe to go to a retreat, to maybe answer some of the questions in your forms that they send via e-mail. Because I am involved because I am interested in the product and I would like to use the product myself and also hope that it can help someone else in terms of them.

H: Do you think a create of sense belonging in the way of oh, you know, many of the ladies that you meet the have already gone to the retreat and there are this group of people that you may or may not like to be a part of?

M: Yeah, because I was able to connect them in terms of you know learning their experiences in terms the retreat and seminars and was it that it worked for them and what didn't work for them and they explained to me to, you know, it may not be something that worked for you, but you know it worked for me. You know, I guess you have to be able to decide, like the choice if you want to try it out.

H: So in what way do you consider other peoples opinion when you are considering whether or not to buy a product or a service?

M: I would consider it between a 1 – 5, a 4.

H: So whose opinion are we talking about?

M: In terms of like close friend those opinion. Friends and people that I have meet or know their opinions too, but maybe closer friends.

H: And what is your thought process about it?

M: About it. You know, it's more or so like just to see what their experiences were and hearing stories they may have or information they could share or just be able to have access to them in terms to ask a lot of questions, in terms of how it benefit them and how it could help me. 25:56

H: How do is influence you then if you want to buy something but you know that people who are closest to you, they will not approve of whatever you want to buy?

M: If that happens to yeah. In terms of, you know, I take it into consideration but in the end of the day, you know it's still my choice and my decision or whatever, so I think I'm the ultimate decision maker in terms of being able to decide, am I going to try this product or not.

H: What about, how does is it influence you if you know that they are going to approve. Does that make it more likely?

M: That doesn't influence me. I don't care if they approve or not approve. Still I am going, you know, like they make the oldest or the worst thing ever, but it's something that I researched and



find, that there are other things that could, that there is a positive side of it, I may even try if I research and find that they are right, hole bounce of negative stuff that this is not even god, I wouldn't bother.

H: what about if somebody close to you buys a service and they really love it, how does that influence you if you are interested in same service or the same product?

M: Okay, it influence me a lot to want to try and buy it, because lets say for an example, like family birthday party and they ordered these chicken wings for the party or whatever, so it was a really good .. everyone adored it and was eating it and it went all gone. Someone was like "oh where did you get it from" so that is something that I would be interested in it. Let's say, I have a party, then I'll say I want to get that information, where did they get that chicken from and have it at my party.

H: So in what way did you consider the opinions of the people closest to you when you decided whatever or not to go to Matthew Hussey's Event?

M: I considered it very highly, it was very important to me to hear their opinions as well, you know and a lot of their opinions was positive, so that had really had a major effect on me. If some of them said "OH why not give it a try" sometimes a lot of negative stuff is said about something, you know. I am still going to "oh let me see it if I can try it" but then I'm going to research myself and see then I realized "oh that is really negative", but nothing I read about Matthew Hussey's products was that really negative, you know.

H: So who did you talk to about it?

M: I talked to Lisell and I talked to the other women, who was a part of the group, that I meet through her.

H: Did you discuss with any of your cllost friends?

M: Yes, I did.

H: What was their view on it?

M: Actually, all their views was pretty high and like they wanted to try it. So I was very excited about that, yeah. I think my friend wanted to come, she was very opinionated or what ever, but she researched it her self and said, "oh yeah I want to come" and she loved it. She went with me and now she want to try to go on a retried.

H: Did that make you more excited, that your friend was excited about it, as well?

M: Exactly yeah. It made me very excited. Just to know other people, you know take my view point to consideration, you know, she was really excited about this product. Let me see what it is about.

H: So if you only have a very little experience with this service, where is it that you go to collect more information?

M: Usually the Internet.

H: Where on the internet though?

M: In terms of like Google, Yahoo, Wikipedia, Youtube.

H: When you searched Matthew Hussey, what did you find?

M: I found about this great book here wrote “Get the guy you want to”, I think it’s called “ Get the guy”. So then I started looking at the website, in terms of that and the different things that they have on the website in terms of videos, testimonies of peoples experiences, what happened to them in their lives and they had like, you know information about the live seminar and the podcast, blogs that he has.

H: Did you read any of the comments on his, either his YouTube videos or his Facebook or anywhere?

M: Yeah I did read the testimonies in terms of, on his page and all of them was pretty, you know pretty great stories positive things, nothing negative that I found.

