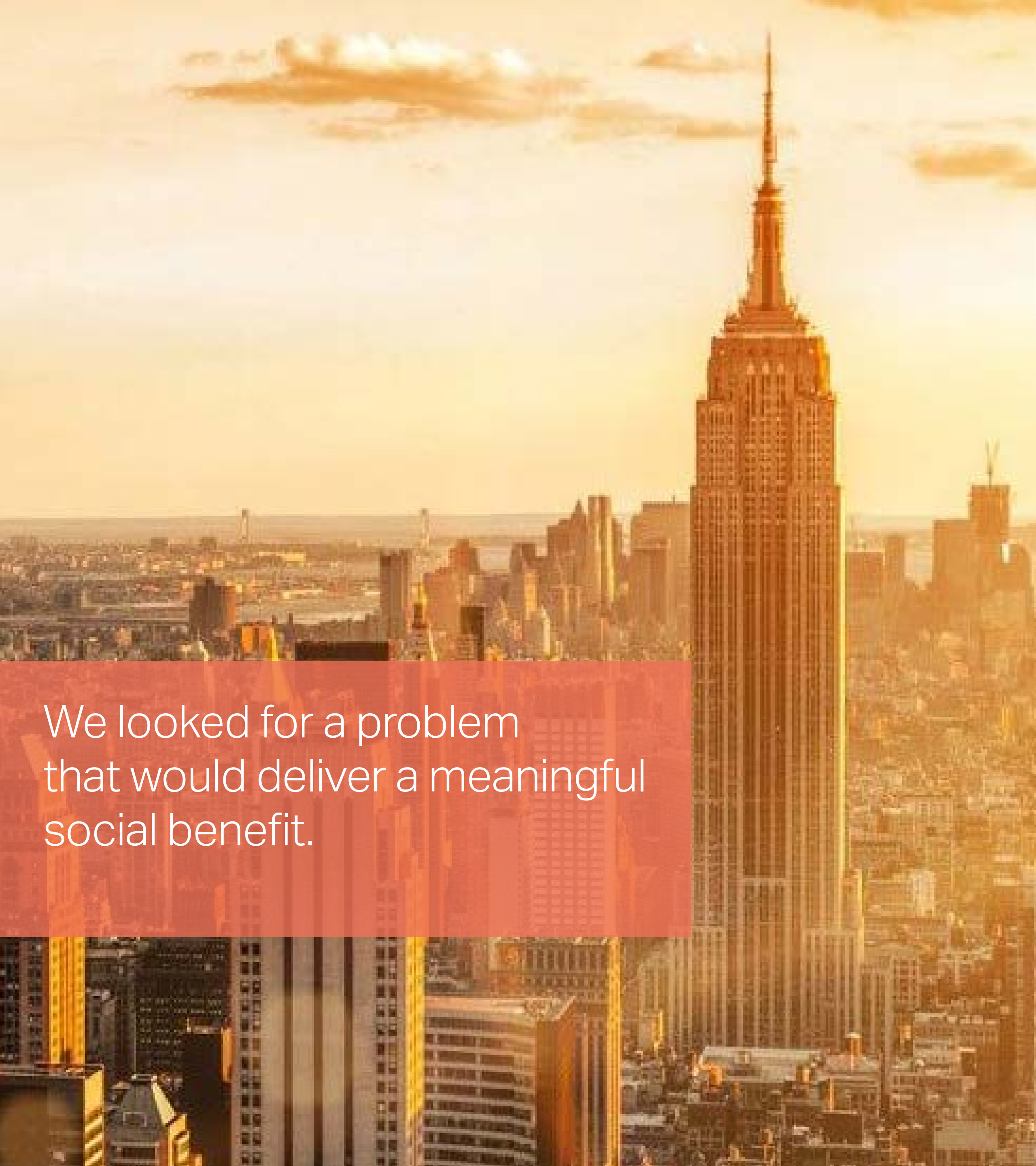




The Meditation Project

Design Kit: The Course for Human Centered Design



We looked for a problem that would deliver a meaningful social benefit.

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Inspiration



New Yorkers spend more time getting to work at an average of 40 minutes - more than commuters anywhere else in the country.

They also log in more hours at work once they get there than workers in most other areas.

New York is among the most stressful places to live

Sky-high housing costs, which are more than double the national average, eat up a big chunk of most residents' budgets. Combine that with a high cost of living, as well as above-average poverty and unemployment rates, and that means more people are struggling to get by.

Median Rent

New York City
\$2,750

United States
\$1,525

Average Population Density

New York City
2,826

Los Angeles
2,646

San Francisco
1,755



Definition

Recognizing that stress is a symptom of living in New York, we challenged ourselves to find a way to give New Yorkers a way to tackle stress and to ultimately, improve their quality of life.

Design Challenge





How can we help New Yorkers de-stress during their commutes?

Seeing An Opportunity

Our initial research revealed that one of the perceived challenges of living in New York, the long commute, could actually be an opportunity.

Finding A Solution

We followed Ideo's Human Centered Design method in order to solicit input from our target audience and test our assumptions.

-  Research
-  Prototype
-  Test
-  Refine



"Our thoughts makes us human, but to let them go gives perspective."

-FAY, 78, Retired

Interviews

We interviewed a cross section of New Yorkers regarding their commuting habits, attitudes toward stress and interest in meditation.



"You can't measure the value of being still"

Jun, 29, Photographer

Key Insight

Wishes time spent commuting could be more productive.



"To be still doesn't mean be silent, it means let go."

Tori, 32, Hospitality Management

Key Insight

Has a commuting routine that doesn't include meditation.



"If I could walk away from my commute not as angry or depressed, that would be nice."

Joanne, 29, Finance

Key Insight

Doesn't think that a meditative practice is accessible during a commute could be more productive.



"My stress level? 10+"

Wilson 22, Retail

Key Insight

Unfamiliar with meditation but open to stress relief

How add meditation to NYers commute routine?

How make meditating more socially acceptable?

- 1 Audio recording on train playing on PA system
- 2 Meditation takeover
- 3 Station dot
- 4 Conductor Leads a meditation a script between stops
- 5 Meditation instructors on the subway
- 6 Instruction posters inside subway cars/platforms
- 7 POSTERS reminders + practice
- 8 Meditation Leaders on Trains during rush hour
- 9 Hit the meditation button
- 10 Use iPhone: Step into car notification pops up: "Take a second to breathe"
- 11 Music-free book-free phone-free subway cars
- 12 Taxi TV music
- 13 ON TRAIN PLATFORM a little room w. light and picture
- 14 LIGHT subway feel different
- 15 Spotify tracks: 1 min of meditation instead of ads
- 16 You like meditation Video
- 17 Use integration
- 18 In flight screens on vmm planes
- 19 Anti Ads

- 1 Role models meditation Heroes model behavior
- 2 Dedicated subway-rars (spaces)
- 3 make meditation a BRAND with good design + slogans
- 4 Posters - Breathe - it's powerful
- 5 Posters Flow it's where you find it Flow it's everywhere
- 6 Partner w Mental Health/ Insurance Organization
- 7 Where should your mind go?
- 8 Don't just sit there Be Mindful
- 9 Stress Kills Meditation SAVES
- 10 "I'm meditating" signage people can wear. Ask me about it after I'm done
- 11 Public awareness campaign - special sunglasses dedicated med. glasses
- 12 Playlist Spotify meditation/relax

Research Insights

Stress

1. New Yorkers don't view stress relief as a priority.
2. New Yorkers accept stress as a symptom of city life and deal with it in a variety of ways.
3. There's an interest in getting power/control over stress.

Commuting

1. New Yorkers want their commute to be a more productive use of time.
2. People don't think a meditative practice is accessible or possible while commuting.
3. New Yorkers already have a routine they practice during their commute which doesn't include meditation.

