Introduction

1.1 Background

The stereotype for the role of women in a marriage is usually considered to be taking care of the children, dealing with chores and serving their husbands thoroughly. They are supposed to be behind men and supporting them to make a living outside diligently, being obedient to their husbands. The conservative notion passed on for centuries. However, by the rise of feminist movement and individualism, women fought for the rights to receive education and work opportunities as men had had.

For nowadays, the absolute power of men in families has been diminishing. Husbands have to learn how to respect wives rather than control them. On the other hand, wives are becoming braver in expressing their opinions in the relationships. But the fact is, the traditional superiority is so deeply imbedded in men's minds, they are reluctant to compromise with their wives, being afraid to disarm themselves so that they will lose their dignity. Therefore, conflicts between men and women happen over and over again in families.

Apart from the historical vicissitudes of social status between men and women, there are many divergences existing sexually in the regard of how to communicate with others, and how to react, recognize, express and appreciate things. Even one word can be understood differently by men and women due to divergent thinking processes developed by unlikely backgrounds. In other words, a trivial matter can escalate to crisis in the marriage simply due to a lack of well established communication.

We tend to get angry with the opposite sex, when they don't act as we expect. We expect them to be alike to us, hope they will behave in expected ways, and react similarly to us. The problems can only be solved if we are aware of the discrepancies, as well as abandoning our own selfish nature for the sake of harmonious relationships. This also provides an easier way to solve frustrations, and misunderstandings with the opposite sex. It is an important attitude for establishing a harmonious marriage; to make it satisfying and lasting.

The main idea of this project is to create everyday products that can enhance the couples' relationship by giving them a new twist to relevant issues

1.2 Motivation and objectives

There are several ways to unravel the complicated husband-wife relationship and improve it efficiently. For instance, reading related books, going for a lecture, or seeking advice from a consultant, can give us solutions for the problems caused by the discrepancies between the sexes. Nevertheless, as a designer, I believe that the products we use daily are what mostly keep us in touch with reality. There must be some ways for those products to play an important role to connect people's emotions. If the tips of how to improve our relationships with the opposite sex can be acquired from words and talking, then why it cannot be transformed into a more substantial form, like a product?

It's been my attempt to design something which is a non-commercial oriented way of making people think more about the meaning behind the products rather than their forms and styles. In this project, products don't provide functions that fit people's general senses. On the contrary, the unfamiliarity is just what is worthy of users' thoughts.

Some contemporary designers have designed products to disclosure husband-wife issues in various ways. Ben Forman's work "*Detacho*" (Fig 1.1) came up with the brief to design toys which incorporate the issue of divorce, something which is all around us in society, yet is ignored by toy manufacturers. Björn Franke designed a kit called "*Traces of an Imaginary Affair*" (Fig 1.2), containing 9 tools to arouse jealousy in relationships by leaving fake love bites, scratches and bruises just for gaining attention from your lover. British designer Jim Rokos discussed about a collaborative relationship with the opposite sex in his work "*Blindspot*" series (Fig 1.3). He designed a pair of wine glasses, which allows the liquid to flow freely between the two glasses; when liquid finds its own level, it flows down to the lowest glass. Users must learn to cooperate, to drink their wine. Another work is a device with a mouth hole at either end and a cigarette hole in the middle. It is a tool for sharing a cigarette, which cannot be used without a friend's help.

Fig 1.1 "*Detacho*" by Ben Forman

Fig 1.2 "*Traces of an Imaginary Affair*" by Björn Franke

Fig 1.3 "*Bindspot series*" by Jim Rokos

In this project, I would like to elaborate on the following ideas:

(1) By exerting the power of design, products are no longer lifeless. They can address as emotionally functional products as well as concrete symbols of the intricacies of the relationships.

(2) In this series of products, every single product symbolizes a lesson which we will have to take in a relationship with the opposite sex. Those perspectives on how to improve relationships usually only found in books will be generated into real products, which will concretely remind us of the idea, rather than only being borne in mind.

(3) A humorous, amusing way to portray the differences between the sexes in a relationship will be explored in this project. From a designer's perspective, with an easy, positive approach, my intention is to ease the charged relationships with new twist of redesigned products.

1.3 Scope

This project includes discussion of issues needing attention in the relationship between sexes. The causes of problems in marriage are quite complex: children's education, financial situations, relationships with families, etc, are just a few potential sources of a conflict. However, those reasons will not be discussed here since this

project is trying to elaborate on how to get along with the opposite sex with a better attitude, rather than trying to solve a particular predicament caused by any reasons mentioned above.

The issues discussed in this project are mainly selected from books written by relationship experts. Their standpoints are from their case studies, asserted to be accredited by thousands of people. Whereas the time and resources of this project are limited, only issues under designer's preference can be chosen to achieve the conversion from intangible words to substantial products.

1.4 Outline of thesis

This thesis consists of several chapters. The research background, motivation, objectives, correlative works by contemporary designers, scope and outline of thesis are introduced in Chapter 1. Common differences between sexes acknowledged by relationship experts are described in Chapter 2. Recommended solutions for a better relationship are summarized in Chapter 3. Design process of this project includes idea spreading, restraining, final outcome and analysis are presented in Chapter 4. Settings relevant to the exhibition for final result of the project are detailed in Chapter 5. In the end, the discussion of this project is arranged in Chapter 6.
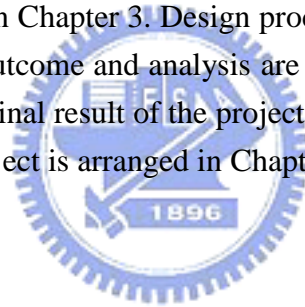
- Chapter 2-
Discrepancies between men and women

In this chapter, an extraction of divergences between the sexes will be brought up into several sections. All of the following contents are based on relationship experts' perspectives and studied cases. Their intention is to offer a general understanding of differences between the sexes, shedding light on the way to uncover more about the opposite sex.

2.1 Different power and status

Social scientists Robert Blood and Donald Wolfe [1] assumed that the comparative power in the marriage comes from the comparative "resources" between sexes. The one who has more resources in the marriage such as covering living expenses, having higher education or well experienced in professional training, has stronger power in the relationship. They divide power in the marriage into four types:

(1) Wife-dominant: Wives make more decisions than husbands do.
(2) Syncratic: Wives and husbands have nearly equal power, they make decisions after negotiation.
(3) Autonomic: Wives and husbands have nearly equal power, but they mark their own domains and being independent in them.
(4) Husband-dominant: Husbands have overwhelming majority of power.

Even though their research proposed that majority of families are under the structure of sharing power (41% are autonomic, 31% are syncratic), but in the case of one-side-dominant, husbands have more power that wives (25% are husband-dominant, 3% are wife-dominant).

The wide gap of one-side-dominant case can be attributed to the social system. For years, men have been taught to carry the burden of making livings, being the center of family. Back to the primitive ages, women couldn't survive without men, they could only feel save under men's shelter due to lack of living skills. Despite the human evolution had developed for thousand years, women still rely on men a lot in terms of physical, economic and social aspects. The historical inheritance of women has passed on for such a long time. Until last century, women could finally go out to work; until the contraception was invented, women could say no to pregnancy. Some researchers believe that when women get married, they have already been cultivated

as inferior by our social system.

Marry Ann Lamanna and Agnes Riedmann [2] regarded the love and need to the other side as the most crucial element to explain the entire power relationships. The one who pays less in the relationship can control and utilize his/her own resources. According to the book, the theory accords with the "*Principle of least interest*" proposed by sociologist Willard Waller. The principle conveys that the side has least interest usually exploits the other side in the marriage. They are more willing to dissolve a marriage contract, fluctuating intimacy and rejecting the active remedial measures offered by the other side to persist their status and power. It happens to be husband plays the role in the marriage mostly. Once again, the reason is related to our social system: female has undergone the socialized course which makes them love and need their husbands more. She tends to value relationships more serious than he does. As a result, women put their position in the marriage unequally and unfavorably in the beginning based on the "*Principle of least interest*".

For those spouses owning equivalent power, they may also have problems to share it. Both men and women don't know how to cooperate rather than compete with the other. The reason is that they normally have similar backgrounds and resources and no one wants to give up power they have. In this case, men and women scramble for controlling power until they are deeply hurt by persistence.

2.2 Different distances of love

John Gray [3] brought up an idea of men's "intimacy cycle". Men pull themselves away to content independence and autonomy after they have fulfilled their need of intimacy. Inevitably, when men begin to pull away, women start to feel panic about it because in their opinions, love should be continuous.

What women don't realize, is that men can't handle anymore love and must emotionally pull themselves away. For him, the need to pull away from intimacy is the feeling of "being alone" and "having some space", he needs to keep certain distance so that he can save up enough energy to spring back to her with love. Since love comes instinctually to women, they have never dealt with these kinds of dilemmas. For her, love has being running through her mind unceasingly, thus, when she feels him start to pull away, she will run after him, assuming he is expecting her to reestablish intimacy.

When this occurs, he feels strained and being controlled. The break down happens when he tries to re-establish his freedom, because of feeling the woman's efforts as an impingement on his life. In these cases, women must learn to let men have their own distance and space. Though it is women's nature to keep intimacy in the relationships, it is still necessary to retain an adequate distance between the sexes.

Liu Yen [4] mentioned about a fable about the importance of keeping distance in relationships:

"Two hedgehogs try to warm themselves by getting towards one another in the chilly winter. When they get closer, one's thorn stabs the other; they both have to separate due to the excruciating pang.

But the weather is getting colder, hedgehogs attempt more to get close. After failure for so many times, they finally come up with a proper distance to keep warm without hurting each other."

The parable is analogous to the marriage: it is easy to get hurt with the distance too close; it is hard to feel warmness with the distance too far away though.

2.3 Different expressions of love

Women can say "I love you" effortlessly. They are full of affections and skilled in linguistically expressing love due to their brain structures. Relationship expert Barbara Angelis [5] explained how important element love is to women. She mentioned about an interesting concept: men use one tenth of their consciousness to focus on intimacy, the other nine tenth for works, hobbies and plans. Women, on the contrary, they use only one tenth for works and other activities, and devote most of their minds to the intimate relationships.

There is no need to really "get into love" for female, since love has been existing continuously as an instinct. They spend time and efforts on the relationships with their lovers, always think about how to optimize it. Women are craving to share everything with lovers, being sympathetic, they try hard to get closer to lovers since they define, estimate themselves by success or failure of the relationships.

It is the way to express love when women exuberantly sharing their life experiences and showing concerns to men. She says "we" instead of "I", she adjusts herself to fit

in with his need. She plans for futures with him because she wants to have sturdy relationships together.

On the other hand, men use competence and achievement in order to define themselves rather than successful relationships. The way for a man to show his love is to offer a better material life by working hard. He misinterprets her thoughtfulness as a mere response to his hard work. In fact, what women really need to have is attention from men. Likewise, even though the men have done so much work, they are still confused that they can never fulfill the desire of women. It is because men's need of feeling love which is based on being trusted and appreciated by women, which women can truly never grasp.

There is another argument that women often complain that men are not as romantic as they used to be after they enter marriage. This is because men think romance is not necessary after marriage. His brain leads him to implement necessary measures to procure her, so he buys flowers, gifts, writes cards, and is attentive. Men's brains are problem solving oriented, which make them endeavor the hardships of reaching goals, but also being careless afterwards. Therefore, when he successfully climbs to the highest top (getting married with her), his brain will think it is not essential to please her like he used to. He will switch to another way to show his love such as providing a better material living standard.

Women's love is a bestowment, which men must understand, and in return, provide a caring and intimate relationship. Men must also understand that women are really grateful for man's attention to their emotional needs.

2.4 Different communications

A healthy, bilateral communication has been considered to benefit relationships between sexes. However, according to scientific reports, it is reasonable that men and women have difficulties to communicate with each other. Firstly, their brain structures are naturally unlike; women can apply both right and left brains simultaneously when they talk, the interweaving exchange of information between both brains makes women comprehend emotional issues promptly.

According to Allan Pease and Barbara Pease [6], they delineated the special areas in women's brains which especially process linguistic data; women can talk various extraneous topics in the same time, or talking by doing other things easily. It is totally

opposite for men in this regard. Researchers refer to men's lack of talking ability is because when men talk, only left brains are exercised which doesn't have any specific areas for operating linguistic works. As a result, men are sheerly inferior to women with talking; they feel threatened when communicating with women.

Audrey Nelson and Susan K. Golan [7] quoted point of views from communication experts Deborah Borisoff and Lisa Merrill: the reason that men are mostly awful listeners is because to "listen" makes them have to show white feathers. The sign of cowardice challenges men's power and status in the relationships. Hence, another common break down in communication happens: men are often planning "what to say" or "how to fight back" during the conversation with women, which makes them cannot concentrate on what the other side's talking about.

There is another crucial difference of communication between genders. Female's brain structures take "talking" as the main way to express. Women love to talk, they enjoy the procedure of talking. They show their concerns to other people and establish relationships by communication. Furthermore, when women are thinking, they say everything that is running through their mind out loud. This is also a way to relax; when women feel stressed out, they tend to ease their pressures by talking purposelessly. They don't expect any suggestions, they only need someone to be listeners- they need vents, not solutions. Unfortunately, that character conflicts with men's nature. Male have been taught to solve problems. So when they listen to women whining about things, they wrongly think it is a sign of asking for helps. Their brains will automatically turn to problem solving mode, interrupting women's talking constantly by giving their advice.

It has never been an easy job to learn how to communicate properly. There are different needs for communication existing between the sexes. Women take talking as a tool to maintain the connection of the relationships as well as a way out for their emotions. Whereas men merely consider talking as transmitting messages. They can hardly bear women's exuberant talking since they don't reveal their emotional sides as easily as women always do.

2.5 Different planets

John Gray [3] asserted the notion that men and women are as different as being from different planets. The notion sounds absurd, but can also be adopted by people since there are so many divergences between sexes, which almost make these two genders hardly get along with one another peacefully.

According to John Gray's explanation, Martians (men) value power, ability, efficiency as well as achievement. They annotate their meaning of existence by accomplishments. Martians have to complete their goals independently, they are proud of being independent and refusing any unsolicited assistance because for Martians, it means their capabilities are under suspicions.

Venusians (women), on the other hand, give weight to things totally differently: love, communication, beauty and relationships. They define their meaning of existence by feelings and relationship quality; they satisfy themselves by sharing and establishing relationships. They have the instincts to perceive people's needs, being willing to offer help. They believe that suggestions and instructive critiques are the way to show their love.

In word, men and women have naturally unlike characters in terms of values, philosophy and social interactions. Although these descriptions are only stereotypes and are not suitable for everyone, many problems between the sexes in marriage still occur to the variables mentioned above.

