SANEHOOD

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The number one predictor of happiness is autonomy. Meditating frees the mind from mental shackles.

Abstract

Sanehood is an AI centric platform anchored by the Flow AI that makes meditation fun, intuitive, and rewarding. Flow AI is an internally developed, ground-breaking technology that can determine the user's flow state during meditation in order to track progress over time. The platform, backed by Flow AI, was produced to break down barriers to entry and to encourage meditation globally.

1 Problem Statement

Mental stress, physical ailments, and dissatisfaction in life are constant companions for many. COVID-19 lock-downs, social isolation, uncertainty, and fear have amplified these issues, causing millions to slip further into depression or a persistantly anxious state of mind. This global increase in depression and anxiety has lead to a striking jump in individuals leaving their communities by way of self-isolation and, in many cases, suicide. Suicide rates among children and adolescents have increased 49 percent in the United States during the second wave of lockdowns [6]; 18 students (one as young as 9 years old) in the 5th largest school district in the United States committed suicide in 9 months of the pandemic with 3,000 more on suicide watch [2]. In Australia, death by suicide is the number one killer for ages 15-44 [1]. Although there are many clinically-practiced methods of treating stress, physical ailments and depression, the lack of accessibility and financial burden placed on those seeking the treatments often causes those who need help the most to devolve deeper into their depressive state.

Meditation is a simple and natural means for reducing mental stress, improving physical performance, and guiding one toward understanding one's purpose in life. Recently, meditation has been used for the treatment of depression[4]. Meditation restores a person's sane, natural state of mind so that they can find joy in living. Despite these positive, life-changing benefits, meditation is under-utilized in the United States and throughout the world. In the US, only about 12-14 percent are exposed to or currently practice meditation [3]. As for the rest of the world, only 2-8 percent practice meditation. The low utilization rate is due to the high barriers to entry.

The primary barriers to entry for any new activity are poor instruction, lack of feedback, missing or little accountability, and low perceived benefit from the activity. They are cross-coupled, forming a feedback loop into one another that causes the new student ultimately to give up. Detailed descriptions of each of these barriers as they pertain to meditation can be found in the sections below.

1.1 Murky Instructions

According to the website Mellowed.com, most people who don't currently meditate have tried meditation in the past but quit because they don't know how. This is presumably due to lack of instruction or poor instruction. A web search for meditation instruction results in hundreds of answers. Some of the most common suggestions are to sit quietly for 15 minutes, self-isolate during meditation, and trust or focus on breathing. More often than not, the people providing such advice do not know what meditation is or how to meditate.

Sitting still is one of the most challenging activities a person can do if not properly prepared for it. When an individual who has never meditated before tries to sit still for ten minutes, they will find it to be quite uncomfortable, unnatural or unsettling. The feeling will linger until they surrender in frustration to later proclaim it's impossible (does this sound familiar?). Sixty-seven percent of men and twenty-four percent of women would rather be electrically shocked than to sit still with their thoughts [7]. With proper training, it is possible, and is very enjoyable.

Self-isolation, another common suggestion on the internet, is not useful or beneficial for those new to meditation. Humans are social creatures requiring interaction with others to feel comfortable and at peace. Isolation has been, and continues to be, a form of psychological torture leading to measurable long-term psychological harm. The United Nations Rapporteur on Torture considers extreme forms of isolation like solitary confinement to be forms of torture and go against the Declaration of Human Rights [8]. Solitary confinement, "go-to-your room," "stay-at-home," and other similar dictates are used to shape human behaviors, but do not lead to positive outcomes for those that they are imposed upon. Historically, those subjected to isolation are more than 3 times more likely to cause self-harm than the general population.

No matter how good the intentions are, bad advice gives rise to bad outcomes. It is logical to conclude that while people know that meditation is good, the lack of good instructions is a barrier for them to continue.

1.2 Accountability

Attempting new initiatives alone often leads to failure. Studies have shown that only twenty-five percent of people stick with a new year's resolution after thirty days. Only a paltry eight percent sustain the initiative throughout the year. To put it another way, ninety-two percent of all initiatives, like losing weight or meditation, fail within one year. The reason these individuals give up is because they are not accountable

internally to themselves or externally to a friend or coach. The meditation community is small and diffuse, so even if people want to find accountability partners, they will be hard-pressed to do so.

1.3   Lack of Feedback

One of the goals of meditation is to gain mastery over mind and body. While training in the physical realm, one can measure strength and speed. How can one measure the progress of the mind? One of the challenges of mental training is the lack of tangible, measurable outcomes. There are no split-second measurements nor weight records to set. The lack of measurable feedback contributes to slow uptake in meditation, and even if people meditate, they abandon it readily.

If something cannot be measured directly, people will try to measure it indirectly, regardless of how imperfect the methods are. Surveys, like the Five Facets Meditation Questionnaires (FFMQ), Toronto Mindfulness Scale, and others, are roundabout ways to measure meditation efficacy. While these results have proven to be useful in many different areas, the major flaw in these methods (which is well known) is introducing the recall bias. These surveys ask the respondent to recall from memory how the sessions went or made them feel, which is a data collection method known to introduce bias in the responses. Much like the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle–where both the velocity and position of an object cannot be known at the same time–a person cannot be in a meditative flow state and discuss flow state at the same time. Flow state is the mental state of being completely immersed in an activity, beyond distractions, where time ceases to have meaning and in which the mind is in ecstasy. Currently, there is no one external detector–neither the teacher, nor the guru, nor the spouse–that can consistently and objectively provide feedback on a meditator's progress.

With timely, accurate feedback, another barrier to meditation can be overcome, and the success rate can move from eight percent to ninety-five percent for new initiates.

