

“Quite”

to be polite.

Outside the company, Yanai comes across as a game and almost impish corporate prophet. I asked if he could give me a concrete example of Uniqlo clothing making life better. He responded by pulling a laminated card from his jacket pocket:

Uniqlo is the elements of style.

Uniqlo is a toolbox for living.

Uniqlo is clothes that suit your values.

Uniqlo is how the future dresses.

Uniqlo is beauty in hyperpracticality.

Uniqlo is clothing in the absolute.

Half jokingly, I asked if I could keep the card. I was surprised when he agreed. I walked away thinking I'd extracted some truth so dear to Yanai that he literally keeps it close to his breast.

Later, I came across a 2012 article in *Forbes* in which the writer describes receiving a laminated card from Yanai in just the same fashion. Yanai, it turned out, was practicing not diplomacy but something more like royal manners, meeting all comers with smooth little business cards in the same way that Queen Elizabeth II was said to respond to every conversational sally with “Quite.” In a sense, it was the perfect Uniqlo ges

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