The following idea map depicts the dissimilarities discussed above; solutions of those differences based on relationship experts will be delineated in Chapter 3, which will be taken as the main design elements for this project as well.
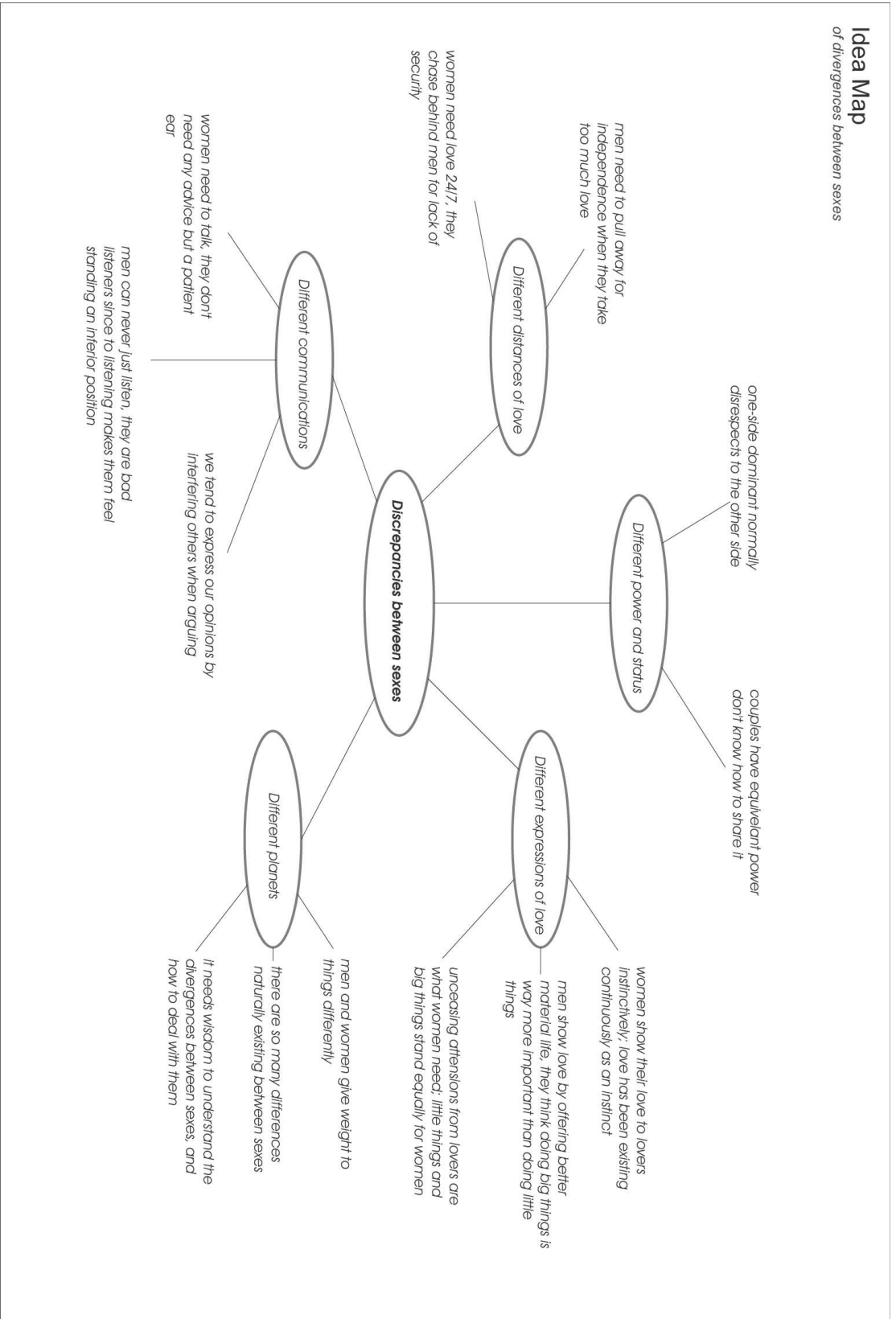
Idea Map
of divergences between sexes

Discrepancies between sexes

Different distances of love
- men need to pull away for independence when they take too much love
- women need love 24/7, they chase behind men for lack of security

Different communications
- women can never just listen, they don't need any advice but a patient ear
- men can never just listen, they are bad listeners since to listening makes them feel standing an inferior position
- we tend to express our opinions by interfering others when arguing

Different power and status
- one-side dominant normally disrespects to the other side
- couples have equivalent power don't know how to share it

Different expressions of love
- women show their love to lovers instinctively; love has been existing continuously as an instinct
- men show love by offering better material life, they think doing big things is way more important than doing little things
- unceasing attentions from lovers are what women need; little things and big things stand equally for women

Different planets
- men and women give weight to things differently
- there are so many differences naturally existing between sexes
- it needs wisdom to understand the divergences between sexes, and how to deal with them

Fig 2.1 Idea map of divergences between sexes

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- Chapter 3-
How to play better roles in the relationships

This project aims to improve relationship between the sexes by taking products to reflect the differences between men and women mentioned in Chapter 2. The listed dissimilarities can be clearly grasped as well as settled by suggestions from relationship experts' books. We cannot just expect our partner's changing to fit in with us. A better way to fix our gap with the opposite sex is to adjust our attitudes. The following content will discuss about the possible solutions for problems caused by sexual discrepancies, and will be regarded as the inspirations of products development in next chapter.

3.1 Solution for different power and status

Marry Ann Lamanna and Agnes Riedmann [2] depicted that only an equal status in the marriage can foster genuine intimacy. Sociologist Peter Blau [8] stated that situation as "*No-power*", which doesn't mean one has no power or doesn't exert it. It means both men and women exert power equally: they both can affect the other or be affected.

To share power is an ideal way to fulfill "*No-power*". When we manage to cut down the frequency to exert power, we try to keep the power balanced and share it at the same time. It is a cooperative relationship to share power. People tend to take power as a tool to suppress the other side in the relationships; it will only aggravate the adverse situation. We have been taught to fight against others during the process of socialization. It is precarious to bring that aggressive attitude into intimacy since destruction to both sides is always the result in the end.

Robert Schwebel [9] addressed the importance of cooperative relationships. He suggested couples to treat each other equally, make agreement not to overrule the other side. Drop out the ideas "I should have the priority", "This should be done by my way" and ask for opinions from the other like "how can we satisfy one another?" instead. For those marriages that men have more power than women, they must learn how to respect the opposite side with lesser power by developing cooperative relationships, which can make women feel more empowered. The more safety women can feel in a marriage, the higher evaluation they will give to the man. A successful marriage requires reciprocity. Only when we know how to share power with the one we love, can we eventually initiate a win-win situation.

3.2 Solution for different distances of love

To get married means both men and women have to accept the fact that they are no longer individuals but couples. From the day they begin to live together, they start to learn how to share life with one another.

However, to walk into someone's life and live together with him/her doesn't mean we have the right to control the other. We may hear one side complains about losing privacy and freedom after getting married. The problem is caused by without knowing the importance to keep certain distances as well as offer private spaces to the one we love in the relationships.

Some people consider they have the legitimate to get into spouse's life. They ask spouse to report everything to them, expect spouse to exclusively spend all time with them. Those are just the ways to show their loves, they try to get closer so they can feel the existence of intimacy. That intimate distance differs from their lovers' expectancies and makes their spouse feel tense and unrespected. The more they want to get closer, the farer their spouse run away. The high pressure relationship will not do any favor in the marriage; on the contrary, it pushes the other side to evade from their lovers and turn away to search for their own life.

An interesting metaphor of keeping distance in the relationships cited from Liu-Yen [4] is as below:

"*Photographers need to solve the contradiction between aesthetics and distance so that they can shoot impressive pictures. Under the befitting lights, if we couldn't adjust the distance from eyes and objects, we wouldn't be able to freeze the momentary attractions.*"

One thing we got to know about is to leave spaces to one another, let love breathe rather than suffocate. Once we lost the distance, we cannot discriminate the aesthetic sensibilities in the relationships. To offer the other side a relaxing space facilitates establishing a steady marriage, and also keeps it fresh. Therefore, the solution for different intimate distance is to pull apart each other properly, the eager for being loved will reveal only when one can have enough independence in the relationships.

3.3 Solution for different expressions of love

Men tend to achieve some goals in order to express their love. Women, on the other hand, take love as the most valuable thing in their life, and spend a lot of time and efforts on their love; however, often they feel tired after paying so much attention to men and not getting what was expected in return. Both men and women are doing their best in order to express their love, but the problem is that they cannot feel it equally.

John Gray's [3] stated the reason why we feel love so differently is because we have different scoring points system of love against the opposite sexes. A man thinks he scores high with her when he does something big like buying luxurious things or taking her on vacation. He reckons that it scores less when he does something small like giving her flowers or hugs. He believes that she can be satisfied when he concentrates his time, strengths and attentions on doing big things. However, she takes big and small gifts as the same scores, in other words, small things are as important as big things in her scoring system.

Men wrongly think women's way of keeping scores, so when they carry out doing some big things for women, they don't know how many chances they missed to fulfill women the best by merely doing little things. Women need many expressions of love in a relationship to feel being loved; even though big things are also important to them, but what they really need is to be filled by frequently doing many little things over and over again rather than doing big ones after a long while.

Doing little tiny things such as offering unsolicited attention to her, walking with her and washing dishes, can all be the ways to express love to her. Another reason for men to learn how to keep doing little things is because men need to switch to "love mode" when they feel like being loved. It is hard for them to show love constantly as women do, they tend to ignore the need of women for being loved when their "love mode" is off. The feedback of doing little things for love is magical. A woman knows she is loved, she will give more love back to her man, feel grateful for what he has done and that is just what makes a man being more willing to devote himself to giving love.

Both men and women need to know the significance of doing little things. That is the method for reminding partners that they are loved, and also for making the relationship encompassed by trust, appreciation and love.

3.4 Solution for different communication

Men are not good at listening to the entire story told by women, they don't truly understand that talking is the process for women to alleviate pressure. As a result, they still try to find problems and offer suggestions from what they are told, but in the meanwhile, it hinders the other side's talking. When women cannot express their emotions to men, they feel annoyed and upset. Men feel shame because they cannot help with women's emotional issues, and they incorrectly think they have to be responsible for women's frustrations.

In this case, listening is the most important lesson to take for men. What men need to know is that they will be very helpful by only listening. Women will appreciate the action of the man offering to let her vent. Women often don't need solutions, what they really want are just a little empathy and a patient ear to listen without interruption.

Moreover, when a fray takes place, we are prone to repress the others' voices as well as interrupt their talking in order to protect our own perspective. According to a research for the percentage of interruption during conversation, 96% are made by male speakers because they consider they are in an inferior situation when arguing with the opposite sex, so they use the method to break in the conversation to get back the leading role.

It is an art to learn how to listen to prevent fighting; if we could listen to one's perspective entirely, we would be able to respond empathetically. People nowadays have been socialized to think in a competitive way, we talk back, fight back and defend our own stands. A cooperative relationship entails both sides to listen carefully, to pause a little while, so both men and women can relate to each other. When we fight back or act aggressively during the conversation, mostly that's because we don't agree with the other's opinions. However, only when we learn to listen to other's perspectives, can we reduce the gap of the differences.

Good listening skills can help establish a solid relationship, and also provide us opportunities to think more equitably as well as rationally. It allows us to avoid saying something bad without a second thought, which will probably make us regret after fighting. We should strive to approach communicating with our partners by listening disarmingly. It takes two to argue, but it only takes one to stop an argument.

3.5 Solution for different planets

When we live with the opposite sex, the longer we get along with them, the more problems appear. Most couples don't know these problems are caused by having totally different values in many aspects, and this is why some consider men and women to be from different planets.

To blame each other and expect our partner to think and behave just as we expect is impossible. The most vital thing is to learn how to tolerate, identify and support the other side. It is a sign of faithfulness, and also a way to show love. It can be seen as a continuous learning process in managing our relationships. There are so many things we need to center ourselves around in order to keep the relationship balanced; we cannot despise how the other side feels by defending our own stands tenaciously without conceding. When we insist on having everything follow our own way, the gap goes wider and wider everyday, and eventually we cannot go back to each other.

Some people may regard compromise as surrender. They don't see the benefit of needed concession as necessary for the relationship. To compromise means to show respect to each other, and it intends to make both sides feel pleased and loved rather than opposite and competitive. On the other hand, there must be something we possess tenaciously and cannot be easily changed, something we try hard to retain. These are just contradictions which need to learn how to mutually tolerate; no one can be perfect, nor should we completely change ourselves in order to fit our partners' expectations.

It requires wisdom to decide when to step forward or backward in the relationship, and it needs time to develop skills for dealing with each other's divergences as well. Try to face the fact that we are from different planets with the opposite sex, transform all the dissimilarities into the power to express more love to our partners. Only when we have positive attitudes like that, a consistent, lasting relationship will pass through difficulties for good.

- Chapter 4-
Design Process

In this chapter, design process of this project will be carried out based on the previous studies. First of all, the idea development will go through every listed study as design topics and refer to solutions suggested by relationship experts. In this stage, I will experiment on various ways to transform words into products. Secondly, after developing ideas for each topic, I will narrow down the spectrum of ideas and the selected ideas will continue to develop vertically. In the final stage, computer 3D models and rendering will be portrayed, which will be turned into real models as the final outcome.
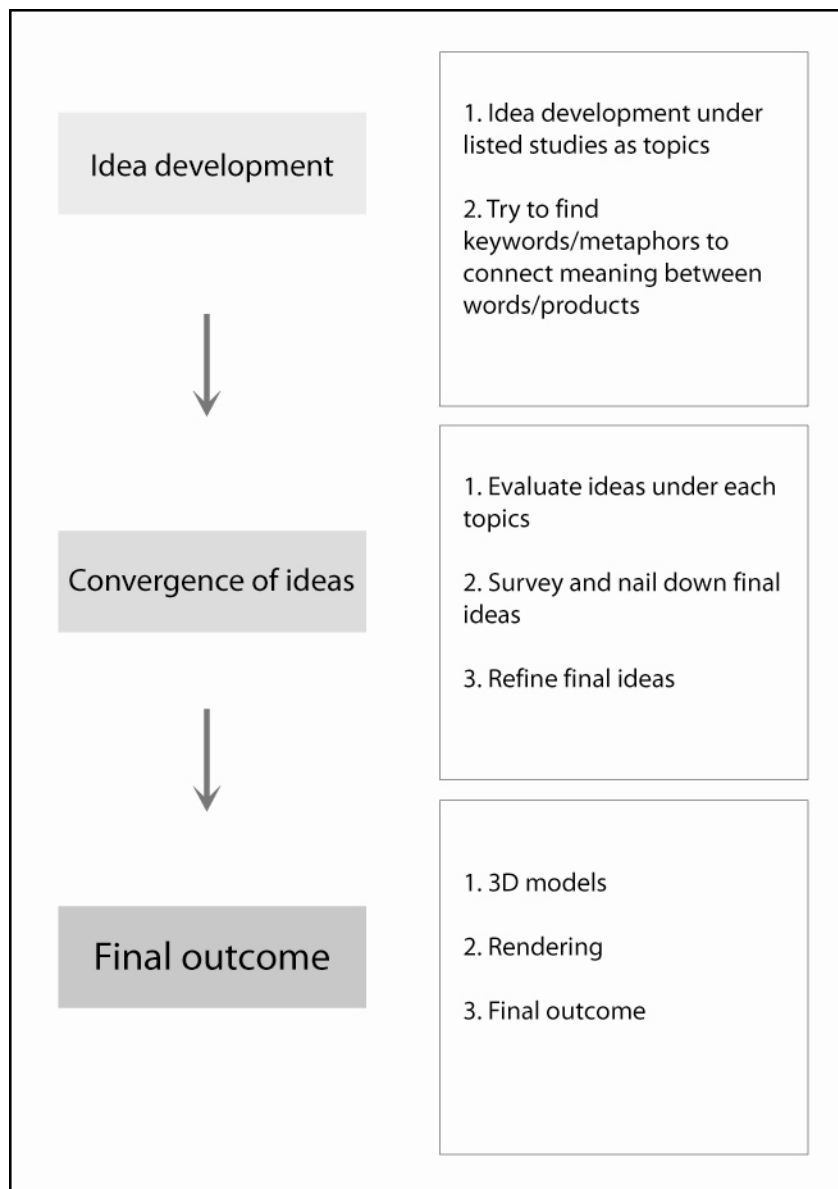
Fig 4.1 Design process

4.1 Idea development

4.1.1 Ideas of sharing power and status

In this topic, how to represent "power and status" is the key element. There are some variations affect the level of power in the relationship. The economic providing of a family has been seen as the main factor to get more power and status according to researches. Patriarchy passed on for centuries is another reason to make power and status unbalanced in the family, even though feminism has fought for equality but patriarchy still cannot be wiped off completely. It makes men think that they are the mainstay for women to count on, having supreme power conceitedly.