Value of Meditation

1. New Yorkers don't see meditation as a productive or beneficial activity.
2. Meditation is not a priority due to lack of perceived value and instant gratification.
3. Meditating in public (vs. private) is not seen as socially acceptable.

Key Insights

1

Key Insight

New Yorkers don't see meditation as a productive or beneficial activity.

Challenge

How might we make meditation more gratifying and productive?

2

Key Insight

New Yorkers already have a routine they practice during their commute, which doesn't include meditation.

Challenge

How might we add meditation to New Yorkers' commuting routine?

3

Key Insight

Meditating in public is not seen as socially acceptable.

Challenge

How might we make meditation more socially acceptable?

Revised Design Challenge

How might we inspire New Yorkers to meditate on their commute?



Project Brief

Design Challenge

How might we inspire New Yorkers to meditate on their commute?

Audience

All New Yorkers - regardless of occupation, economic status, race or ethnicity.

Objective

Inspire action, to encourage New Yorkers to meditate on trains, buses and taxis.

Through a simple approach we want to promote mindfulness and inspire regular practice.

Insight

New Yorkers are accustomed to seeing advertisements throughout their commute - we wanted to repurpose ad spaces to communicate our message.

Prototypes

Our prototypes were inspired by advertising, so we borrowed used a traditional focus group approach to test our execution

Messaging

Determine what message inspired our audience to act

Aesthetic

Determine the most effective aesthetic approach to draw our audience in

Tactics

In addition to occupying traditional ad space we wanted to disrupt the commuter

Guided Meditation

Focus and Breathe

Focus and Breathe offers commuters an image to focus on along with instructions to provide a guided meditation they can practice during their commute.



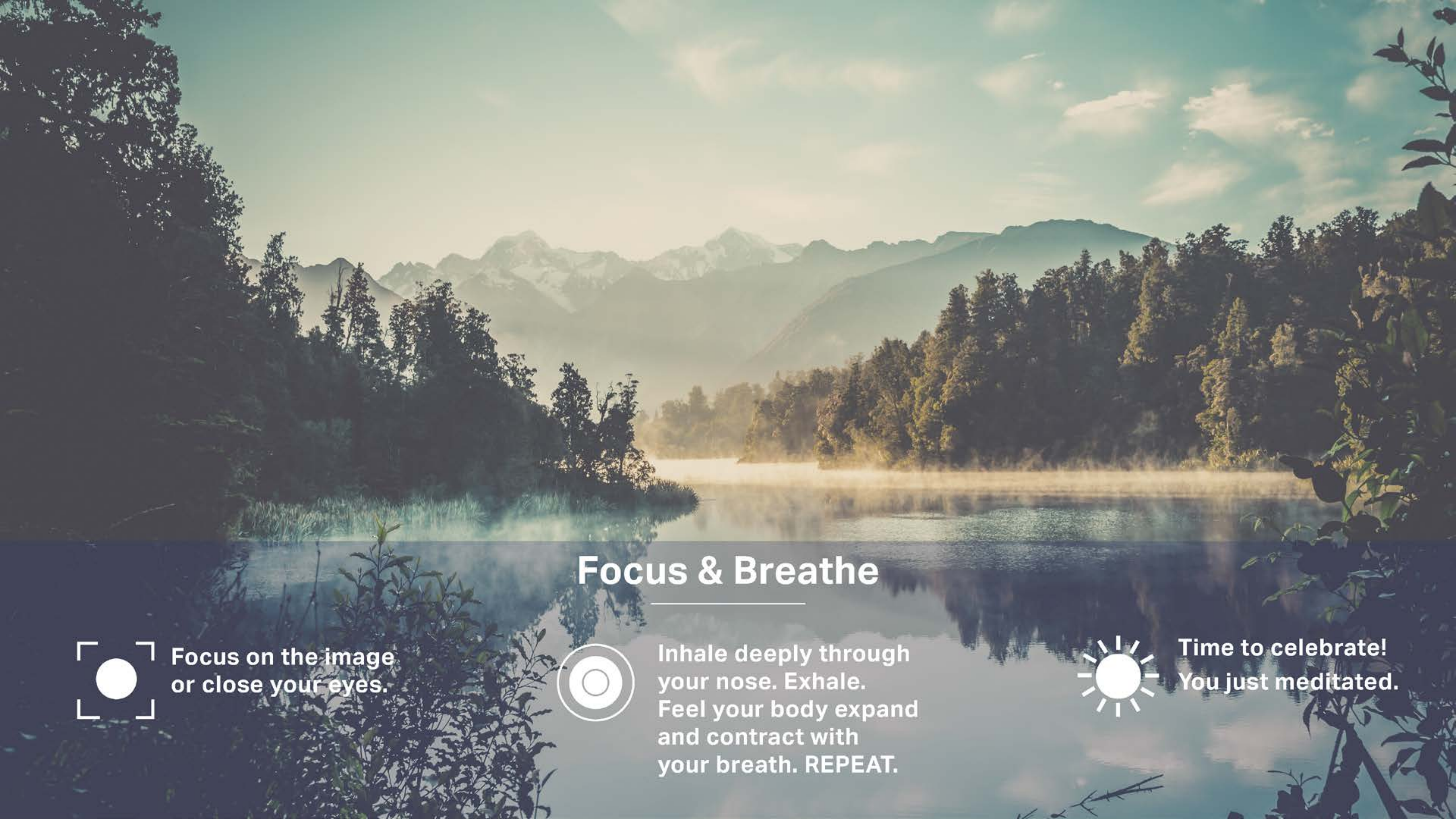
Step 1
FOCUS.



Step 2
**INHALE.
EXHALE.
FEEL.
REPEAT.**



Step 3
CELEBRATE.



Focus & Breathe



Focus on the image
or close your eyes.



Inhale deeply through
your nose. Exhale.
Feel your body expand
and contract with
your breath. REPEAT.



Time to celebrate!
You just meditated.

Role Model Campagn

I Meditate

Featuring local New Yorkers, I Meditate not only promotes meditation, it promotes the benefits. This campaign is intended to inspire through a community of everyday role models.



“I meditate because it helps me stay focused.” – Bernard

Join thousands of New Yorkers who found meditation helped them improve concentration and memory.

- 1 Close your eyes and focus on your breathing.**
- 2 Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale. Feel your breath.**
Repeat as long as you want to.
- 3 Open your eyes and celebrate! You just meditated.**



“I meditate because it helps me relax on my commute.” – Alexis

Join thousands of New Yorkers who found meditation helped them feel happier and more productive.

- 1 Close your eyes and focus on your breathing.**
- 2 Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale. Feel your breath.**
Repeat as long as you want to.
- 3 Open your eyes and celebrate! You just meditated.**

Practice. Practice.

Just 10 Breaths

Just 10 Breaths focuses on practice, an easy and direct way to inspire. This campaign differentiates itself from the noise of other ads through a clean, minimalistic approach.



JUST
10
BREATHS



Close your eyes and focus
on your breathing.



Inhale.
Exhale.
Feel your body expand and
contract with each breath.

10x

Repeat 10 Times



Open your eyes and celebrate!
You just meditated.

Prepare to feel happier, healthier, and
more relaxed. **Breathe. It's powerful.**

Just 10 Breaths

Prepare to feel happier, healthier,
and more relaxed.

Breath. It's powerful.