H: When is a persons word of mouth most valid to you?

M: I think it’s most valid, when I am really unsure about something and I have a little apprehension, as to say. Just to get their opinion if they have tried it before the they can reassure me that, this is really god you should try it, you know, it worked for me or something like that.

H: So your first experience with Matthew Hussey was the viewing party?

M: The viewing party at Lisell’s house, yes.

H: Okay and you have no prior knowledge before that?

M: No just the Internet research that I did.

H: What did you consider before going to her viewing party?

M: I had watched some of the YouTube Videos online, I never even read the book, the big book that he had out, but I never read the book, but I watched the YouTube videos that he has out.

H: So she made the recommendation and then you watched the videos and then you went to the viewing party? Is that right?

M: No, she made the recommendation and I did the research, I did the research, watch the videos and went to the viewing party and then I went to the seminar.

H: Okay and what now? Are you going to do – buy any more of his products?

M: Right now it's just at a stand still, I have decided if I'm going to a retired yet, but I mean if I do this, you know, it's not like I won't, I definitely would keep that in mind, that it's something I would like to do ... because I am trying to even get my other friends to go. He is having an other seminar in April, so I was trying to get them to go there, as well.

H: All right and how, how did they respond to your recommendation and trying to get them to go?

M: They were pretty positive, they wanted to check it out. One friend actually, she wouldn't be able to go, but the other friend she would be able to go.

H: What would make you having concerns about buying a service or a product?

M: Like reading the comments, you know.

H: What types of comments, would put you off?

M: Like never try this, I bought it for my mom and it really was bad, she had a bad experience or don't try this, it's not even worth the money. You can get it from so and so and so.

H: What would make you, if you have some concern, if you haven't been on the Internet and you still had some concerns and you didn't know, let's say we are talking about the Retried, so you don't really know whether or not you want to go and you have some concerns about it. What would make you feel better about your concerns?

M: I think the people that I come in contact with, with Lisell, this group thing on a regularly basis. I can talk to them individually and get their opinion and see what they experience by going or not going.

H: Is one of your concerns the costs of the retired?

M: Yeah, one of my concerns is the costs and to see if it's really is worth it.

H: What can make you feel better about spending that much money?

M: I guess, just in terms of knowing, that's okay for me to do that. That's first of all and second of all I guess just to, you know, that if something that I really can use through that or in to something cheaper that I can find. In terms of finding, I guess you would say, a better bargain. In terms of that specifically yeah.

H: Do you have any other concerns regarding Matthew's retired?

M: No

H: So you still have not made a decision at all?

M: No I have not made a decision whether to go or not to go. No

H: Whose word of mouth recommendations are you most acceptable to?

M: Whose word of mouth and recommendations? I would say friends and Family.

H: Why Them?

M: Because those are the ones that are closest to me, like my closest friends and family members, they would have, I think, to me have a better sense of, you know, letting me know if this product is good or not.

H: What if it is a person that you don't know that well, but that person seems to have a lot of expertise?

M: Yeah, that is true, that could happened. Yeah, I Would definitely listen, because actually ... yeah that could works.

H: What makes the person seems like they have expertise?

M: In the way that they sell the product, in the way of their excitement, they are lit up about it or their respond to it, if they look or sound, I guess something that they hated or had an attitude with it, maybe I don't know. If they really like it or not whatever, but I think that's how a person who sells a product, respond and shows there interest and excitement in it or no excitement.

H: How dos expertise then influence your purchase decision?

M: The way that they are able to use expertise to influence my purchase product. In terms of, if they have, I guess the positive outweighs the negative in terms of having positive things they can contribute to this product, to get me to want to even try it or buy it or just even listen to it.

H: If a person has gained really good results, let's say, with Matthew's retried and recommends it to you. What is your respond to that recommendation?

M: Just the respond, like you telling me to go, I should try it, it's the best thing ever. You know, I would definitely take in to consideration and want to be involved in and actually try it out, but you know, it's actually something that I wish was interesting, but I guess It's up to me ultimately if I want to do it or not. But the way they can say how positive and how great it is, but I have to be the one who want to do it.

H: What if something is recommended to you and that person has a sort of celebrity status? Does that influence you?

M: Oh like is their opinion better than a friend.

H: No it's more like, I mean, if someone recommends Matthew to you, does it make a different to you that he had been on TV and he is a kind of established within different media as TV, Radio and all that? Does that make a difference?