Based on the solutions for equalizing power and status mentioned previously, I would like to take "how to share" as the main form, to discuss about a balanced, sharable relationship in terms of economic and patriarchate issues.
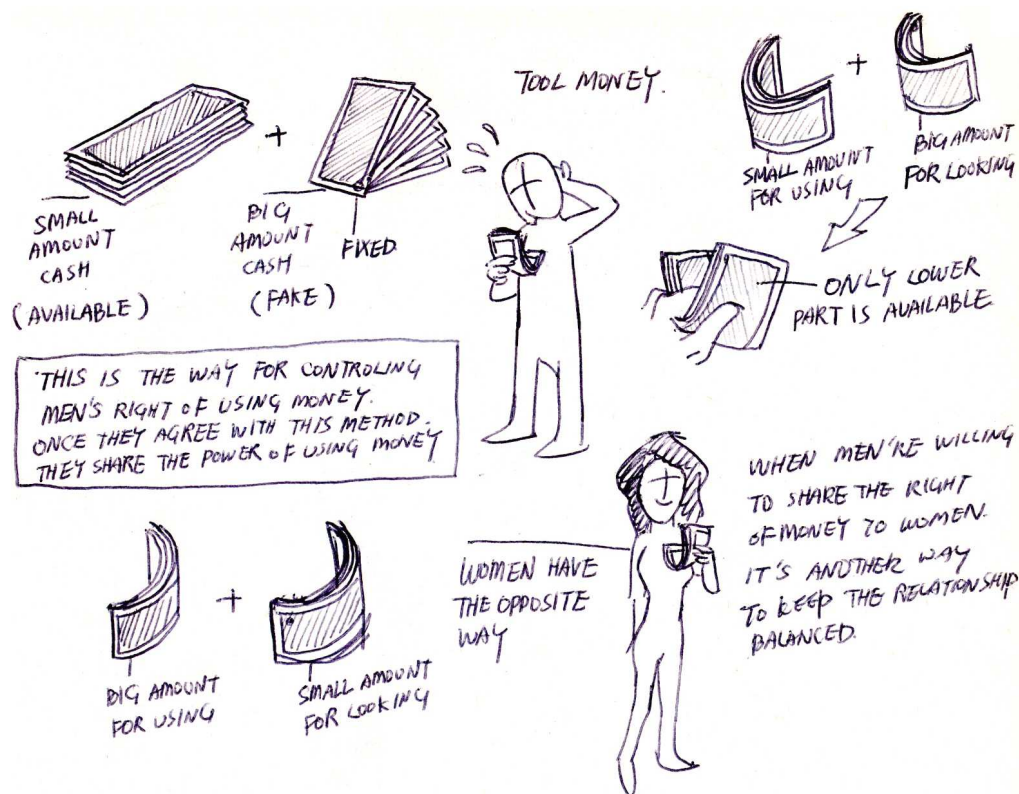
Fig 4.2 Concept 1

Description: Letting her control the household income may be a wise way to share power. He will know who is the real boss in the family- his pile of money is divided into two parts, only the upper part is available, lower part is fixed and only for enhancing men's self-esteem in public.
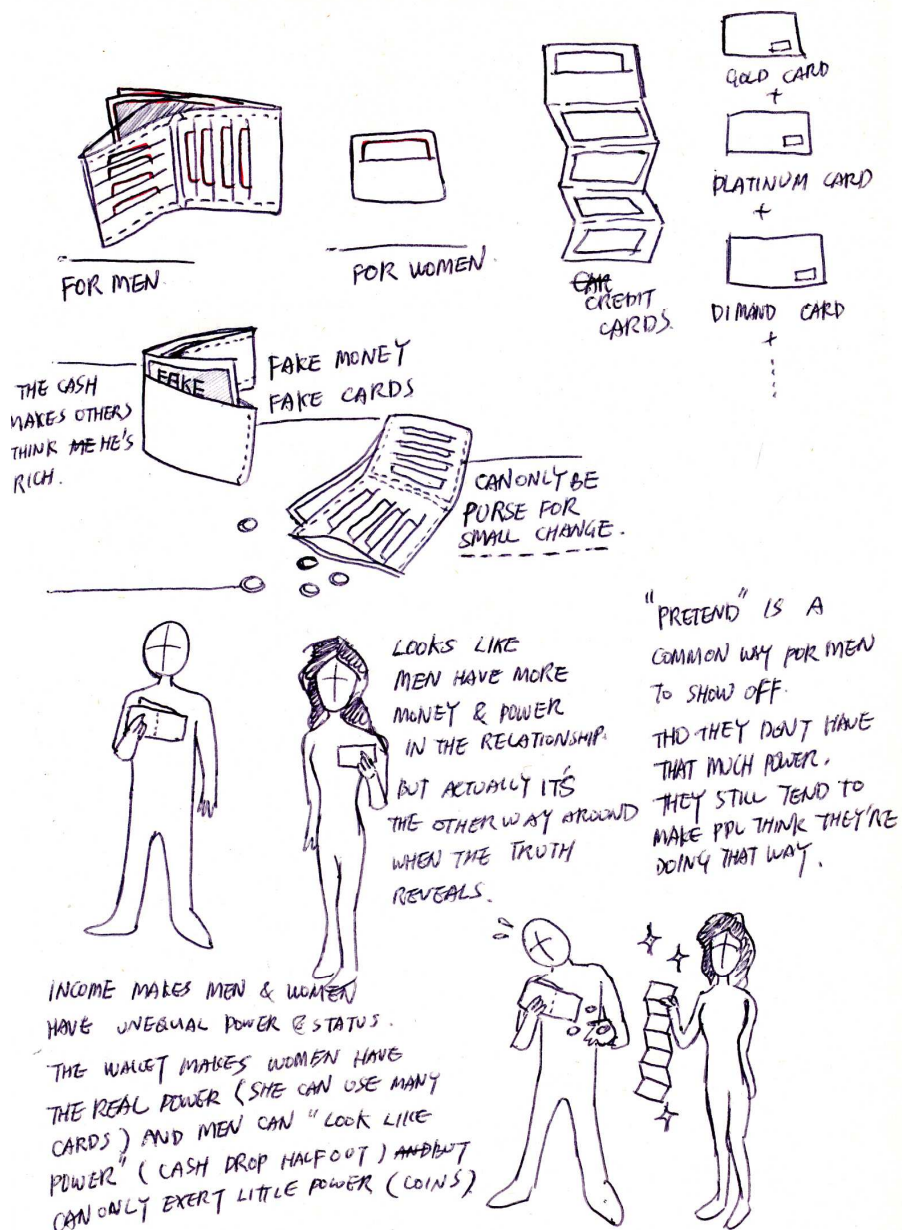
Fig 4.3 Concept 2

Description: This idea is to reinforce the previous one as well as to explore more patriarchal issues involved with finances. A man's wallet appears to be his wealth, but with this wallet, the cash and credit cards are fake: the wallet is merely a coin purse. On the other hand, the woman carries an ordinary, simple wallet which has very flat and small space- for credit cards only. The contrast makes a joke out of the patriarchy a man feels, and his excessive need to show his power and status in the relationship. This idea allows him to fulfill his patriarchal obsession seemingly and satisfy his lover practically.
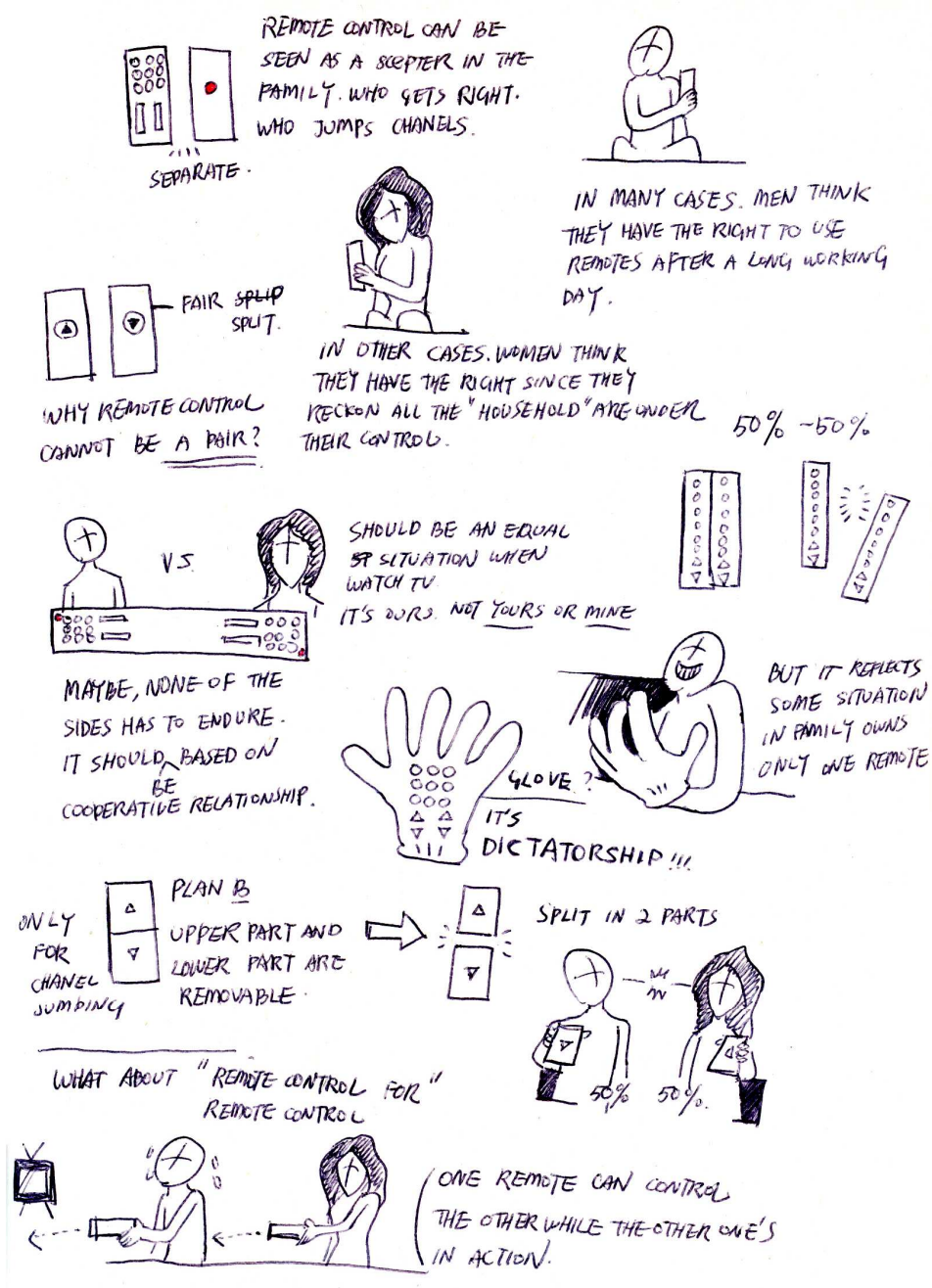
Fig 4.4 Concept 3

Description: A remote control for television sometimes is like a scepter. The one has more power in the family can have it and others can only follow what's been watched. I read some stories, saying that women complain about men tend to occupy the remote control for the whole evening. Thus, I take a remote control as a symbol of power, distribute different functions into two remote controls so both men and women can pin each other down as well as have the equal rights to share the television.

LOOKS LIKE MEN HAVE MORE. BUT ACTUALLY WOMEN'S HAS MORE DRINKS.
IT CAN BE SEEN AS A FORM TO "SHARE" THE STATUS. PLAY DOWN ONE'S OWN PLACE TO BOLSTER UP THE OTHER SIDE.

IN MANY OCCASIONS. MEN ARE EAGERING FOR LET OTHERS THINK THEY HAVE A SUPERIOR ROLE IN THE FAMILY / RELATIONSHIPS.
WOMEN SOMETIMES HAVE TO BOLSTER MEN'S SELF-ESTEEM IN SOME CASES — EVEN THOUGH THINGS ARE NOT SO TRUE
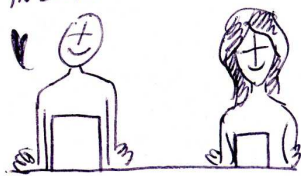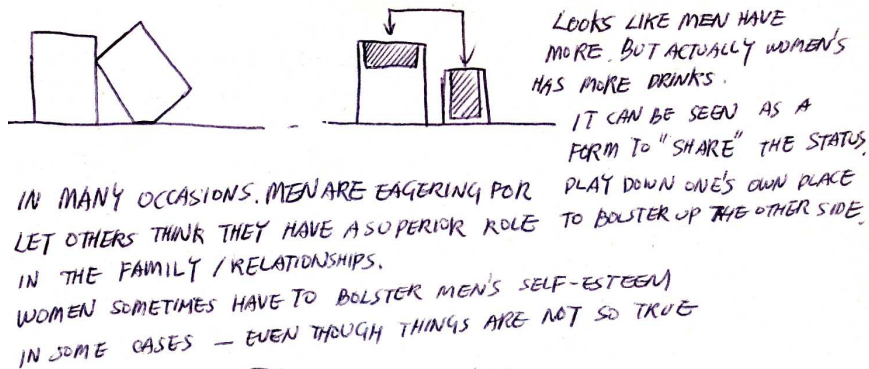
MANY MEN DON'T CARE WHETHER THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TRULY. THEY JUST WANNA MAKE OTHERS CONSIDER THE POWER BELONGS TO THEM.
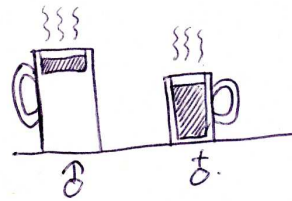
MUG IS THE OBJECT WE USE NOT ONLY WITH FAMILY. SOMETIMES FRIENDS OR RELATIVES COME BY. MUG BECOMES A MEAN TO SHOW "WHO'S THE MAN BIG BOSS IN THIS HOUSE!"
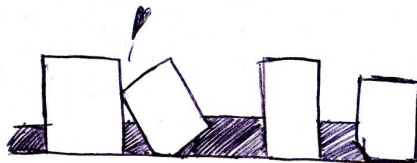
THINKING ABOUT THE MUG CAN ALSO REVEALS THE TRUTH IN AN INTIMATE WAY — THO WOMEN HAVE THE REAL POWER (BIGGER CAPACITY) THEIR CUPS STILL LEAN TO MEN'S ONES
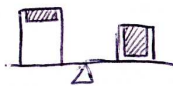
A REAL BALANCED POWER STATUS IN RELATIONSHIP ALLOWS ONE TO KEEP CERTAIN LIMITS OF POWER. IN THIS CASE. MEN LET WOMEN HAVE MORE CAPACITY OF MUGS. AND WOMEN ON THE OTHER HAND. LET MEN HAVE THE IMAGE OF "STRONG" "DOMINATED" FOR OTHERS.

Fig 4.5 Concept 4

Description: This mug set looks like the big one has more capacity, shows the symbol of being "the center of family", but actually it is very shallow. It is also the idea reminding men to keep each other's status balanced. The contrast looks of them serve an ironic face-saving point and alert men not to be conceited in the relationship. The small mug leans to the big one is a metaphor of intimacy, meaning that when men let women have more power or status can always bring up more trust and closer love.

4.1.2 Ideas of solving different distances

According to former studies, the best way to deal with different distances is to "keep a proper distance". To represent the benefit of keeping a distance is therefore the main element under this topic.

