

ED



AGE

back  
slash



AGE

OF

WELLNESS

WHAT IS THE

NEXT WAVE

OF WELLNESS



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# ED | GE

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Crises accelerate the future.

History shows us so, and the present acts as living evidence.

Before COVID—"BC"—wellness was one of the world's biggest, fastest-growing and least understood industries. Attracting ridicule like a moth to a flame of a questionably scented *goop* candle. But avo on toast, fasting, athleisure and being shouted at while sitting on a \$2k stationary bike are mere saplings compared to the next wave of wellness.

This content is an exploration of that wave. Some beginning BC, since given fresh meaning or alternative trajectories. And some now sing even more in their resonance.

"Financial Therapy," for example, was suddenly being promoted in the workplace and through government programs to aid mental health and economic stability. Teased out of its requisite years of trend report purgatory. Read Backslash's experience on the couch, on page 53.

Niche became mass with rural escapism, homebody culture and body hacking—at least for the portion of the world that believes in masks.

Our essay Zero Out predicted a Great Pause, BC. It now serves as a shining light on the brave new world we might forge as we move through the virus. Clinging to the best that we found in the worst of times, on page 34.

There's teenage rebellion on page 40. A sobriety movement on page 18. Possibly a little lagging until we start our post-pandemic detoxes, on page 56.

And of course there's anti-racist healthcare, someone who sleeps for a living and a Zen Barbie—because what is 2020 without a Zen Barbie?

Hope in wellness might seem like an absurdity. But 2020 has become a fast lesson. Teaching us that established structures can wobble. And to survive this **absence**, we have to nurture our self and our **collective**. It's **essential** for our control, our **democracy** and our **pleasure**.

**EDITOR IN CHIEF** SARAH RABIA

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# WELLNESS TIMELINE

Where did "Wellness" begin and how has it evolved through time? Backslash charts a cultural history of wellness and how it became widely accepted in our health lexicon.



By Cecelia Girr, Linda Hosmer Spain, and Karen Falk

## 3000–1500 BC

AYURVEDA IS BORN IN SOUTH ASIA.

A holistic health system, Ayurvedic regimens are tailored to each person's unique nutritional, exercise, social and hygiene needs—with the goal of maintaining a balance that prevents illness and optimizes well-being. In Ayurveda, wellness of the self is interconnected to the wellness of others, the environment, and the universe.

## 1994

AMERICAN GROCERY SHELVES FILL WITH "LOW-FAT" EVERYTHING.

SnackWell's, a line of 11 no-fat and low-fat crackers and cookies, became one of the nation's best-selling brands with sales of \$400m. Millions of health-conscious Americans were following the strict low-fat diet of the day endorsed by the American Heart Association.

## 2004

TO PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS, IRELAND BECOMES THE FIRST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD TO INTRODUCE A TOTAL SMOKING BAN.

Shortly after, Bhutan went further to outlaw the sale and production of tobacco completely.

## 1980–2000s

WELLNESS MAINSTREAMS.

Jane Fonda's Workout VHS brings fitness into the home. Meanwhile, Boeing becomes the largest U.S. corporation to go smoke-free. The combination and proliferation of gyms, spas, celebrity health freaks, and early wellness-at-work programs, provide the momentum that makes wellness go mass.

## 2009

VEGAN FAST-FOOD LOVER ETHAN BROWN LAUNCHES BEYOND MEAT—PLANT-BASED BURGERS AND FOODS THAT TASTE LIKE MEAT.

Requiring measurably less land and water and emitting far less greenhouse gas than traditional meat production, Beyond Meat paves the way for plant-based eating to become cool.

## 1650s

THE NOUN "WELLNESS" FIRST APPEARS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word meant the opposite of illness or the state of being well or in good health.

## 1979

ON A SEGMENT OF 60 MINUTES, DAN RATHER REPORTED, "WELLNESS. THERE'S A WORD YOU DON'T HEAR EVERY DAY. IT MEANS EXACTLY WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK IT MEANS: THE OPPOSITE OF ILLNESS.... IT'S A MOVEMENT THAT IS CATCHING ON ALL OVER THE COUNTRY."

Later in the segment, he spoke to Dr. John W. Travis, founder of the Wellness Resource Center who said, "Just because you aren't sick and you could go get a checkup and get a clean bill of health, doesn't mean that you're well."

## 2011

K-BEAUTY GOES GLOBAL, MAKING SHEET MASKS, COSMECEUTICALS AND LABORIOUS 10-STEP CLEANSING ROUTINES THE NEW BEAUTY STANDARD.

Before this, Asian beauty was largely segregated or ignored by Western brands and alien to the average consumer. It marked a cultural and sales shift from makeup to skin care.

## 1936

JACK LALANNE OPENS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FIRST GYMS IN CALIFORNIA.

He later became known as the "Godfather of Modern Fitness" for introducing weight training and nutrition to the masses.

## 1974

GRANOLA GOES MAINSTREAM—BEFORE THIS, "HEALTH FOOD" WAS CONSIDERED JUST FOR HIPPIES IN THE WEST.

The breakfast food made an appealing and accessible icon for the health movement.

## 2012

CO-FOUNDED BY THE OXYMORONIC COMBINATION OF A FORMER MONK AND EX-AD MAN, HEADSPACE LAUNCHES THE FIRST VERSION OF ITS APP WITH A SET OF 365 SESSIONS.

The brand has since popularized mindfulness and meditation for the masses, with 62 million downloads in 190 countries to date and more celebrity followers than Scientology. We hope.

## 1948

THE WHO PROVIDES A MODERN DEFINITION OF HEALTH IN ITS CONSTITUTION.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

## 1961

HALBERT L. DUNN, M.D.—KNOWN AS THE "FATHER OF THE WELLNESS MOVEMENT"—PUBLISHES HIGH LEVEL WELLNESS.

Looking for a new terminology to convey the positive aspects one could achieve beyond avoiding sickness, Dunn defined High Level Wellness as "an integrated method of functioning, which is oriented toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable."

## 2016

THE YEAR OF HYGGE—THE DANISH WORD FOR GETTING COZY: "A QUALITY OF COZINESS AND COMFORTABLE CONVIVIALITY THAT ENGENDERS A FEELING OF CONTENTMENT OR WELL-BEING."

As Hygge became a global cultural phenomenon, people rediscovered the value of a quiet night in, and started to prioritize self-care.

## NOW

COVID-19 GIVES US ALL "CLEAN-XIETY."

Uncertainty and anxiety around health and hygiene creates a culture obsessed with cleanliness and a new generation of germophobes. Bleach sales boom as demand for cleaners and sanitation products spike more than 500%. "Clean" becomes a new standard of modern wellness.

## 2020

NEW DECADE, NEW VAGINA ENVY. GOOP'S \$75 "THIS SMELLS LIKE MY VAGINA" CANDLE GOES VIRAL (AND ACTUALLY SELLS OUT).

In the same year, the brand launches its hit Netflix show, demystifying New Age wellness trends such as microdosing and cold therapy for mainstream audiences. Critics argue that Netflix has legitimized wellness pseudoscience. Two years earlier, Goop was fined \$145,000 for false marketing claims about jade eggs. The eggs are still selling.

## 2019

FROM STUDENT BONGS TO WELLNESS BILLIONS, "CANNABUSINESS" COMES OF AGE.

Worldwide cannabis sales soar 48% YoY to a record \$15 billion, and the FDA holds the first-ever public hearing on CBD. The darling of investors and the remedy of any self-respecting, anxious health freak.

## 2018

"HAVE YOU DONE 23ANDME?" THE DNA TESTING REVOLUTION REACHES ITS HEIGHT.

The direct-to-consumer model is a game changer for genetics, giving people easy, sociable access to their own health data.

## 2017

SOULCYCLE LAUNCHES ITS FIRST AD CAMPAIGN AND GOES AFTER THE MAINSTREAM.

The cult \$32 spin class that urges fans to "find their soul" marks a new era for wellness as religion—if you could afford it. Instructors are famous for saying things like "I want the next breath to be an exorcism." And fans describe SoulCycle as their community and therapy (and are much mocked by the Internet). Cut to 2019 and SoulCycle's chairman is revealed to be a Trump supporter. Doves of liberal SoulCycle devotees cancel the brand. The backlash to wellness elitism manifests in a wave of boycott memes.

# 23 SHIFTS OF CULTURAL DEFINING THE NEXT WAVE OF WELLNESS

## CONTROL

- BODY HACKING
- INDIE HEALTH
- GET MILD

## DEMOCRATIC

- WEALTH WARFARE
- PLURALISM
- BEDROOM PLOP

## ESSENTIAL

- MONEY OUTLOUD
- EMPATHY A.G.E
- DIVERSIFICATION

WELLNESS  
WELLNESS  
WELLNESS

## PLEASURE

- MOOD GEISTING
- VULVA-LUTION
- FEMPOWERMENT

## COLLECTIVE

- HELICOPTER TECH
- FOOD FIGHT
- SURVIVALISM

## ABSENCE

- ZERO OUT
- FRUGALICIOUS
- BIO DESIGN

### WHAT IS AN EDGE?

An Edge is a cultural shift or cultural value where brands can identify insights and opportunities to play into.

Edges provide direction on emerging and evolving cultural, consumer, and category behavior.

### TOP 5 EDGES ACCELERATED BY COVID

Ones to watch now

- HELICOPTER TECH
- GET MILD
- FRUGALICIOUS
- INDIE HEALTH
- ZERO OUT

### TOP 5 EMERGING EDGES POST-COVID

Ones to watch next

- NEO-ANIMISM
- WACKO WORLD
- TRAVEL RIGHT
- WORK/LIFE BOUNDARIES
- HOMEODY ECONOMY

Download & discover all 62 of our 2020 Edges at [Backslash.com](https://Backslash.com). Please contact Anaka Kobzev, [anaka.kobzev@tbwaworld.com](mailto:anaka.kobzev@tbwaworld.com) for more information.



# WELLNESSES DISRUPTORS

Meet 10 founders from around the world leading the next wave of wellness. Each individual has accomplished something truly disruptive in their field that is changing the way we think about "wellness."

By Cecelia Girr and Skyler Hubler



**Mary Pryor \ Cannabis \ U.S.**  
*For insisting on cannabis inclusivity*

Mary Pryor is on a mission to solve cannabis' inclusivity issue. After experiencing racism in the industry firsthand, Mary co-founded Cannaculture to facilitate fair representation of minority cannabis consumers. On top of that, she's the first-ever Black Chief Marketing Officer for a hemp company—Tonic CBD. As the bud business continues to boom, Mary is leading the fight for diversity and destigmatization.



**Gina Gutierrez \ Sex Wellness \ U.S.**  
*For leading the erotica revolution*

Gina Gutierrez is taking pleasure from porn to podcasts. Gutierrez co-founded Dipsea, an app that empowers listeners to get in the mood with sexy, feminist audio stories. The app was built based on the notion that sex wellness starts with your mental state. Since lockdown began, Dipsea has seen an 84% increase in subscribers seeking an intimate escape. While other brands focus on the physical, Gutierrez is bringing a relatable, mind-first freshness to the erotica space.

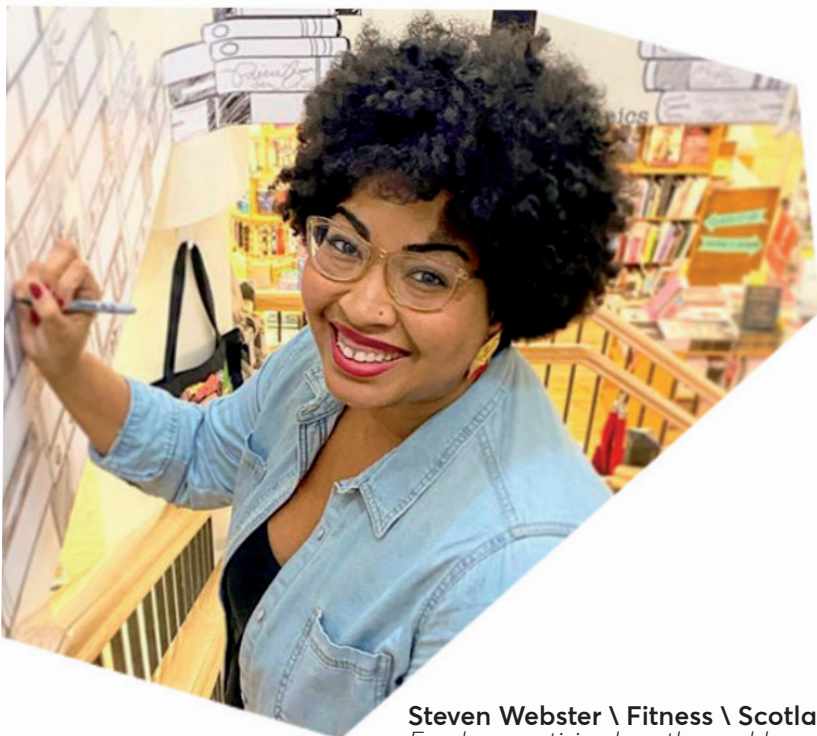


**Gordon Renouf \ Fashion \ Australia**  
*For holding the fashion industry accountable*

Gordon Renouf is part of a movement empowering shoppers to buy well. The Good On You app, developed by Gordon and co-founder Sandra Capponi, ranks more than 2,000 fashion brands based on how they impact people, animals, and the environment. The intersection between fashion and wellness is creating a safer and more sustainable future. COVID-19 has further lifted the lid on fashion's sickness and mobilized industry action, from the Leicester factory scandal to consumers embracing a 'make do and mend' mentality. As Good On You says, it's time to "Wear the change you want to see".

**Rachel Cargle \ Activism \ U.S.**  
*For providing anti-racist healthcare*

It's all too easy to find data demonstrating racial inequalities in healthcare. What's harder to find are signs of progress. For Rachel Cargle, progress starts with ensuring that race isn't a barrier to receiving mental health support. Her nonprofit, The Loveland Foundation, provides therapy for Black women and girls. The current resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement has amplified Cargle's platform, bringing her Instagram follower count from 355,000 in May to over 1.9 million in July. Cargle is committed to making wellness intersectional, inclusive, and actively anti-racist. Because being "well" shouldn't be a matter of white privilege.



**Vince Lu \ Food \ China**  
*For creating foolproof faux-meat*

As the world's largest consumer of meat, China means big business for the growing number of plant-based meat startups. Vince Lu, CEO of Zhenmeat, is setting out to win the battle for China's meatless market with foods tailored to Chinese tastes, like faux-meat mooncakes. He's even using 3-D printers to produce the bones and muscles that's expected in meat. With COVID driving up demand for protein alternatives, Lu is in a prime position to change how China eats.