M: No

H: Why not?

M: I think because, it's still an opinion whether you are famous or not famous. I mean my friend can have the same experience as a person that is famous or whatever. So I think it's just, you know, as to see how, I guess you really have to know and you know listen and see if there is something you want to do and then you may be able to decide, but I think even if there is a matter there category status or whatever. To me they are selling a product and they can be someone you trust, but you don't know, but it's how they sell it. How they give it to you.

H: How does Matthew Hussey seem like he has expertise in his field?

M: I think it's because he has been in it for so many years, who is able to explain, how he started out in London and how, I think he was like 18 or 17 years old or even younger than that and was starting out with like giving relationship coaches to men, in like little bars and stuff like that. So it's interesting to hear how ... this product has grown to this level, world wide, internationally wide.

H: Does his age concern you in any way?

M: At first it was kind of like "oh is he so young", I'm like "oh my God", how does he have so much ?? 39.14 then by going to the live seminar it was obvious why, he read so much and worked with many mentors that he was able to help him, I guess whether growing up and in school and stuff like that, so I think that's how word of knowledge is and I think that he is just a very exceptional smart person anyway but yeah, that was an issue to me because I haven't seen him live and he actually explained everything. So I wasn't actually very clear as to how he was able to gather this wealth of knowledge and I think it's just enabled him too a little bit so.

H: Is there anything, no, what can Matthew Hussey do to influence your purchase decision. Let's use the retreat as an example. Is there anything he can do or provide that'll make that decision easier on you?

M: He can give me half off!

H: Okay, anything else?

M: I guess he can just sell it as best as he can, like this is a one in a lifetime opportunity. You really need to take and really like ... you know to set aside your money and funds to do this.

H: Alright, let's move on then. A little bit away from Matthew. How does it influence you when a person recommence a service within an area where you already have a lot of knowledge?

M: In that situation I always take people's opinion to listen to them because I might learn something that I don't know about this particular product or brand or whatever. So it could've influenced me in wanting to stick to it or not or make me change my mind, like "oh really, I never about that way" but I think I take their opinions into consideration too.

H: So if you already know a lot about it, what will you do with the recommendation, you know, would you look it up or what would you do with it?

M: Well I would think about what they've said and maybe I can talk to someone else about it. I can find out that they have tried this product too. If I have a friend who have done that and I could talk to him about if they say "Mae I have some different opinion to what the other person are saying" then I might do some research about it and see what, you know, they are saying out there online.

H: All right. So what if a person recommend something to you that is not something you have ever research and you know no knowledge and you have not even thought about that that could be something that's relevant to you. How do you react to the recommendation then?

M: I react highly. I take it into consideration something that I might want to try to invest in. Definitely.

H: Why would you do that? What is that would make you want to look into it?

M: I think that it would be that I have to have an interest in it, like if someone would say "oh .... Maybe something I'm not interested in like ... like building a ice-skating ring or something like that. If someone was talking about that, that's not going to be of my interest but I would listen to them and see what the product is but that may be something that I'm not interested in.

H: In what type of purchase situation are you most susceptible to word of mouth recommendations?

M: Usually food, like, stuff like that?

H: Yeah, you know, any type of situation?

F: It could be food or ...

H: Where are you at personally when you feel that you need the advice of other people?

F: If I'm confused about something or I'm not sure or something that I don't know and I think that they may have expertise, then I will reach out to them.

H: Do you very often go out and look for recommendations about products or services or do you mostly do it online?

M: Like look and go out? No, I usually use my network in terms of phone or texting or facebook or internet.

H: So is that in a situation where you randomly come across a product or a service or is when somebody is recommended it to you? When do you mostly lean to word of mouth recommendations?

M: When do I lean towards word of mouth recommendations?

H: Yeah! Is it when you come across something yourself and you researched it and you're not sure or is it more when somebody has said, "this is really great you should try it"?

M: I think more so when I have researched it and talked to other people about it.

H: Okay, why is that?

M: Because I guess I want to be sure that this is something that is going to benefit me and it's a good fit for me.

H: Why do you seek word of recommendations in general?

M: Just to get different opinion to see what other people have to say, like some ... like I wanted to get a new pair of Nike sneakers so I had my cousins. I was at a birthday party and she had these great sneakers on, like "Oh, I love those sneakers" or whatever and I was like I want to get those, so she's like "okay, I'll give you the information's on those" but, you know, it's just stuff that you see or know want to get information on and it's available to you.