I carried out some ideas to force two objects to keep certain distances; otherwise a break down happens when these two remote controls are in too close of proximity.
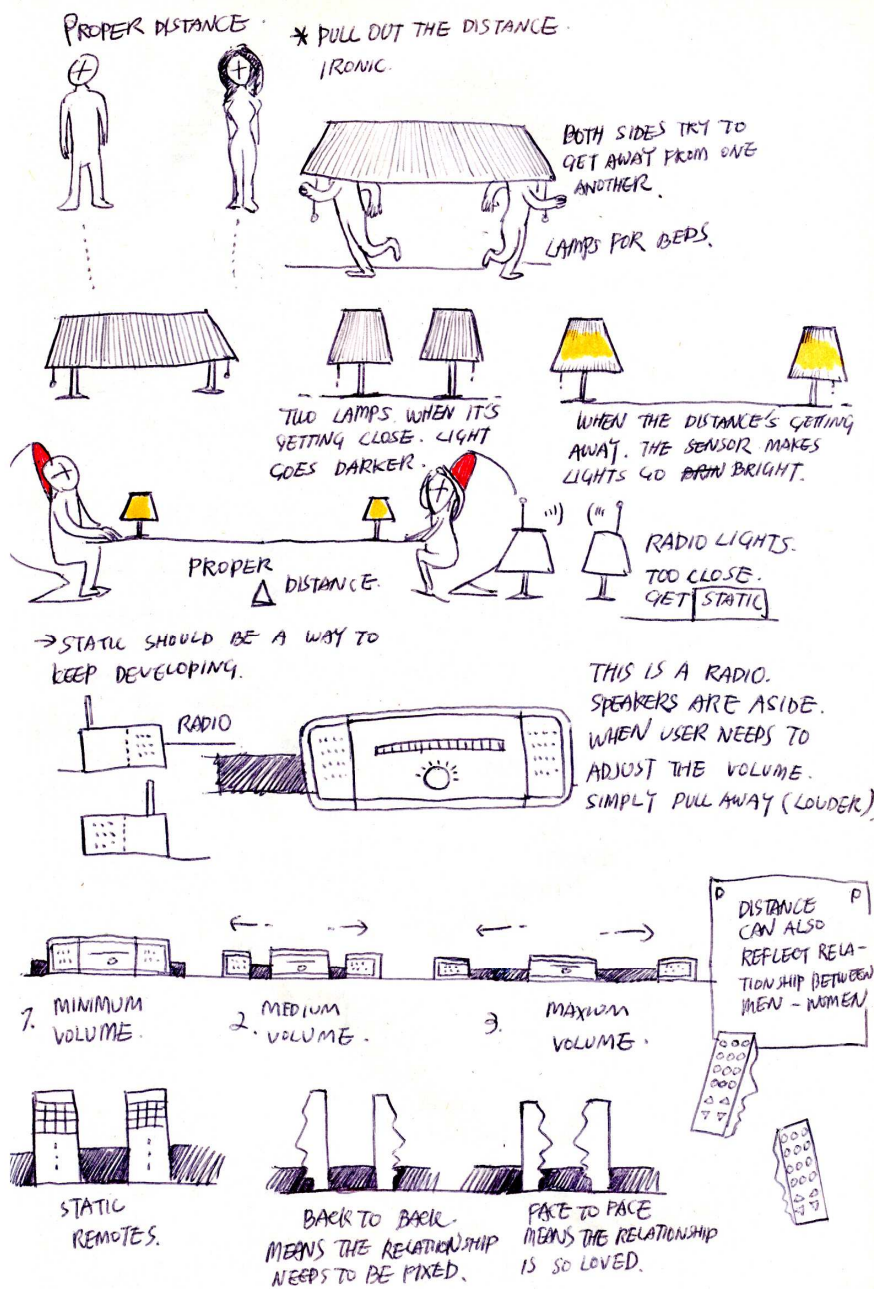
Fig 4.6 Concept 5

Description: Initially, I considered bed lamps because they are a commonly pair of products in a bedroom. There is a darkness sensor in one lamp; when the one with the sensor is too close to another, the light goes off due to enough brightness. On the contrary, when pull them away from each other, the one has the sensor will illuminate by darkness. The similar idea is also applied to other objects. The radio concept is to use distance to adjust volume; the farer user pulls speakers away, the louder volume it goes. The last concept is a pair of remote controls which have face-like outlines on the back side. The outlines symbolize men and women in the relationship: when one side turns it to reversal, means to keep distance is needed for now.

4.1.3 Ideas of solving differing expressions of love

The first thing that came to my mind for expressing love in small ways was by following a schedule. We all check the schedule daily, mark important things and make a to-do list. A calendar is also something we check everyday. Although calendar has mostly converted to digital form, I believe it still carries nostalgic value.

Thus, I combine a schedule and a calendar together; to see if there is anything interesting happens.
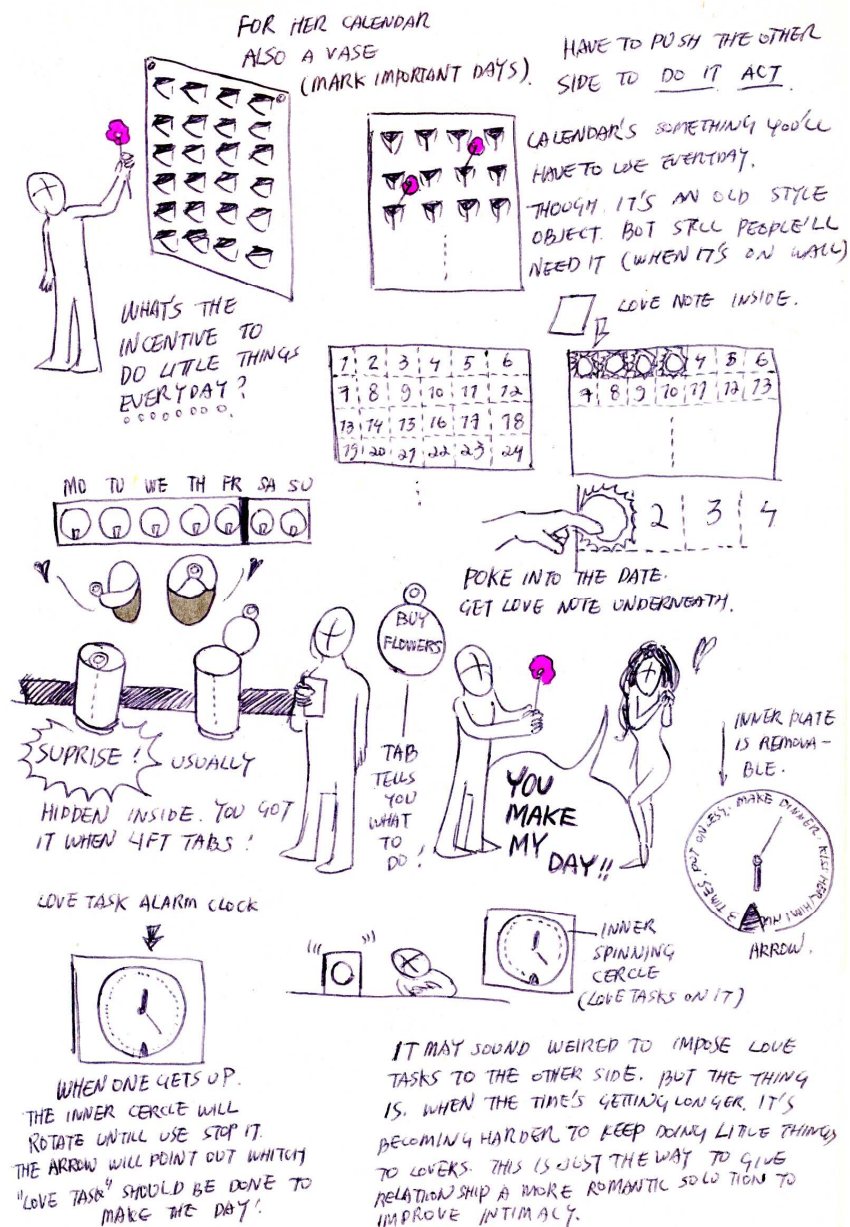
Fig 4.7 Concept 6

Description: To combine calendar with a vase, using the calendar to put flowers in specific dates to remind one doing little things. This idea is too abstract and not clear enough. Then I thought about nostalgic games such as poking paper grids to get small surprise behind, and lifting tabs to win a prize. Those forms seem to be amusing if I apply them to the calendar design, to take doing little things as small surprises can probably improve the relationship. The last concept is a wheel alarm clock. When the alarm clock rings, the wheel with various small love tasks on it starts spinning. When someone stops it, the wheel stays and a tiny arrow underneath points out which love task one should fulfill to "make his/her partner's day".

4.1.4 Ideas of how to communicate

As long as we can start to listen without interrupting or fighting back, the other side will greatly appreciate it. Although most of time men are the ones who don't want to listen, but listening skill is still crucial for women to learn since their talking skill is superior to men's, which makes men don't have much opportunities to express themselves because women dominate the conversation most of time.

A telephone is the products with both "listening" and "talking" functions. It is natural for me to come up with using a telephone to discuss about different communication difficulties between men and women.
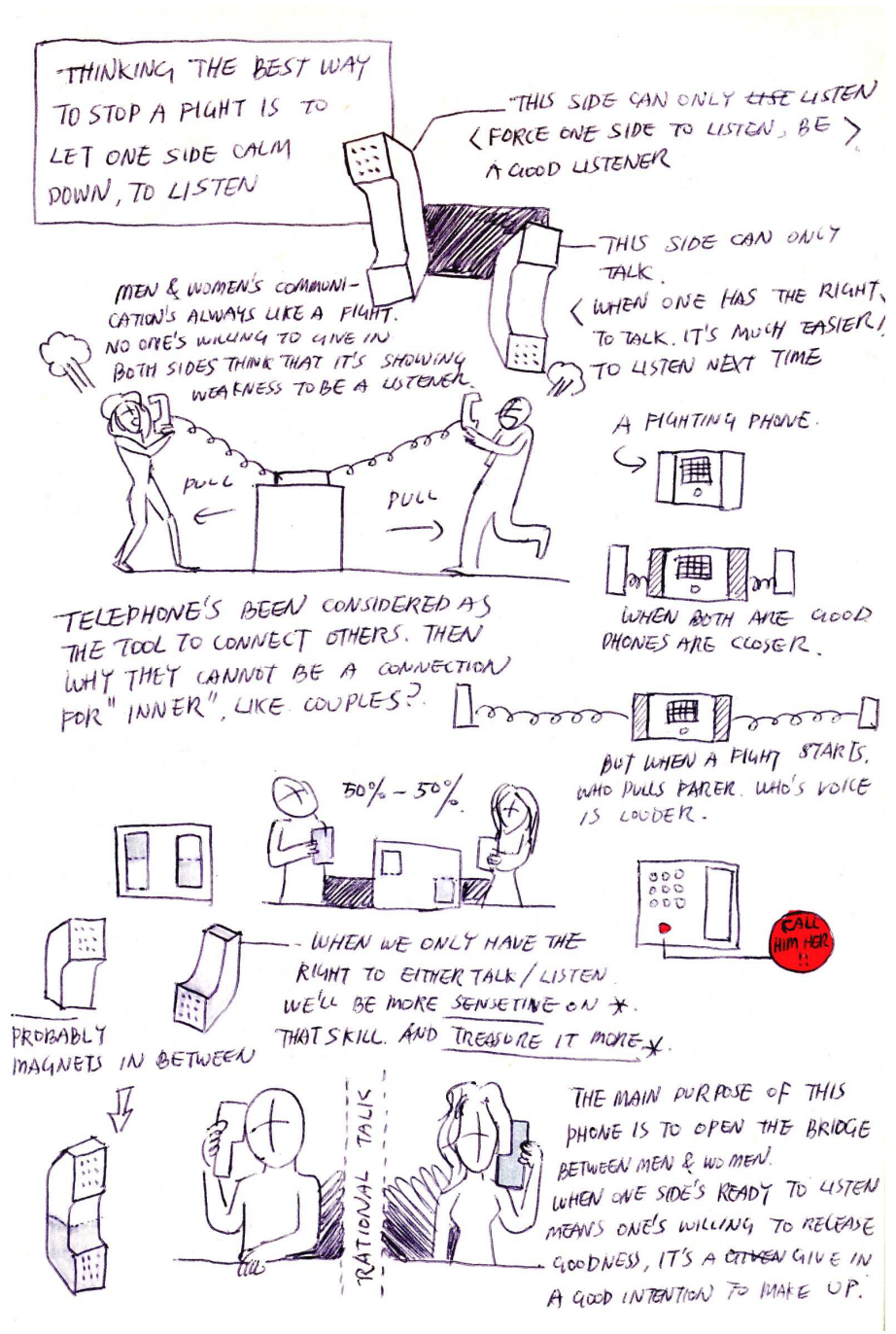
Fig 4.8 Concept 7

Description: The first form came to my mind was a pair of telephones. I divided the functions "listening" and "talking" into two phones which means user can only use one function at one time. When one wants to talk, one should grab the "talking" part and call the other side. Another one can decide whether to answer the phone or not. It seems like the "listening" part is in an inferior position due to lack of chances to respond back, but it actually conveys the idea that the "listening" side has the right to open the door of communication (to pick up the phone) or not.

4.1.5 Ideas of how to solve divergences between men and women

Since we have so many differences against the opposite sex, the best way to maintain a successful relationship is to be tolerant, supportive and exceptive of our partner's imperfections. Love is a trade-off: we have to adjust our positions so the relationship can be balanced. I took "supportiveness", "adjusting our positions" and "tolerating drawbacks" as key words to develop following concepts.
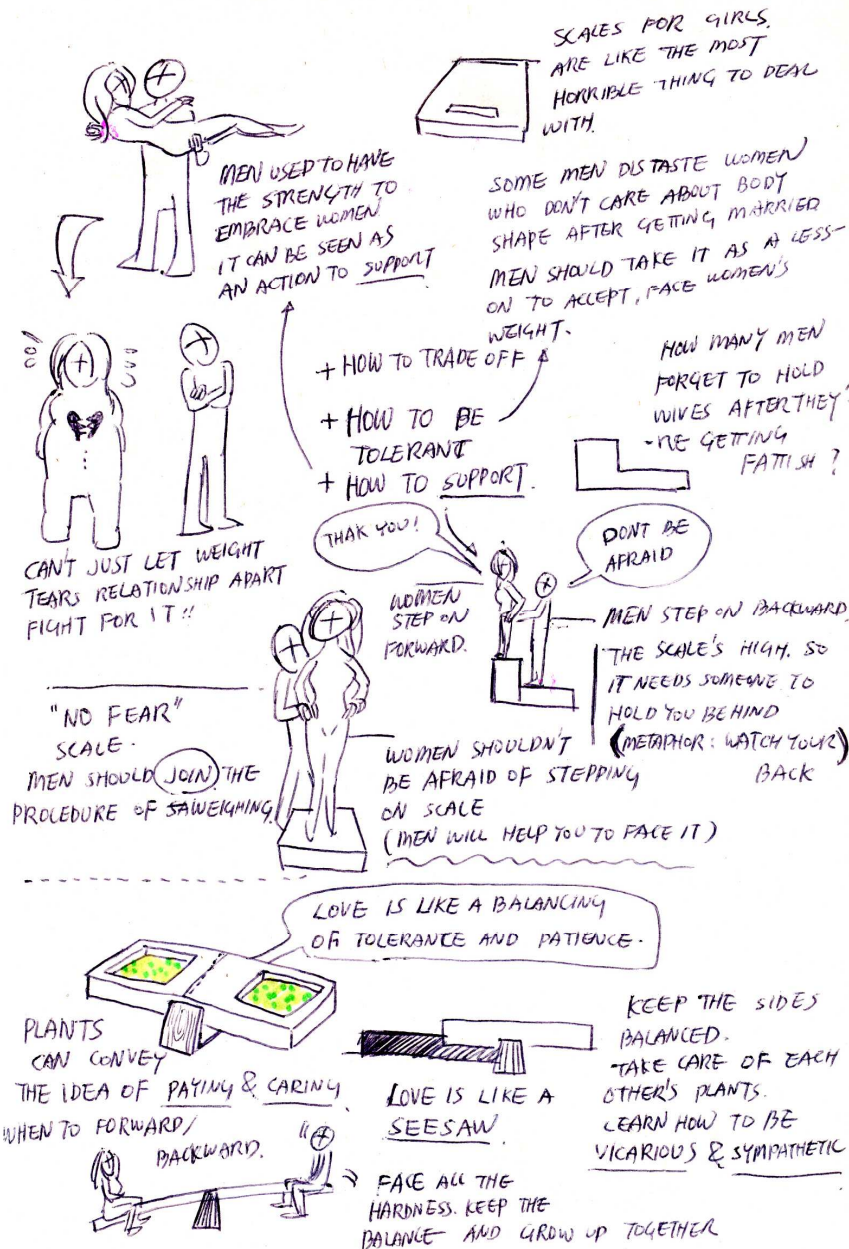
Fig 4.9 Concept 8

Description: Many people perceive a weight scale as a horrible product. They are afraid of stepping on it as well as knowing the numbers, not even for a glance. To convey the idea of "to support", I came up with a scale which is like a ladder; one steps on the front and lets the other hold on to the back. The idea is to let the other side support us from the fear of knowing our weights. The power button is on the back ladder so the scale needs two people to step on the top of it at the same time. It is a device to force the other side to join the process of weighing. In addition, one ought to face partner's shape, be tolerant to hold from behind. As to the expression of "adjust positions", I reckon that love is like a seesaw, we all try hard to keep it balanced. The seesaw plant pot idea below entails men and women to take care of each side, try to keep the balance by carefully cultivating it.