**Suhas Misra \ Men's Health \ India**  
*For breaking through a stubborn stigma*

Suhas Misra is spearheading a shift in how we handle men's health. Misra created Mistery, a freshly funded "men's confidence company" in India that's providing personalized solutions for touchy male issues like premature ejaculation and hair loss. The AI-driven platform provides therapy through the privacy of a smartphone, so there's no fear of being judged. In a country where sex wellness has been kept in the shadows, Misra is making strides to break the stigma.



**Nour Khalife \ Halal Beauty \ UAE**  
*For celebrating the many faces of Muslim women*

Nour Khalife was tired of tokenistic portrayals of Muslim women in the beauty space. Her frustration with underrepresentation led her and Jolie Nubani to co-create Shade M—a halal-certified, vegan, cruelty-free line of matte liquid lipsticks. From product development to packaging, Shade M was designed hand-in-hand with real women who have been overlooked by the mainstream. Nour is celebrating the beauty of individuality, one shade at a time.



**Multiple Creators \ Mental Health \ France and Switzerland**  
*For proving the power of collaboration*

No health professional is immune to the mental health crisis exacerbated by COVID-19. All too familiar with the psychological struggles, a group of caregivers and researchers from Paris-Est Créteil University, the French National Centre for Scientific Research, Inserm, and the University of Geneva teamed up to find a solution. Together, they developed Covid-Out, a free site that offers personalized resources for improved well-being—from art therapy programs to sleep tools. The age of the elite entrepreneur is coming to an end. If COVID has taught us anything, it's that we truly are all in this together.



**Cody Zhang \ Robotics \ China**  
*For developing a COVID-killing robot*

When the pandemic made health our top priority, Cody Zhang acted fast. In just 18 days, Zhang's company—Youibot Robotics Technologies—designed and developed a disinfecting robot. The human-height robot patrols public spaces and scans body temperatures by day, while emitting a virus-killing ultraviolet light by night. The busy bot is already being put to work in 18 countries around the world. Under 30 years old and CEO of a thriving business, Zhang is proving that pivoting quickly pays off.



**Steven Webster \ Fitness \ Scotland**  
*For democratizing how the world works out*

Forget fitness trackers which merely count your steps or monitor your heart rate. A new wave of "smart apparel" is reinventing wearables, personal training and athleisure in one cool swoop. Asensei founder Steven Webster, a former Microsoft and Adobe executive, is democratizing this technology for the masses. His "(app)arel," as it is branded, is designed with biomechanical sensors woven into the fabric which can precisely analyze the way you jog, or critique your volley, with real-time audio feedback. It applies the same motion-capture technology used in Hollywood, previously limited to elite athletes. "I live in a future where smart apparel is cheaper than regular apparel," Webster has said.



# CONTROL

**We're looking for control** in an out-of-control world, and wellness is providing a new order.

“There's a desperate need to believe again and to have some structure around your life. Reality itself is under warfare. I think the wellness world is the place people are going to find solutions and systems that help them make sense of the world.”

—Beth McGroarty, Director of Research and PR at the Global Wellness Institute

“There are two sides to control. There are some things where it is good to be ambitious and take back control. And other things where we need to be okay with having no control. Wellness should be more about that type of resilience.”

—Amanda Chantal Bacon, Founder of Moon Juice

# BUSINESS OF THE BODY

**Good-bye Big Pharma, hello Biohacks.** Body Hacking is the 21st century's DIY biology. New technologies and wellness trends are empowering a growing number of people to improve upon what nature gave them and hack their way to better health. Whether the goal is to think faster, live longer, or conceive naturally, the solution can be as simple as tweaking your diet to an extreme \$250K bionic overhaul. The desire for **control** is an essential component of what it means to be human. From head to toe, self-optimization is big business.

## BRAIN—SLEEP ENHANCERS & BRAINFOOD

**1 in 5 people** rank getting enough sleep as their top health maintenance priority. *Iconoculture, 2020*

**\$500** — The price of an **URGoNight** headband, which measures your brain activity during the day, then creates a custom program that trains your mind to sleep better at night.

**\$6.2 billion** — The size of the Global Brain Health Supplements market in 2018, which is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 8.2% by 2025. Memory Health is an all-natural supplement brand that's been proven to boost memory, mood, focus, and clarity by replenishing the brain's natural ingredients. *Grandview Research, 2019*

## FACE—COSMETIC SURGERY

**\$22 billion** — The size of the Global Cosmetic Surgery Market by 2023, driven by a rise in minimally invasive procedures. *Technavio, 2019*

**36 million** — Number of people who use **GenMei**, a Chinese app that uses AR to score your attractiveness, then makes suggestions for cosmetic surgery improvements. Users can read surgeon reviews, book appointments, and apply for credit through the platform.

## WRIST—THE QUANTIFIED SELF GETS EMOTIONAL

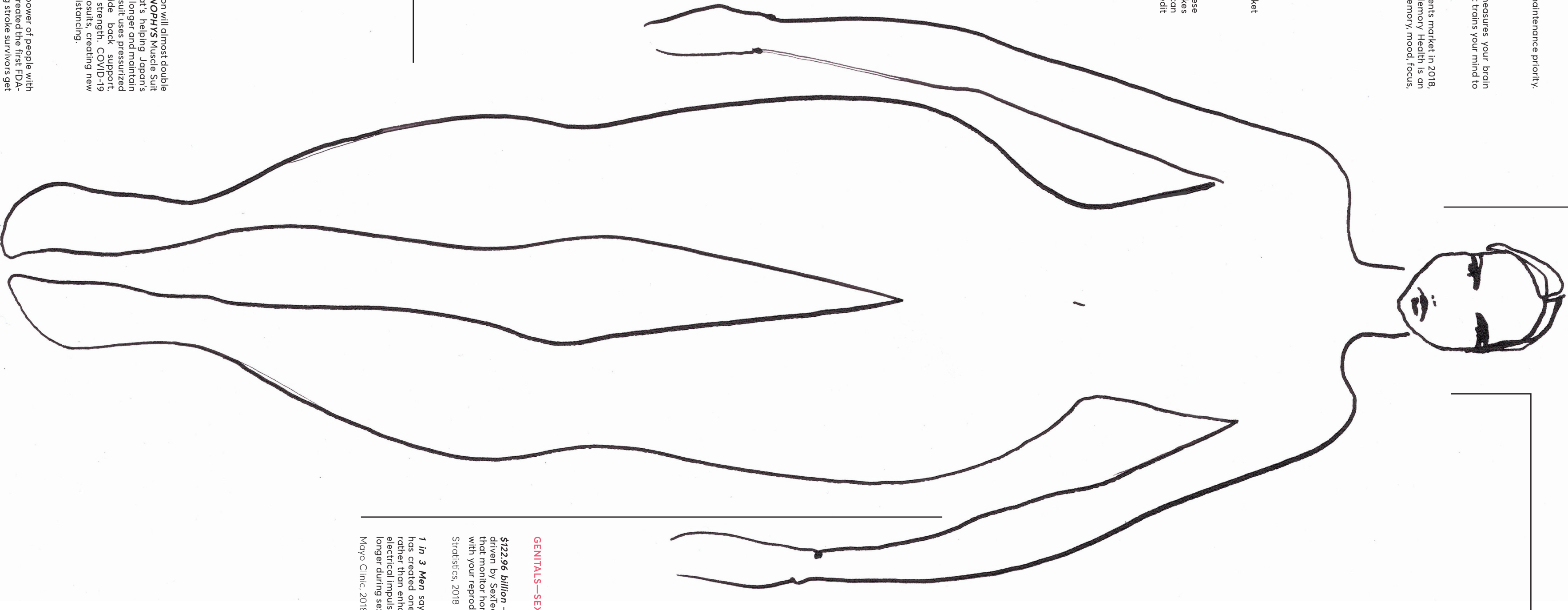
**\$240 billion** — The size of the Global Behavioral Health market by 2026. The Fael Emotion Sensor is the world's first mental health advisor that you can wear on your wrist. It monitors your physiological signals throughout the day and suggests simple ways to make the most of your emotional experience. *Global Newswire, 2019*

**\$35.5 billion** — The size of the Global Wearables market by 2024, growing at a CAGR of 13%. **WHOOP** markets itself as the fitness tracker that will tell you not to work out: "Science tells us that you don't get stronger in the gym, you actually get stronger during rest. It's the period to repair, regenerate and prime your mind and body for peak performance." For **\$30/month**, **WHOOP** measures your sleep, workout intensity, and recovery in order to help you optimize your daily performance. *Research and Markets, 2020*

## BODY & LEGS—EXOSUITS

**X2** — The world's over-60 population will almost double from 12% to 22% by 2050. The **INNOPHYS** Muscle Suit is a powered hip exoskeleton that's helping Japan's aging society stay in the workforce longer and maintain independent, active lifestyles. The suit uses pressurized air-powered "muscles" to provide back support, augmenting the worker's natural strength. COVID-19 has accelerated the market for exosuits, creating new needs around hygiene and social distancing. *WHO, 2018*

**\$7 trillion** — The global spending power of people with disabilities. **ReWalk Robotics** has created the first FDA-approved soft exosuit that's helping stroke survivors get their mobility back. *WAL, 2018*



## EYES—SCREEN-TIME SAVIORS

**Nearly 60%** of people who work on computers experience "Computer Vision Syndrome," which can cause blurred vision, sleep disruption, and potentially, rewrite our brains. Zoom-fatigued? Join the waitlist for Canadian start-up **Umoy's** high-tech eye mask, that uses medicative heat to refresh your mind and leave your eyes feeling happier after too much screen time. *National Institutes of Health (NIH), 2019*

## NOSE—FUNCTIONAL FRAGRANCES

**\$52.4 billion** — The size of the Global Fragrance market by 2025, driven by wellness trends such as "Functional Fragrances," which are growing at a CAGR of 6.54%. Functional Fragrances are defined by their added functional or health benefits. **Adidas'** Culture of Sport fragrance claims to increase your desire and ability to exercise by activating the emotional centers of the brain that enhance performance. *Statista, 2019*

## MOUTH—CULT OF COLLAGEN

**\$7.5 billion** — The size of the Global Collagen market by 2027. Studies show that consuming collagen can improve wrinkles, nail strength, and bone density. Brands such as **Vital Proteins** are part of a growing industry marketing collagen to millennial women in the form of beauty beverages. It's Diet Coke for the Glossier Generation. *Grand View Research, 2020*

## GENITALS—SEX TECH

**\$122.96 billion** — The size of the Global Sexual Wellness market by 2026, driven by **SexTech**. Start-up **NextGen Jane** has invented "Smart Tampons" that monitor hormone levels, so you can proactively track what's happening with your reproductive health from your first period to menopause. *Statistcs, 2018*

**1 in 3 Men** say they experience Premature Ejaculation. **Morari Medical** has created one of the few **SexTech** products designed to delay pleasure, rather than enhance it. The wearable goes on the perineum and sends mild electrical impulses that confuse the nervous system in order to help men last longer during sex. *Mayo Clinic, 2018*



By Cecelia Girt, Skyler Hubler & Stephanie Choi

# SOBER

# GOES

Good-bye to late nights, reckless behavior, and getting hammered. Drunkenness has lost its cool. The rise of sobriety, sexlessness, and staying-in, driven by millennials and Gen Z, signals a shift to healthier, cleaner lifestyles.

And it makes sense.

Uncertainty and doom define their world. So they look to what they can control right now for a less-anxious mindset. As youth prioritizes self-control and feeling good the next day over wild nights out, wellness reshapes the next era of partying.

*"Getting up early to run a Tough Mudder race or go to a spin class is the new staying out until 4 a.m. to catch the latest DJ set."*

—Rosie Spinks, Skift, 2019

The rite of passage for youth used to be about going wild. Today they "Get Mild." Teetotalism clubs are popping up in universities around the world. Homebody cozy culture is taking over teenage bedrooms, and 150K #JOMO's. The new leisure is defined by

drinking occasions will be defined by wellness. These new forms of socializing will fix a culture of disadvantageous binge.

Brands can help redefine the idea of "partying" with a wellness spin.

### So What if..

**Fitness nightclubs replaced barhopping?**

**Travel and tourism innovated around sober social experiences?**

**The bar built sobriety into its menu? Creating a more inclusive space.**

### Sober Nightlife

Alcohol-free booze, like Heineken's "0.0" beer, is saturating the market, and sober bars including Dublin's The Virgin Mary are popping up to serve them and provide an alternative place to party.

### Sober Networks

Forget breaking the ice, dating is sobering up. Startup Loosid calls itself the "sober social network." The app connects recovering addicts to the sober-curious, to find love, make friends and stay sober.

### Sober Influencers

Sobriety is getting a rebrand helped by a slew of millennial influencers such as @jennifergimenez, who say things like "drinking is basic," living their best life sober. There are more than 1.2 million #soberlife and over 500K #soberissexy posts on Instagram.

# DEATH OF THE PARTY

health, relaxation, and introversion.

A sober market is growing to mirror this cultural shift. Alcohol giants increasingly hop on the "no-low" bandwagon with no- or low-alcohol products to attract the sober-curious and keep them drinking. Meanwhile, other beverage companies look to the future of CBD and THC. According to Zenith Global, canna-beverages (drinks infused with cannabinoids) are expected to be a \$1.4 billion market by 2023.

In her recent book *Sober Curious*, Ruby Warrington says reduced alcohol intake "is the next logical step in the wellness revolution." She emphasizes the absurdity of a day filled with exercise, meditation, and green juice followed by a night of hammering your liver at the bar.

From sober "happy hours" to post-workout refuels, future

### COVID-19 EFFECT

"I see two narratives happening in Ireland, and potentially worldwide. Those who were sober-curious pre-COVID, have been using this time to explore sober life. It's likely that the experience of lockdown will move them further into sobriety as people reevaluate what's important in their lives. Alcohol consumption is a big factor in those evaluations. For those who are still drinking alcohol, consumption actually increased during lockdown. People have turned to alcohol as a form of entertainment and stress relief. This will continue with the threat of recession and second waves of COVID. I expect the "No-Lo" market to be stronger coming out of COVID-19 restrictions."

—Aleesha Tully, Spotter, Dublin

"The cultural forces at work underlying the sober movement include the fact that we are more informed about what we consume, seek out higher quality options, are more public-facing with our lives, and busier than ever. The rise of the no- and low-alcohol category goes hand-in-hand with the rise of 'wellness,' in the holistic sense of living, eating, moving, and drinking well, or more mindfully."

—Ben Branson, Founder, Seedlip

### Sober Travel

An entire travel industry has emerged to service sober-curious and teetotal travelers. Drinking on vacation is still the norm even for the wellness-obsessed. Now companies like Sober Vacations International are helping them stay the course in style.

