

it's not all bad  
8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2020

## REASONS TO...

### smile (pg 1)

shark tank season 19  
is it a bird? a plane?  
hi, jim halpert!

### innovate (pg 1)

lone ranger  
~~peer~~ connection

### reinvent (pg 2)

dear diary: doctors are cool  
mask for all  
virtual rituals

### reflect (pg 2)

beautiful or barren?  
hakuna matata



Crown shyness is a natural phenomenon where trees grow with spaces between themselves to avoid touching. Be like trees: practice social distancing!

Britain's 'lovable buffoon', Boris Johnson, had repeatedly said that he had "as much chance of being decapitated by a flying frisbee or reincarnated as an olive as becoming Prime Minister." Yet, here we are. If we were to follow the Boris Logic:

**P (being decapitated by a frisbee) = 0.000000001 = P (becoming prime minister)**

But P (0.000000001) happened; Boris Logic drives home a hopeful point: that which we least expect is possible. Taiwan was expected to face a huge outbreak of COVID-19, but managed to curtail its numbers at 400 (*see pg. 1*). People are defying expectations everyday—103-year-olds are recovering from the virus, potential vaccines are being fast-tracked to the trial phase. These acts of defiance are informing our research and future expectations, like lower-than-expected infection rates in countries like India and prompting research into the immunity effects of the BCG vaccine. Yes, the situation looks grim, but if Boris can be PM, an outcome with a probability (in his mind) of near-zero, then maybe we can envision a post-virus world that exceeds our expectations.

# reasons to smile

A post-virus world will be all about the contactless and we're already seeing this manifest. From [hands-free door openers](#) to toddy tappers (see *below*) and [hairstylists using pipes](#) to continue their services, we're in store for a strange (and brave) new world.

A [certain lad](#) decided to wear his Spiderman onesie for his morning jog. He inspired another, then another, and very soon Manchester reported sightings of Deadpool, Captain America and even Cinderella. With their favourite superheroes patrolling the streets, little kids looking out their windows had nothing to worry about.

If you want to smile for 15 minutes straight, watch John Krasinski's [Some Good News](#): a feel-good update on all the heart-warming goodness that we're seeing around the world; with help from Emily Blunt, Lin-Manuel Miranda and more, because #Hollywood.



# reasons to innovate

Despite its proximity to China and [exclusion by the WHO](#), Taiwan has [restricted the spread](#) of the virus to under 400. How? It learned from the past. Its 2003 SARS outbreak prompted the creation of the National Health Command, which used technology like QR code scanning, online reporting, and leveraged big data analytics for immigration and insurance data— certainly a [plan to learn from](#).

We've all been in a virtual call that sounded something along the lines of "huh?" "what?" "can you say that again?". Here's why that's happening: when you say something, it gets chopped up into lots of tiny pieces that are zipped across the internet in data blocks known as packets. Packets often arrive at the other end jumbled up and a software has to reorder them correctly. The problem is, 99% of Google Duo calls have jumbled or lost packets. But some respite is on the way—[Google](#) (yes, them again) has built a [neural network](#) that can auto-complete speech and cover up glitches in online calls—maybe you'll finally give them that coveted 5-star rating.

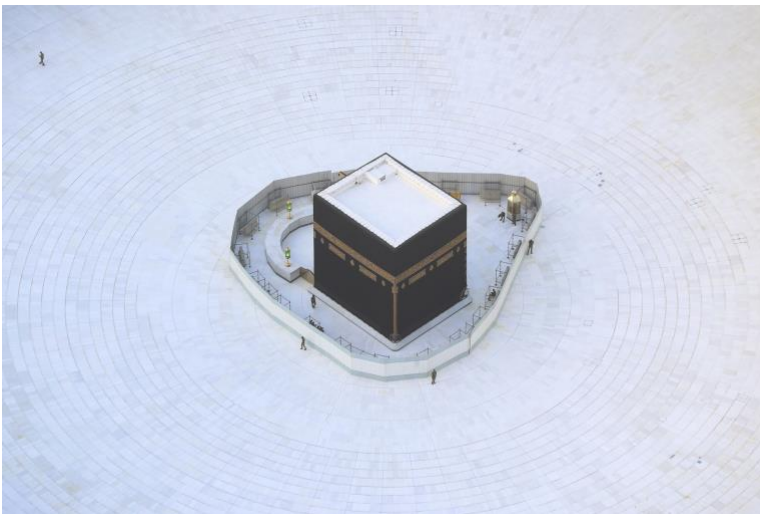


# reasons to reinvent

[A surgeon](#) from Mount Sinai hospital in Brooklyn, wrote a daily dispatch about how he repurposed his skill as a vascular surgeon to insert intravenous lines for COVID-19 patients. Civilians and medical professionals from all over the country have volunteered their services for New York, and he wagers that when they return to their homes they will be on the front-lines of saving the rest of the country, with invaluable experience from working in the field.

Navigating the barrage of medical information is particularly challenging for the deaf and hearing-impaired community. A 21-year old student has designed a reusable (!) [face-mask](#) with a see-through window so that such patients can communicate with doctors using lip-reading or ASL. Fun fact: lip-reading forms a critical component of speech perception even for people with normal hearing.

April is a month of festivals: Passover, Easter and Ramadan. From Seders/communions/iftars on zoom to baking bread, it's fascinating to [see how](#) devotees are celebrating their faith from the safety of their home. Can't help but wonder about all those wars that have been (and continue to be) fought over "places" of worship.



To do or not to do? That seems to be the question or rather, onus, of being quarantined at home. Friends launching their side-gigs, social media being flooded with workout challenges, heck, maybe even this newsletter, reminds you of the rising [expectations of productivity](#). But what does it mean to be productive? To me, it might mean finally watching The Irishman. To you, it could be catching up on your sleep. To do or not to do? We say: you decide. But to take care of your mental health or not? Absolutely.

# reasons to reflect

Quarantine has left our cities empty - transforming them into completely new spaces, whether it's the [streets of Mumbai](#) or the [holy site of Mecca](#). Some call these sights "serene" while others, like the [NYTimes](#), think they are "ghastly empty": Where do you stand?



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*"All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." Do your bit for humanity—stay at home. We'll be back tomorrow! But if you want to keep receiving our newsletter, [please subscribe here](#). **Stay safe!** M & S.*

*P.S: For the sake of comedians all over the world, Dear Boris, we're hoping (whatever the odds may be) that you pull through!*