After all the ideas development for each topic, these rough ideas need to be refined and connected with relevant topics and then re-examined.

4.2 Convergence of idea

4.2.1 Idea screening of sharing power and status and solving different distances

The idea of creating a contrast image of "women rule the money issue" is intended to express the switched status in an ironic way. However, when a man has only face-saving status and power in the relationship, it makes a woman have extortionate power. When there is no right for the menial side to resist, the sharing power system will no longer exist. In other words, one still needs substantial power to balance the sharing platform.

The same problem happens to the mug set idea. A spiritual victory in this case (a bigger looking mug) has nothing to hold up or remind the other side. A symbol to reflect power and status seems better not to be too extreme in contrast. Moreover, if user could feel the meaning behind manipulating the products, the feeling would be deepened.

The remote control set is an idea that is more proper under this topic. The appearance can be related to equality. Meanwhile, the use of remote controls offers user equivalent powers, one needs to show concern for the other's feeling when watching television, a compromise should be settled beforehand in the effort to elude a possible fight when watching.

I combined "how to solve different distances" within this topic because the idea of forcing both sides to be apart fits the situation here. The sharing system can be broken if one holds both remote controls insistently. Thus, it is essential to use certain ways to add some limits to the remote controls set.

Inspired from the speaker idea, we all have had the experience of hearing annoying static through speakers due to electromagnetic wave interference. It would be interesting to transfer the static idea to remote control sets. When one wants to grab two remote controls at the same time, too close in proximity will generate static to interfere viewer when watching television. It is a device to ensure that one of the remote controls is always available for someone else to use. Moreover, it is also a metaphor of one's right to be independent, reminding us to keep a proper distance and don't try to control or chase after the other side in the relationship.

As a reasonable idea to use a pair of remote controls to discuss the topic, the following stage is to decide the form and layout of it. In this process, a unified style of all series of products in this project should be tuned. The whole project is for users to think more about the meaning behind products, hence, keep the style in a neat, simple way prevents people focusing too much on the appearance of products.

After deciding the style of the products, the next step is to conceive the layout of the remote controls. How to divide functions into two remote controls is the upcoming task. The concept of having jumping channel buttons on each remote control can fairly bring the idea of "fair play in the relationship" which is relevant to the topic. But it will also make the products being over simplified and not easily identifiable. As a result, I chose to keep one remote control having all buttons for regular functions, and let the other one have only one button: power.

It makes the contrast vivid and easy to understand. The remote control with only "power" button on it looks extraordinarily simple, but in fact it is much more powerful than the other. The button "power" relates to the metaphor of remote control in this topic. We have to share "power" rather than selfishly occupy it.

The following figure attempts to show the various adjustments of the layout. The shape and color are kept simple and clean. That is the basic idea of style for the whole series in this project.
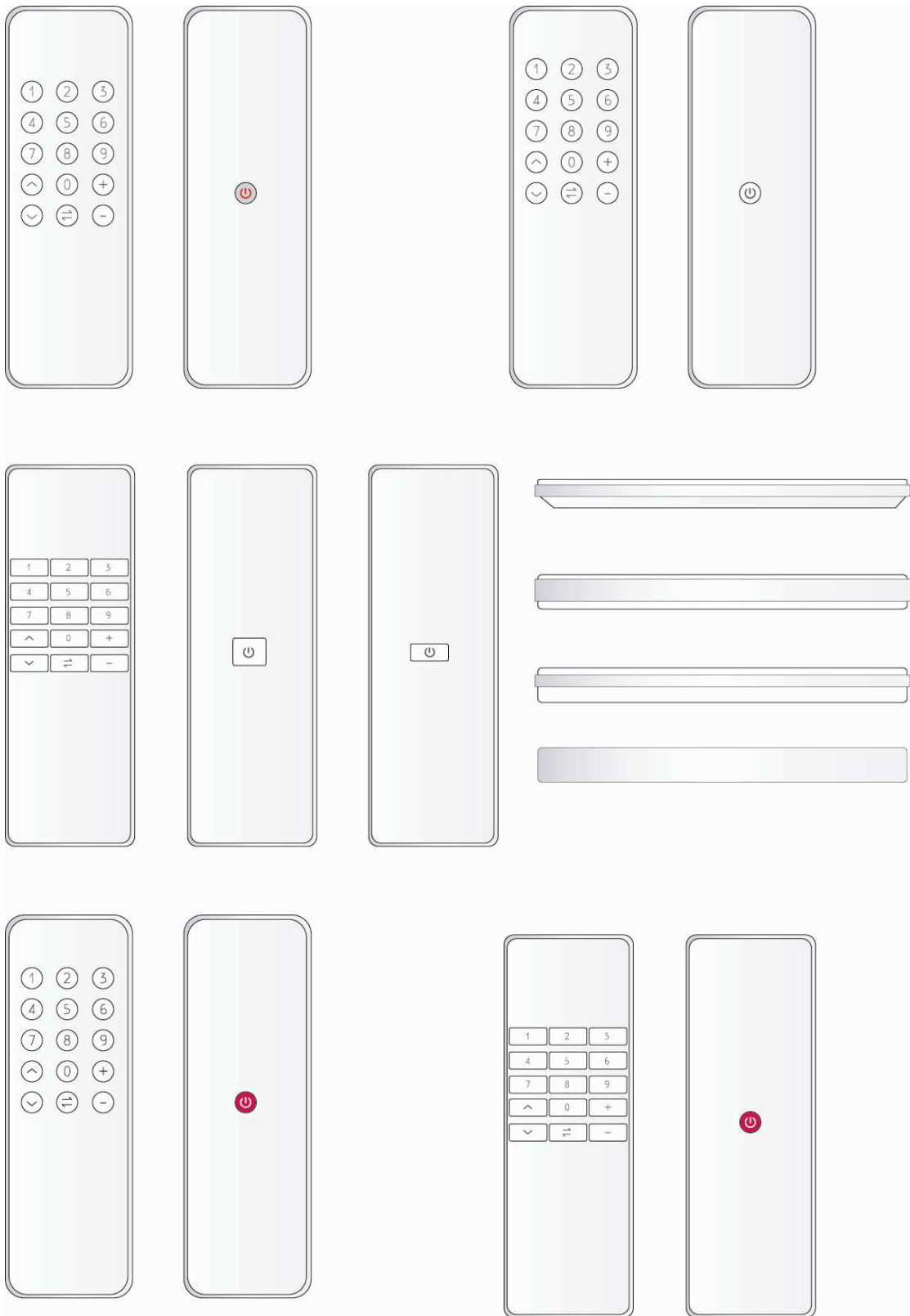
Fig 4.10 Buttons layout of remote control sets

A problem accompanies the idea of having two remote controls. It may be too troublesome for the user to find remote controls each time. It seems people are accustomed to leaving the remote control somewhere randomly after watching television. I came up with the idea of returning the pair of remote controls back to a dock. That solves the problem of losing them somewhere.
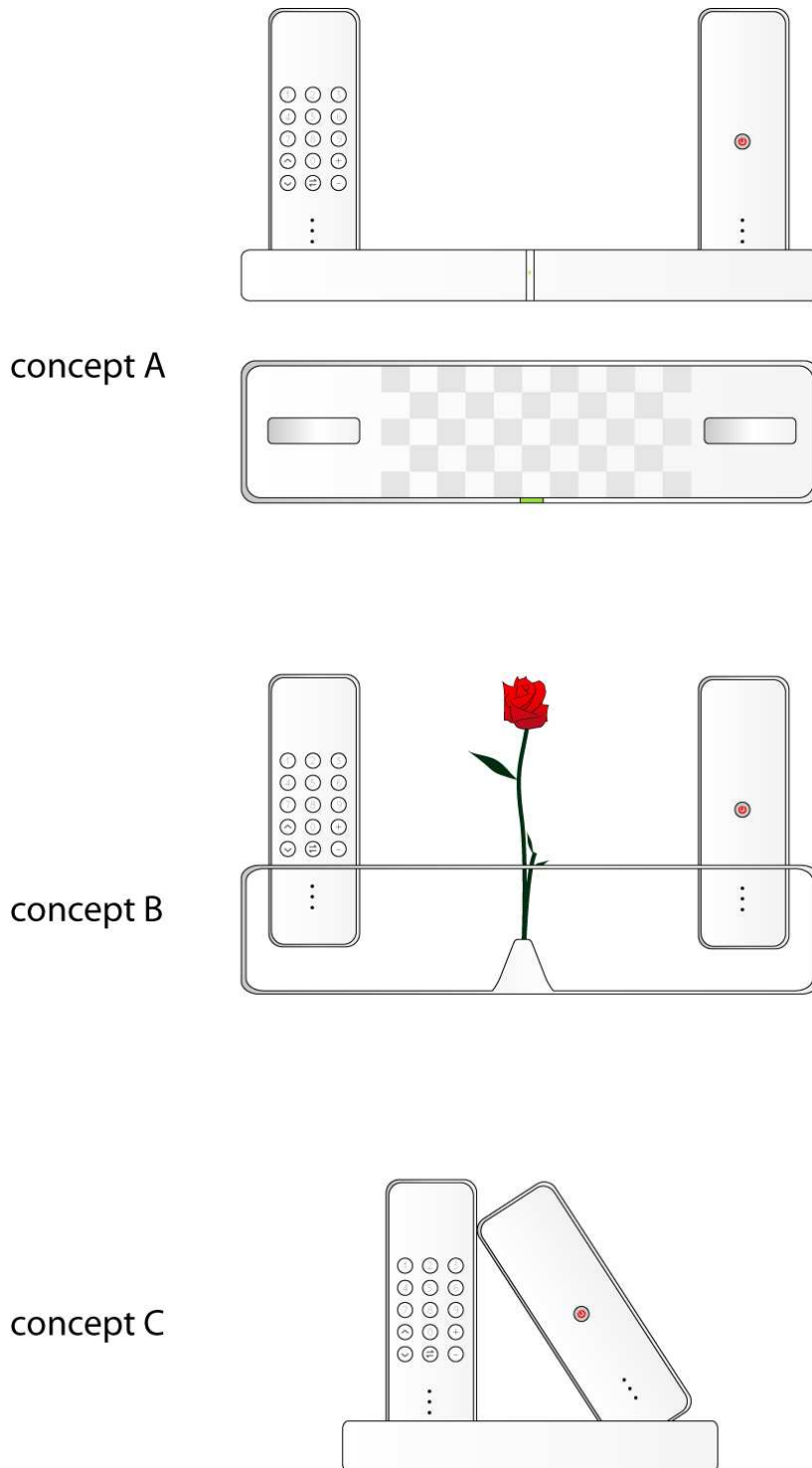
concept A

concept B

concept C

Fig 4.11 Ideas of remote control dock

The dock doesn't only serve as the function of holding, but can also remove static interference so remote controls can be put together.

Concept A is a dock with chess board image on the top of the dock. I want to express the idea of a "proper distance", the chess board image allows remote controls to hold both sides against each other. This idea turns distance into a more adversarial way of thinking. Concept B interprets the idea "a proper distance as romantic", a rose between the remote controls is a symbol of "romance". This concept tries to turn distance into positive thinking and hopes men and women will be more willing to carry out keeping the distance. Concept C transfers the metaphor of intimacy from the mug concept, meaning even though both sides have to keep proper distance, the purpose is for gaining more love, they still need to disarm and return back to intimacy.

As to those surveys and discussion above, Fig 4.12 reveals the final idea for sharing power and status as well as keeping each other from a proper distance. The button in the middle of dock is for searching remote controls when user cannot find them. Both remote controls have tiny speakers for voicing static.
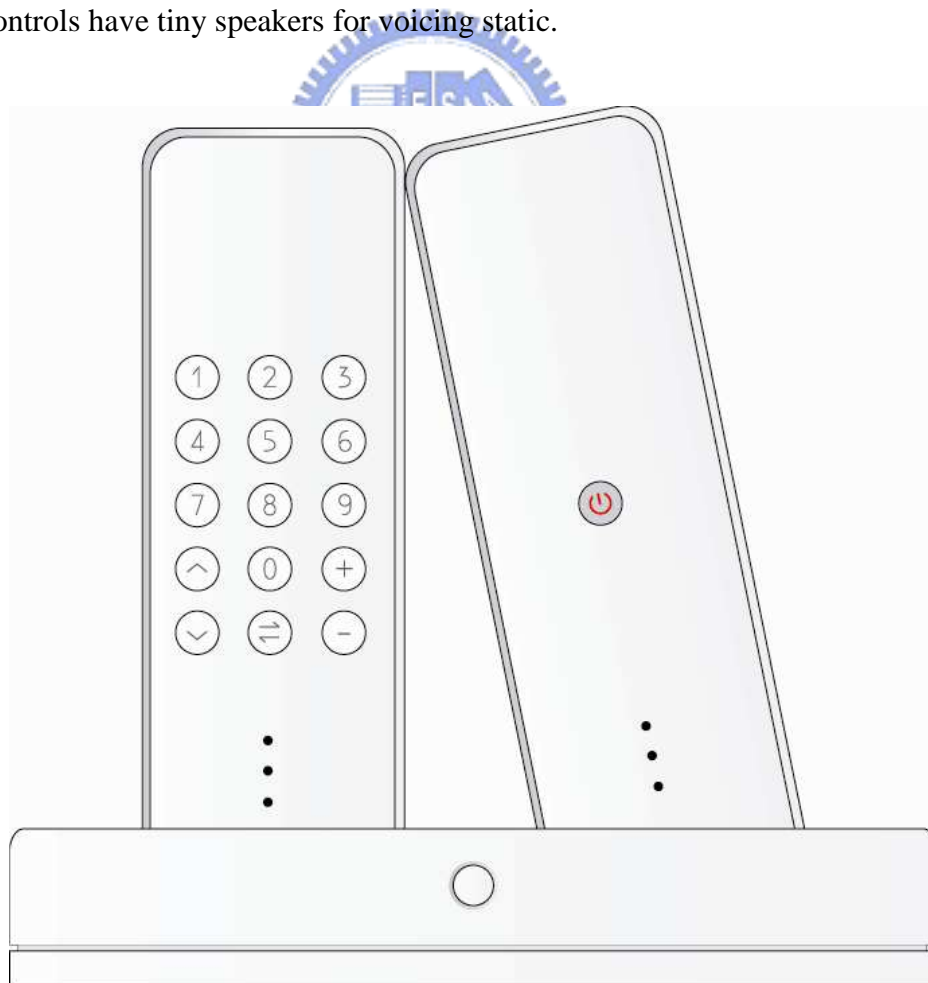

Fig 4.12 Final idea of remote controls

4.2.2 Idea screening of solving different expression of love

According to previous idea spread, to use an interesting way to let couples become more willing to do little things is the aim in this project. I mixed tab lifting idea with the wheel of alarm clock which has love tasks on it. When people lift tabs every time, there are small tasks printed on stickers underneath, waiting to be fulfilled. It is the way for both men and women continuously keep their love modes on.