### Sober Food

Alcohol is coming out of our drinks and going into our food—albeit in healthier, novel doses. From booze-infused dressings to up your salad game to "kidulting" with drunken candy from brands such as Sugarfina, known for its viral rosé gummy bears. Alcohol is no longer constrained to the bottle, and moderation sells.



By Cecelia Girr

# SOCIALLY



# DEEMMO CRATLIC

**Wellness has been defined** as a niche and elite status symbol. In the next wave, wellness goes mass.

“Inclusive is a keyword. The industry used to be more elitist, now there are so many ways to tap into wellness.”

—Newby Hands, Global Beauty Director at Net-a-Porter

“Sleep, movement, silence. The best forms of wellness are free.”

—Amanda Chantal Bacon, Founder of Moon Juice

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Photo Credit: Eloy Flores

# IN BED WITH A SLEEP-FLUENCER

**Who are the next wave of wellness icons?** We nominate Alex Shannon @FollowtheNap, the world's first "Sleep-fluencer" to the roll call. In a culture that fetishizes sleep, Alex is living the dream as a professional napper. Backlash met with Alex pre-COVID in the penthouse suite of the SLS Hotel in Beverly Hills to talk sleep, homebodies and the democratization of wellness.

**Backlash \ What inspired you to become the world's first sleepfluencer?**

@FollowtheNap: I actually dreamt it up quite literally. I am a really avid dreamer and I usually have either a notebook or my phone by my bed to write down ideas in the night. Ninety percent of the time they are complete garbage and unusable. I read them in the morning and I'm like, cat documentary with fruit! Hmm, no. But this time I read it—Sleep-influencer—and thought, oh, that's actually kind of an interesting idea.

**\ What do you think your appeal is to people?**

@FollowtheNap: Sleeping and napping is a very relatable everyday thing that we all do. Number one, for me, as a 'Sleep-influencer' is making people realize that sleep and chilling out is not lazy or selfish. It's actually something that you really need and is really beneficial. I think having 'home influencers' makes that more visible and acceptable to embrace those things in your own home.

**\ Have you always been obsessed with sleep?**

@FollowtheNap: I've always been an avid napper, even as a child. My mum actually has photo albums that are purely comprised of me sleeping in various locations—and I'm just asleep. When I was younger, people just thought I was very lazy. But what I've come to learn about myself personally, as a very creative person, is that sleep, and rest and downtime, is really vital to my creative process. So it's something I definitely need and value.

**\ You're a guy that stays in a lot. "Homebodies" are having a cultural moment right now. Why?**

@FollowtheNap: What is really interesting about the rise of 'homebody culture' is that it goes against what has been so pervasive in media. We've been bombarded with messages like—you've got to hustle, rise and grind, no days off, annoying gym selfies—which you see in your feed constantly. People are realizing that it's not healthy. It's great to have aspirations and to be driven, but you can't be that 24/7 and you can't be that if you're exhausted.

**\ Is wellness the new entertainment?**

@FollowtheNap: There's a mass realization that rest, relaxation, staying home and self-care is really important. And if you're going to do it, why not do it to the max and make it really enjoyable? Make it into an event in itself. Staying home, being cozy, bingeing Netflix shows with your comfy slippers on...to me, that's so much more enjoyable and interesting than a night out and you feel great the next day.

**\ As we shift from an always-on to a time-off culture, will we need new role models?**

@FollowtheNap: Yes. We're moving from idolizing people who are go-getters, get up at 5 in the morning, do a juice cleanse, a 10-mile run and then go to work, to idolizing people that know how to relax and unwind. It's such a dramatic shift, and shows us what we need as a society.

**\ What does this mean for the future of self-care?**

@FollowtheNap: The idea of self-care is now being extended beyond just working out and eating well. Organizing your closet is now a form of self-care. Taking a three-hour bath in magnesium salts is self-care. Taking a nap with your aromatherapy machine and bird sounds is now self-care too.

Self-care is becoming something that's for everyone. And as that happens, health and wellness is moved from being this kind of elitist structure into something that's accessible for all. You don't have to have access to a two-thousand-dollar exercise bike. Or a five-hundred-dollar-a-month gym. Or a personal shaman. You can have these things in your own home and benefit from them.

## BACKSLASH POV

Low-interest, domestic products—this is your wellness moment! As wellness democratizes and moves into the home, we see it increasingly infiltrating and elevating mundane behaviors like sleep, cleaning and bathing. The opportunity is to reframe everyday household brands for wellness. What if Mr. Clean channeled Goop?

The try-hard, sacrifice-all mentality of so many influencers and entrepreneurs will lose its allure. Brands should consider partnering with the new wave of "Homefluencers" as we coin them. Pulling inspiration from @MrsHinchHome's cleaning with Harpic, @FollowtheNap's quest for the perfect sleep with Armani Hotels, and @MamaMedicine's self-care revamp—turning bathing into the ultimate #JOMO. We anticipate that consumers will trade products and brands that tout performance, multitasking, and life on the edge, for something simpler, more relaxed and homely. Think jogs over sprints, Volvo over Bugatti, bullet juicer over bullet journaling.

Introversion is one of the biggest consumer behaviors of the year. More time and self-care spent in lockdown has led to a rise in at-home consumption and new needs to fulfill and invent for. Now that we've re-learned the pleasure of slowing down and staying in, we expect cozy culture will be here to stay. Post-pandemic, brands will need to find their place in our new routines and create for a more solo, less social, ever-expanding "Homebody Economy."



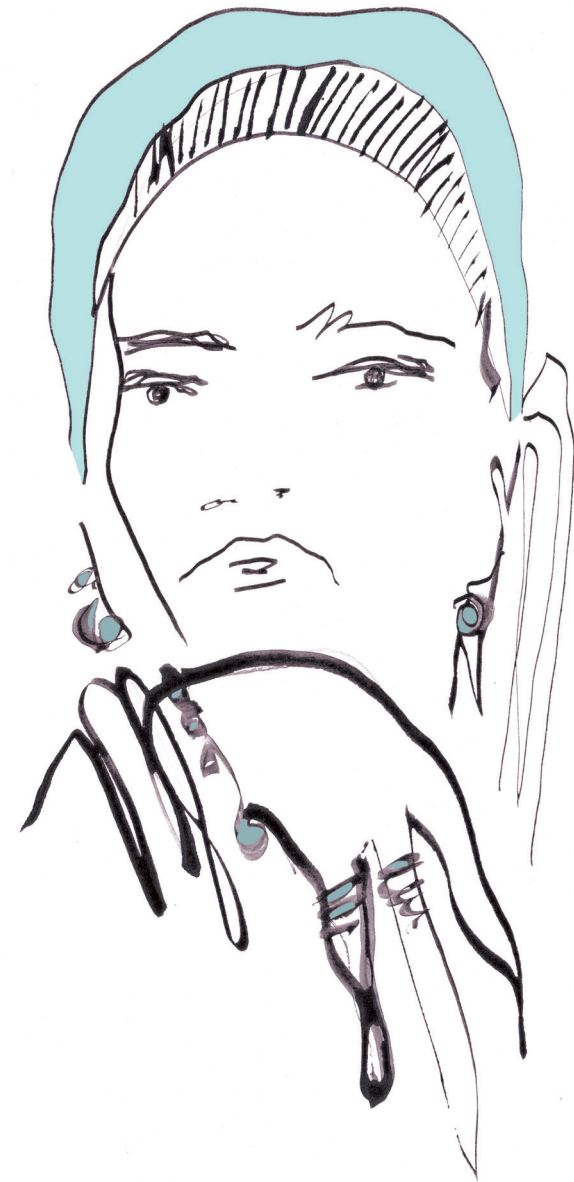
By Cecelia Girr, Yareli Morales & Sarah Rabia



# NEW AUDIENCES OF WELLNESS

Where traditional healthcare was designed by and for men, the next wave of wellness will embrace the plural and democratize optimal well-being for all.

By Skyler Hubler, Karen Falk & Alexander Landau



## FEMPOWERED ACTIVISTS

**\$47.8 billion** - The size of the Global Women's Healthcare market by 2027.

Fempowered activists have had enough. Failed by a patriarchal health system, their "women's issues" ranging from menopause to heart attacks are frequently untreated, forcing them to suffer in silence or find an alternative. Data shows that sexism in healthcare literally kills women. Empowered and emboldened, they're feminizing the health and wellness industries by force.

Perhaps their activism was triggered by the struggle to access a safe abortion or birth control—reproductive justice is one of the world's biggest and most politicized health failures against women. In Argentina, 50,000 women are hospitalized each year as a result of illegal abortions. Or, their tipping point could have been seeing a woman they loved struggle with an under-researched female-specific condition—like endometriosis, which can take 10 years or more to correctly diagnose. Or, perhaps the wellness seeker in them was sparked by their battle with infertility—a struggle faced by 50 million couples worldwide.

Where traditional medicine has failed, alternative health, wellness brands and Silicon Valley are trying to fill the opportunity gap in women's health. Cue pricey pelvic-floor gadgets and psychotherapy customized to a woman's life stage, offered with varying degrees of expertise. The Disruption is to go beyond what we know about women's bodies today and discover the many more things we don't.

Gaining women's trust will be key. In a 26-market Edelman study, 1 in 3 women said they do not trust the health industry. And with good reason. They are 30% more likely to be misdiagnosed, according to a US study. Factor in race, wealth and sexual orientation, and health inequalities reveal an intersectional crisis, further exacerbated by COVID-19.

Whether she's a working-class black mother facing zero paid leave; a crystal-wearing, pro-choice millennial without a GP; or a show-me-the-female-data (good luck) menopausal businesswoman, for this global, diverse group of women, health is a feminist issue. It's time for brands to help close the gender health gap.

EDGE \ FEMPOWERMENT



## YOLO BOOMERS

**10X** Cannabis use among Americans over 65 is growing faster than any other age group.

Turning 65 is like a second Sweet 16 for YOLO Boomers. They binge-drink, online-date and dismiss their susceptibility to COVID ("Who you calling elderly?") in numbers greater or faster-growing than youth. Where the health industry makes them feel old and sick, wellness presents empowerment and longevity.

Boomers are the healthiest, richest and biggest aging generation the world has ever seen. And yet, the health industry and marketers in general either ignore them or make them feel like they're at death's door. YOLO Boomers don't feel old yet. 50% say they feel younger than their biological age—from 10 to 19 years on average. Their desire to redefine and distance themselves from "old age" is what led the cartoonist Garry Trudeau to quip that "dead is the new old."

Wellness startups are courting aging consumers in hopes of gaining a slice of the global \$15 trillion "Silver Economy." Offering everything from home assistant robots, mobile brain games and longevity drugs to keep care homes, dementia, even death itself at bay.

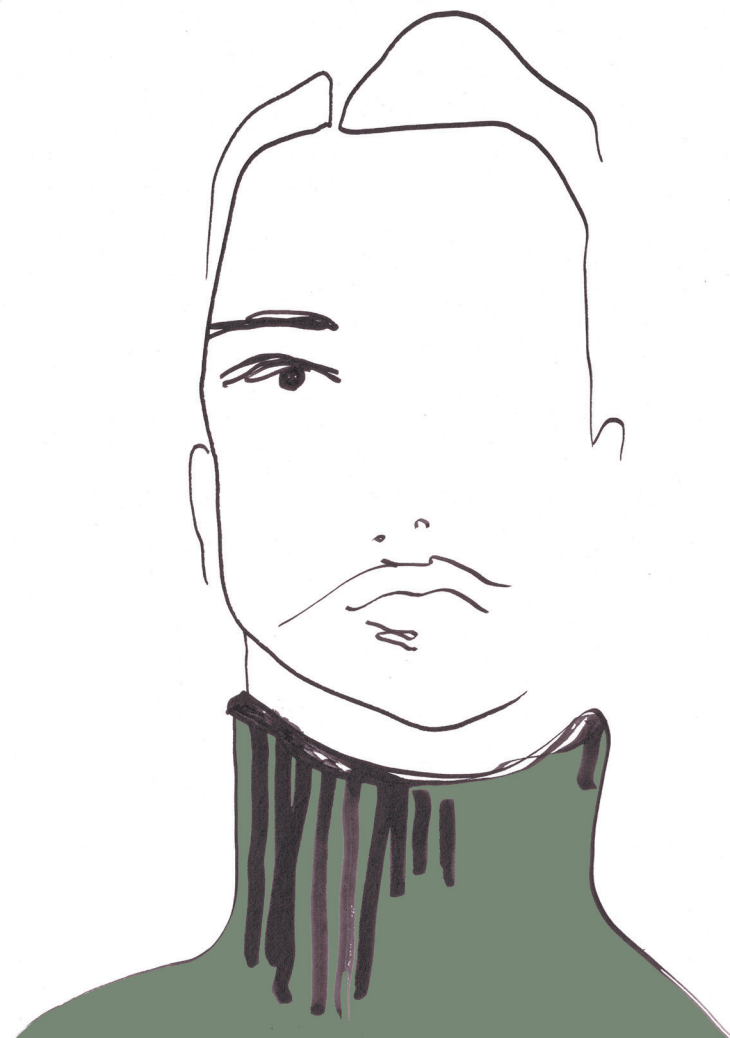
The challenge? YOLO Boomers still regularly visit their doctor and define health in a traditional way. By 2030, more than 6 in 10 will be managing more than one chronic health condition. But existing healthcare systems won't be able to cope. Countries such as Singapore are actively seeking affordable ways to keep their aging populations well. And YOLO Boomers are increasingly seeking alternative health themselves, from CBD (proven to benefit age-related diseases) to Chinese medicine, spurred by COVID. Preventive health and maintaining well-being will be key.

The Disruption?

Confidence.

YOLO Boomers feel good about themselves and life ahead, and want to see that reflected back by healthcare providers. In India, 73% of people look forward to old age. In the US, millennials aspire to retire early. Brands can fulfill their sense of adventure, connect them with friends, and help them achieve their many #healthgoals in a pleasurable way. Just think of them as "millennials with money."

EDGE \ AGELESS



## CLEAN FREAKS

"Your cell phone is **10 times** dirtier than a toilet seat."

"Nearly **80%** of illness-causing germs are spread by your hands."

"Germs from a sneeze can travel up to **27 feet**."

These not-so-fun-facts have been top of mind for germophobes long before the pandemic. But as COVID ignites the inner clean freak in all of us, a growing group of hyper-hygienic consumers are aspiring to live germ-free.

History tells us that virus outbreaks spark a rise in germophobia. Since the spread of coronavirus, more than 1 in 3 Americans now classify themselves as a germophobe. And globally, over 60% of shoppers are avoiding touching objects. For this new wave of clean freaks, the pandemic has promoted cleanliness next to godliness.

