

BREAKING THE TENSION: THE POWER OF ENABLING YOUR EMPLOYEES TO SHOW UP AUTHENTICALLY

***B. PAGELS-MINOR
DESIGN AT SCALE 2022***



THE MEMO

We know that a number of you have been left angry, disappointed and hurt by our decision to put Dave Chappelle's latest special on Netflix. Also, we have many new colleagues who want to better understand the principles that guide our team's content choices, especially with challenging titles like this.

Our goal is to entertain the world, which means programming for a diversity of tastes. This member-centric view has driven our growth over the last 20 years, despite all the competition, and remains Netflix's north star today. We also support artistic freedom to help attract the best creators, and push back on government and other censorship requests. Our Entertain the World and Strategy Bets memos, which we've debated extensively, are clear about both principles – including the trade offs, i.e. that we'll always have titles some members and employees dislike or believe are harmful.

With The Closer, we understand that the concern is not about offensive-to-some content but titles which could increase real world harm (such as further marginalizing already marginalized groups, hate, violence etc.) Last year, we heard similar concerns about 365 Days and violence against women. While some employees disagree, we have a strong belief that content on screen doesn't directly translate to real-world harm.

The strongest evidence to support this is that violence on screens has grown hugely over the last thirty years, especially with first party shooter games, and yet violent crime has fallen significantly in many countries.

Adults can watch violence, assault and abuse – or enjoy shocking stand-up comedy – without it causing them to harm others. We are working hard to ensure marginalized communities aren't defined by a single story. So we have Sex Education, Orange is the New Black, Control Z, Hannah Gadsby and Dave Chappelle all on Netflix. Key to this is increasing diversity on the content team itself.

In his special, Chappelle makes harsh jokes about many different groups, which is his style and a reason his fans love his comedy and commentary. Stand-up comedians often expose issues that are uncomfortable because the art by nature is a highly provocative. As a leadership team, we do not believe that The Closer is intended to incite hatred or violence against anyone (per our Sensitive Content guidelines).

We've had these operating principles around pleasing our members and artistic expression for many years, and the team's decision to put The Closer on our service was consistent with them. The variety and quality of our content is what members value most. Our hope is that you can be hugely inspired by entertaining the world, while also living with titles you strongly believe have no place on Netflix. This will not be the last title that causes some of you to wonder if you can still love Netflix. I sincerely hope that you can.

MY VERSION

While we stand by the decision to launch the Closer, it's clear that we missed the mark in thinking through its affects on team morale. We can and will do better. In the coming weeks, we look forward to engaging with team members to hear your feedback so that we can continue to improve out culture.

Q&A

