

*This is an abbreviation of a larger 2009 [Netflix culture presentation](#) by co-founder, Reed Hastings. *

Culture at Netflix

A hundred million members is a good start, but we want to entertain everyone.

Entertainment, like friendship, is a core human need. It changes how we feel and gives us common ground. The invention of motion pictures 120 years ago, and then of television 70 years ago, were the first two entertainment revolutions. The third revolution is streaming, personalized any-screen anytime anyplace video, which allows Netflix to provide better entertainment at lower cost and greater scale than the world has ever seen.

This document is about our internal employee culture: the unusual ways we work together so we can eventually entertain everyone.

Like many great companies, we strive to hire the best and we value integrity, excellence, respect, and collaboration.

What is unique and special, though, about Netflix is how much we:

- encourage independent decision-making by employees
- share information openly, broadly, and deliberately
- are extraordinarily candid with each other
- keep only our highly effective people
- avoid rules

Our core philosophy is ***people over process***.

More specifically, we have great people working together as a dream team. With this approach, we are a more flexible, fun, inventive, stimulating, creative, and successful organization.

Specific Values

Many companies have value statements, but often these written values are vague and ignored. The real values of a firm are shown by who gets rewarded or let go. ***Below are our real values, the specific behaviors and skills we care about most.*** The more these sound like you, and describe people you want to work with, the more likely you will thrive at Netflix.

Judgment

- You make wise decisions despite ambiguity
- You identify root causes, and get beyond treating symptoms
- You think strategically, and can articulate what you are, and are not, trying to do
- You are good at using data to inform your intuition
- You make decisions based on the long term, not near term

Communication

- You are concise and articulate in speech and writing
- You listen well and seek to understand before reacting
- You maintain calm poise in stressful situations to draw out the clearest thinking
- You adapt your communication style to work well with people from around the world who may not share your native language
- You provide candid, timely feedback to colleagues

Curiosity

- You learn rapidly and eagerly
- You contribute effectively outside of your specialty
- You make connections that others miss
- You seek to understand our members around the world, and how we entertain them
- You seek alternate perspectives

Innovation

- You create new ideas that prove useful
- You re-conceptualize issues to discover solutions to hard problems
- You challenge prevailing assumptions, and suggest better approaches
- You keep us nimble by minimizing complexity and finding time to simplify
- You thrive on change

Courage

- You say what you think, when it's in the best interest of Netflix, even if it is uncomfortable
- You are willing to be critical of the status quo
- You make tough decisions without agonizing

- You take smart risks and are open to possible failure
- You question actions inconsistent with our values
- You can be vulnerable, in search of truth

Passion

- You inspire others with your thirst for excellence
- You care intensely about our members and Netflix's success
- You are tenacious and optimistic
- You are quietly confident and openly humble

Selflessness

- You seek what is best for Netflix, rather than what is best for yourself or your group
- You are open-minded in search of the best ideas
- You make time to help colleagues
- You share information openly and proactively

Inclusion

- You collaborate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures
- You nurture and embrace differing perspectives to make better decisions
- You focus on talent and our values, rather than a person's similarity to yourself
- You are curious about how our different backgrounds affect us at work, rather than pretending they don't affect us
- You recognize we all have biases, and work to grow past them
- You intervene if someone else is being marginalized

Integrity

- You are known for candor, authenticity, transparency, and being non-political
- You only say things about fellow employees that you say to their face
- You admit mistakes freely and openly
- You treat people with respect independent of their status or disagreement with you

Impact

- You accomplish amazing amounts of important work
- You demonstrate consistently strong performance so colleagues can rely upon you

- You make your colleagues better
- You focus on results over process

It's easy to write admirable values; it's harder to live them. In describing courage we say, "You question actions inconsistent with our values." We want everyone to help each other live the values and hold each other responsible for being role models. It is a continuous aspirational process.