Clean freaks tend to be younger, wealthier and more female. But they're not your average upper-middle class millennial. Their relationship with health is rigid and routine-based. While others criticize healthcare for being sterile and strictly business, clean freaks take comfort in its science and numbers.

But health is only half of it. When they're in between doctor visits, wellness provides peace of mind. With an air purifier in their bedroom, a toothbrush sanitizer in their bathroom and immunity-boosting foods on their plate, clean freaks are leaning into all things practical and proven. Together, traditional health practices plus foolproof wellness hacks keep them safe and sane.

From fashion to tech, every industry is racing to cure their Clean-xiety. New products like the Hygiene20 Smart Sanitizing Backpack are using UV-C light to kill bacteria. Clothing brands like Diesel, DL1961, and Warp + Weft are incorporating antimicrobial fabrics. And tech tools like the Samsung Hand Wash app, the Google Clock app and Fitbit are reminding people when to wash up.

To win this audience over, brands will need to go above and beyond to prove that they're taking sanitation seriously. Currently, only 42% of consumers trust hotels—perhaps the most high-touch service industry—to take the necessary steps to ensure their health and safety. By doing the dirty work, businesses can reassure clean freaks that they don't have to.

EDGE \ SURVIVALISM



## GEN-ZIETY

**72%** of Gen Zers around the world say managing stress and mental health is their most important health and wellness concern.

Burdened with climate change, economic instability, and now, a global health crisis, it's no wonder they've been dubbed "the most anxious generation." Nearly half (48%) of Gen Zers say they're stressed all or most of the time. To combat the chaos, teens are embracing anxiety-reducing wellness hacks with a hint of nihilism.

If this audience were to have an anthem, it would be the melancholy pop music of Billie Eilish: "I'm not going to lie in a song and talk about how I'm feeling good when I'm not," says the 18-year-old artist.

This refusal to fake it is a defining attitude of Gen-Ziety.

This group is owning their stress with zero shame. Gen Z is the most likely generation to get help for their mental health issues. Their proactive behavior stems from growing up with a holistic understanding of health. Today's teens aren't choosing between plant-based proteins, forest bathing (or Shinrin Yoku as the Japanese call it) or weighted blankets. They're embracing all three, with sleep spray misted on their pillow and incense sticks burning on their desk.

When it comes to healthcare, old-school systems don't stand a chance. Young people are the most dissatisfied with traditional healthcare services, and they're making it clear that a copy-and-paste approach to being well isn't for them.

Just take Chinese youth's remix of Yangsheng—the ancient Chinese approach to self-care. Gen-Ziety is blending select Yangsheng practices with modern teen habits to create a new wellness counterculture: Punk Yangsheng. "Rather than strict diets and gym visits, Punk Yangsheng youths may use expensive facial masks to compensate for the negative impact of late-night TV marathons," commentator Gu Zhongyi has said.

For Gen-Ziety, wellness isn't an optional add-on. It's essential to how they live. From real-time fitness trackers to DIY DNA collection services like 23andMe, they've been armed with the tools to take preventive care into their own hands. If brands want in, they'll need to step up with lifestyle-led solutions. With the majority of Gen Zers using fewer than 10 apps a day, integrating mind-body wellness into a single, seamless experience will be key. Because if you don't make it stress-free, they'll just do it their way.

EDGE \ ANXIETY INDEX

# PLEASE ASURE YOURSELF

Where healthcare was functional, wellness now brings pleasure. Wellness is becoming the new way to entertain and celebrate ourselves.

“Going on a Netflix bender has a new rival: the self-care spree. Welcome to a new era of ‘health hedonism.’”

—Cecelia Girr, Deputy Editor

“Wellness is becoming a social exercise amongst friends. From at-home salon evenings of LED masks, to meditation classes and holiday retreats. We’re spending more time together in a healthier way.”

—Newby Hands, Global Director of Beauty at Net-a-Porter





### BREATHE WITH ME BARBIE

Barbie says, "Breathe." Mattel has launched a wellness collection in partnership with Headspace to show girls the benefits of self-care through play. Barbie now wears yoga pants, goes to the spa, and gives guided meditations to her child owners. Because Barbie knows, "To be one's best is to give yourself the best care."

\$19.99, mattel.com \ Edge: Zero Out



### SUPER YOU

The cure-all, smart pill is here. That's the promise of "adaptogens," a group of super herbs and mushrooms, which literally adapt to the body's needs. If you're anxious, they calm; if you're tired, they energize. Founder Amanda Chantal Bacon describes them as the modern sunscreen or toothpaste. "Two caps a day keeps the stress away."

\$49, moonjuice.com \ Edge: Mood Geisting



### CLOROX DISINFECTING BLEACH

Good-bye gentle, all-natural cleaners, hello COVID-killing bleach. A newfound fear of germs has us reaching for the toughest solutions and going back to tried-and-tested traditional products. Celebrating its 100th birthday this year with record sales growth, Clorox is reclaiming its role as a household essential and new status as a 2020 wellness tool.

\$4.42, clorox.com \ Edge: Authenticity



### GOCYCLE

Who knew it would take a pandemic to start a global cycling boom? And bike shortages that could take months to resolve. COVID has us avoiding public transport and craving fresh air and exercise more than ever. Enter GoCycle—the electric bike. Designed to be folded away in less than 10 seconds, this model is the perfectly portable companion for the new local traveler. With studies showing that e-bike riders are happier and healthier, there's a lot to love about two-wheel wellness.

\$3,299, gocycle.com \ Edge: IRL

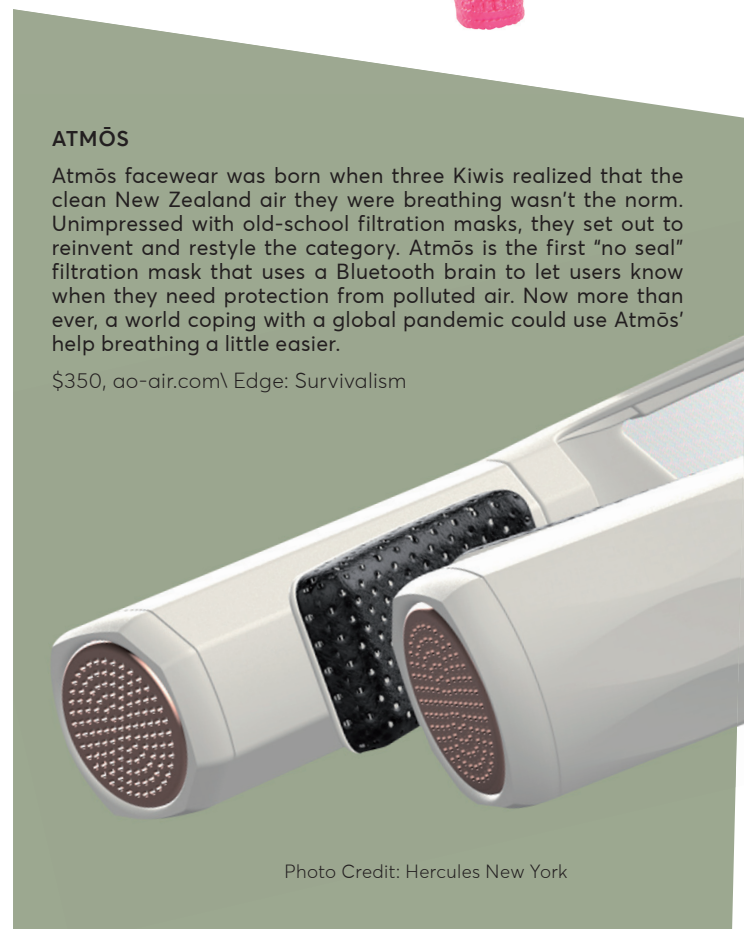


### AIR CO. CARBON-NEGATIVE HAND SANITIZER

Air Co. first made headlines by creating the world's first carbon-negative vodka. But when COVID-19 hit, the NYC start-up quickly pivoted from pleasure to purpose, fully redirecting its efforts to produce CO2-made hand sanitizer. Instead of cashing in on panic buying, Air Co. is donating its entire output of about 1,500 bottles a week to the NYC institutions that need it most. In tough times, Air Co. is delivering on its promise to provide "goods that do good."

\$0, donations only \ Edge: Empathy Age

# S H O P W E L L



### ATMÔS

Atmôs facewear was born when three Kiwis realized that the clean New Zealand air they were breathing wasn't the norm. Unimpressed with old-school filtration masks, they set out to reinvent and restyle the category. Atmôs is the first "no seal" filtration mask that uses a Bluetooth brain to let users know when they need protection from polluted air. Now more than ever, a world coping with a global pandemic could use Atmôs' help breathing a little easier.

\$350, ao-air.com \ Edge: Survivalism

Photo Credit: Hercules New York

### VEGAN CONDOMS

German start-up Einhorn ("Unicorn") is on a mission to take the embarrassment out of buying condoms, and to make sex not only safer, but more sustainable too. With its meme-like designs by hip Berlin artists and plant-based ingredients, this is sexual health for the Instagram generation.

€6 for 7, einhorn.my \ Edge: Bio Design



### SEEDLIP SPICE 94

Seedlip was inspired by a really bad mocktail. It motivated British founder and former brand design consultant Ben Branson to reinvent the category. His start-up is the world's first distilled nonalcoholic spirit. A food critic described this drink as a "high-end spa." We say, it's Hendrick's Gin for the sober curious generation.

\$30, seedlipdrinks.com/us \ Edge: Get Mild

### PLANT AND ALGAE T-SHIRT

Steve Tidball, CEO and co-founder of Vollebak, set out to create a piece of clothing that could return to nature and leave no trace at the end of its lifespan. This is the result. Advertised as "part T-shirt, part worm food," once you're done wearing it, you can bury it in the garden and it will help plants grow.

\$110, vollebak.com \ Edge: Second Lives



### AIBO ROBOT DOG

The dog whose crap you don't need to scoop is just one of the reasons to fall in love with Aibo, Sony's "companion bot." Designed with advanced AI, Aibo behaves much like a regular dog—you can feed him and potty train him. But he also offers some unique benefits. You can program Aibo to monitor your kids or help with the housework. If he's in the mood, that is. His API has been designed with robot ethics in mind to give him some freedom of choice. In a lonelier, Zoom-fatigued world, Aibo might just be a technology to help us get well.

\$2,899.99, us.aibo.com \ Edge: Connected Families



# SEX IS THE NEW SELF-CARE

Women are driving this demand—with good reason.

**52%** of women have poor sexual wellness compared to just **17% of men.**

The challenge? Sex is still a taboo and women don't know their own bodies.

**1/3** of college-age American Women do not know where their clitoris is.

People who have sex **2-3x** per week have a better immune system.

Regular, satisfying sex has also been proven to **lower** blood pressure, **increase** brain power AND **halve** heart disease fatalities.

COVID-19 has accelerated the sex industry into a wellness industry.

Governments worldwide have promoted sex-positivity for public health and well-being and embraced and updated "safe sex" guidance.

Luxury Swedish sex toy brand LELO has seen a **40% increase in sales** since the start of social distancing.

**23K** UK Google searches to make handmade vibrators and lube during lockdown. (Not doctor or Backlash recommended!)

Wellness is sparking the **Next Sexual Revolution**. Reinventing the "adult industry" into a convergence of health, pleasure and activism for all.

By 2024 The Global Sexual Wellness market will reach **39 M**



By Linda Hosmer Spain, Cecelia Girr & Karen Falk

# THE NEW COMING OUT

In a **bracing monologue** in *Fleabag*, a smoldering Kristin Scott Thomas character expounds on the wonder of menopause while swilling a stiff martini.

*"I was told it was horrendous," she says to Fleabag. "It is horrendous, but then it's magnificent."*

Every woman will experience it. Yet every business ignores it. Long overlooked and socially stigmatized, menopause is starting to come out of the closet as doctors and entrepreneurs see a market ripe for disruption. By 2025, there will be over 1 billion women potentially experiencing menopause. That's 12% of the world's population.

Yet menopause is shrouded in myth, shame and silence. Still creepily referred to as "The Change."

*"This silence around it in popular culture just perpetuates the horrible silence among women," writer-producer Marti Noxon has said, who broached hot flashes on her TV show *Girlfriends' Guide to Divorce*. Network execs were skittish, she recalls: "They kind of asked me not to say the word 'menopause.'"*

A global healthcare industry designed by and for men, misunderstanding and fear around effective treatments such as HRT, plus social stigma, have collectively kept menopause invisible.

Menopause happens between the ages of 45 and 55 and marks the end of women's periods (if they have them). The list of symptoms includes sleep disruption, joint pain, and vaginal dryness, and can last anywhere from two to 10 years. But menopause is not considered a medical condition. Dr. Suzanne Gilberg-Lenz, MD, a board-certified OB/GYN who specializes in empowering women through menopause, defines it as "a natural consequence of having the privilege of aging."

Age prejudice is at the heart of the issue facing women. Menopause is one of the most discriminatory taboos still existing in the workplace, according to Harvard Business Review. Any progressive company will have effective policies for diversity and parental leave, but policies regarding menopause are practically nonexistent.

Culture influences how women experience menopause. Dr. Mary Jane Minkin, a professor specializing in gynecological health at Yale Medical School, has found that, "In societies where age is more revered and the older woman is the wiser and better woman, menopausal symptoms are significantly less bothersome." As Gwyneth Paltrow has said: "I don't think we have in our society a great example of an aspirational menopausal woman... I think menopause needs a bit of a rebranding."

Where society and the health industry have neglected menopausal women, Silicon Valley spies an opportunity to monetize an untapped market—led by female entrepreneurs. Ex-Microsoft exec Jill Angelo is behind start-up Gennev.com—an "online clinic for a better menopause." "The tech world is ahead of Hollywood," Angelo has said, who has raised \$5.3 million in

funding to date. "The only thing that's ever been communicated about menopause are the negatives. And it's the kickoff to the second half of life."

Gennev is part of a global wave of start-ups innovating around menopause known as "Menotech." In the UK, 25-year-old Peter Astbury is the UX designer and founder of Grace—a cooling wristband designed to help menopausal women moderate their temperature at night. He has said, "It feels as though we're ahead of the curve." Launched off the back of a Kickstarter campaign, French start-up Moona has developed thermo-regulating pillows that live on your bed, bringing menopause into homewares. The global women's health market is expected to reach \$54.6 billion by 2026.

Cultural change is coming too. The feminist movement is empowering women to demand access to a great menopause. Led by celebrities such as Kim Cattrall, Emma Thompson, and self-appointed role model Gwyneth Paltrow, women are starting to "come out" as menopausal and encouraging others to embrace it too. Menopause is not a one-size-fits-all experience. Fay Reid is a London-based blogger aiming to take the stigma out of menopause and demonstrate its diversity across race, size and age. Next year, Hulu plans to release a menopause-themed series starring Nicole Kidman and Melissa McCarthy. Backlash calls this cultural shift the "Vulva-lution."