**Close your eyes.
Focus.**



**Inhale.
Exhale.
Feel your body.**

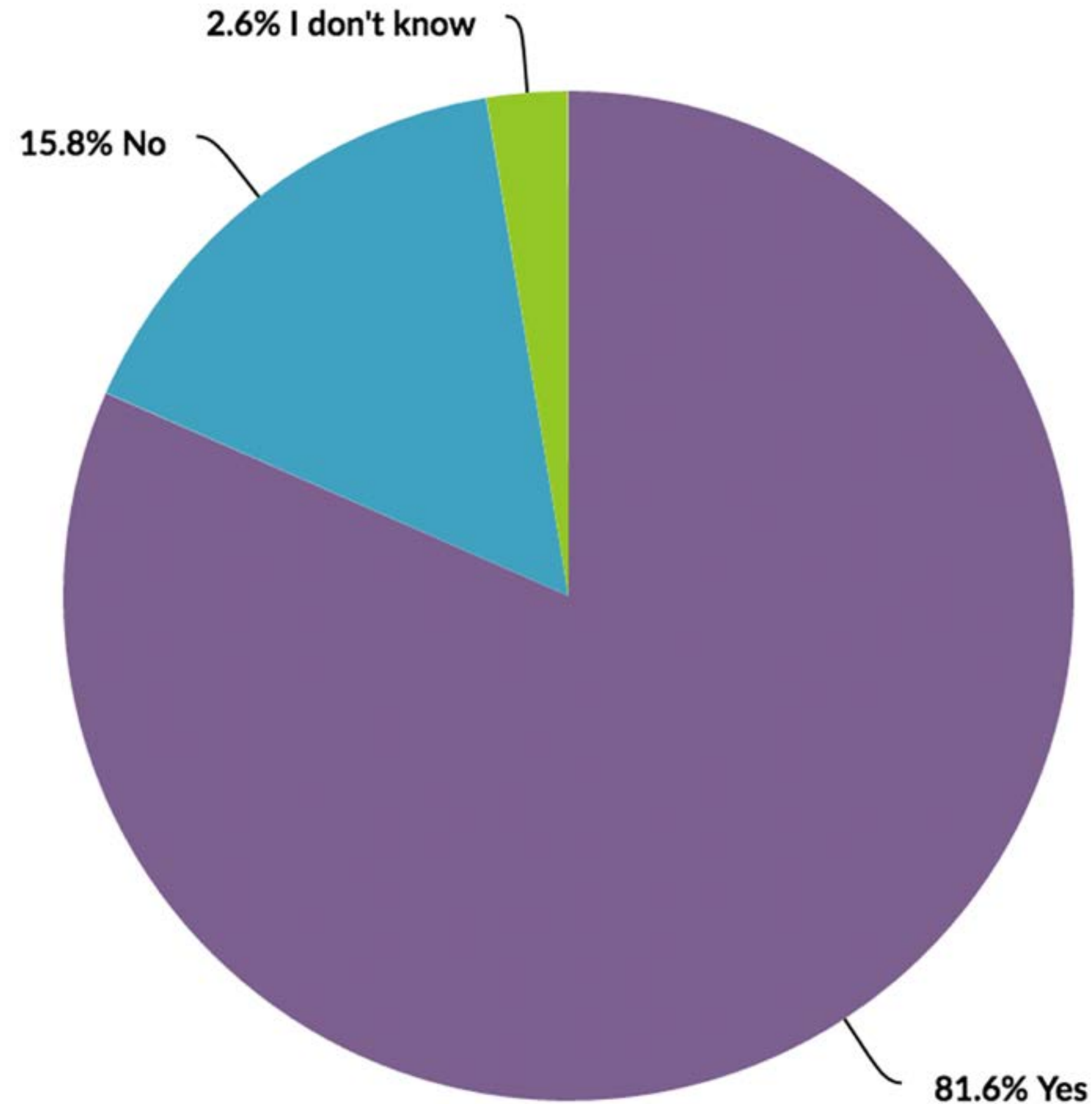
10x

Repeat 10 times.



**Open your eyes.
Celebrate!**

Would you like to improve your commute?



Testing

We created three campaigns based on different approaches to our revised design challenge:

How might we inspire New Yorkers to meditate on their commute?

Focus and Breathe featured beautiful local scenery accompanied by a guided meditation practice - the poster itself became the object to focus on during the meditation.

I Meditate focused on benefits and community. We wanted to see how well presenting an everyday role model would inspire people to take action.

Just 10 Breaths utilized a clean, minimal aesthetic to make the practice of meditation appear easy and accessible to all.

Format

We shared the prototypes along with a series of questions to gather insights on what approach would be most effective for our audience.

Responses

We received 36 responses.

- Ages ranged from 25-65+
- 64% female, 36% male
- 79% commute by subway or train

Positive Reactions Overall

“A welcome change from the posters I usually see on the subway!”

“Someone out there is concerned about your anxiety level on the subway which is nice.”

Large Opportunity for Success

80% of respondents would like to improve their commute experience:

- Top two improvements: If the commute helped them be less stressed or annoyed and if it helped them relax
- Productivity during is not highly desired → we don't need to prove the productiveness of meditation

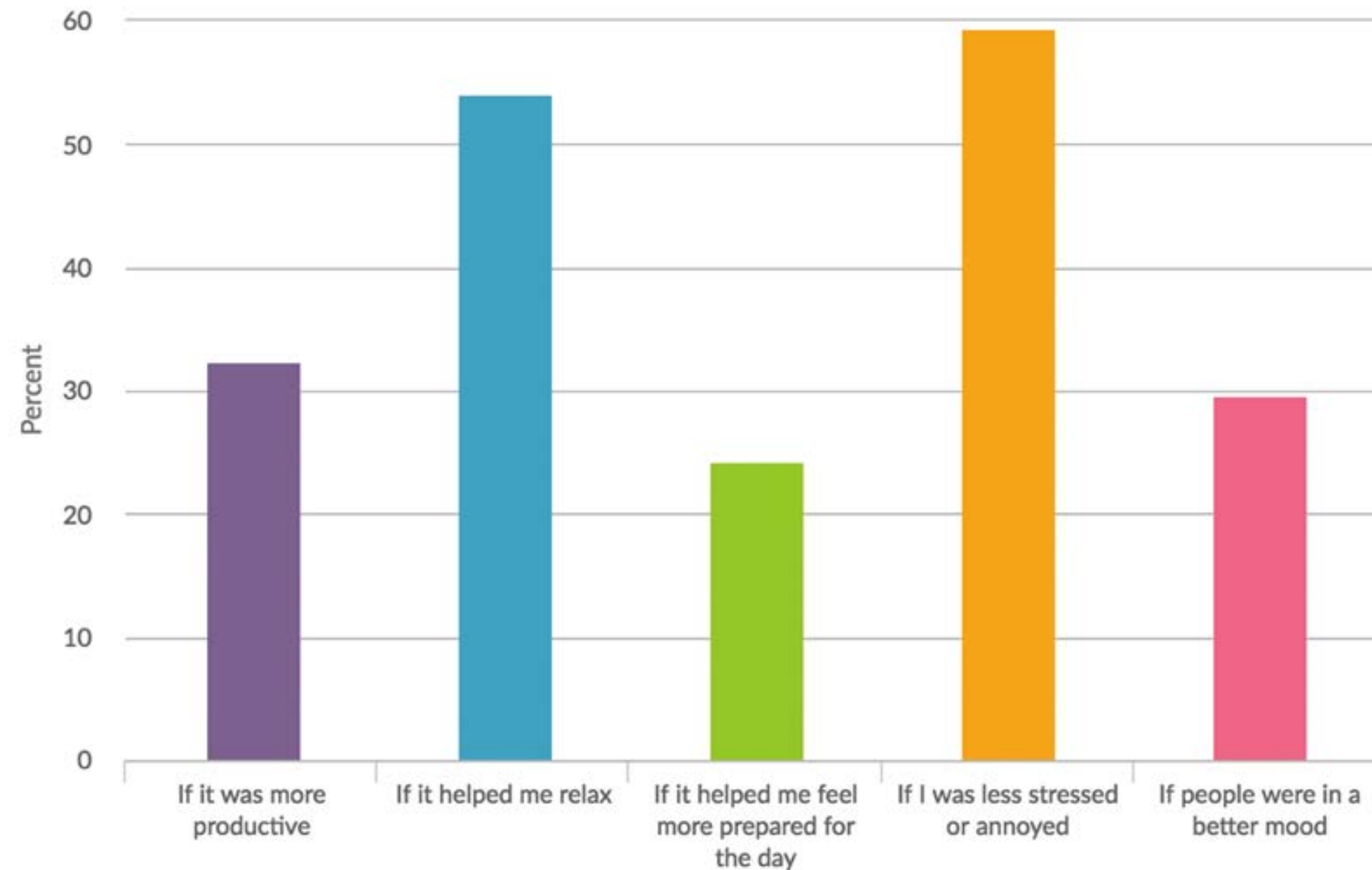
All Posters Were Rated ~50% for Likelihood to Inspire Action