H: Do you often seek out information or is more something that's offered to you and then you consider it?

M: It's kind of both ways but I guess more or so I seek out information.

H: Okay. What do you value higher face-to-face recommendation or social media?

M: Face-to-face.

H: When do you become an adverb for a product or a service?

M: When I know that it has worked for me or I know that it'll may work for me even if hasn't worked for me yet it could work for me in a near future.

H: And why do you try to persuade other people to buy this service or the product?

M: Just based on my reports and my opinions about the product that is something that, you know, that I haven't used for so long but it seems to be going good or whatever, let's say for an example, and you might want to give it a try.

H: What do you consider before making a recommendation?

M: How it has worked for me or how it could work for me. How it could benefit me.

H: Okay ... and is that recommendation most often made on social media or face-to-face?

M: Maybe, I guess social media.

H: Okay, so can you explain to me some more about how you would make that recommendation on social media?

M: In terms of looking up the product, googling the product, let's say it is Thais and chicken. Look up Thais and chicken to see what people are saying about Thais and chicken versus Perdue.

H: No I mean when you are making the recommendation. If you're trying to persuade somebody, if you have something that you want to tell somebody about do you mostly just share it on social media or do you go face-to-face?

M: Oh, I see what you are saying. Usually that is face-to-face.

H: Why do you choose face-to-face?

M: Because I'm not really a person, like I use social media like that, Facebook, but I'm not really an adverkit Facebook, like all the time writing everything and "Oh this is what happened to me today", like that kind of person. It is more so phone conversation, texting and face-to-face.

H: Okay and to what extend have you been successful when you have tried to persuade people.

Let's take Matthew Hussey for an example, how successful have you been?

M: I think I have been pretty successful. That for sure and I am pretty new to it and I have already gotten 3 people. I have told 3 people about it.

H: Are you usually pretty successful? About ..

M: Usually yeah.

H: Okay, why do you think that is?

M: I think people are able to see what it has done for me or what it haven't done for me yet in terms of Matthew Hussey but just know how happy and proud I am of talking about the product. In the way I am conveying it to them makes them excited, so they are like "Oh I want to get information about it" because Mae seems really excited about it.

H: To what extend do you try to influence your friends on Facebook to buy products or services?

M: Not that much. I don't really write a lot on Facebook so, it wouldn't be that, like if it's ... no. It would be face-to-face or texting or word of mouth.

H: Have you ever to a place, like a coffee house and it's like, where you made post "Oh the coffee is great here you should try it" or something like that and then posted it on Facebook?

M: No.

H: No, that is not something that you do very often?

M: No, I don't do that yeah. I have friends that do that but no. I will tell someone over the phone "Oh I went to this great place you should try the chicken there or the steak or whatever you had.

H: So what is it about the experience that you had at Matthew's event that made you want to share it?

M: I think the overall experience was just as sense of being able to just listen to him and see and just take, you know, being aware of what information that he had and how it could work in my life



and stuffs that he said, that's stuff that they found a little weird to you or like, the obvious stuff that they would think but it is actually stuff that could work and help you in an ideal situation in terms of like quote/unquote secrets of how to attract a guy or how to develop a relationship and once you are in that relationship, different things that you could do to keep the relationship and see where they go from friends to a committed relationship and to hopefully, you know.

H: How did you recommended it to the people that you recommended it to?

M: Oh I recommended it kan ikke høre hvad hun siger 50:24.0.

H: Yeah! How did you go about it?

M: I recommended it through, that I got information from Lieselle and I was explaining how I became interested through her.

H: Was that now face-to-face?

M: You said was that face-to-face?

H: Yes.

M: No, that was over the phone.

H: Okay. So would you ever post on Facebook, you know, I have been to the Matthew Hussey event you should all try it.

M: No.

H: Why?

M: I think I'm not really into posting stuff on social media. I don't really post anything like, that's not me. My thing is through word of mouth and I like communication over the phone that's some kind of old school in terms of that but yeah, never really like online

H: Okay. In what cases do you pass on a recommendation from somebody else? When you haven't tried it yourself?

M: When I haven't tried it myself?