Dr. Gilberg-Lenz wants women to start seeing menopause as a sign that "you've made it."

*"One of the big positives for me has been this recognition of who I really am and being over what other people think about me. It's very empowering. It's very liberating. To just be in yourself. If brands frankly can tap into that, wow, that's some powerful stuff. People really just want to be seen."*



## COVID-19 Effect

"We've seen greater levels of self-care during COVID—everything from spirituality to sex toys are on the rise. Menopause calls for greater appreciation and celebration of women's transforming bodies, so any brands that can offer that self-care in big or small ways will benefit."

—Michelle Gilson, Head of Strategy, TBWA/London



By Michelle Gilson, Linda Hosmer Spain & Sarah Rabia



# A B S E N C E

# E

**We overstuffed our lives** and now the pause button has been pushed for us. Wellness will reconnect us to ourselves.

“We live in an age of noise. Silence is almost extinct. You must create your own.”

—Erling Kagge, author of *Silence in the Age of Noise*

“At no other time, ever in our lives, have we gotten the opportunity to see what would happen if the world simply stopped. Here it is. We’re in it...We get to Marie Kondo the shit out of it all.”

—Julio Vincent, author of essay *Prepare for the Ultimate Gaslighting* (which has been read over 20 million times on Medium)

Z E R O



O U T

TINGS, DINGS, THINGS. MORE, CONSTANT, NEWER. BRIGHTER, FASTER, SHOUTIER.  
THE WORLD HAS SELF-GORGED AND STUFFED ITSELF SILLY.  
OUR AGE REEKS OF EXCESS AND ANXIETY.  
ATTENTION IS OUR ILLNESS. BUT THE ANTIDOTES ARE ARRIVING.  
AND THEY'LL CHANGE OUR VALUES, OUR SYSTEMS AND OUR CONSUMPTION.  
THEY ARE SILENCE.  
AND ABSENCE.  
THE WORLD IS READY TO ZERO OUT.  
THE ALWAYS-ON IS ABOUT TO GET SOME TIME OFF.  
AND NOTHING IS GOING TO BE OUR EVERYTHING.

## I . S I L E N C E

**Modern life is designed to make noise.** To demand our attention. We are over-stimulated and over-connected by what we've surrounded ourselves with. "Quiet places have been on the road to extinction at a rate that far exceeds the extinction of species," Gordon Hempton, an acoustic ecologist has warned. Sound is so constant, that we've forgotten what silence is. Why we need it. And how to find it.

Silence is a rare commodity in our lives, harder to find than ever. **Silence is a new luxury.**

"Over the course of history, silence has often been a reaction to the extravagances of the era," says Jane Brox, author of *Silence: A Social History of One of the Least Understood Elements of Our Lives*.

Where we once viewed silence as repressive—classroom demands to "sit still, be quiet"—we now stand in a time where we urgently need it. Heather Prete, a meditation practitioner, distinguishes this as a "gentle, nondoing 'Noble Silence'" that brings us closer to ourselves, creating a barrier against our natural tendency to seek more stimulation.

Silence, of course, is nothing new. Retreat and refuge are thousands of years old. The delivery system is just different. From meditation apps, who collectively made \$195m from 52m first-time downloaders last year, to vipassana 10-day silent retreats, rammed with tech millionaires like Jack Dorsey, deconditioning their minds.

But while noise is free, silence comes at a price. We now pay a pretty penny for it in a slew of silent cafes, silent Ubers (20–40% premiums for "Quiet Mode" rides) and even silent hair salons. When it comes to silence, money talks.

Silence is becoming institutionalized further still. In South Korea, burned-out workers check themselves into a voluntary "prison." Relinquishing responsibilities (and phones) for the sake of some peace and quiet.

While in England, in a somewhat softer approach, 1 in 3 young people now say they go to church. But not for Jesus (and definitely

not the comfy seat). But for the space it affords them to collect their thoughts. "Space and silence are of the same roots. It's that expansiveness, that feeling of freedom, being nurtured," Prete says.

And if it's not church, then it's Finland. A quiet country not known for much. Except perhaps functional design. And nudity. Finland is a place where silence is part of the everyday. In kindergarten, children are taught the value of forest walks. In adulthood, they avoid small talk and embrace pauses in conversation. "Silence is gold, talking is silver" goes a Finnish maxim.

But when it came to selling the country as a tourist destination, it hardly felt like a captivating USP. "Come to Finland, where nothing happens." So, the government commissioned a report to find their country's selling point. It concluded "...in the future, people will be prepared to pay for the experience of silence." They'd found their resource, and they had it in acres. The resulting campaign—"Silence, Please"—featured lone figures in the wilderness. It is growing tourism at record levels, year on year.

Noise is also embracing silence to sell. Harley Davidson, historically sold on its roar and "Screw it, let's ride" mentality is now telling us to "Breathe." Using a Siri-esque voice as the enemy, it's repositioning in its latest campaign as a wellness tool. It's Hogville meets Jade Eggs.

Kyle Chaykra, in his book *The Longing For Less* posits, "We crave silence because we are disappointed. We are disappointed because man-made noise, language and art have proved themselves fruitless, if not outright oppressive."

Silence creates time for rediscovery and simplicity. Of ourselves and of life's pleasures. As Brox says, "Silence is essential to our ability to be human." Or perhaps in the case of modern life, remain so. And to discover who we are, on our own terms. As Andy Puddicombe, co-founder of Headspace states, it's within us all, "the silence of a quiet mind."

We thought of silence as empty. Needing to be filled. But we are realizing it can be enriching. Fulfilling even. And we're embracing the absence in its wake.



# II. ABSENCE

*"The moment you breathe...everything stops. Your heart, your lungs, and finally your brain. Everything you feel and wish and want to forget, it all just sinks...I remember the first time it happened to me I got so scared, I wanted to call 911 and be kept alive by machines and apple juice... and then over time, it's all I wanted. Those two seconds of nothingness."*

—Rue, Euphoria

Gen Z are searching for nothingness. Described as the most anxious generation yet, they are self-prescribing with "Xanny" and CBD. Sedating themselves into a #JOMO, not #FOMO life. Where once youth sought stimulation, today they want to feel nothing.

The unnamed protagonist in Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* decides to take enough drugs to sleep for a year. "If I kept going, I thought, I'd disappear completely, then reappear in some new form. This was my hope. This was the dream." It darkly reflects a wider desire we feel. To just take a break. To press reset. To find something transformational in our absence.

Billie Eilish provides the soundtrack to nothingness. Pop-music adverse to the sugary highs of the past. Yet neither the Nirvana lows of heroin chic. It's therapy pop expressing the fetishization of absence. She's withdrawn herself from the societal expectation of the female-pop appearance, sound and lyrics. She steers clear of oversaturating us with herself, and that absence clearly appeals.

**"Zero is both a fullness and an emptiness.  
I do see zero as a yearning for a reset and a redo."**

And within that abstention we find a kindred spirit—Greta Thunberg. The force of nature, trying to save said nature, with her efficiency of words, with her action and with her abstinence. Both women represent a desire for **control in an out-of-control world**.

Abstinence is in on the rise. Gen Z are shirking meat, alcohol, sex. And even stimulation, in its entirety. Dopamine fasting is the latest wellness trend, emanating from Silicon Valley. By reducing dopamine in the brain, partakers believe they can "reset" themselves to be more effective and appreciate the simpler things. Dr. Cameron Sepah, who oversees the fasting of CEOs and VCs, believes it is the "antidote to our overstimulated age." Perhaps there's encouragement in the irony of simple pleasures being propagated from within Silicon Valley.

While we wait for that abstention to filter into our technology, youth through their restraint are already transforming our and their world. Through zero waste, veganism, nonownership and climate change. Through their search for nothingness this generation may even save the world. Bold perhaps. But after generations of binge, the purge is coming. And it's starting with our things.

"Super Renters" is a movement of young people who choose to own as little as possible. Minimizing their present life, rather than investing in an uncertain future. Culturally, we've been constantly shifting from an ownership to an experience model with disruptive businesses emerging to save us money, reduce stuff and respect the planet. While simultaneously running us over with their rent-a-scooters.

Jennifer Hyman, CEO of Rent the Runway, is one of the pioneers of the growing non-ownership industry. She believes "we used to

display wealth via what we purchased...the recession accelerated it but I think there's a value that's been placed on being smart about how you spend your money that has coincided with the sharing economy." **Owning less but better is the new cultural cachet. And sometimes it's even made of waste.**

Our desire is growing to not only own less, but to reuse our waste—changing the idea of what "nothing" is. In Dahod, India, in the city's bid to become plastic free, you can now pay with plastic rubbish. In fashion, "The R Collective" upcycles luxury-textile waste to create new luxury items. "The reality is that the world has enough clothes, and we don't need to make or buy any more," says British founder Christina Dean. "But fashion is not rational; it pulls and provokes...we took the realistic and pragmatic view that consumers will continue shopping for clothes and that 'new' fashion production is here to stay."

The shift is not just aesthetic but linguistic also. The language of zero is entirely embraced. Zero parabens. Zero pesticides. Zero alcohol. Zero carbon. Zero waste. **These zero brands are defining themselves by absence.**

The clean beauty industry has capitalized on seeing absence as radical or revolutionary. Framing loss as a benefit. Purity as potency. The ultimate example of this is RAW, a single ingredient product line from Parisian start-up Typology. Semiotician Chris Arning relates the association between the number zero with a cultural craving for a reset. "Zero is both a fullness and an emptiness. I do see zero as a yearning for a reset and a redo—but in the meantime it provides a nice buzzword to sell something."

Author Jenny Odell believes we can move beyond buzzwords. She describes "doing nothing" as an act of political resistance to the Attention Economy. She urges us to shift away from a capitalist perception of time and self. Away from the financial incentives of corporations that keep us in a state of anxiety, envy and distraction. Rather than constant self-improvement, upgrading and optimization, she challenges us to live a life with the ultimate goal of doing nothing. Celebrating the economic pointlessness of a task.

*"Nothing is harder to do than nothing. In a world where our value is determined by our productivity, where we submit even our leisure for numerical evaluation via likes, time becomes an economic resource that we can no longer justify spending on 'nothing.'"*

—Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*

In the Netherlands, they embrace pointlessness. They call it "niksen." Its literal meaning—"to do nothing." Pottering around. Enjoying music. Watching birds. Anything, as long as there's no end goal. Niksen has recently been adopted globally. A codification of nothingness, and a potential antidote to the idea of growth or achievement.

We also find the activation of nothingness in something we all do. Sleep is now an industry, using self-optimization to sell us mattresses, apps and the dulcet tones of Matthew McConaughey. Pokemon is even expanding into "deadtime" with a game that rewards you for sleeping. The human need for inactivity is being monetized and repositioned as a wellness tool, in one paradoxical swoop. Capitalism crept into our eight hours of downtime, exploiting our need for self-optimization, even as we drool into our pillows.



The tension is clear. Absence is being embraced. We're culturally reappraising the idea of doing nothing. As expected, industries and systems are being created to support that need. But the commoditization has the potential to become yet another form of competition for our attention. Entering a self-perpetuating cycle where we are riddled with anxiety that we should be doing nothing—because the system is telling us to. The meditation app that sends you five push notifications a day, reminding you

to meditate. The homebody who spends their weekend Marie Kondo-ing their things. "Our competition isn't other brands—it's sleep. And we're winning," stated Netflix CEO Reed Hastings.

The true value of nothingness is when it is practiced without purpose. And in opposition to the attention economy. That is when we become free.

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### III. SO WHY IS THIS ALL HAPPENING?

We're burned out. Our overstuffed lives have left us feeling disconnected from ourselves. In an overcrowded, overstimulated and overworked world, we experience a constant cycle of micro-satiations that leave us never satisfied. But we're hitting the pause button and seeking a reset on our lives.

*"We can do anything now. We all have all these superhuman devices, but we're not feeling very full at all."*

—Amber Case, anthropologist

The house is on fire. Post-truth. The end of democracy. Climate emergency. The world is in crisis mode and there is urgency for radical action and change to our way of life. Throughout history, people have sought out new structures and belief systems in uncertain times. The old ways are unsustainable. And there's no going back.

*"THERE IS NO PLANET B! DON'T BURN OUR FUTURE. THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!"*

—Protest banner, Global Climate Strike for Future, March 2019

We're self-connecting. In the past we've looked externally for escapism, expression and validation. But as we seek refuge from this outside world, we're turning inwards. Oversharing and overfriending has left us culturally craving deeper, more personal relationships. We're self-partnering, single householding, remote working and solo traveling. We're nurturing our own self-connection. And solitude is becoming social.

*"We've all had our 15 minutes of fame. Now it's time for our 15 minutes of anonymity."*

—Akiko Busch, *How to Disappear: Notes on Invisibility in a Time of Transparency*

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### IV. WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

#### 01\ End of the Attention Economy

Brands and advertisers, who have built their business models on the Attention Economy, from Netflix to Facebook ads, need to pivot to an "Inattentive Economy."

New industries will be born to de-stimulate the mind and body. Helping us do less. Convenience and wellness will converge. Mental health will enter entertainment spaces.

Start-up apps, established platforms and smartphone brands will continue to nudge people from social media habits to healthier activities or simply embracing nothingness.

Financial wellness will boom. Money, the biggest cause of stress cross-generationally, will become easier to organize. Giving us less to think, and worry, about through nudge economics (influencing people to make choices in their best interest). Price comparison site Moneysupermarket recently launched its "Get Money Calm" campaign telling us they let "you save a lot by doing very little." The bank Monzo enables you to block gambling transactions from your account.

"Zero Out is mental self-defense," says Arning. "Pollution used to be physical work. Now it's decluttering our minds. It's a whole new industry." Brands should ask, how can they be shorter, quieter, rentable, even invisible? Going forward, brands with the lowest impact on our minds and the planet will win.

#### 02\ Absence Marketing

Brands hate to be ignored. Rather than fear an inevitable absence, what if they encouraged and celebrated moments of nonconsumption in their customers' lives?

Done meaningfully, this has proven to be successful. Orange, a telecoms brand, produced an award-winning spot telling us "Good things happen when you switch off." Patagonia's print ad asked consumers not to buy their products unless necessary. And British Airways told the UK

"Don't Fly" in order to support home advantage at the London 2012 Olympics. Humility and awareness as a brand is endearing to customers. And disruptive among a barrage of attention-seekers.