I also referred to the different scoring systems between men and women, men tend to think the way to fulfill women best is to do big things. This tab calendar offers a chance for men to follow the tasks daily, expecting men will get used to do little things automatically some day. Moreover, a scoring system sounds viable to be added in the process of using the tab calendar. If men and women had to immerse in the scoring game, they would have to pay equally. A tab calendar and an album for scoring were designed like Fig 4.13-4.15.
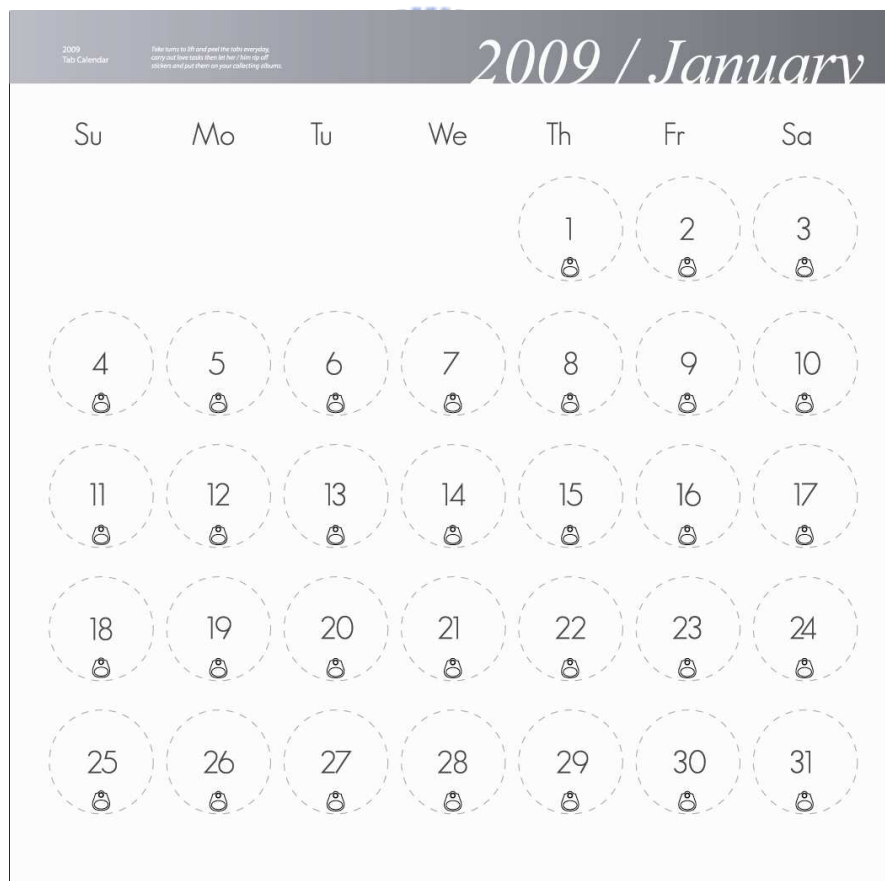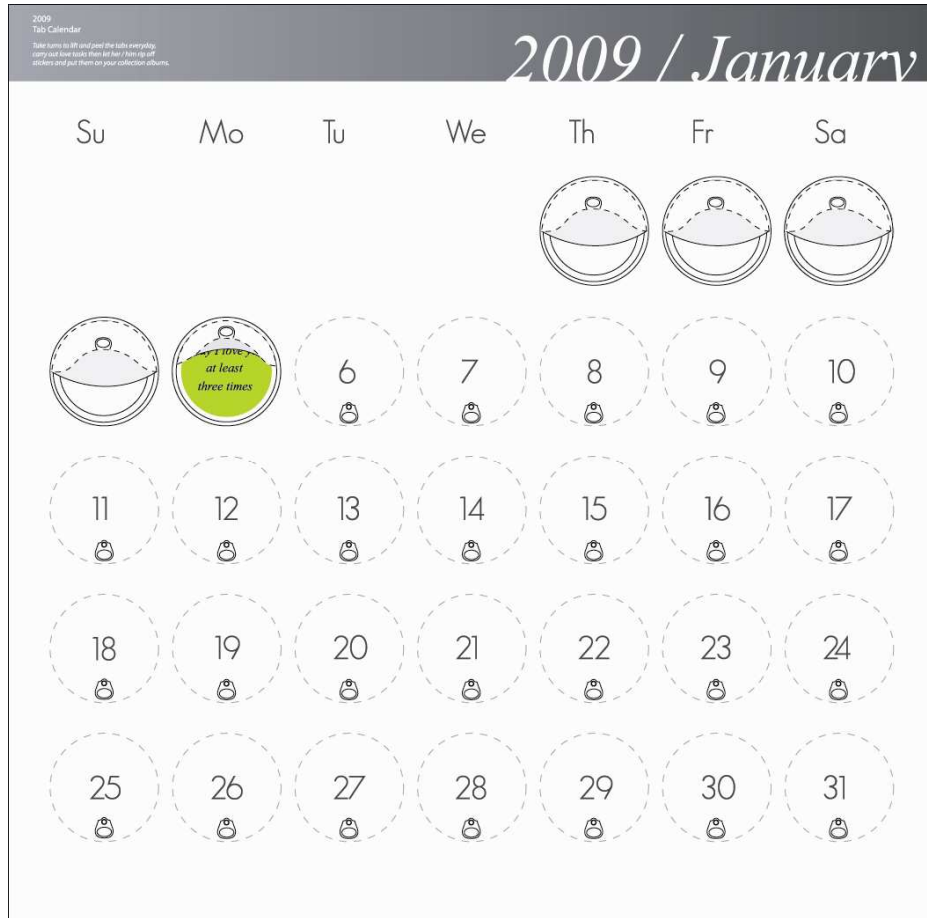

Fig 4.13 Final idea of tab calendar -1

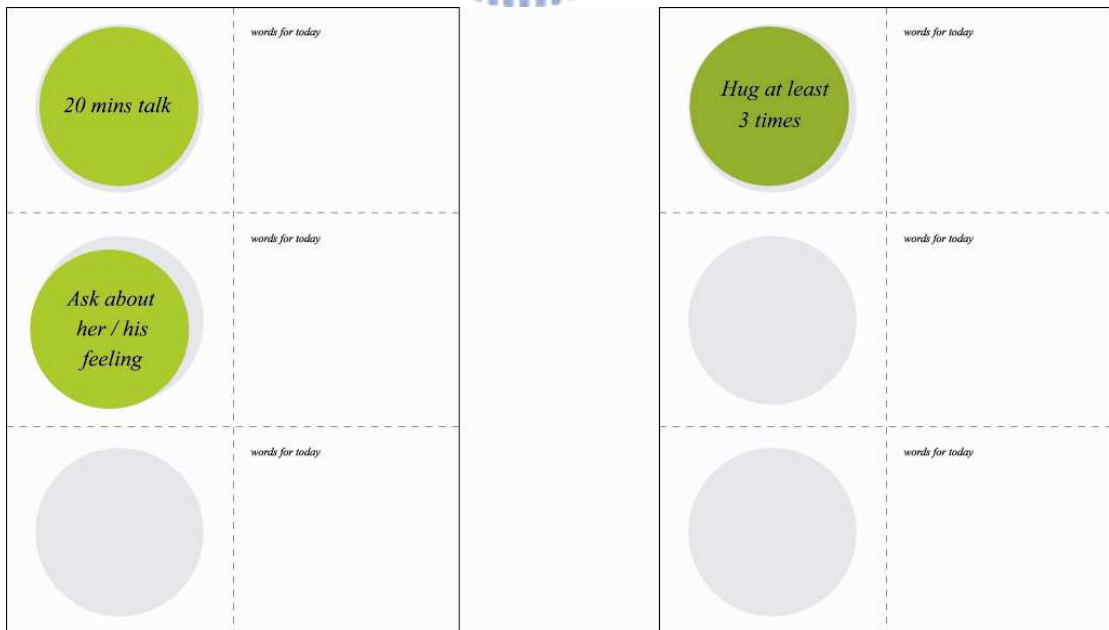Fig 4.14 Final idea of tab calendar -2

Fig 4.15 Final idea of albums

The tab calendar requires couples to do little things mutually everyday. Each tab represents one day. When one lifts the tab, there is a sticker which has a love task underneath it. The one who lifts the tab has to carry out the love task, when the little thing is done for the partner, the partner will peel the sticker off and put it in an album. The idea is to let the other side collect stickers for them. They can be the examiners to check if we are qualified to get the scores or not, so can we do the same thing to them.

Those right columns are for leaving comments of the day. Couples can also make a deal to reward each other when the scores reach a certain amount, which will facilitate the system to work smoothly.

4.2.3 Idea screening of how to communicate

To continue the idea of separated functioning telephones, I decided to focus on how to express the difference between "listening" and "talking". In the beginning, I applied the prototype of regular telephone and blocked either upper or lower parts for serving different functions. Fig 4.16 is the concept in the early stage.
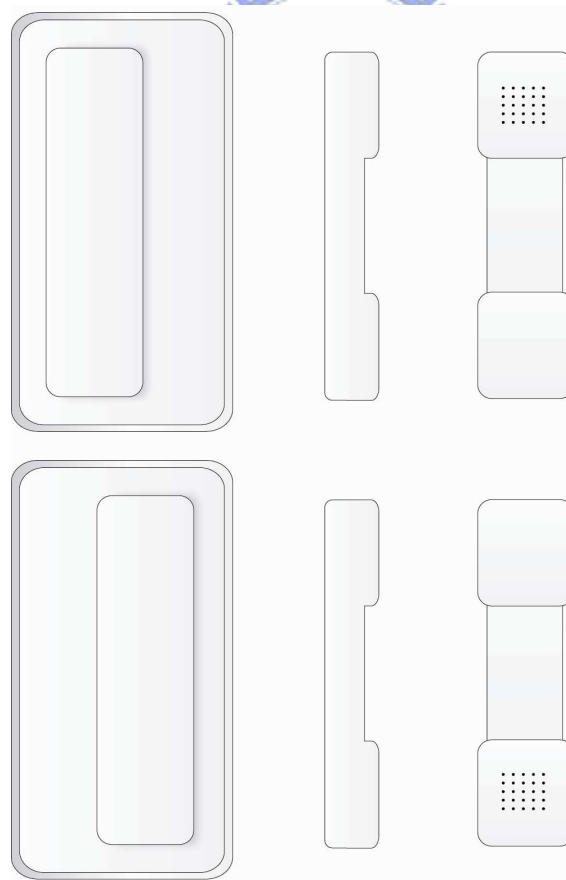

Fig 4.16 Telephone concept A

Buttons are neglected since the telephone is designed only for communication between husband and wife. The operation process is more like an intercom. When one grabs the "talking" phone, it calls to the other side automatically. The form is simple, but the visual element is too monotonous. The importance of "listening" cannot be underscored and difference between two phones cannot be told either. I reinforced the "listening" part in the second concept as below.

Fig 4.17 Telephone concept B

The "listening" phone set includes a pencil and a pile of notes. The meaning is to "really listen" by taking some notes when the other side is talking. The layout of "listening" dock differs from the other, which is more distinguishable than concept A.

However, since both phones are face down when they are not in use, the "listening" and "talking" parts cannot be interpreted by their forms. A pencil and notes are also too weak to express the metaphor of "listening". Therefore, I tried to develop phones which can strongly indicate the image of two different functions
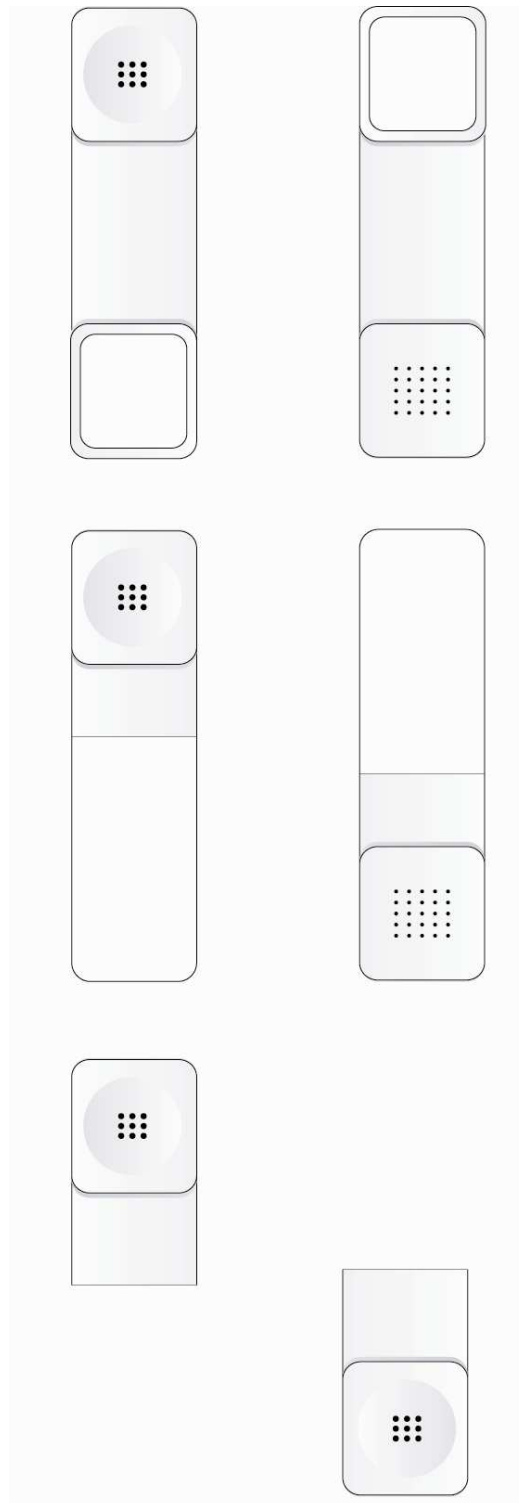