H: Yeah, so maybe someone recommended something to you it wasn't really for you. You didn't really wanted to use it but you still think that it went great for whoever recommended it and then you have another friend who might use it or who might be able to get something out of it?

M: Right.

H: Do you ever pass on recommendations like that in your network?

M: Yes.

H: Is that usually face-to-face or on Facebook?

Der var lidt problemer med forbindelsen i et lille 52:08 – 52:48

M: Face-to-face

H: Okay. What are your feelings on passing on a recommendation?

Problemer igen fra 52:58 – 53:24

M: I don't mind passing on a recommendation at all I think it's a great way of getting people to get involved and to know about the product that you are trying to do. Trying to share so I would definitely pass information along.

H: What are your feelings about passing on recommendations that are made on Facebook as in re-posting?

M: Let's say in re-posting?

H: Re-posting. So somebody makes an recommendation, one of your Facebook friends, would you re-post into your network?

M: Oh, would I post them on Facebook?

H: Yeah, so somebody makes a post on Facebook right and then there is option to re-post. Is that something that you do?

M: Right, someone makes a post on Facebook. Sorry it's just ...

H: And do you ever re-post it?

M: Re-post it? No.

H: Okay. What are your feelings about re-posting?

M: I'm not really that type of Facebook person but I have that are, yes.

H: Okay.

M: Yeah, mostly how I share my information ...

H: Is face-to-face? ... how do you feel that passing on a recommendation can reflex on you?

M: I mean if they take it and don't like it then that's their decision but it's just, you know, my opinion and my information as to how I gain knowledge and how I enjoyed it so I'm just passing it on to them.

H: Is there anything that you consider before you pass something on? Any concerns that you might have?

M: No, usually u just tell them about it. They can come and we can talk about it or whatever and I would just share my information or what I would know about it. Then they can take it and use it to their advantage.

H: Okay. How much would you say that you use Facebook?

M: Not that often, no.

H: What is it that you mainly use it for? Catching up?

M: Just mainly using it to catching up with people who write me or text me, I mean e-mail, send me information. I never really like give out information on Facebook I guess. With me, like people if they contact me then I reach back out to them, you know, but other than that ... I may post a picture here and there but yeah. I'll just ...

H: So ... sorry?

M: No, it is pretty much just to use in case I need it or whatever, you know, a lot the people that I don't have in my phone contacts, you know, I have them on Facebook.

H: Yeah, so it's a networking tool?

M: Right.

H: Just to summarize. How many people in all did you recommend Matthew Hussey to?

M: So far five.

H: Five and how many of them have actually acted on that recommendation and either gone to his website or gone to the seminar?

M: One

H: And how many are considering going to the next seminar?

M: Two. Well actually one, the other one can't go.

H: Did any of them just write you of or weren't interested at all in your recommendation?

M: I'm sorry?

H: Did any of the people that you recommended it too did they just not care, not want to go, not feel that it was right for them?

M: No, they were interested in getting the knowledge I guess it was up to them to decide whether or not they wanted to use it or not but they weren't like "Oh I don't want to hear about this" they were very receptive of it. That was a good thing.

H: Yeah, that's lucky. Well that was it ... that was my questions.

57:36 – 57:48 problem med forbindelsen.

H: I was just wrapping up. I was just telling you that the interview is over and I'm done.

M: Okay, great. Is it Helene or Helen?

H: It's Helene.

M: Helene okay.

## **Appendix 4. Example of Coding**

### **Interpersonal influencer**

BRI

First I try to see if I know anybody that know I personally and if not, then I would read online.

B: To high. I generally value people opinions ... I would say to high and let it affect what I do sometimes?

L: don't usually make purchases of that sort without at least consulting with trusted people.

J

So I trust people more than the Internet,

### **Credibility**

M

I mean my friend can have the same experience as a person that is famous or whatever.

M

Just because I know them doesn't mean that I trust them.

M

My level of trust is pretty in the middle, I mean I don't trust all of them even if I know all of those people I don't trust all of them, no way

J

It depends on who is raving there on Facebook but I guess I'm more the real life person

J

I think that could work if you have somebody who is one step further than you are, you can trust in.

J

I think it's more experience

J

I have the feeling I can trust them and rely on them,

J

I think mouth to mouth has a bigger effect on me, because I know the person, and maybe the person tells me that the product is shitty.

J

Because of there is a lot of commercial out there and everyone is saying my product is the best product, so nobody would tell if there is something wrong or not so good with it, so I ask people I trust.