- New Yorkers need and appreciate the reminder to breathe and take a moment for mindfulness
- New York cynicism is root cause of unlikelihood to take action

Responders had a Large Aversion to Advertising

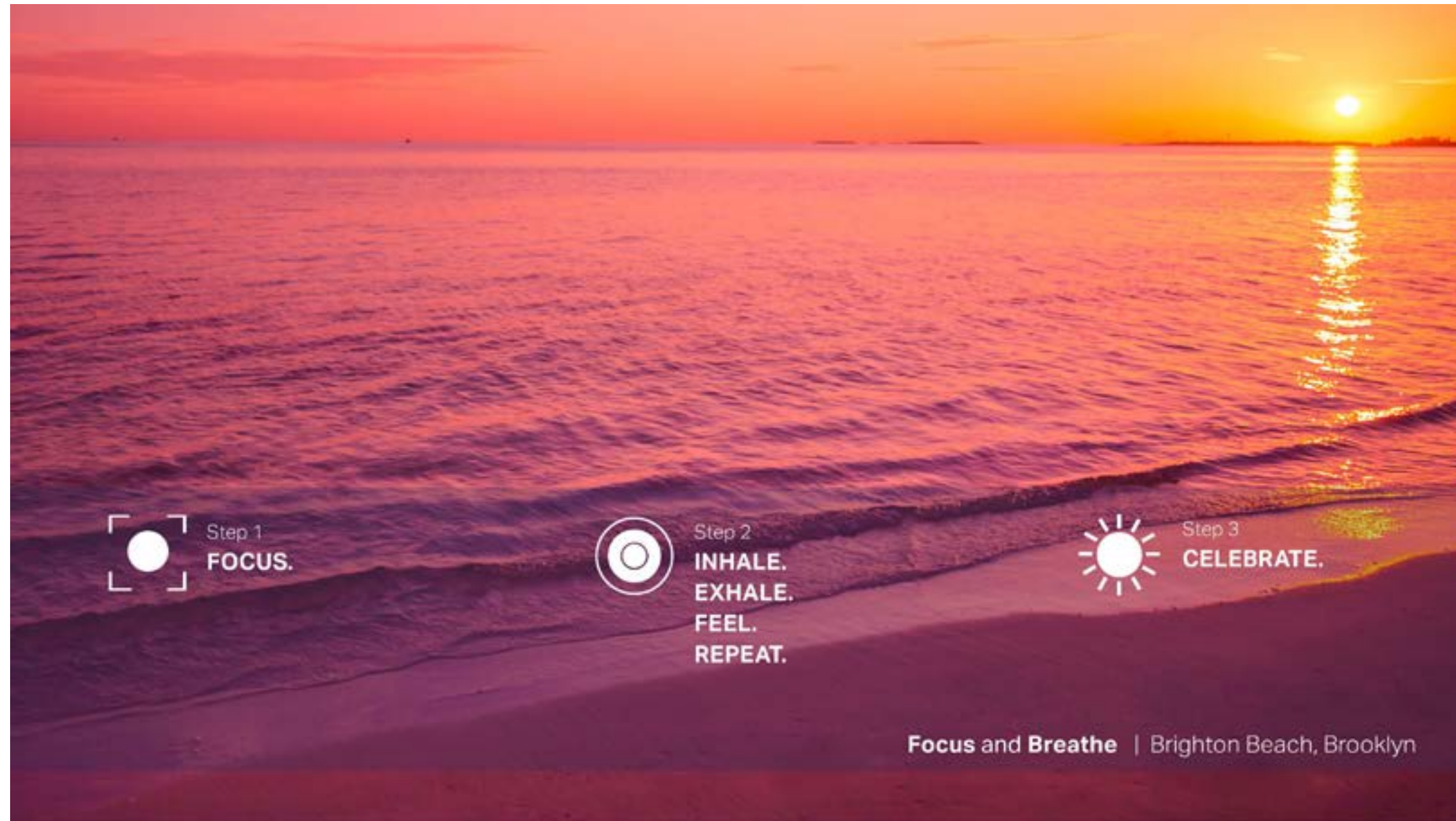
- The more ad-like a poster seemed the more resistant respondents were towards it.

What would improve your commute experience?



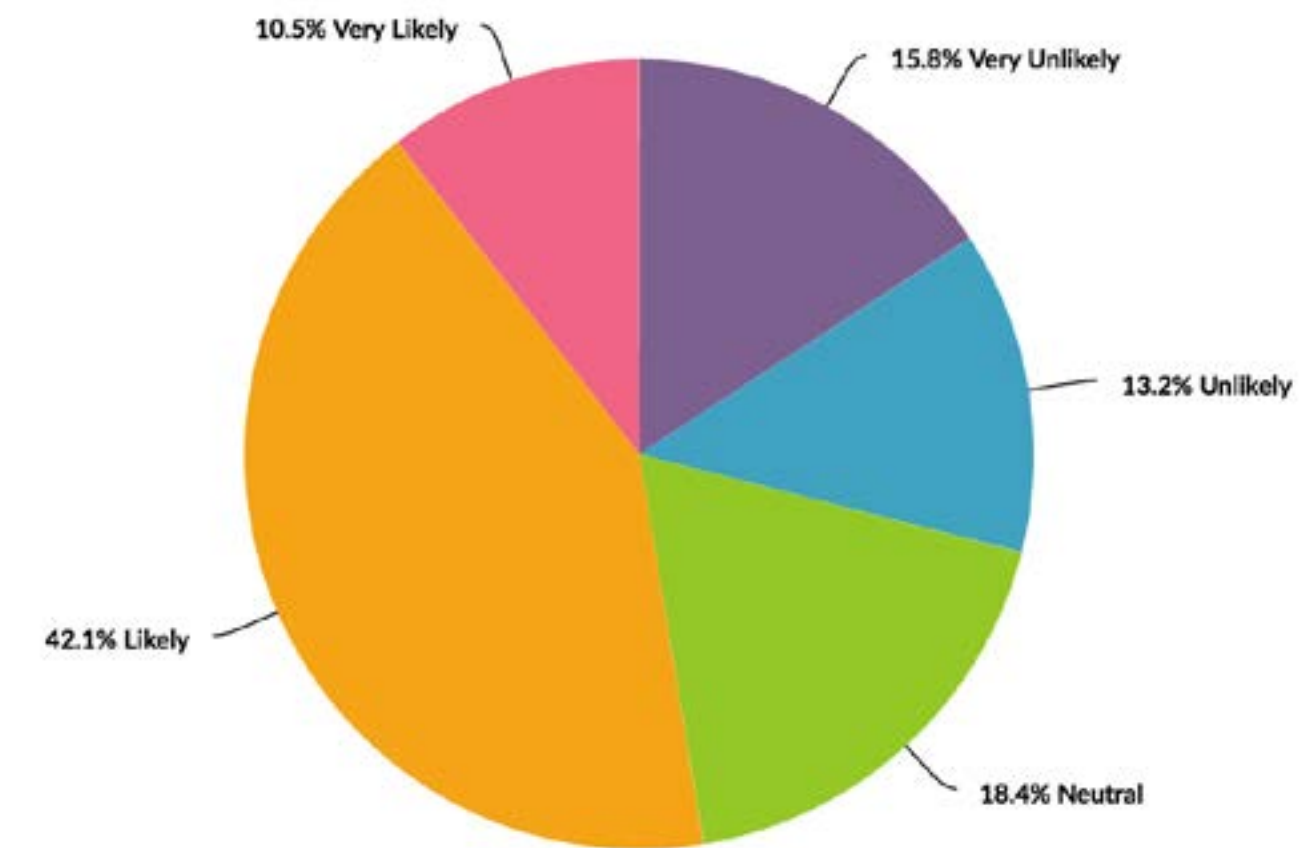
The majority of respondents (67%) felt like seeing any of the posters would help improve their commute experience.

