



**4 Reasons why
onboarding tours
and coach marks
don't work.**



— ONE

People don't read the instructions.

Onboarding coach marks, tours, and tutorials are a nuisance to click past, interrupting your customer's mental state and use flow.



Short-term memory is really short-term.

Users typically forget everything as soon as they close the tutorial because our short-term memory doesn't retain very much information.



By the time people are done reading this, they'll have forgotten most of the information and will have to learn by using the app.





The point.

Even if users would save time in the long-term by reading coach marks and tutorials, that's just *not how people behave in the real world.*

This is called "The Paradox of the Active User¹"

¹ <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/paradox-of-the-active-user/>



— TWO

Context is everything.

Onboarding coach marks and tutorials present information completely out of context for your customers.



One thing at a time.

Your users can't read coach marks and use the app at the same time.

So they're forced to memorize instructions at launch and try to apply them later.



**People want solutions,
not puzzles.**

We don't launch an app to learn how to
use the interface.

We want to jump in and complete tasks
as quickly as possible.



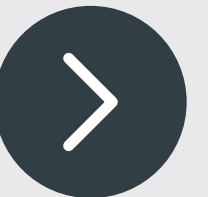
The point.

Skip the onboarding overlays and support your customers through *contextual helpability* by displaying tips only when necessary, as they use your product.



Self-promo pause.

Contact me for a Rapid UX Audit to find and fix onboarding UX problems before they become customer problems.



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— THREE

**Perceived complexity
creates real complexity.**

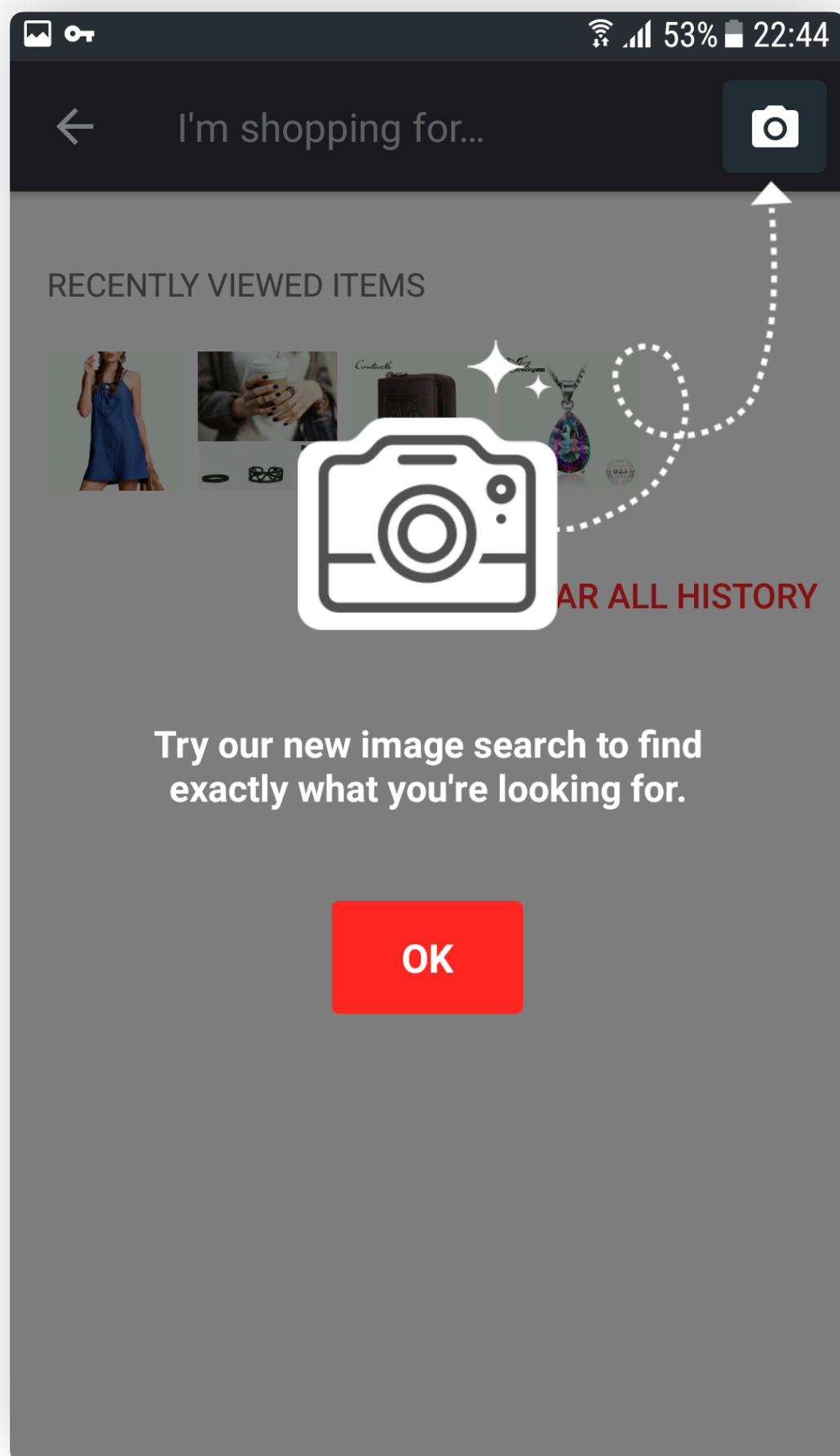
Coach marks and onboarding tutorials
imply that your product is difficult to use.