1.4   Unknown Incentives

The second and third most common reasons why people do not meditate, according to Mellowed, are the lack of time and lack of perceived benefit, respectively. Research has shown that most people meditate less than 30 minutes a day, and that meditating for as little as ten minutes is beneficial for mental and physical health. Therefore, it can be surmised that the people who quit due to lack of time are actually quitting due to lack of perceived benefit. The two leading paid meditation apps at the time of writing have sixty percent of the market share. While they have been successful at acquiring market share, they are not as successful at retaining users. Industry leaders in meditation services have a thirty-day user retention rate of only 8.6 percent. It can be concluded that the two leading apps don't provide the value that their new users are looking for. People may try the meditation apps, but do not perceive enough benefit to continue. Providing additional incentives to continue meditating would increase perceived benefit and user retention. Potential incentives can be anything that people value, such as a monetary reward or a psychological reward like fun or social gratification.

2 Sanehood Removes Barriers to Meditation

Sanehood is a meditation-centric platform powered by AI and cryptocurrency. Its groundbreaking self-learning AI technology (Flow AI) assists the users on their meditation journey. In addition to AI-backed guidance, the Sanehood community can connect people with other meditators and meditation instructors around the world for encouragement and learning. Users can view their progress and compare it with others, if desired. Tokens are awarded to meditators and can be redeemed for goods and services on the platform, or perform off platform actions.

Sanehood AI makes good instruction, accountability mechanisms, objective feedback and incentives for meditation accessible to everyone, thus removing roadblocks to meditation.

2.1 Instruction

"Intentional teaching means acting with specific outcomes or goals in mind for learners' development and learning."
–Webster Dictionary

Sanehood Flow AI is designed to make instruction more intuitive, clear and effective. Since everyone learns differently, multiple options are available.

(a) **Instructor Led**
When attending instructor-led classes over video, the Flow AI evaluates every practitioner to determine the efficacy of the instruction. This information is used to refine each lesson by providing objective feedback to instructors. Over time, live and recorded classes should be more fine-tuned and measurably more effective.

(b) **On Demand**
A user can choose to practice meditating solo, without the live assistance of another person. During this period, the Flow AI can provide audio prompts when it determines the user is out of flow state in order to help that person get back into flow state. The real-time learning AI is personalized for each individual and for each session, helping the user get the most out of their meditation efforts.

By objectively determining the efficacy of each set of instructions, Sanehood will, over time, improve the instruction on the platform. Furthermore, real-time learning Flow AI can customize the experience for each individual user, thus removing the barrier of poor instruction and enabling more people to meditate.

2.2 Accountability Through Community

"When performance is measured, performance improves. When performance is measured and reported, the rate of improvement accelerates."
- Thomas Monson

The Sanehood platform is a place where users can keep track of their progress with the easy-to-understand Sane Score. With this scoring system, users can make goals and hold themselves internally accountable. But the real power of the platform is in its social functions, where users can meditate with friends, build communities, and connect with people around the world. Key use cases include:

(a) Creation of meditation circles to practice weekly or daily

(b) Attending classes with friends

(c) Giving and receiving encouragements to and from others

(d) Seeing one's progress and the group's progress over time

(e) Launching meditation challenges to play with friends

Connecting users to enable peer accountability increases success rates drastically, especially when a specific goal is made with quantifiable results. With these built-in mechanisms, the Sanehood platform will be able to help users meet and exceed their goals.

2.3 Feedback

"Don't judge your meditations. Don't rate them. The physical mind cannot tell how well you did."

– Frederick Lenz, Ph.D.

While the meditation student and instructor may not be able to truly assess meditation quality, Sanehood Flow AI can.

Sanehood Flow AI can objectively measure when a meditator is in flow state, tracking its duration and frequency real-time while a person is meditating. Flow state is the mental state in which a person is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the activity, and where time ceases to be a factor. Because the AI can determine when a person is out of flow, it prompts cues that help the person get back into flow and back on track.

In addition to creating the world's first mechanism to measure meditation, Sanehood Flow AI's feedback features deliver real-time contextual responses to a meditator's practice. It brings attention to mistakes (falling out of flow), affirms competence (getting into flow) and helps a student overcome misconceptions that can lead to quitting.

2.4 Rewards

Participants earn reward tokens for meditation on the platform to provide a tangible incentive. People from all around the world participate on an equal footing to receive rewards based on the frequency and quality of their meditation sessions. Meditation is fun and Sanehood will gamify the practice. It has been shown that gamification decreases attrition by sixty-three percent and users are four times more likely to refer friends and families [5]. With this gamification, Sanehood will keep attention of the users long enough for them to begin realizing the immense psycological and physical benifits of the practice of meditation.

3 Sanehood's Tokenized Economy

Sanehood tokens (SANEHOOD) will be distributed to users as a reward for meditating within the app. A set amount of new tokens will be released each day to users in proportion to their daily Sane Scores. Tokens will be used within the app for buying and selling additional content and live instruction. A percentage of every in-app transaction will go to the app owners to incentivize further development.

4 Conclusion

Now more than ever, depression and mental illnesses are sweeping across our world at a sad and alarming rate, impacting individuals, families, and those who love them. Without a way to alleviate this mental suffering, what is now an acute state may transform into a life-long chronic illness. Meditation is a tool to help people find peace and purpose and to find meaning in life. Despite the benefits of meditation, this skill is woefully underutilized because of the many barriers to entry, like insufficient instructions, lack of accountability, lack of effective feedback, and uncertain incentives. Sanehood has developed a groundbreaking AI technology called Flow AI that will entice more people to meditate and enable them to meditate more effectively. We do this by making meditation fun through gamification, helping people find supportive communities, providing incentives by awarding tokens, and making it easy to learn through effective instructions.

Learn more at www.sanehood.com

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