A. Focus and Breathe

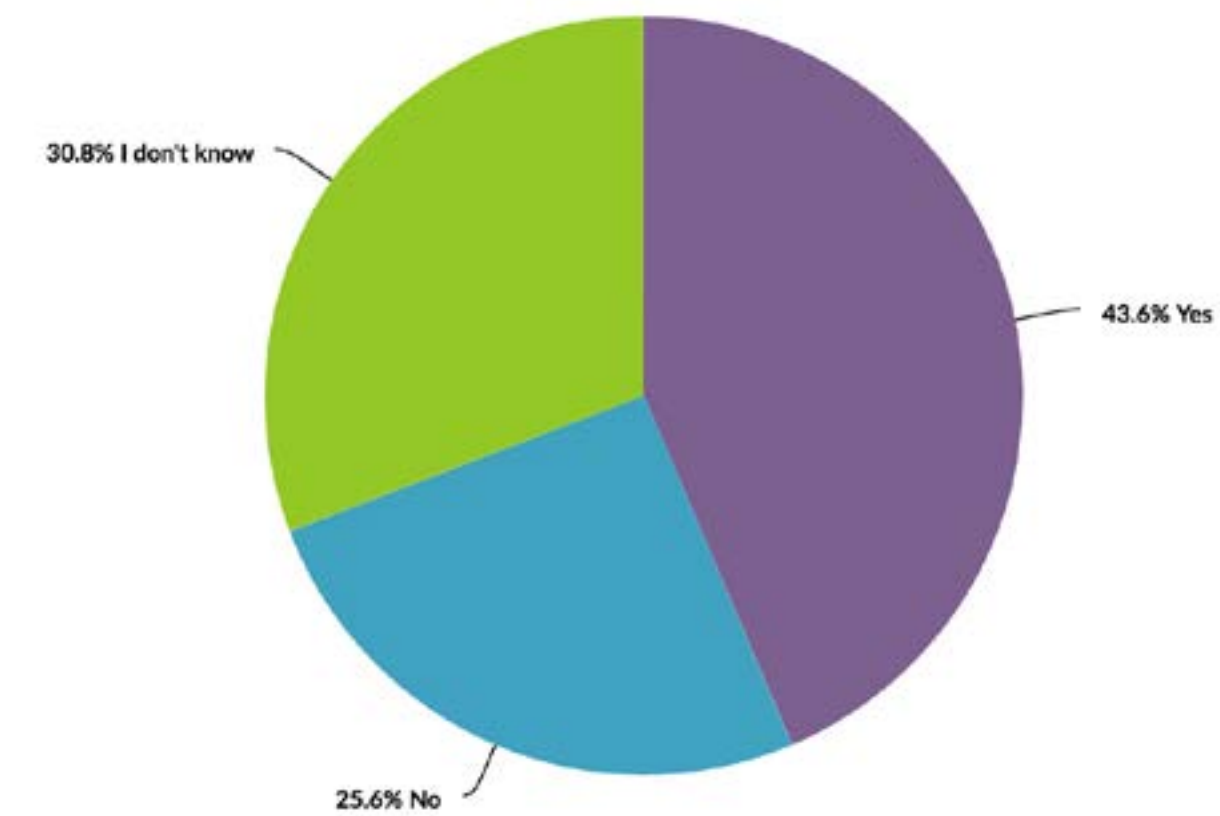


- Favorable aesthetic 76% likely to look at
- Some confusion over copy
 - “Celebrate is a bit vague and not sure how I’d do it on my commute”
 - Advertise Brighton Beach?
 - Is Focus and Breathe the name of the company?
 - Are they based in Brighton Beach?

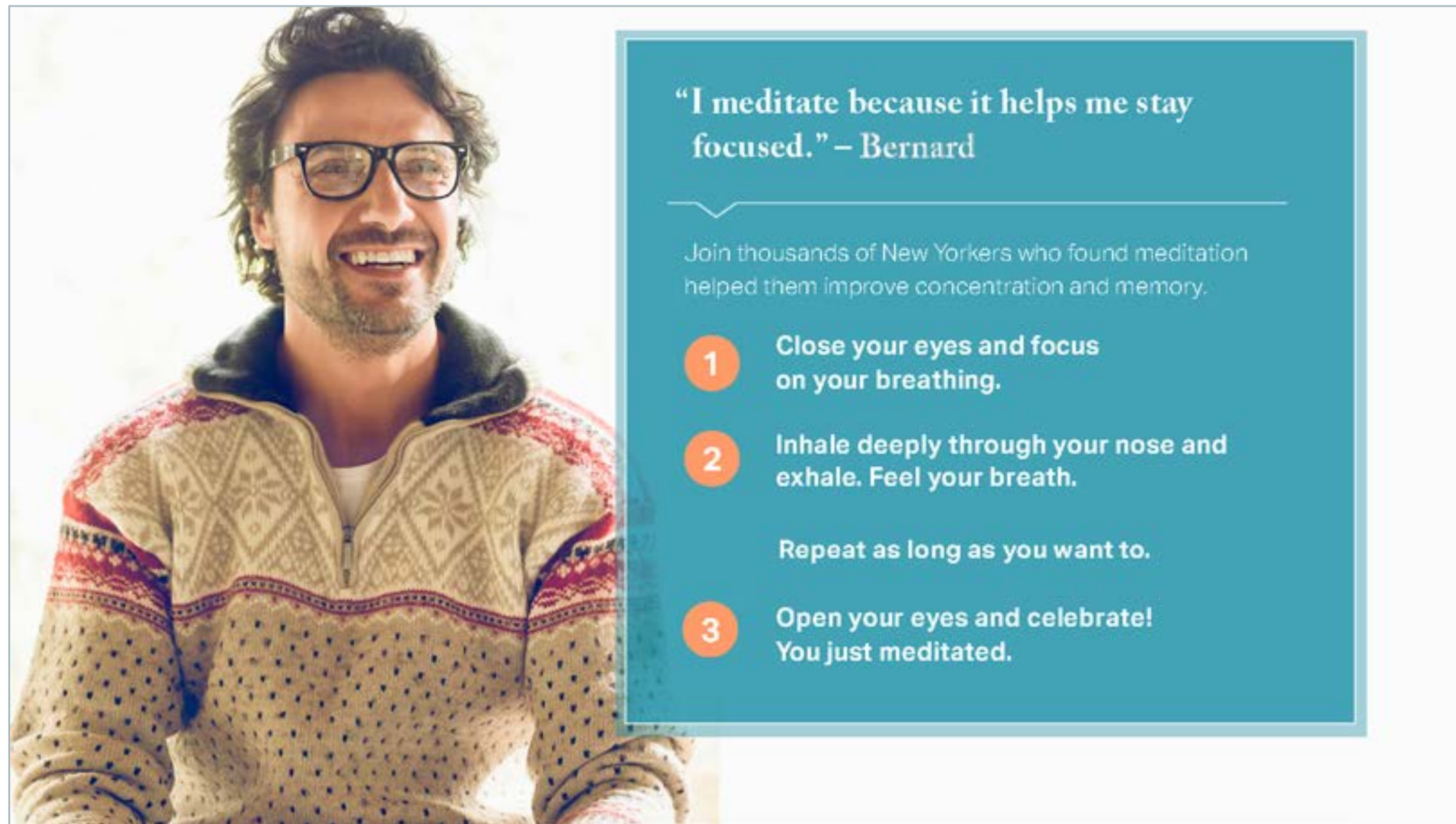
8. How likely are you to take action after seeing this poster?