To stay relevant in the midst of the purge, brands must stand for something beyond their product. Be it a long-term decline, like Big Soda or an intermittent fast, as we see in skin care. "Anti-consumers" might reveal new culture, potential fanbases or product innovation. Consider the flourishing industry of alternative period products transforming women's health, or sober millennials who still need a refreshment, a place to party and a little (clean) euphoria. Industries need to reinvent themselves in response—abstention culture is bigger than brand loyalty.

#### 03\ Sell Silence

Noise is free, but silence sells. Quiet brands can position themselves as wellness tools, unlocking a premium new benefit. For others, can you cancel the noise? Or create a "quiet mode" for your product?

And silence isn't just sound. Turning down the volume on branding, excess packaging or chaotic UX works too. Selfridges partnered with Headspace on a "No Noise" initiative during a busy sale period, including a "quiet shop" featuring de-branded famous goods as collectible items. They also resurrected its "Silence Room," originally created by its founder in 1909.

Handbag start-up "Silent Goods" sells itself on being anti-label, its lifetime warranty, and basic packaging—brown paper, with tape that reads "it's inside that counts." Muji, short for "Mujirushi Ryōhin" or "brandless quality goods" reign supreme among silent brands. Their use of absence communicates discernment, transparency and sustainability.

Louder products can survive this quiet revolution by making their noise matter. Toyota created a sound that enhances plant growth. Start-up IRIS improves sound quality while simultaneously activating the brain of users in a positive manner. Their mission to help us "listen well" provides wise advice for other brands to follow.

#### 04\ Think For Yourself

Silence and absence create the mental and physical space to see the bigger picture. To think for ourselves and escape our self-induced echo chambers. In a tribalized, algorithmic world, this is something people crave. And brands can help break the system.

The BBC Sounds app pitches itself as the "public service algorithm." Nudging users to discover content outside of their norm, rather than more of the same. The anti-algorithm is a powerful positioning in today's world of Amazon monopolies and polarized cultures. Creating safe spaces for solitude, directionless reflection and perspective is something other brands and workplaces can champion.

Consuming more of what we know is a creativity killer. "We are squeezing out the possibility of the new. Nothingness is a channel for creativity," says Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst author of *Not Working: Why We Have To Stop*. He references how great artists such as Warhol, Beckett and Keats would sleep, be idle and try to forget everything they knew, in order to welcome the new. Keats called this "negative capability." He talked of the artistic beauty we can achieve when we are "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubt without any irritable reaching after fact.

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### V. REMAINING HUMAN

*"I like to think (right now, please!)  
of a cybernetic forest  
filled with pines and electronics  
where deer stroll peacefully  
past computers  
as if they were flowers  
with spinning blossoms.  
I like to think  
(it has to be!)  
of a cybernetic ecology  
where we are free of our labors  
and joined back to nature,  
returned to our mammal  
brothers and sisters,  
and all watched over  
by machines of loving grace."*

—Richard Brautigan, *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*

As industry automated, our leisure rose. And for the last 50 years, we steadily crammed that freedom full. Our every waking moment is now accounted for—automated reminders, reminding us to have our fill. Eat. Sleep. Consume. Repeat. But bingeing beyond our capacity, has burnt us out.

Cohen says, "We have been defined so increasingly narrowly by what we do rather than by what we are...that we are literally losing a dimension of ourselves." But through silence and absence, we are finding even in a loud, crowded world, space and time do exist. And we may have to regress in order to progress. Get back to basics, to humanity, to nature in order to rediscover ourselves.

Industry and brands may help us get there. But we are starting to help ourselves. To help ourselves remain human. And what we're discovering is that silence and absence are within us.

We just need to embrace it, and **Zero Out**.

#### COVID-19 EFFECT

"The Great Pause' we've been predicting for the past 2 years is now here. So, what did we get right and inevitably wrong? Without the COVID effect, Zero Out would likely be a more elite, enlightened wellness movement. What the pandemic has done, for better and worse, is to democratize a life filled with less. And created the impetus for governments and business to radically simplify and become more essential in our lives. Post-pandemic, we will see a revenge wave of hedonism and maximalism, but for many, to 'Zero Out' will now be a normal and embraced part of life."

—Sarah Rabia, Editor in Chief



By Sarah Rabia, with Cecelia Girr & Paddy Fraser





@alovvra  
Alice Clarke, 20, Coventry, UK



“The city is literally taking my life energy.”

@your\_ptashka  
Nathalie Savitska, 23, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine

“I have always loved nature but now I see nature more as a true living organism and treat it how I would treat fellow man or animals.”

@the.toxicfox  
Shannon Kerns, 18, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



“For me, Cottagecore is an escape from the chaos of everyday life.”

@cottagecore.dreamer  
Claire Labuda



@strawberry\_foxie  
Martyna, 18, Poland

“It is actually a dream of mine to be able to create Cottagecore visuals and films for brands and I would so love to see some brands jump on board and create magic.”

@gingerlillytea  
Keri-Anne Pink, 33, Northamptonshire, UK

# COTTAGE CORE

“I have always been the girl who would sit in the forest and watch for deer and foxes. I will bake and knit and garden and press flowers. I love to watch Beatrix Potter and wear long floral dresses in flower fields. Being in lockdown and not being able to be in the forest or wander around gardens and stately homes has really made me slow down and appreciate the things I can do with what is around me.”

@gingerlillytea  
Keri-Anne Pink, 33, Northamptonshire, UK

A new escapist movement is being accelerated by life in quarantine.

Cottagecore is a subculture that fetishizes nature and rural life. Think farm animals, Victorian dresses, bread-baking and gardening. Its followers are a community of young millennials and Gen Zers, often queer women. They long for a slower pace of life, free from screens and busy cities.

First spotted in 2017, Cottagecore has recently gained momentum across social media as a visual and lifestyle trend—particularly on TikTok. This boom for the bucolic is largely due to COVID-19, where stay-at-home orders have kept us cooped up inside our homes.

The outside world has become a taboo place during coronavirus. Nature-craving youth are #Nowstalgic for an existence that’s the antithesis to current circumstances. Rural life is reimagined as a place where we #GetMild and #ZeroOut.

“The Chinese take on Cottagecore is expressed through the rise of ‘Rural Influencers’ (农村网红). Their content shows an authentic reflection of rural Chinese life. Unsurprisingly, most followers are from mega-urban cities. Also related is the long-term phenomenon of ‘Escape from BSG’ (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou). Previously, young people flocked here for ‘Big City Dreams,’ but now they’re eager to move back to their hometown or Tier-2 cities for a simpler life.”

—Justine Hsu, Spotter, Shanghai

“Cottagecore seems to be a cyclical representation of bucolism that we saw during ‘Arcadismo’ in Brazil, a cultural movement that became popular through the Latin terms ‘carpe diem’ (enjoy the present moment) and ‘fugere urbem’ (escape the cities). Cottagecore responds to the same scenario as centuries ago: the overload of information.”

—Bruno Sousa, Spotter, São Paulo

“I think the challenge is to go past the Cottagecore aesthetic and how brands and consumers can embrace a different lifestyle because if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that city life, as we are living it, is not doing us well and we are not doing it well.”

—Cecelia Vallini, Spotter, Mexico City



By Sarah Rabia, Alexander Landau & Cecelia Girr



# COLLWE CTIVE

**We're moving from self to societal wellness.** We're learning that our wellness is interconnected to other people and the planet.

**"Unless our care moves from the self to the collective (or ideally both) as a society, we will continue to be unwell."**

—Brigid Delaney, journalist and author of *Wellmania: Extreme Misadventures in the Search for Wellness*

**"If your wellness isn't intersectional then you're not 'well.'"**

—Michelle Pellizzon, Founder of Holisticism, a platform dedicated to making wellness more accessible

# GEOGRAPHY OF CLEAN

COVID-19 marked the start of an all-out war against deadly germs. Across the globe, our collective Clean-xiety is changing how we eat, travel, teach, dress, and worship. As "Clean" evolves into a new standard of wellness, it will become more visible, marketable and collective than ever before. Here are ten ways the world is taking clean culture by storm.

By Skyler Hubler

**USA**  
Disinfecting robots may just become Hollywood's next big star. Hoping to get productions back up and running safely, the entertainment industry is looking to a lab-certified robot to keep sets sanitary. The "Xenex Germ-Zapping Robot" uses pulses of ultraviolet light to successfully deactivate 99.9% of the novel coronavirus in just two minutes. The bot has already been heard at work in hospitals around the globe, but would be a first-time visitor to the film world.  
As cleanliness becomes crucial to reopening, **Survivalism** inspires industries to embrace the rise of robots.

**SCOTLAND**  
Scotland is aiming to get kids back to school safely with a plan involving playgrounds, gardens, and fresh air. Outdoor education has been a cornerstone of Scotland's "curriculum for excellence" long before the pandemic. But now, open-air learning is gaining even broader support as a template for socially distanced schooling. With infection control being easier outside, students just might be skipping the stuffy classroom in the upcoming school year.  
**IRL** outdoor education is embraced as a way to minimize risk without putting child development on pause.

**THE NETHERLANDS**  
These days, coughing into your hand is sure to cause some looks of disgust. But the preferred alternative—coughing into your arm—is far from germ-free. After learning that bacteria can survive on fabric for up to five days, the Dutch design studio Raw Color came up with a simple hack. Their idea is as easy as finding an old sock, cutting off the toe area, and sliding it over your elbow. The Elbow Sock serves a dual purpose of keeping your clothes clean, while also acting as a visual reminder to practice Corona-proof coughing.  
DIY **Second Life** hacks turn everyday items into new forms of pandemic protection.

**CHINA**  
In China, using personal chopsticks to serve others is a centuries-old way of showing affection. But now, sharing food could mean sharing deadly germs. In a push to create more hygienic habits, the government is urging people to use a separate pair of chopsticks purely for serving. Unsurprisingly, not everyone is on board. Many people are resisting the so-called "dining table revolution," considering the change to be a tasteless offense to China's communal culture.  
With fear of contamination changing our food culture, it's traditional customs vs. new etiquette in today's **Food Fight**.

**COSTA RICA**  
The next big tourism driver may be less about Instagram-worthy views and world-class cuisines, and more about finding a safe escape. Under the slogan "Wellness Pura Vida," Costa Rica is hoping to attract tourists by promoting its ability to contain the virus. Costa Rica had reported just 20 total coronavirus deaths as of July 6—proving itself to be a true contender in the fight against COVID.  
In the new era of **Travel Right**, the cleanest countries will win with cautious consumers.

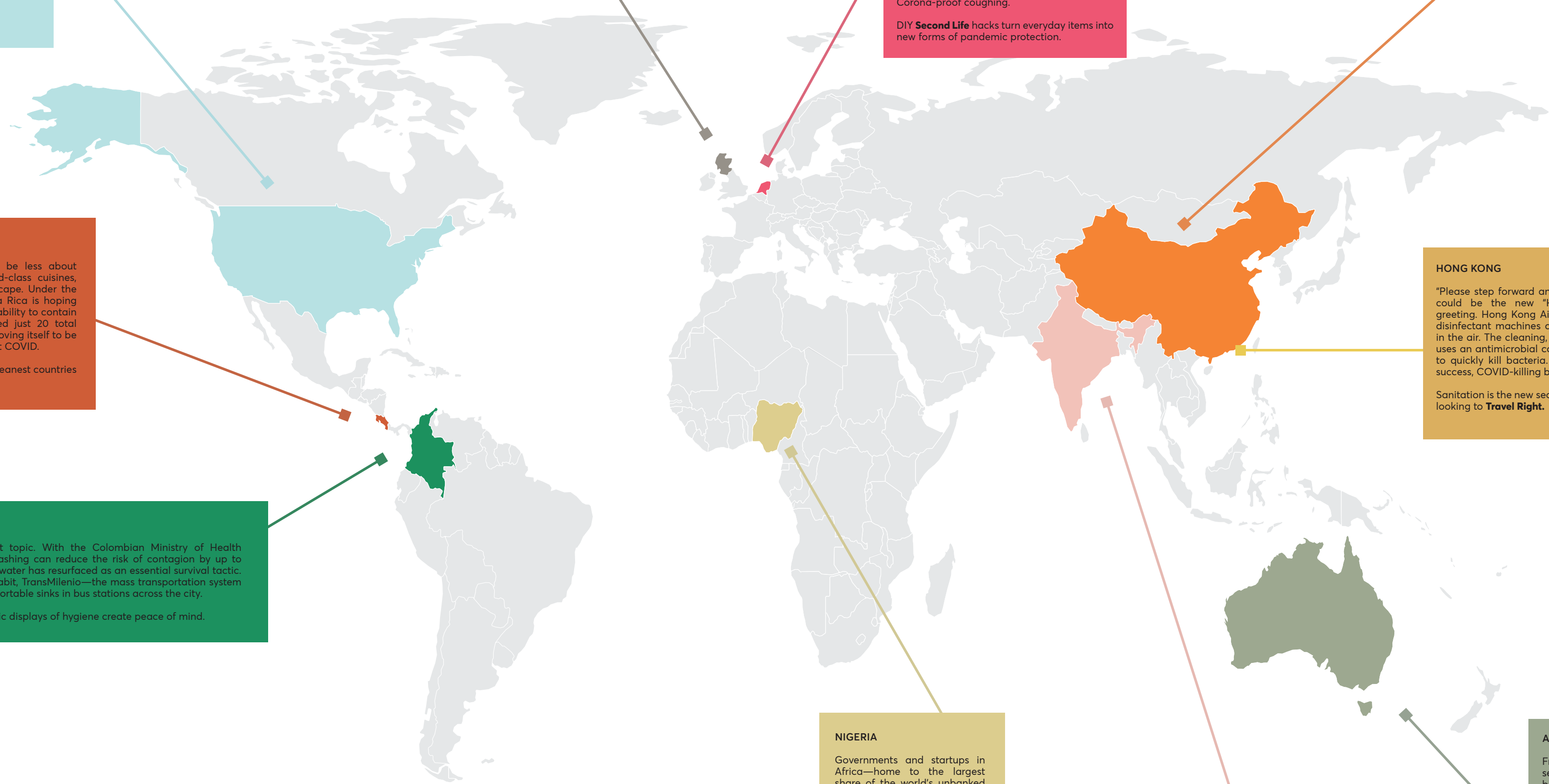
**HONG KONG**  
"Please step forward and prepare to be disinfected" could be the new "Have a nice flight" airline greeting. Hong Kong Airport is testing out full-body disinfectant machines as a way to get people back in the air. The cleaning, which takes just 40 seconds, uses an antimicrobial coating and a sanitizing spray to quickly kill bacteria. If the "CleanTech" trial is a success, COVID-killing booths could be here to stay.  
Sanitation is the new security measure for passengers looking to **Travel Right**.