In describing integrity we say, "You only say things about fellow employees you say to their face." This attribute is one of the hardest for new people to believe — and to learn to practice. In most situations, both social and work, those who consistently say what they really think about people are quickly isolated and banished. We work hard to get people to give each other professional, constructive feedback — up, down and across the organization — on a continual basis. People frequently ask others, "What could I be doing better?" and themselves, "What feedback have I not yet shared?"

We believe we will learn faster and be better if we can make giving and receiving feedback less stressful and a more normal part of work life. Feedback is a continuous part of how we communicate and work with one another versus occasional formal exercise. We build trust by being selfless in giving feedback to our colleagues even if it is uncomfortable to do so. Feedback helps us to avoid sustained misunderstandings and the need for rules. Feedback is more easily exchanged if there is a strong underlying relationship and trust between people, which is part of why we invest time in developing those professional relationships. We celebrate the people who are very candid, especially those in more powerful positions. We know this level of candor and feedback can be difficult for new hires and people in different parts of the world where direct feedback is uncommon. We actively help people learn how to do this at Netflix through coaching and modeling the behaviors we want to see in every employee.

Dream Team

A dream team is one in which all your colleagues are extraordinary at what they do and are highly effective collaborators. The value and satisfaction of being on a dream team is tremendous. Our version of the great workplace is not comprised of sushi lunches, great gyms, big offices, or frequent parties. Our version of the great workplace is a dream team in pursuit of ambitious common goals, for which we spend heavily. It is on such a team that you learn the most, perform your best work, improve the fastest, and have the most fun.

To have an entire company comprise the dream team (rather than just a few small groups) is challenging. Unquestionably, we hire well. We also must foster collaboration, support information sharing, and discourage politics. The unusual part is that we give adequate performers a generous severance package,

so that we can find a star for that position. If you think of a professional football team, it is up to the coach to ensure that every player on the field is amazing at their position and plays very effectively with the others. We model ourselves on being a team, not a family. A family is about unconditional love, despite your siblings' unusual behavior. A dream team is about pushing yourself to be the best teammate you can be, caring intensely about your teammates, and knowing that you may not be on the team forever.

Freedom & Responsibility

There are companies where people walk by trash on the floor in the office, waiting for someone else to pick it up, and there are companies where people lean down to pick up the trash they see, as they would at home. We try hard to be the latter, a company where everyone feels a sense of responsibility to do the right thing to help the company at every juncture. Picking up the trash is the metaphor for taking care of problems, small and large, as you see them, and never thinking "that's not my job." We don't have rules about picking up the real or metaphoric trash. We try to create the sense of ownership, responsibility and initiative so that this behavior comes naturally.

Our goal is to inspire people more than manage them. We trust our teams to do what they think is best for Netflix — giving them lots of freedom, power, and information in support of their decisions. In turn, this generates a sense of responsibility and self-discipline that drives us to do great work that benefits the company.

We believe that people thrive on being trusted, on freedom, and on being able to make a difference. So we foster freedom and empowerment wherever we can.

As companies grow, they often become highly centralized and inflexible. Symptoms include:

- Senior management is involved in tons of small decisions
- There are numerous cross-departmental buy-in meetings to socialize tactics
- Pleasing other internal groups takes precedence over pleasing customers
- The organization is highly coordinated and less prone to error, but slow and frustrating

We avoid this by being highly aligned and loosely coupled. We spend lots of time debating strategy together and then trust each other to execute on tactics without prior approvals. Often, two groups working on the same goals won't know of, or have approval over, their peer activities. If, later, the activities don't seem right, we have a candid discussion. We may find that the strategy was too vague, or the tactics were not aligned with the agreed strategy. And we discuss generally how we can do better in the future. The success of a "Highly Aligned, Loosely Coupled" work environment is dependent upon the

collaborative efforts of high-performance individuals and effective context. Ultimately, the goal is to grow the business for bigger impact while increasing flexibility and agility. We seek to be big, fast and nimble.