11. Do you think seeing and following the directions on this poster would help improve your commute experience?

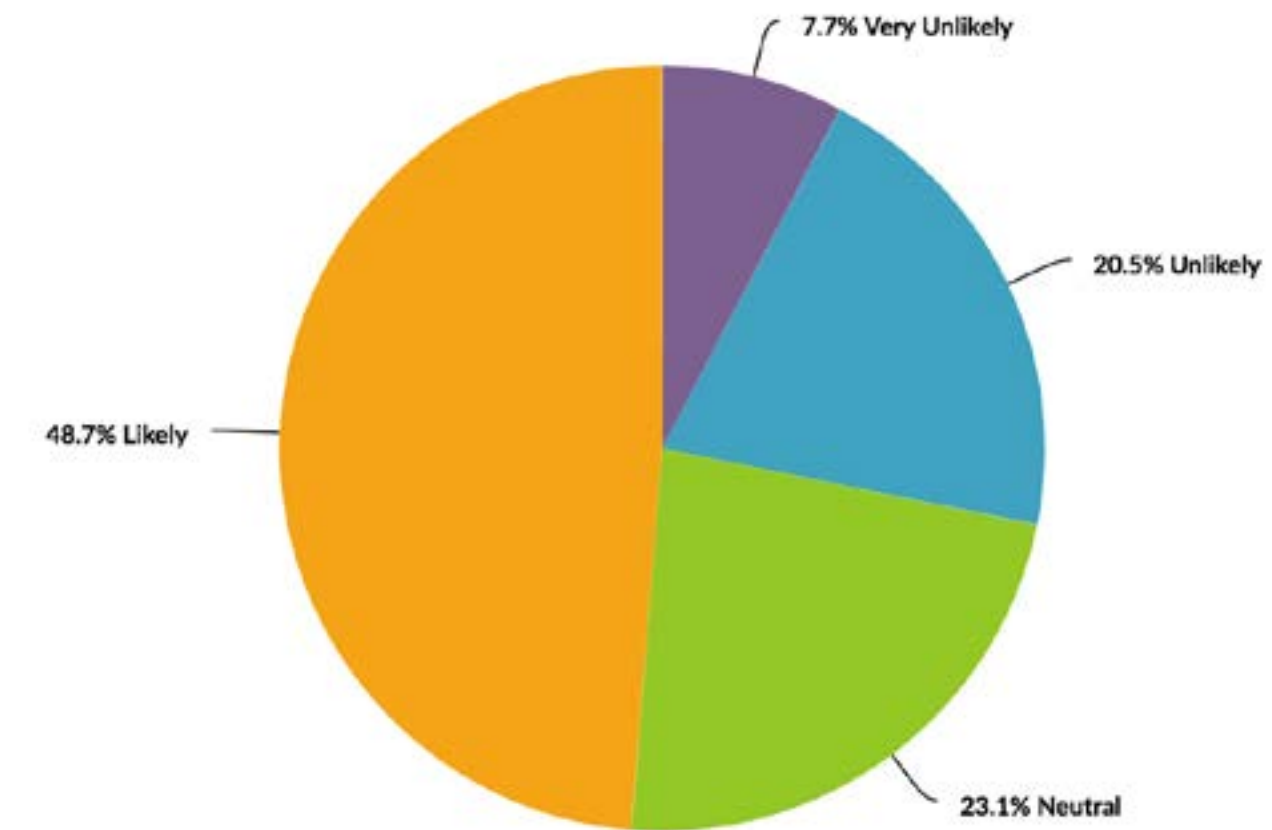


B. I Meditate

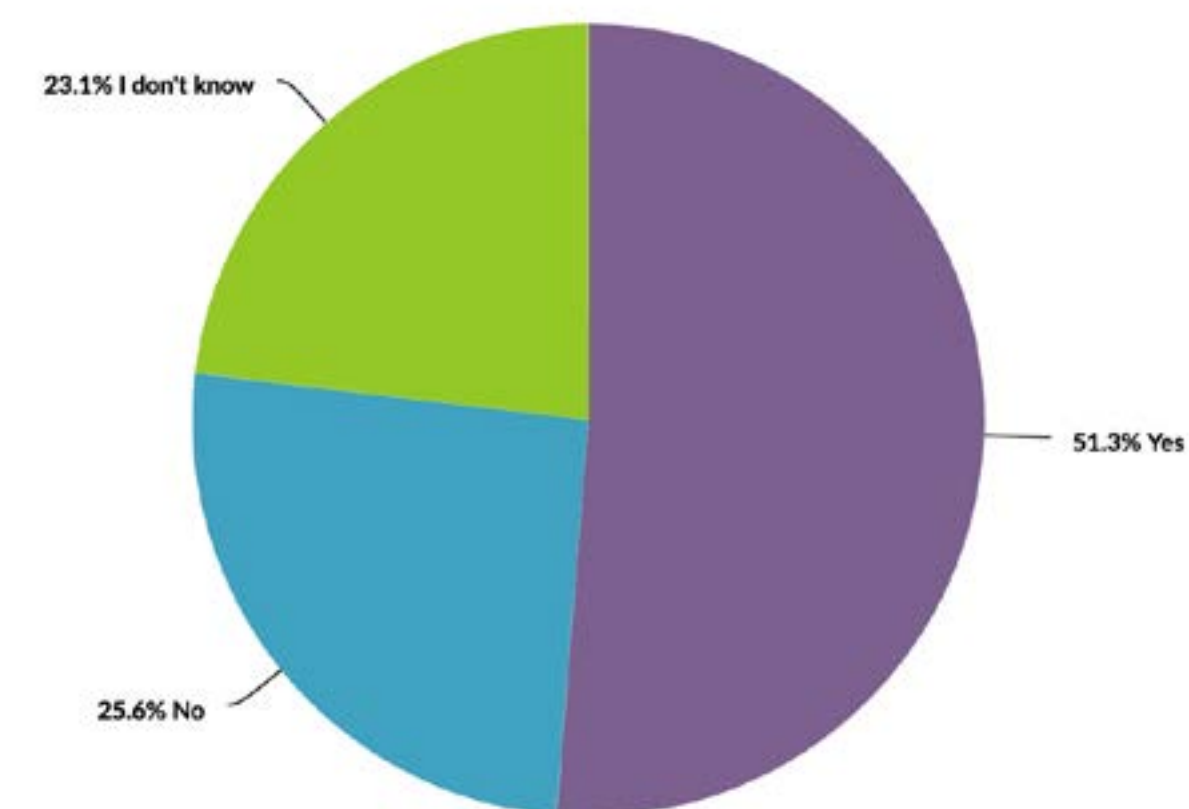


- Lowest likelihood of catching attention
- Lowest word of mouth appeal - 11% likely to tell friends and family
- Mixed feedback on design
 - Some like PSA-style, some dislike it because it looks like an ad
 - Some like the human-to-human approach
 - Some negative feedback on image choice