J

Nobody tells bad things on Facebook

F

I would make me think, what is in it for them especially if they are recommending a service are they getting something in return because if they are getting something in return means that their opinion and whatever they say is irrelevant and it's not valuable for me

F

So can't be 100 percent trusting for someone that you don't know in person

F

If someone I know whom I trust and have great confidence

F

because I know that there is nothing for them in person and that they just like it and they have had a good experience with the service.

F

I would make me think, what is in it for them especially if they are recommending a service are they getting something in return because if they are getting something in return means that their opinion and whatever they say is irrelevant and it's not valuable for me (on SM)

F

So can't be 100 percent trusting for someone that you don't know in person (on social media)

F

Shared connection, shared values perhaps and trust. (makes her feel close)

L

Sure, I want to know why they were recommending it first if it's something that I've never considered then I definitely look into it and you know see what it is about.

H: Why would that recommendation make you want to look into it?

L: It it's someone that I know and I trust that is recommending it to me then I would want to know why. So if they're recommending it to me I would think that they were recommending it for a reason. If it's something that they feel like can improve my life then sure. I'm always up for growing and .. you know.

L probably be a combination of the two. (expertise + trust)

L

you want someone that knows what they are talking about

L the people that I don't necessarily keep in contact with I don't care as much about their opinion or I probably don't trust them

L

It's probably similar with the trust and there have probably been situations where they've come through for me. So like, where maybe I needed someone or I've needed I felt a certain and they either comforted me or supported me or you know, basically we haven't only gone through good times together. We've gone through bad things and they've been there for me in some way?

L

f I feel someone is close to me or that I feel close to them it means that I trust them. If someone is not close to my anymore but used to be it probably means that there were some breach of trust in some way.

L

I trusted Brie and I trusted that, like her and I, you know we're really good friends and we talk a lot about stuff and we understand each other and we're sort of in a similar

B

It is probably because I know that I can do that, that I don't trust other people impulsive post.

B: No. It just wouldn't mean anything because people can that it is great for a lot of reasons it could be their life situation ... maybe, you know sometimes when you feel excited about life, you can attribute that to a service that maybe doesn't deserve it. So ... I know I do the same thing. – Social media

B.

Because he looks young and what does he know.

B

In general I don't trust things from Facebook because anybody can post, there is no "kan ikke høre hvad hun siger 28:58". There is just a lot of crap.

BRI

ask people I trust and each service would be - I probably ask different group of people so maybe people that I know that have had a certain result.

BRI

I pick up on how genuine they are and I'm very open person and if they're genuine about their experience, I can usually tell.

B

I usually can know from the people that I trust asking them if it's going to be good or not, it's just figuring out if the value is high enough to be worth it.

B

I usually can know from the people that I trust asking them if it's going to be good or not, it's just figuring out if the value is high enough to be worth it.

B

Because it shows level trust that you're willing to be vulnerable and share about something personal and I think that is a connection.

B

Trust is, I can share pretty much anything with them and I know that they will ... I trust that they'll have my best interest at heart when they give me advice and when they listen to me.

B

Well it made me buy it. Because I did ... you trust their opinions and if it fails and you don't like it, I don't know you can tell them or you can be held as responsible because you had that opinion.

### **Homophily**

M

I mean my friend can have the same experience as a person that is famous or whatever.

M

I considered it very highly, it was very important to me to hear their opinions as well

M

I think we all have the same goals and mindset of what you want

F

your friend and they should really have your best interest at their heart

F

I don't know them in person so.

F

It's very important that you share a set of values and experiences and especially in the relationship where it's romantic or as friends.

F

Shared connection, shared values perhaps and trust. (makes her feel close)

F



I know my friends and I know their taste and their preferences. One of my friends – not all of us share similar taste or similar preferences so one of them might recommend a stylist or a hairstylist or a make-up artist or some kind of .. that she thinks is amazing. I wouldn't go for this person because I know her taste and her style which is not, not saying that it's bad, but it's just not my taste.

L

Well her in that sense, like I said that her and I were going similar struggles and we were in similar places in our life and I knew that we shared that, like we talked about that for years. So I knew that she understood the point I was in in my life.