Fig 4.18 Telephone concept C

In order to emphasize the differences, I blocked the unnecessary functions in this series. First of all, I made hollows on both phones so it is obvious to tell which one is for listening, and which one is for talking. Next, I tried to make those parts transparent instead of empty. Transparency allows two phones to represent deficient functions moderately. Finally, I would like to have the forms sufficient and vigorous enough to show the focused functions, so I cut off a complete phone into half. It makes them look more complementary to each other. On second thought, the "listening" and "talking" parts should be reversible now that the shapes are exactly the same. I came up with the idea to compress two phones into one and use the reflection to represent the other part. Fig 4.19 is the final layout of telephone.
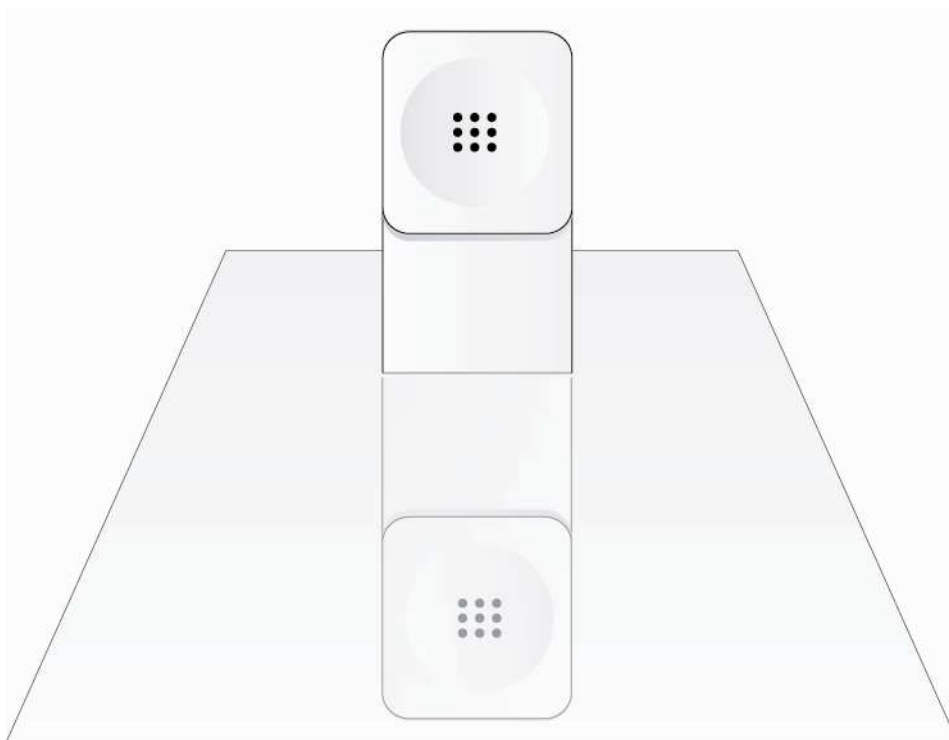
Fig 4.19 Final idea of telephone

The reason to make "listening" part substantial is for reminding people that "listening" always exceeds "talking". The "talking" part is merely a reflection from "listening" because with successful communication, people talk only when they start to listen. That is also the metaphor in this concept: listening is the beginning for talking. When one needs to be listened to, just pick up the phone and grip it reversely, it will call the other side automatically. The decision is up to the listening side, who can decide whether to open the door of communication or not by answering the phone.

4.2.4 Idea screening of how to solve divergences between men and women

In the earlier idea spread, a ladder scale to depict the idea to "support" and "tolerate" the other side was created. I re-examined the idea and found that one may feel reluctant to support and tolerate the other side when using the product. One couldn't really get involved in weighing only by stepping on the back. Besides, the key word "tolerance" is also feeble to be depicted in such a way. On the other hand, to use a seesaw image can be analogous to the idea that a balanced relationship needs both sides to adjust positions.

Hence, I attempted to apply the seesaw image to a scale. When I put them together, a new idea was conceived like this: a seesaw scale requires two people to manipulate. Both sides have to adjust their positions until the seesaw scale is balanced, which means men and women should try to adjust their positions in the relationship. As long as the scale is balanced, the weight of both sides shows in the middle. Some people may think weight is very personal, undergoing the hardship of shedding weight privately. With this product, it is no longer one's business, the other side shares and joins the process instead. When the weight is a bit too excessive, the couple can then make it a goal to loose weight together. It is the notion of "supporting" and "tolerating" as well.
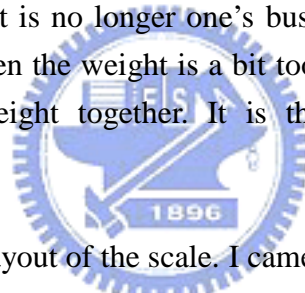
The next step is to settle the layout of the scale. I came up with a few ideas in terms of showing weight. Fig 4.20 is the concept for various displays.
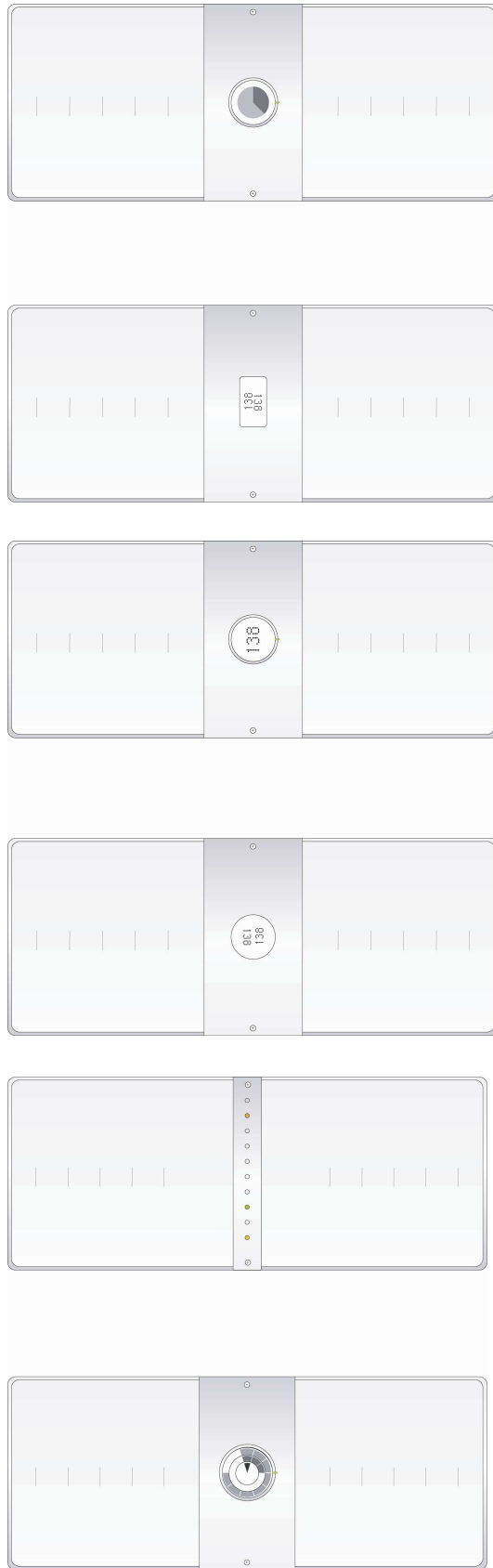
Fig 4.20 Display layout of scale

In the beginning, I tried to make the display more abstract such as different colors of light, graph and pie chart. The reason is for easing people's distaste for weight. However, those displays are unintelligible after collecting other people's opinions. Normal numbers are more acceptable for users after evaluation. In the case of showing numbers, a split form is readable for both sides, but considering the intent to deal with the weight together, the split numbers cannot make people take the weight as a whole and may distract users from the original purpose. Thus, the final layout is nailed down as following figure, which has one display to show totally weight for couples.
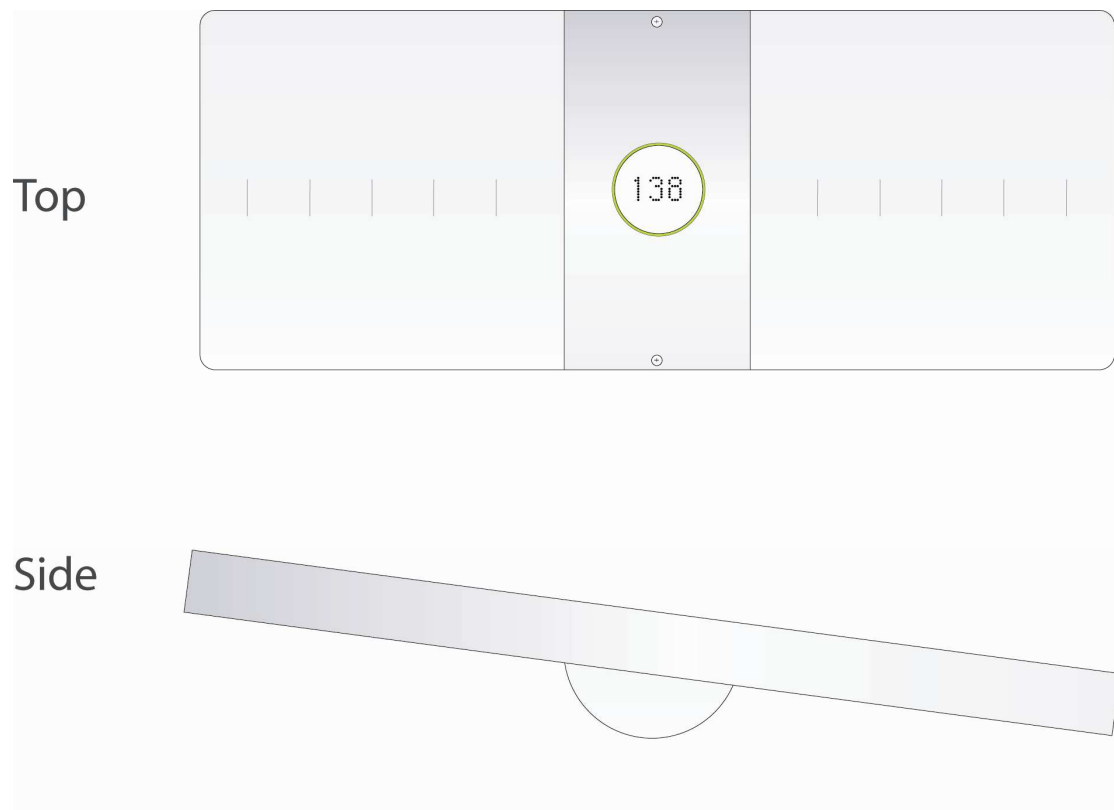

Fig 4.21 Final idea of scale

4.3 Final outcome

4.3.1 Computer 3D model and rendering

Fig 4.22 Remote controls rendering
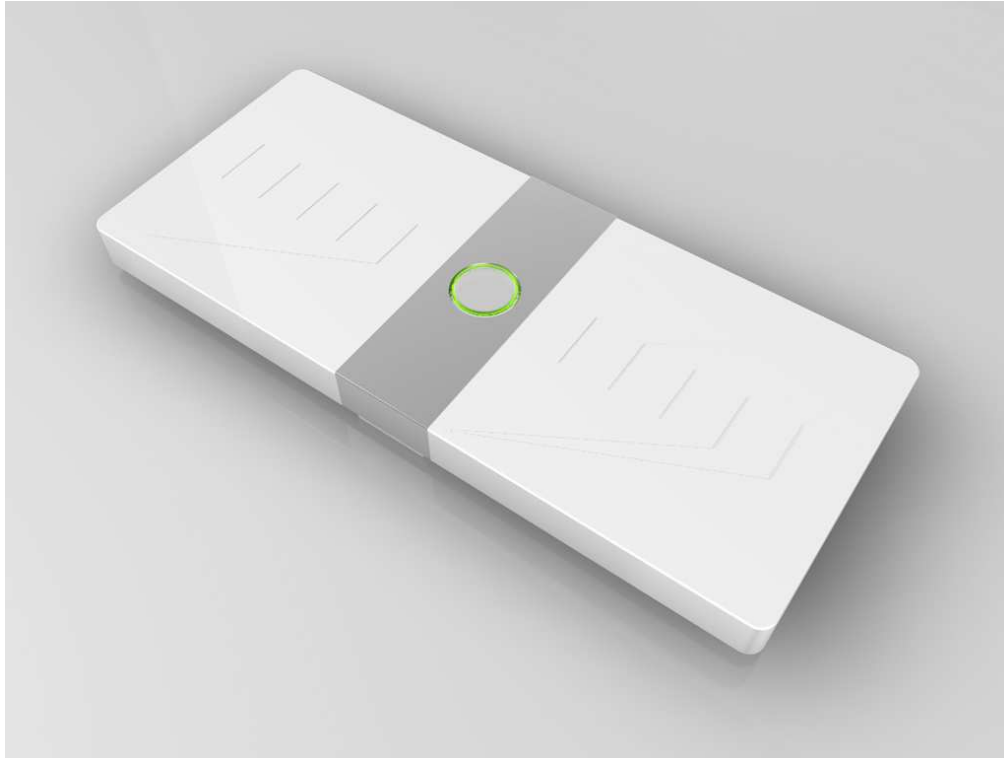

Fig 4.23 Telephone rendering

Fig 4.24 Scale rendering

4.3.2 Models during manufacturing process

After the simulation of computer 3D model and rendering, all the ideas are ready to be turned into real models. Since the tab calendar work has to be printed, there is no 3D model or rendering pictures in this phase.
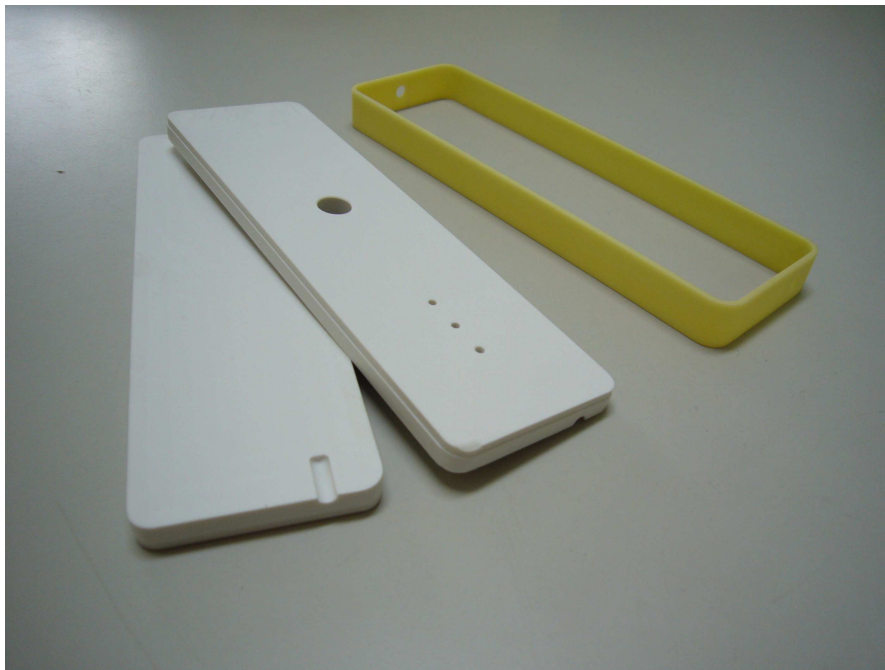

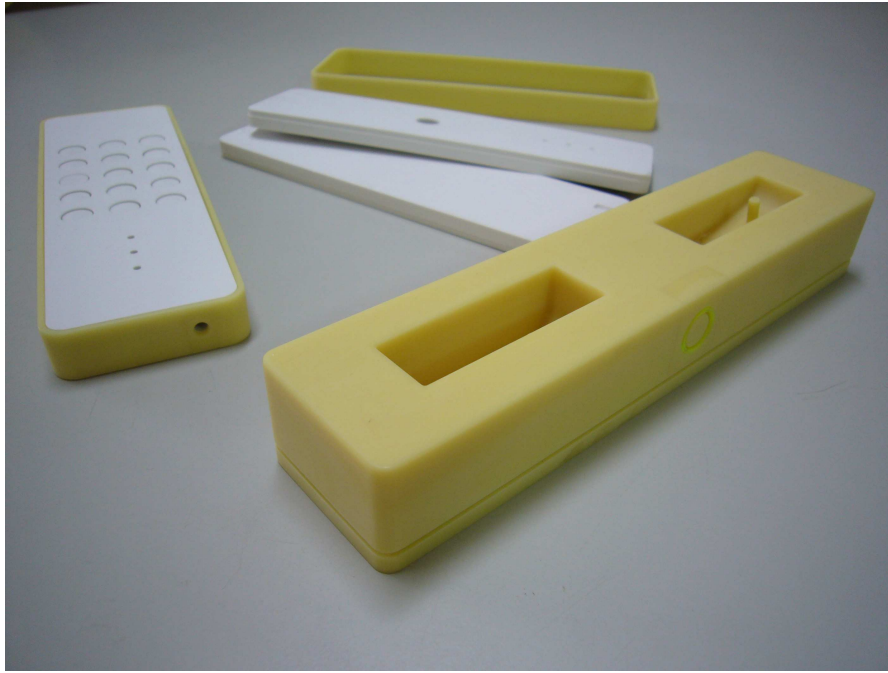Fig 4.25 Unpainted models of remote controls -1