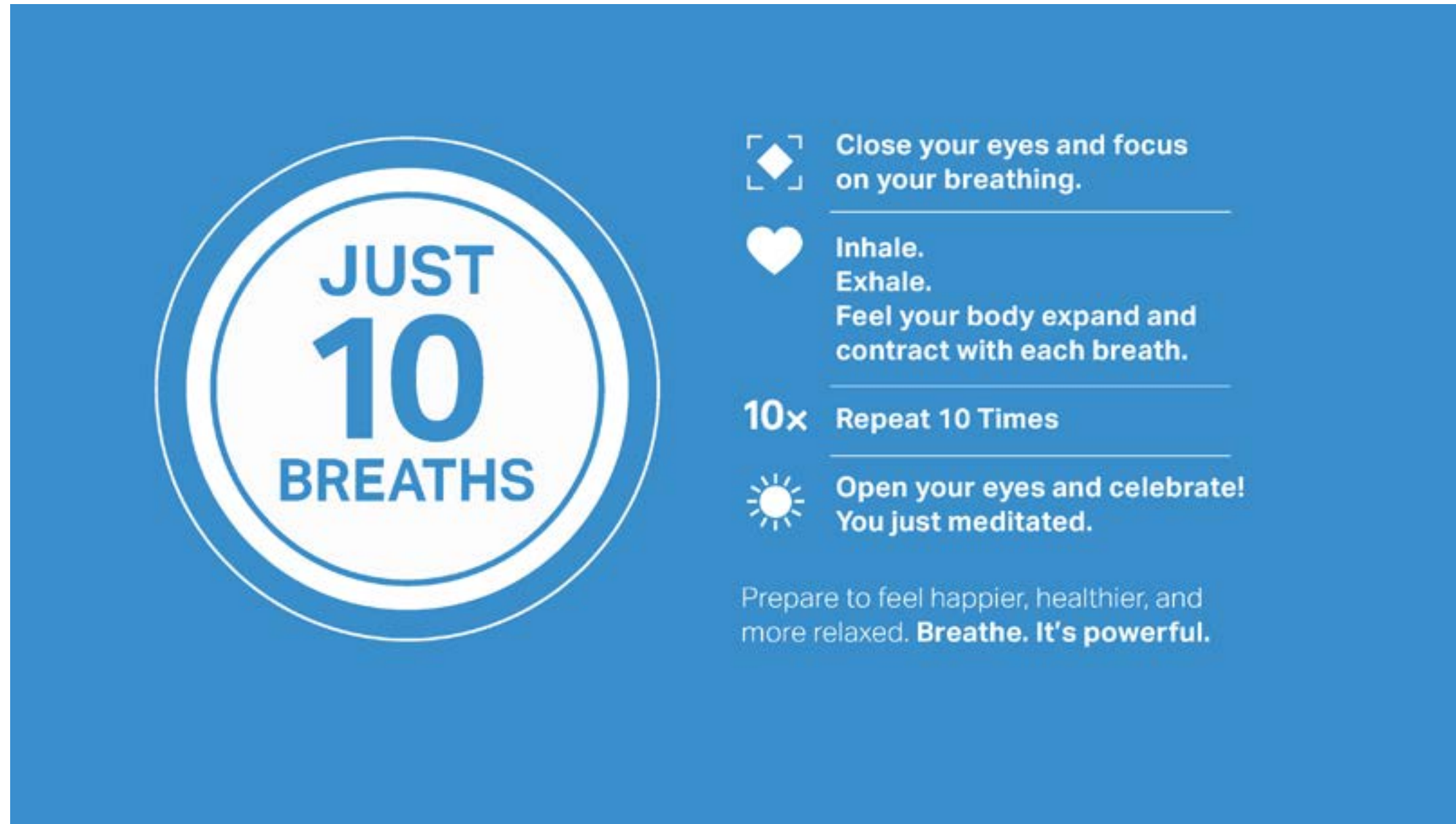
14. How likely are you to take action after seeing this poster?