**COLOMBIA**  
Hand hygiene has become a hot topic. With the Colombian Ministry of Health announcing that frequent hand washing can reduce the risk of contagion by up to 50%, it's no wonder that soap and water has resurfaced as an essential survival tactic. Hoping to make hand washing a habit, TransMilenio—the mass transportation system of Bogotá—has installed over 130 portable sinks in bus stations across the city.  
As **Clean-xiety** rules our world, public displays of hygiene create peace of mind.

**NIGERIA**  
Governments and startups in Africa—home to the largest share of the world's unbanked population—are accelerating the adoption of mobile money as a means to stop the spread. The shift was driven by a World Health Organization warning that COVID could cling to cash for a number of days. One Nigeria-based mobile payment company, Paga, has seen over a 200 percent quarterly increase in users since the outbreak.  
With health concerns driving contactless adoption, **Vaporized** payments become the sanitary solution.

**INDIA**  
Worship centers across India are going contactless for contagion control. In Tamil Nadu, Hindu temples are playing it safe by putting certain rituals on pause. Physical offerings like prasadam and vibhuti are no longer allowed. Activities like group singing and recital of shlokas have been suspended. And sprinkling holy water is now seen as unsanitary. But despite tangible elements of faith dissolving, devotion remains strong.  
As **Survivalism** forces new religious restrictions, long-standing traditions get a touch-free transformation.

**AUSTRALIA**  
From plastic shields to seats separated by giant teddy bears, bars are finding creative ways to keep drinkers socially distant. But one particular pop-up bar in Australia is removing the social aspect altogether. The Heineken Zer0.0 Contact Bar uses two robot arms—named Heidi and Ken—to crack a cold one and serve it to solo visitors via a conveyor belt. Not only does the bar require zero human contact, it also offers zero-alcohol beer at zero cost to customers.  
With **IRL** interactions on pause, experiences evolve to please parties of one.





# SURVIVALISTS COOKBOOK

By Cecelia Girr, Linda Hosmer Spain  
& Alexander Landau



Photo courtesy of SPACE10 & Barkas,  
Photography by Kasper Kristoffersen

For more Climate Diet recipes, check out  
SPACE 10's Future Food Today cookbook.

Over the next 30 years, global demand for food will increase by 70%. Based on today's diet, we simply do not have the resources to feed everyone. The way we currently eat is killing the planet; food production is responsible for one-quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. This is one of the grand challenges the world faces, says the World Resources Institute. So how do we sustainably feed 10 billion people?

Enter SPACE10, an innovation lab funded by IKEA that is dreaming up the food of the future and making it accessible now. And it's starting by reimagining classic dishes of today with the climate-friendly ingredients of tomorrow. Which translates as, out with unsustainable protein sources, and in with micro-algae, insects and lab-grown meat. Healthy for the planet and people alike, and delicious, they insist.

Food and sustainability are converging as environmental wellness becomes inextricably linked to the wellness of society.

So let us serve you a taste of what's to come.

## The Bug Burger

by SPACE10

200g	Potatoes
800g	Beetroots
200g	Parsnips
50g	Mealworms
15g	Dried, Blended Shiitake Mushrooms
4 Tbsp	Clear Rapeseed Oil
20g	Psyllium Husk
20g	Wheat Flour
½ tsp	Salt

### COVID-19 Effect

"COVID-19 shocked the world's food supply chain, while lockdown measures got people experimenting with home cooking, and foraging has never been trendier. The pandemic has served as an opportunity for both business and consumers to analyze their resiliency. This will accelerate Community Supported Agriculture models, and demand for new foods that promise the health of the planet and the self."

—Cecelia Girr, Deputy Editor

### So What If..

Brands end the culture of food-shaming by using ingredients that are good for people, planet, and purse?

Climate activism drives innovation in food and drink? Making lab-grown and wild foods more palatable and politically correct.

Schools instill the "Climate Diet"—promoting healthy and sustainable eating as normal to the next generation?





# ESSENTIALS

# NOTHING

**Wellness is graduating** from supplemental to fundamental. Accelerated by COVID, the next wave of wellness will meet our most basic needs.

“One of the challenges with the wellness industry is to sort out what’s real – what’s actually helpful – and what’s complete B.S.”

—Brigid Delaney, journalist and author of *Wellmania: Extreme Misadventures in the Search for Wellness*

“The pandemic has forced us to reappraise what we deem ‘essential.’ Turns out, delivery workers and supermarket cashiers are more essential to us than accountants and lawyers. Similarly, our belittling of wellness has been remedied, as it is proven to be essential to our survival. ‘Essential’ is our word of the year.”

—Sarah Rabia, Editor in Chief



A

CALL

FOR

UNIVERSAL



To say the state of healthcare will never be the same after today's COVID pandemic is the least insightful way to start any discussion.

But it's true.

And as we're focused on navigating the ambiguity of "what now," I can't help but be fascinated by the "what next"—fast forwarding to the fall, and thinking about the state of healthcare and all of the changes both forced upon it along with the opportunities seized.

As the rhetoric escalates around public health and even in some instances "universal healthcare," and "Medicare for all" in the US, I'd like to infuse a different rally cry that I think will be foundational to health—the need for Universal Self-Care.

Universal Self-Care isn't a call for a government-imposed system to provide means and money for access to self-care tools. It is a call to action for brands and organizations to recognize the need for increased self-care and provide means, where appropriate, to help.

Self-care is more than preventing illness. Self-care is taking deliberate actions to care for our mental and physical health.

That's at the heart of calling for Universal Self-Care.

This is how brands can have a massive impact.

I have often said every brand has the ability be in healthcare, and I have been inspired by many brands' responses to COVID. From alcohol and spirit brands making hand sanitizer, to clothing companies shifting gears to create personal protective gear.

All brands are now health brands.

But as we turn the corner and continue to settle into our new way of living and working, this is an opportunity for brands to continue momentum in health by creating Universal Self-Care.

It starts with a simple question: "What is our role in shaping self-care?" Perhaps you can foster better connections with loved ones, help provide clarity on what healthy means, or perhaps provide the means to allow people permission to do something for themselves, unwind and focus.

A brand's influence on health is boundless. It starts by acknowledging it can impact health in a positive way, and then acting.

## "All brands are now health brands."

Fundamentally, the building blocks are a return to basics—eating healthy, exercising, spending time with loved ones, breathing, and doing something to unwind every day.

We entered into 2020 at a time when the World Happiness Report read out that the US continues to show a decline in self-reported happiness. Depression continues to be a leading cause of disability worldwide and a major contributor to the global burden of disease. A culture of always being on and available continues to weigh heavy on our mental and physical well-being. Self-care had never been more critical.

And then COVID-19 happened.

Sheltering in place, social distancing, home schooling and general concerns for our well-being continue to take a toll. A recently published study showed 45% of those surveyed in the US had anxiety and depression levels that fell out of normal range.

Last month 315 college admission deans put out a statement to students. A focal point—self-care. "Self-care is of high importance, especially in times of crisis...We encourage all students to be gentle with themselves during this time."

However, just engaging in self-care isn't that simple.

While self-care is built on basics, establishing habits and rhythms is extremely difficult. Time, access to education, money—many factors correlating with class and race-based privilege work against making self-care attainable by all.

What will the world look like in the fall or even one year from now? I don't know. I'm an eternal optimist and hope that we can seize this moment to create great change. Universal Self-Care to me is one important way.

Imagine a day when the World Happiness Report shows great gains everywhere in the world because all brands stood up to make a positive impact on health.

### So What If...

**Every business had an internal team focused on positively impacting self-care for their customers and staff?**

**Brands made self-care about more than the self? Making it social and community-oriented.**

**New tools quantified the positive effects of self-care? Proving it to be an essential ROI, rather than an indulgence.**



Paul J. Pfeleiderer, PhD. Global CSO, TBWA/WorldHealth

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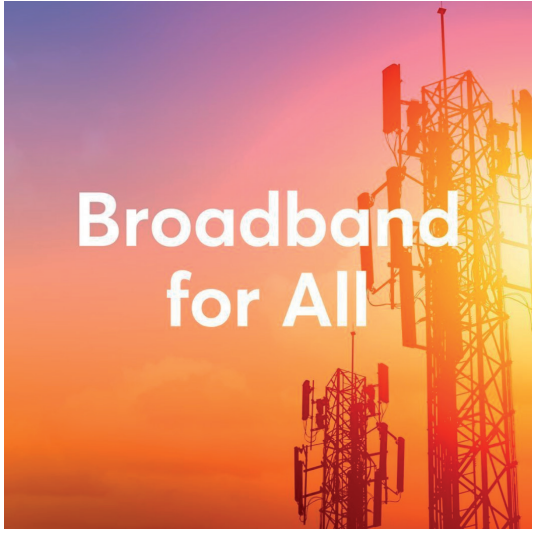


# WHY YOU NEED FINANCIAL THERAPY




**LVMH FTW**

Haute hand sanitizer is here. In reaction to COVID-19, luxury conglomerate LVMH—which owns Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, and Givenchy—is having three of its perfume manufacturing facilities make hand sanitizer instead of fragrance.



**Broadband for All**

Claro Colombia is shrinking the digital divide with a new initiative. The project, Connected Colombia, allows customers to sponsor internet access for up to 10,000 low income households for a year.



**Uprefreshing**


Diesel has unveiled a new capsule collection that keeps you clean. The Spring 2020 line, called "Uprefreshing," consists of 20 pieces that have been treated with the company's antibacterial and antimicrobial technology called "Protector Shield."

## ESSENTIAL INNOVATION

As the world shifts its attention away from shiny gadgets and over-engineered products, solutions that fulfill today's most basic human needs are earning their time in the spotlight. These nine essential innovations are making ingenuity count.


By Skyler Hubler & Alexander Landau

For more insight on what innovation will look like post-pandemic, check out our Culture After COVID series on Diversification at [Backslash.com](http://Backslash.com).




**Digital Diet**

AeBeZe Labs is giving digital content a nutritional value. Their Moodrise app delivers tools—such as digital nutrition labels and personalized digital nutrition plans—to help people consume healthier digital diets.



**Haute Sustainability**

WWF Sweden and Google have partnered to create a fashion sustainability platform. The platform provides fashion companies with supply chain data in an effort to drive more responsible sourcing decisions.



**ContainER**

Italian architect Carlo Ratti created an open-source design that transforms shipping containers into hospitals. He calls it CURA (Connected Units for Respiratory Ailments). Each shipping container can fit two intensive care units.

### Backslash \ So what is "financial therapy" exactly?

**Lindsay Bryan-Podvin:** Financial therapy is much more therapy than finance. Because our relationship to money is heavily emotional and psychological, financial therapy takes a look at the way money shows up holistically in a person's life. Financial therapists look at the way individuals and couples think, feel, and behave with their money. They are not substitutes for financial planners; instead, they help people understand the behavioral hurdles that make wise financial choices.

charges less—and the rich because they want to—like which investment brokerage they use. Folks in the middle are less likely to talk about money with one another. This creates a bizarre middle-class dynamic where everyone assumes their friends know what to do with their money when, in reality, most people are running around without a guide.

We all experience financial anxiety, regardless of income or net worth. Differences abound between gender. Race would be a separate article entirely.

### \ Pre-COVID, the term "financial wellness" was just starting to emerge. How is the pandemic shaping what we mean by this?

**LBP:** Financial wellness is the Chilean Sea Bass to "fiscal responsibility." If we called the Sea Bass the Patagonian Toothfish, it just wouldn't sell. [Editor: interesting rebranding story if you're unfamiliar]. The term "financial wellness" is a much more palatable way of saying "financial plan." This reframe was a smart decision on behalf of financial service providers. Using something that has taken off in recent years, "wellness," and folding it into personal finance, to entice people into having a healthy relationship with their money.

### \ Does the "average person" need a therapist like you?

**LBP:** I'll give a therapist answer: that depends. The range of reasons a person seeks financial therapy can vary, but my specialty is working with high-earning couples that the financial industry calls HENRYs (High earners, not rich yet). They might be stuck wondering why things feel so overwhelming and complicated when they are earning good money.

Research shows people are more comfortable talking about death and sex than money. Money is something we engage with daily. We spend it, earn it, save it, lend it, and donate it, and we owe it to ourselves to tend to our relationship with money the way we would anything else that we interact with daily. The world has started to normalize mental health as a part of our lives. I'm hopeful that we will start to destigmatize talking about and engaging with money, too.

Pre-pandemic, I saw many people who thought an emergency fund, long-term disability, and a financial plan were "nice to have" and not "essential to have." With the pandemic, more people understand their importance. There's been an increased interest in creating a financial plan that works and understanding that the way we spend, save, and invest needs to be in alignment with our values. For example, if you value sustainability and community, you'd be better off spending grocery money at a farmer's market and local grocery store than at a big box grocery conglomerate.

### \ What advice would you give to the CEO of a financial institution looking to make financial therapy part of their growth plan?

**LBP:** Include financial therapy as an offering for both your employees and your customers. We all need to take a look at our relationship with money beyond bookkeeping. The more aligned and in balance we are, the more likely we will spend, save, and invest in alignment with our values.

### \ We're at a point where many industries are beginning to address mental health. Why do you think the finance industry has ignored this for so long?

**LBP:** Like many industries, somehow, they thought that we leave our mental and emotional selves at the door when we engage with money. This isn't true, and there are more studies coming out about the intersection between mental health and money. Sure, there's the often touted "buy experiences, not things, for happiness" study, but there are others about the implications of student loans on suicide rates and depression (DeLeire and Kalil, 2010; Matz, Gladstone, and Stillwell, 2016; Richardson, Elliott, and Roberts, 2013). We sell the idea that money equals happiness. Yes, more money means you have your basic needs met and a financial cushion, but we still have to take care of our full selves to have balanced lives.

### \ Can you finish this sentence: Post-pandemic, financial wellness will...

**LBP:** ...become encompassed within 'wellness' in general.

### \ Data shows that money is the No.1 cause of stress for all generations and sexes. What do we all have in common when it comes to money worries and what are the key differences between us?

**LBP:** Surprisingly, the ultra-rich and the poor have something in common, both groups are more likely to talk about money. The poor, because they have to—for example, which grocery store



Lindsay Bryan-Podvin, LMSW, is a Financial Therapist and author of *The Financial Anxiety Solution*. Follow her @mindmoneybalance

C O N C L

U S I O N N





# EMERGING WELL

# INDUSTRIES LINES

# OF SOS

Every industry is now in the business of wellness. And entirely new sectors are being born to make us well. From sex to death, Backslash identifies a spectrum of 10 key markets driving the \$4.5 trillion global wellness economy into the future.