Fig 4.26 Unpainted models of remote controls -2

Fig 4.27 Unpainted model of telephone -1

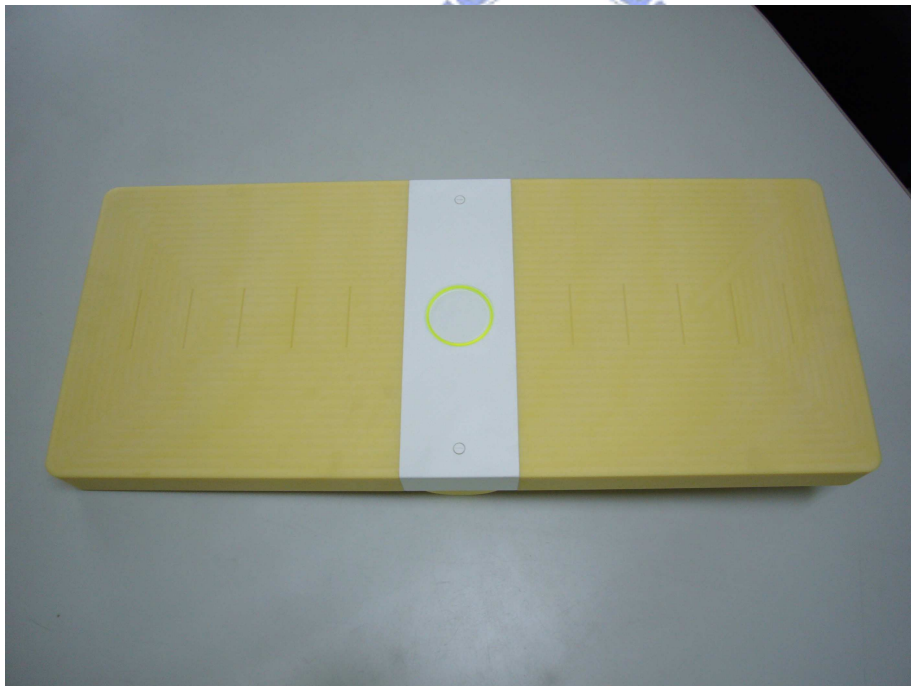Fig 4.28 Unpainted model of telephone -2

Fig 4.29 Unpainted model of scale

4.3.3 Final outcome

"Simple Lessons"

- For a better relationship between men and women

The reason for naming the project as "Simple Lessons" can be traced back to the initial motivation. I was trying to make products into concrete symbols in order to improve the husband-wife relationship. Each product in this project can be seen as a lesson to be learned for fulfilling a better relationship. It doesn't mean that the project is trying to achieve a great mission; the basic idea is just to help people think more about the meaning behind products when manipulating them. To establish a desirable relationship is not as hard as we may expect, we just have to be aware of our gender differences; and products in this project are reminders which exist in our daily life, which can be taken as lessons to review over and over again. There is no intricate and profound theory hidden behind the products, but just a few useful and simple tips. As long as we can spend a little time paying attention to those simple lessons, work with them and integrate them into our life, we can have the loving relationships we need and deserve eventually.

In an effort to ensure the best quality of presenting products, scenarios for each product were done and will be showed in the following pages.

There are four products in this series to express various lessons in the relationship:
Lesson 1
"*How to share*"
-Remote control set

Lesson 2
"*How to act*"
-Tab calendar

Lesson 3
"*How to listen*"
-One-way telephone set

Lesson 4
"*How to balance*"
-Seesaw scale

Fig 4.30 Remote controls set-1

Fig 4.31 Remote controls set-2

How to share

Lesson 1

A large number of couples don't know how to establish cooperative relationships and scramble for power to dominate the other side. It is crucial to learn how to share power in the relationship, and it is also a way to show respect to partners. The pair of remote controls is the image of a scepter. The "power" button is assigned to another remote control; the contrasting look as well as the meaning behind the usage of the product gives one the veto power against such habits as remote control hogging, or constant channel-jumping. Meanwhile, a static sound is generated when the remote controls are in too close of proximity. It indicates to the couple that they both need their private and independent space in their intimate relationship, which is also an expression of their shared freedom. When placed back in the dock, the remotes intimately nestles against each other and serves as a symbol of a win-win outcome in a successful cooperative relationship.

Fig 4.32 Scenario of "*shared power*"

Fig 4.33 Scenario of "*keeping proper distances*"

Fig 4.34 Tab calendar

How to act

Lesson 2

When getting along with the opposite sex for extended lengths of time, passion decreases and the relationship gets stale and monotonous. To do sweet little things constantly is a good way to keep love fresh. The tab calendar teaches us a daily lesson of how to act and express our love continuously. Both men and women take turns lifting the tabs everyday and fulfill the love tasks printed on the stickers underneath. When the task is completed, he or she will place the sticker in their albums and write some their comments or feelings about it. The album is a recording system of their relationship and love. Both sides can exchange albums, read comments, or make deals to reward each other mutually when stickers reach a certain amount.

Fig 4.35 Scenario of "*doing daily little things*"

Fig 4.36 One-way telephone set-1

Fig 4.37 One-way telephone set -2

How to listen

Lesson 3

People tend to defend themselves or interrupt each other when their opinions differ. Active listening is an essential element in establishing desirable communication in relationships. We would act more rationally if we could only take the time to pause and reflect upon what the other person has said. This telephone set serves like intercom function but restricts the user to talk or listen only at one time; when someone needs to be listened to, they reverse the grip of the phone, and it automatically calls the other side. However, the other side has the option of accepting or rejecting communication from their partner. The metaphor of listening as a superior and substantial way of communication is displayed in this product. We must start by listening if we would like to learn more about our partners. It takes two to fight, but only one to end an argument.

Fig 4.38 Scenario of "*opening the door of communication by listening*"

Fig 4.39 Seesaw scale

How to balance

Lesson 4

This scale needs both sides to be balanced to show weight, which symbolizes that husband-wife relationship is analogous to a seesaw. Both sides have to adjust themselves to fit in with each other's divergences. We need wisdom and tolerance to decide when to step forward or backward in the relationship. The display shows a combined total weight of both partners, instead of an individual weight; this represents the partnership between men and women when faced with obstacles. Thus, to shed or gain weight is no longer one's own burden; it is a shared goal for the couple to work together for obtaining better health.

Fig 4.40 Scenario of "*adjusting positions to keep balanced*"

- Chapter 5-
Exhibition

This project participated in the joint exhibition organized by Institute of Applied Art.

The exhibition was on view from 23nd of October, 2008, to 15th of November, 2008, and was held at the art gallery of National Chiao Tung University. This chapter includes the setting process of the exhibition, and displays the final outcome of this project.

Fig 5.1 Beginning of the setting

The "L" corner was given as my section on the second floor. Considering of the visiting path for the viewers, the order of products was changed to make the path more fluid. I place the topic of the project on the left side on the wall, expecting viewers to have a cozy, smooth viewing path.

Fig 5.2 Scenario pictures arrangement

It was hard work to arrange all the scenario pictures. There are eight pictures for remote controls set in order to show the "shared power" and "keeping proper distances" scenarios. The most difficult part, however, was to exploit limited space efficiently. Moreover, to balance the esthetics and layout of pictures was crucial as well; viewers might get confused with inappropriate scenario layout. Thus, the display of pictures should be in a neat, understandable way. The following picture was the final setting for the exhibition.

Fig 5.3 Final setting of the exhibition

Fig 5.4 Light setting of the exhibition

In order to emphasize products out from white background and cabinets, I sprinkled mung beans on the top of cabinets to let products stand out; another reason to use mung beans was because there are some illuminated green acrylic parts on the products, which are consistent with the color of mung beans.

Fig 5.5 Remote controls set in the exhibition

Fig 5.6 Seesaw scale in the exhibition

Fig 5.7 Tab calendar in the exhibition

Fig 5.8 One-way telephone in the exhibition

Fig 5.9 Design works with scenarios and detailed descriptions

Fig 5.10 Albums for tab calendar work

Fig 5.11 Explanation for visitors -1

Fig 5.12 Explanation for visitors -2

- Chapter 6-
Discussion

6.1 Introspection of the project

In this project, the selected topic came from my observation of relationship between people and products nowadays; we are all immersed in a commercial-oriented world, products are made more delicate and complex. Our material life is turning into another generation which is more diverse and abundant. However, due to the excessive options of products, people start to focus too much on the sensuous side of products; we pursue the latest colors, styles, functions and forms, the meaning of products to exist is merely to satisfy people's aspirations and the relationship between people and products is overly diluted.

I believe that there must be something more valuable from the products other than serving intricate functions and trendy appearances. The usage of a product should be extended as a reflection of the users rather than a product only serving to complete its function. The reflection can be seen as the synthesis of user experience and subjective evaluation of the product; it provokes emotions and affects people's evaluations of the products. A story, a meaningful memory and continuous interaction with products are what solidify the relationship between people and products.

I tried to conduct a meaningful user experience to improve our relationships with products and other users. Products in this project serve restrained functions, which calls for two people to integrate them and intended to provoke interaction. In this regard, products are taken as concrete symbols to help us to develop better relationships with usage, and the user has been transformed into a complex, emotional experiencer. The relationship between men and women has been thought as an intricacy but also inevitable for couples to cope with in matrimony. I reckon that as an interesting issue to exert the power of products since when men and women get married, they live under one roof and share everyday products; in this context, daily products should have the potential to alter our relationships with the opposite sex and give it a new twist.

This project aims to facilitate people to develop a better attitude when getting along with the opposite sex by probing into issues of intimate relationships. Based on opinions and studies from relationship experts, the selected issues are chiefly taken as cruxes which concern happiness in marriage. From a designer's perspective, words

from books are transformed into concrete products; the purpose is to remind people of matters needing attention in the relationship with substantial forms other than printed papers.

To begin with the discussion of discrepancies between men and women, all of the reviews contributed ideas of different thinking process as well as values caused by gender difference. Those natural divergences lead to misunderstandings when couples cannot interpret each other correctly. After collecting needed information from relationship books, I summarized issues which are more possible to be represented into real products and looked for proper images to show relevant issues. This stage is considered the most difficult part of the project since products here are not only serving functions but also serve as symbols; this means it was necessary to combine daily products with appropriate relationship issues. The context of manipulating products is a vital clue to develop products; various characters of the products are observed in order to integrate the chosen issues as well.

Donald Norman [10] mentioned three emotional reactions levels: "visceral", "behavioral" and "reflective". The "behavioral" level comes from user's experience of using products and the "reflective" level is superior to other levels since it comes from user's interpretation, comprehension and deduction. Products are neutral; they are endowed with specific meanings by user experience. Emotions are evoked by user experience and the values vary depending on the products. This project attempted to conduct people to designer's pre-ordered intention by restrained functions. Through the interaction with products and other users, I expect people will be able to contemplate the extraordinary user experience in the "reflective" level, and trace back to what the designer intended to imply in the relationship. Furthermore, by means of building up a better relationship through the products, people will have positive feelings and emotions from the products; products can thereby help people not only physically but also mentally.

6.2 Contribution

(1) Unlike most products that are functionally-oriented, the improvement of interpersonal relationship is the prerequisite in this project. The series of products focus on the husband-wife relationship, expecting the interactively manipulative process to achieve emotional exchange, which takes products beyond merely solving problems; they are reminders to keep people thinking of certain meaning behind the products, the emotions people have towards products are thereby

stronger.

(2) A shared experience of manipulating products is also underscored in the series of this project. Products offer users a platform to cooperate with each other and through the cooperation, products become more flexible to users; various scenarios will be occurring during the usage process and products will be interpreted with various possibilities as well.

(3) In this project, functions of products are restrained and somehow absurd. However, when people decide to use the products, they agree with known conditions. In this regard, products are no longer obedient to users; they can stand in a higher position to inspire people to think about their own fundamentality. The role of products play here is more serious and instructive to people.

(4) The project focuses on the improvement of husband-wife relationship, devoting the effort to lessen the gaps and divergences we have with the opposite sex. A novel way has been carried out to reannotate intimate relationships by redesigning daily products. For further study, designers interested in this filed should explore more potentialities concerning interpersonal relationships; in this way, products are no longer lifeless tools, they can have more humanity and geniality.

6.3 Imperfectness of the project

For the limits of time, resources and members of this project, there is still room to improve. The imperfectness in terms of research and design are discussed as following.

(1) The chosen relationship issues are picked from studies and books from experts, but all the difficulties and suggestions from experts probably cannot be suitable for everyone. In other words, it is possible that users could not be empathic to delineated issues if they didn't encounter the similar situations. To provoke people to have resonance is a key element in this project; the products would be meaningless if users could not respond to relevant issues.

(2) The meanings behind products in this project need to be particularly explained, users may not fully understand the stories merely by the given external conditions. In order to fix the problem, products should be able to reveal the meanings in a sufficient and precise way; to cut down redundancies to help products become more understandable and avoid being misinterpreted by users.

(3) The idea of this project is devoted to improve relationships with the opposite sex. However, the scenarios designer has planned are too ideal and the real situation may not go as smoothly as expected. Yet, though the restricted functions are meant

to direct users rebuilding intimate relationships, users may still be bothered and annoyed by incomplete functions. Furthermore, products in this project can be seen as reminders only on certain occasions due to their attributes. Hence, how to make products play the roles fully is important in further studies and should be concerned from the very beginning.

(4) Working models should have been built to test the scenarios as well. Designer could obtain comments from users and refine products during the design process based on the trials; products could become more reasonable and precise to express the relevant issues.

(5) As to the display in the exhibition, it would have been better if I had made short films to demonstrate the scenarios. The display is a vital segment to present the whole work, which should be considered thoroughly about how to capture viewer's interest effectively; films can provide viewers with stronger emotions as well as arouse sensuous feelings. Since the limits of time and resources, it is a pity that a more comprehensive expression could not be carried out in this project.

6.4 Suggestions for further studies

The role of products in this project is more than solving problems but pulling closer interpersonal relationships with a positive attitude. Man-woman relationship are just one kind among various interpersonal relationships; designers who interested in related fields should probe deeply into the possibilities of product's affections to human relationships. Moreover, simulations conducted by working models are essential to ensure a deepgoing, accurate user experience, which helps designer to control different feasible situations.

The interaction of the usage process should be expanded and developed into a great diversity of potentialities; products should be more open as well as encourage users to experience the implications properly through the interaction. We are surrounded by numerous products in everyday life, as a designer, I believe that products are an ideal way to offer people different perspectives to view the world through designers' eyes; designers, on the other hand, should concern about issues of human, environment and culture, then transform the concerning into designed works. Only if we aware of the responsibilities to our society, both designers and customers won't be drowned in the gargantuan cataract of commercial pursuits nowadays, and the values people have towards products will thereby be more tenable.