L

I'm looking for a service or something in particular I might look at friends or acquaintances or people in my life that I know have either been in the same situation or might have someone in their life who's been in the same situation

L

it could be our backgrounds where we grew up. It could be, you know, the point where we are in our lives and it could be financially. It could be educational. It could be cultural

B

most of them are the same political as me. I don't like seeing opinions really, that are far from mine. It frustrates me.

B

We can related. We shared common experiences and we can laugh at each other's stories because we can understand them.

BRI:

I know my friends and I know their taste and their preferences. One of my friends – not all of us share similar taste or similar preferences so one of them might recommend a stylist or a hairstylist or a make-up artist or some kind of .. that she thinks is amazing. I wouldn't go for this person because I know her taste and her style which is not, not saying that it's bad, but it's just not my taste.

B

I usually can know from the people that I trust asking them if it's going to be good or not, it's just figuring out of the value is high enough to be worth it.

B

Well, if I know that we are similar type of people then I'm pretty sure I'm going to get something out of it even if I don't get the full experience and it all comes like a cost benefit right – so I know I will get something good if she got something good.

B

Well, if I know that we are similar type of people then I'm pretty sure I'm going to get something out of it even if I don't get the full experience and it all comes like a cost benefit right – so I know I will get something good if she got something good.

### **Noninterpersonal influence**

#### **Perceived risk**

M

think I'm not really into posting stuff on social media. I don't really post anything like, that's not me. My thing is through word of mouth and I like communication over the phone that's some kind of old school in terms of that but yeah, never really like online

M

one of my concerns is the costs and to see if it's really is worth it.

J

I think the different is what the video is telling about me. Because yeah I think everything you do say and have you react is telling a story about you and yeah. If I am posting videos of relationship advice, I think what the people may think and they would think maybe, I need advice, I am not sure have to do it my self and I don't want the people to think this. But when I post the secret hero video it's just, oh she has posted this nice video and she is a kind girl, yeah you know.

J

It has been a video not, without topic about relationship. It has been – let me see – called something with hero – unknown hero or I am not sure about it. But the video is about hmm

J

Because the person would make a choice of them self, because I post the responsibility to them. I say look here maybe that is interesting to you – you can read it here and they can they can contact you

J

And I think fuck you don't you have a personal life than posting I am here eating

J

I think that it is only a restaurant and if it's a friend of mine I think I just go there and try it out, if it's my taste. Because what would happen – it's one or two hours and if you don't like it, then you don't go there anymore. But it doesn't sack up your whole life, you know.

J

It makes it better for me talking to people saying "yes, it is expensive and I tell you it's worth it"

J

I wouldn't like to tell them that it's about coach confidential, because I feel insecure.

F

It's a perception. That's what people think. They think she is .. thinking that she wants to go ahead and get the guy. This is what people will think and so it's not something that I would ... I wouldn't like, I share that. Definitely. For people who would share the same values as myself, in the end but for others .. I consider this to be a private thing.

F

Investing some amount of money would require something from me especially because I don't have an income right now, per say. So before I make the investment it's important to know if it's going to worthwhile or no

F

it was free so once it's free you don't really bother yourself because if it's good it's okay, if it's not good then, hey whatever.

F

if I have time and if it requires a financial commitment especially.

L

I probably don't have to like, explain why I like it or why it's something that, you know, my connection could be ... there's millions reason why I'm connected to this particularly thing that I like.

L

I guess it depends on what it is and also think, like if that I don't really share much myself and part of that is probably feel very articulate as some people. If someone writes something up and they're, you know, really ... so I have an example. I have a friend a good friend of mine who I grew up with and she's also one of those people that I don't necessarily I keep in touch with outside of Facebook. But I went to junior high school with her and I grew with her and she's anchor I think on CBS and she just wrote a children's book and, you know, posted about it and you know she's looking for people to by the book before it's printed. So I posted that. That was my was of supporting it's, you know, it's a 5\$ children's book. I feel like that's not something that'll offend anyone. It's not something that's personal to anyone. It's not something that, if someone goes out and buys the book and spends 5\$, like it's not something a big deal of it's end being crap. But I also trust her enough that I feel like that it's going to be a good product.

L

Because it was 200 dollars as supposed to 4000 dollars and plus flying across the country plus paying for a hotel. I mean 200 dollars, like if it turned out to be like, crap I can get over that. But 6000 dollars is, you know, I'm still paying for it so.