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**If you say “it’s complicated”
then it’s complicated.**

Even the most intuitive interfaces can
be perceived as complex by adding
unnecessary coach marks, tours, or
tutorial overlays.



A simple image search becomes complicated by a coach mark that disrupts the user's experience.



The point.

It's better to find and fix usability and UX issues rather than add disruptive barriers like coach marks and tutorials.



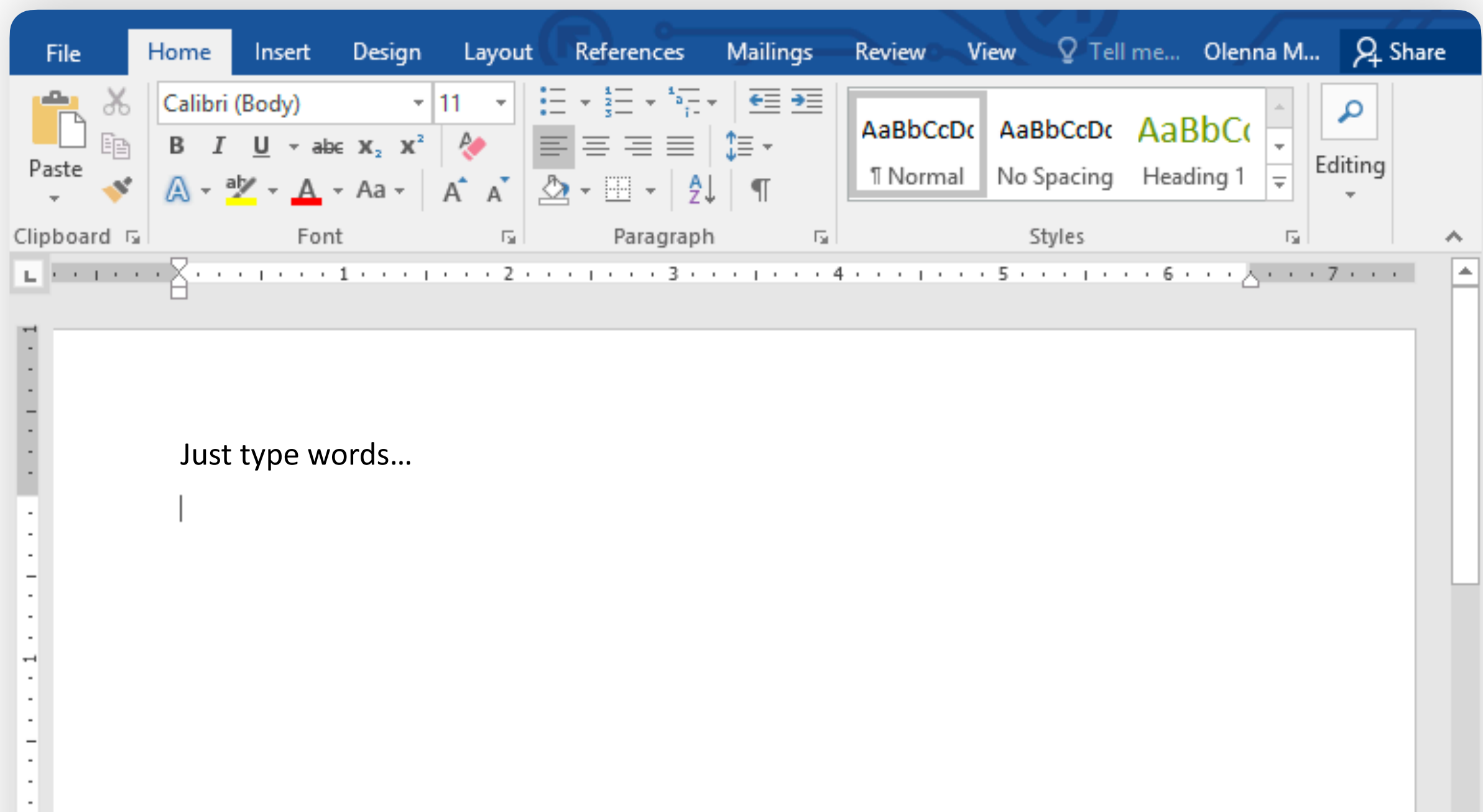
— FOUR

Make users happy with early wins.

Focus on the core purpose of your product and help new customers succeed at that.



Microsoft Word is a very complicated software, yet it's easy for new users to jump in and do what they set out to do.





Progressive disclosure.

As users engage with your product introduce them to new actions and features seamlessly through contextual discovery.



The point.

Helping customers succeed early on will make them happy and encourage them to explore other features.



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Let's get to work.