17. Do you think seeing and following the directions on this poster would help improve your commute experience?

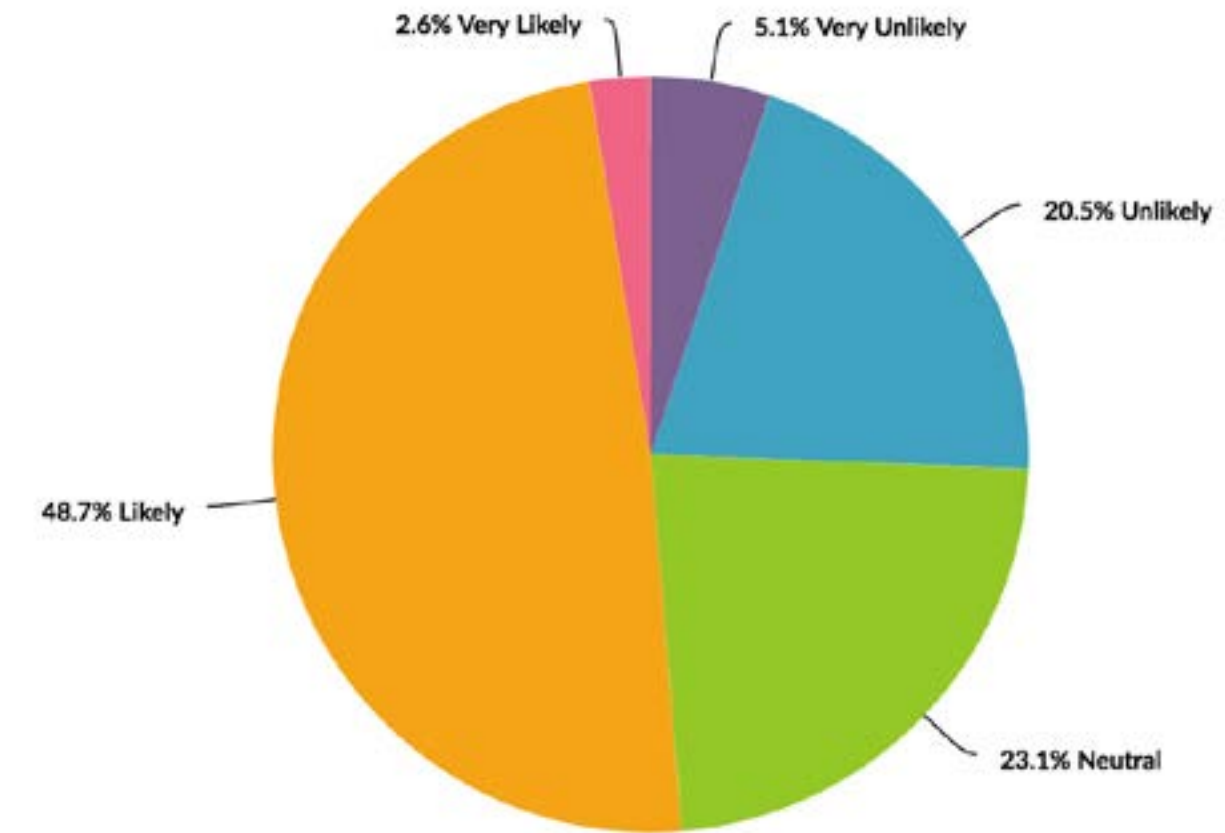


C. Just 10 Breaths

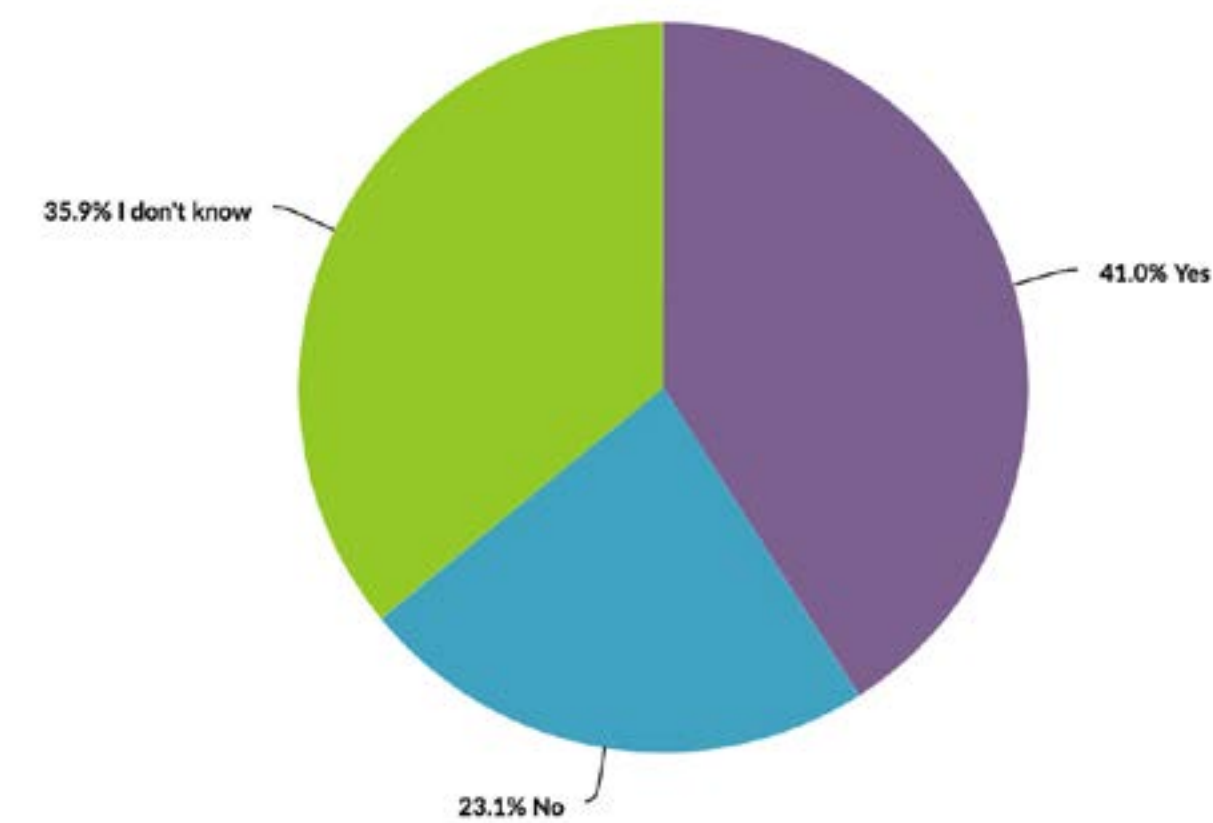


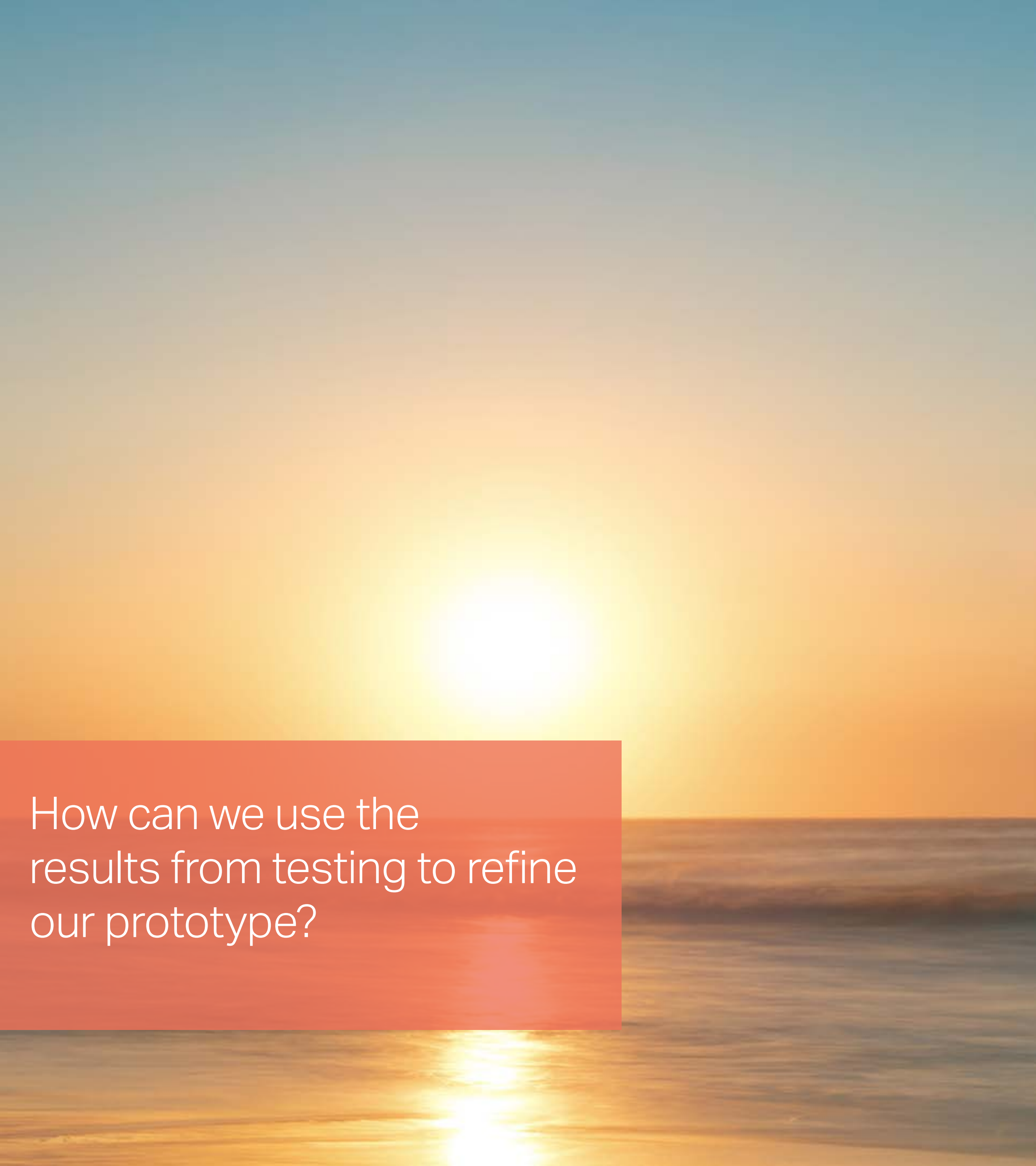
- Most interesting/eye-catching aesthetic
 - Highest likelihood to look at (82%)
 - Highest word of mouth appeal (30% likely to tell friends and family)
- Disliked the direction to close eyes
- Mixed feedback on design
 - Some like the iconography/boldness of font and design
 - Criticism for being too directive, not gentle enough
 - Some missed the humanity in the design

20. How likely are you to take action after seeing this poster?



23. Do you think seeing and following the directions on this poster would help improve your commute experience?





How can we use the results from testing to refine our prototype?

Opportunities

How might we incorporate / test different types of exercises?

- Avoid asking people to close their eyes - use single point focus instead
- More tension-relieving / embodied actions

"I think it might be more effective to also tell folks to feel their feet on the floor, roll their shoulders, relax their mouth and jaws and then breathe."

How might we design a series of posters / materials to become habit building? (eg. New Yorkers see our posters or symbol and know what to expect)

- "Maybe after seeing other posters with a similar theme, it would make more sense then"

How might we promote and develop a meditative experience that New Yorkers can practice while walking?

- 80% of respondents' commute includes some form of walking



Next Steps

Phase 2 Research

- Update prototype posters to incorporate learnings from research
- Re-test: Incorporate a question to determine stress level before and after viewing prototype to measure effectiveness of campaigns A and C

Expansion Into Other Tactics

- Set up social media accounts and domain name
- Visualize additional brainstorm ideas; Meditation glasses, Meditation train cars, Subway platform experience, Conductor scripts

Funding and Partnerships

- Investigate grant from NYC Mayor's Council.
- Propose stress relief and meditation to Ad Council for PSA consideration

Expanding the Audience

- Move beyond commuters to other populations
- Hospitals and waiting rooms
- Colleges and schools
- Create a meditation curriculum for schools and non-profits
- Partner with yoga studios, gyms and meditation centers