B

I usually can know from the people that I trust asking them if it's going to be good or not, it's just figuring out of the value is high enough to be worth it.

B

Well when I listened to most of his videos, I did it for free, so that was cheating. Then I listened all of his youtube videos and - so those are for free and I don't have any question. I'm pretty sure that I like it and then I'm having enough trouble with my life that I know this is the point at which it becomes important to do something further.

B

Time and money ... and I wasn't sure that I needed it.

## **Receivers expertise**

M

If I'm confused about something or I'm not sure or something that I don't know and I think that they may have expertise, then I will reach out to them.

M

If I'm confused about something or I'm not sure or something that I don't know and I think that they may have expertise, then I will reach out to them.

M

H: All right. So what if a person recommend something to you that is not something you have ever research and you know no knowledge and you have not even thought about that that could be something that's relevant to you. How do you react to the recommendation then?

M: I react highly. I take it into consideration something that I might want to try to invest in.

Definitely

M

I think it's most valid, when I am really unsure about something and I have a little apprehension, as to say. Just to get their opinion if they have tried it before the they can reassure me that, this is really good you should try it, you know, it worked for me or something like that.

J

Then I would do more research because it's just a bigger thing and with a bigger thing I really mean the price.

J

When I don't know enough. If I don't think I'm an expert on it.

## **Sender's expertise**

M

If I'm confused about something or I'm not sure or something that I don't know and I think that they may have expertise, then I will reach out to them.

M

I mean my friend can have the same experience as a person that is famous or whatever.

M

I was able to connect them in terms of you know learning their experiences in terms the retired and seminars and was it that it worked for them and what didn't work for them

J

Because if I have the feeling that they are expert on this topic and they recommended

J

If you know the person or he can show me something. Like the guy in the disco he had a great haircut and he said "my hairdresser is fine" and I've seen his haircut. So I think I can rely on it.

F

It definitely influence me because I know that, okay they are experts in this field but then again I have to check whether if it's true or not, or it's valid or not.

F

I think his an expert because he has coached a lot of people. That makes him knowledgeable. It's the experience itself rather than him being celebrity status.

L it'll (WOM influence) probably have to be based on their expertise.

L probably be a combination of the two. (expertise + trust)

L

you want someone that knows what they are talking about

L

If it's something that they have either put a lot of their time and energy into

L

Well her in that sense, like I said that her and I were going similar struggles and we were in similar places in our life and I knew that we shared that, like we talked about that for years. So I knew that she understood the point I was in in my life.

## **Use of social media**

M

think I'm not really into posting stuff on social media. I don't really post anything like, that's not me. My thing is through word of mouth and I like communication over the phone that's some kind of old school in terms of that but yeah, never really like online

M

I don't really write a lot on Facebook so, it wouldn't be that, like if it's ... no. It would be face-to-face or texting or word of mouth.

M

Because I'm not really a person, like I use social media like that, Facebook, but I'm not really an adverkit Facebook, like all the time writing everything and "Oh this is what happened to me today", like that kind of person. It is more so phone conversation, texting and face-to-face.

L

They are very important and I only have friends on my Facebook that I actually know.

L

there're some that I don't communicate with anymore. I just kind of keep with them on Facebook that they were dear to me at one point in my life but not so much anymore but I would still like to keep up how they're doing

L

They are very important and I only have friends on my Facebook that I actually know.

## **Appendix 4. Example of Netnographical Journal**

### **Twitter**

Not so much repost of MH makes or says, more poste of people's own experiences from the book or semnars.

This carries much more character of traditional recommendations.

On twitter you have no option to retweet and comment - there is only the original msg. and you as a sender. THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED EWOM

Likes/Favorite seems to not make a difference, the likers network will not be informed of the like, as on FB.

It can though be seen as "I-agree-therefore-I-Like" recommendation.

Quotes and sayings are retweeted the most.

With the # people get to have more of an opinion and but with the retweet the msg. might get further. But because those are mostly quotes, maybe the viewer forgets to notice who the original sender is....does it lead to more exposure?

It is not something you go looking for. Twitter is harder to navigate and if you do come across MH it is because it is because someone in your network is already connected.

People do make recommendations saying: @Matthewhussey I love book (or what ever) Mh is notified of this and the senders network will see it, but it is impossible to find if you are looking, unless there is #

It is not as powerful a tool as Fb if you are looking what people are saying, it is more of of a one way communication.