By Cecelia Girr, Skyler Hubler & Sarah Rabia

## SOBER BEVERAGES

Alcohol is no longer the life of the party. "Nolo" (no and low alcohol) drinks will increasingly get a seat at the table as growing numbers—particularly millennials—realize the benefits of sobriety to their health, lifestyle and wallet. While many of us have been drinking our way through COVID (#quarantini), post-pandemic we expect the detox to come and bar-free life to feel normal. The Global Non-Alcoholic Drinks market is forecast to hit a whopping \$1.62 trillion by 2025

GrandView Research

## GUT HEALTH

"Microbiomes" is a current wellness buzzword that's been accelerated into the lexicon by COVID. The term refers to all the microbes that live inside the body, such as bacteria, that help us digest food and fight disease, among other essential functions. With new research connecting gut health to mental health, gut-testing apps and fermented foods are on the rise, promising to keep our microbiomes in balance. The Global Human Microbiome market is projected to reach \$1.7 billion by 2027.

Markets and Markets

## SLEEP ECONOMY

Sleep is no longer deadtime but productive wellness time. From office nap pods to sleep-boosting pajamas, AI sleep assistants to sleep-tracking video games, we're sleeping better in order to live better. The immune-boosting health benefits of sleep have been elevated due to COVID, both as a remedy to help prevent and fight the virus if contracted, and to manage general anxiety and mood. The Global Sleep Economy is predicted to be worth \$585 billion by 2024.

Casper / SEC

## DEATH WELLNESS

We're saying good-bye to the dark days of death and embracing businesses that help us celebrate and maximize our final departure—a pre-COVID movement known as "death wellness" or "death positivity." The pandemic has forced the death industry to innovate digitally, flipping live-streamed funerals from niche to norm. And in combination with the Black Lives Matter movement, started a conversation about collective grief. The Global Deathcare Services market is expected to reach a value of nearly \$184.46 billion by 2022.

The Business Research Company

## AIR PURIFICATION

A growing awareness of airborne diseases and air pollution (or lack of, thanks to COVID) is making us think twice about what's filling our lungs, and take matters into our hands via at-home solutions. Researchers from the University of Houston recently designed an air filter that can kill the coronavirus, which could become commonplace in offices, airplanes and homes. The Global Air Purifier market is expected to grow to \$18.21 billion by 2027.

GrandView Research

## SEXTECH

Sex care is the new self-care. Women are taking their sexual wellness and pleasure into their own hands. Medical studies show multiple benefits to regular, satisfying sex, such as a more effective immune system. And governments have been promoting the importance of "sex buddies" during COVID (or "cuddle buddies" if you're Boris Johnson). But only 48% of women have good sexual wellness (meaning no STI's, plenty of orgasms)—compared to 83% of men. Last year, sex toys were still banned from CES. This year, they stole the show, led by female startups such as LELO, which has reinvented the vibrator with a product that definitively answers the question: what do women want? A "blended orgasm," please. The Global SexTech market is estimated to be worth \$122 billion by 2026.

Business Leader

## WELLNESS REAL ESTATE

Our buildings are getting a wellness makeover. Pre-COVID, this was a luxury industry—think celebrity mansions with spa-level bathrooms and "hospital-grade air." Now, wellness real estate is going mass. COVID-proofing offices is a worldwide government mandate, meaning new air purification systems, contactless technology and outside meeting space—or reimagining the "office" altogether. A recent survey found that 70% of people are now focused on making their homes healthier as a result of COVID. The Global Wellness Real Estate market is predicted to reach \$180 billion by 2022.

Global Wellness Institute

## DISINFECTANTS

COVID-19 has turned germs into worldwide enemy No.1, and sparked a stampede for hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes and bleach to rival a Supreme drop. With no fancy ad campaign, just pure, rapid cultural change, cleaning products have transformed into wellness products. And we predict "Cleanwashing" will replace Greenwashing as the new way for brands to show they care. The Global Disinfectants market is poised to reach over \$5.7 Billion by the year 2025.

Global Industry Analysts

## MENTAL HEALTH TECH

Between pandemic panic, burnout, and eco-anxiety, we're increasingly turning to tech to get a grip on our mental health. "Flattening the mental health curve" has been described as the next big coronavirus challenge. Answering a mental health crisis, further amplified by COVID-19 and characterized by "Gen-Ziety" (see our New Wellness Audiences story on page 24-25), mental health management tools have surged in popularity under lockdown. The world's top-10 mental wellness apps generated 2 million more downloads in April alone. The Global Behavioral Health Software market is expected to hit \$2.31 billion by 2022.

Markets and Markets

## WELLNESS TRAVEL

The \$639 billion global travel industry has been one of the hardest hit by COVID and is unlikely to reach previous forecasts (\$919 billion by 2022, according to the Global Wellness Institute). The good news is that lockdown-friendly business models are emerging to revive its growth, such as at-home hotel services and even fake flights, where passengers can board a grounded plane just for the "experience." Post-pandemic, wellness travelers will prioritize fitness, spirituality and the great outdoors. (Editor: knackered parents will also crave Solo Travel and marriage-saving romantic breaks). Home or away, wellness will travel.

Global Wellness Institute

SOBER BEVERAGES \ \$1.62 TRILLION BY 2025

GUT HEALTH \ \$1.7 BILLION BY 2027

SLEEP ECONOMY \ \$585 BILLION BY 2024

DEATH WELLNESS \ \$184.46 BILLION BY 2022

AIR PURIFICATION \ \$18.21 BILLION BY 2027

SEXTECH \ \$122 BILLION BY 2026

WELLNESS REAL ESTATE \ \$180 BILLION BY 2022

DISINFECTANTS \ \$5.7 BILLION BY 2025

MENTAL HEALTH TECH \ \$2.31 BILLION BY 2022

WELLNESS TRAVEL \ \$919 BILLION BY 2022

C O N C L

IN 2020, THE WORLD  
DISCOVERED THAT NONE OF US  
ARE WELL UNTIL ALL OF US ARE  
WELL.

Wellness has historically been a privileged pursuit. Before COVID-19, we were starting to realize that the most crucial aspects of wellness—sleep, sex, silence—are free. The pandemic made it clear that our own health and wellness is intrinsically connected to that of others around us. And, by exacerbating existing inequalities, it ushered in a greater consciousness that wellness for all must be a priority.

U S I O N

# 1 WELLNESS IS GOING BACK TO BASICS

A phenomenon preceding but accelerated by COVID-19, we've come to trust scientists over influencers; bleach over essential oils; nature walks over gym memberships. We're rediscovering the value of simple public health practices like hand washing, over complex surgical procedures. This will force the wellness industry to address our basic needs first and foremost.

"Mommy, I want to be an epidemiologist when I grow up." Global online searches related to epidemiology are up **80% since November 2019**, catalyzed by the pandemic. "How to become an epidemiologist" has consistently been taking over "How to become a brain surgeon" in search queries over the same time period.

Source: Google Trends, August 2020

# 2 IT'S NOT "WELLNESS & HEALTH," & "HEALTH & WELLNESS"

Curative healthcare, however sophisticated, can only do so much. With comorbidities linked to increased COVID fatalities, the pandemic is making us all realize that it's better to stay well than wait for illness to strike. Increasingly, a wellness-promoting lifestyle will be our priority, while health treatment becomes plan B.

After a spike of **44% at the start of the crisis**, the proportion of Americans who say they are "fearful for their health and safety" has stabilized at a very high level, **above 35%** in most countries. This will fuel a more proactive, wellness-seeking approach to health.

Source: Hall and Partners global COVID-19 panel, July 2020

Worldwide interest in "How to be healthy and fit" **is up 40% since November 2019**.

Source: Google Trends, August 2020

# 3 WELLNESS WITH A CAPITAL W

Wellness used to be supplemental, superficial, unproven, turmeric in your latte, vagina candles. But wellness is growing up: the next wave of wellness will be legitimized by science and elevated by institutions. To win over remaining wellness nonbelievers, it will have to prove that it works.

Interestingly, vitamin purchases have **declined by 8%** since the crisis started, suggesting we are prioritizing more proven remedies.

Source: USA Omni / Advanced audience data

*"You've seen the 'woo.' You've seen the crystals. I think the trajectory for wellness is going to be gathering scientists and having the allopathic (conventional) medicine side of things integrate. And with that, a lot of test results will confirm the validity of certain herbs and wellness practices. And so, we'll get really comfortable with proving that all different types of wellness work."*

—Amanda Chantal Bacon, Founder of Moon Juice

# 4 WELLNESS GETTING IS POLITICAL

Pre-pandemic, class rage was a brewing battle between the **1% vs. the rest of us**, signaled by the canceling of elitist wellness brands like Peloton and movies such as Parasite. But COVID, alongside the Black Lives Matter resurgence, has exposed and created greater divisions in health and wealth. Mask-wearing has become a new culture war. And self-care is reclaiming its activist origins. The next wave of wellness will demand "Access for All" and brands will champion democratization.

*"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."*

—Audre Lorde

# 5 WELLNESS IS OUR NEW GLOBAL RELIGION

We're looking for control in an out-of-control world, and wellness is providing a new order. In a post-truth, increasingly secular world, wellness is now the place people are turning to in order to find meaning, belonging, guidance and hope. While religion used to fulfill our spiritual needs, wellness has taken its place, emerging as a holistic solution that serves our mind, body and soul. In a polarized, COVID-ified world, wellness is something we can all believe in.

*"In the absence of traditional forms of religion, where are the youth of today getting their religious kick? I believe the answer lies in Soul Cycle and green smoothies...wellness has become a kind of secular, new-age religion."*

—Clementine Prendergast, Dazed Digital

# EVERY WELLNESS BRAND IS NOW A WELLNESS BRAND NOW

*Wellness is where all industries will converge and will no longer be a separate industry. As wellness becomes more mainstream, brands have a role to play in unlocking access to all of its facets: from financial to environmental wellness, from wellness in sex to wellness in death.*

Wellness is the new springboard for innovation and social responsibility. As the pandemic forces a reappraisal of priorities, wellness will become more essential, diversified, democratized, and valued than it's ever been. Wellness is the way forward.

*"The next wave of wellness will converge with the medical and brand worlds. Treating illness and optimizing well-being will just become part of the same system. One that extends beyond the self to the planet. From governments to friendship circles. This will redefine 'Holistic Health.' We may need new language to describe it. Wellness will still be sold in smoothies, but it will also become a science."*

—Sarah Rabia, Editor in Chief

# A B O U T U S

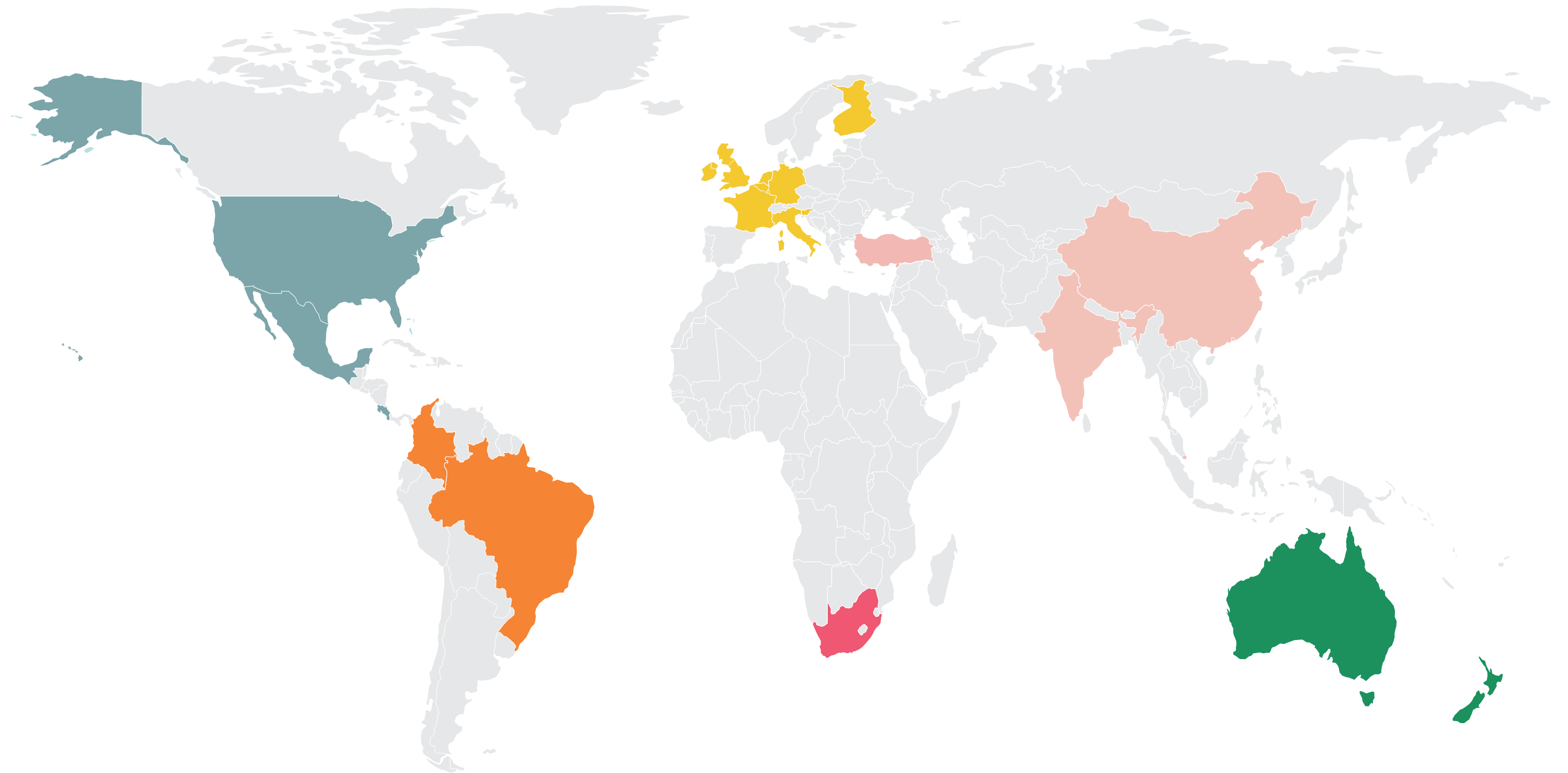
Backslash is a cultural insight studio based in Los Angeles and powered by a global network of over 250 Culture Spotters, part of the TBWA collective. We produce daily content to make TBWA—and our clients—smarter about culture. A dynamic hybrid of strategy, data, and storytelling, Backslash translates cultural blur into business opportunity.

*Find out more at [backslash.com](https://backslash.com)*

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SEX IS THE  
NEW SELF-CARE

DEATH OF THE PARTY

CLEAN - X I E T Y

REBRANDING

MENOPAUSE

GEN Z'S SEARCH

FOR NOTHINGNESS