WELCOME

Not Everyday Life is a unique, crowd-sourced initiative designed to understand how COVID-19 is impacting people around the world.

This document is a summation of conversations with 176 people from 35 countries between late March and mid-April 2020.

From Australia to Azerbaijan, India to Israel, Pakistan to Peru. These are the experiences of engineers, audiologists, taxi drivers, housemaids, nurses, executives, comic book illustrators and many more.

To the 119 contributors who have conducted interviews and analysed information so far – thank you and keep contributing. To those who would like to find out more about this ongoing initiative, we look forward to speaking with you at noteverydaylife.com.

– The NEL Team

Conversations by region: Northern Europe – 34, Western Europe – 21, Southern Europe – 16, Americas – 21, South Asia – 36, South-East Asia – 26, ANZ – 15, Others - 7
**FINDINGS:** 7 KEY THEMES

1. **CONNECTION:** Self-reflection and relationships under lockdown: learning to live with uncertainty

2. **COMMUNITY:** From “me” to “we”

3. **COLLISION:** Work and family life colliding

4. **COMMUNICATION:** Calling, messaging, video: the new essentials

5. **COPING:** Self-acceptance, re-evaluation, the unexpected

6. **CLARIFICATION:** Roles, responsibilities and rituals

7. **CONFIDENCE:** Rethinking trust
CONNECTION: Self-reflection and relationships under lockdown: learning to live with uncertainty

People are adjusting their expectations and we’re now seeing new manifestations of fear, hope, and change.

Fears: A protective stance
People are seeking guidance and comfort in the face of anxiety from ‘news overload’ and uncertainty. COVID-19 related job losses have created a new professional class on income support, with money problems creating relationship stresses and increased alcohol consumption.

I need to stay at home, in isolation.
I cope with it searching news, info, guidelines to follow the rules and survive in this dramatic period of imposed isolation.”
- Quote from Southern Europe

Hopes: Self-empowerment
Isolation is being embraced as an opportunity for self-discovery and expression, a source of personal growth and creativity. People are embracing healthier lifestyles, experimenting with new cuisines and learning new skills. They are exploring self-sufficiency: making and growing things at home.

I think I have never been this fit. I can go for a run or a 20KM cycle every morning ... and still be able to start work at 9:00. There is no train to catch and without the commute I don’t have to get up at 6:30 to do exercises. It doesn’t matter if I sit behind my desk still a bit sweaty, no-one cares.”
- Quote from ANZ

Change: Reframing essential and non-essential
People are developing a new perspective on what they really need. As they think about when they’ll be able to return to work and when things will be safe again, they think about what is useful in their lives. Asking the question: “what is actually valuable to me?”

We do not need all that stuff. As long as you can do the things you want to do most, like expressing yourself in art and walking the dog, that is enough to be thankful for.”
- Quote from Western Europe

WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:
For many, the COVID-19 crisis feels like THE most important life-changing time of their lives. But that comes with the pressure of having to figure things out when they feel least in control. How might we ensure that individuals have the emotional support they need to get to the other side? What could encourage self-confidence and a growth mindset? Is this new wave of creative and altruistic energy temporary, or will a spark from a few individuals drive change towards a more mindful society?
For many, COVID-19 has created a new or renewed sense of community. As this plays out differently between regions, questions still remain about whether it will last.

Reconnection: From “me” to “we” at a local level

For most, there is a renewed sense of being in this together, best seen in local communities—neighbors who connect (virtually and/or physically) and help out where they didn’t before, more gratitude for close relationships and a growing sense of local community and spirit.

"The big thing for me is the community spirit thing coming back... people start to realize how important family and friends and community is ... how much you can rely on your community.”
- Quote from ANZ

Inequality: Increased awareness drives emotion and action

Many are aware of or worry about the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups or those less privileged. Sometimes this results in feelings of guilt but it can also result in strong drives to help where they can.

"We are all worried, but not for the same reasons."
- Quote from the Americas

Future: Hope and uncertainty on whether it will last

While this new sense of togetherness has been mostly positive, thoughts on it continuing post-pandemic vary widely, even within regions—from hopefulness and determination to uncertainty and frank pessimism.

"I hope all this kindness lark carries on, I hope that carries on, I hope people think about that."
- Quotes from Northern Europe

WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:

While expressed very differently across regions, what we are seeing worldwide is that in times of global crisis, a strong sense of community brings relief in various forms. This opportunity may come from recognizing these shifts in how people now see their social circles and networks, and/or finding ways to support and prolong favourable aspects (which will differ between regions) of this new sense of togetherness.
Productivity, boundaries and family roles are new challenges for those who are now working from home. Working parents juggle both aspects of their lives, but still find unexpected moments of joy.

**Productivity: Universal difficulties**

Across regions and social class, parents are learning to juggle childcare and work. Family presents a constant distraction from work, making it harder for parents to feel accomplished in both areas.

Amongst lower classes, online classes are making kids dislike studies – they do not want to sit for them. Parents need to sit with the child, leaving them unable to do their own work or chores.  
- **Insight from South Asia**

**New Roles: Sharing the load**

Family members share childcare and household duties, exposing people to roles and responsibilities they otherwise may not have had - which may test their limits.

- **Quote from Southern Europe**

**Joy: Moments that would have otherwise been missed**

Being at home has given people more chances to spend time with their loved ones; from regular meals to being present for life’s milestones.

- **Quote from Western Europe**

"My current sport is called patience, because working at home and being a full-time father of my two sons requires all my patience."
- **Quote from South Asia**

**WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:**

There is an opportunity to help people establish new routines, rituals and mental or physical spaces that help them feel in harmony, or develop mechanisms to better deal with an unbalanced reality.
Society: Seeking Connection

Technology is creating a feeling of being safe and connected. While many are alone, they are not lonely. People are using social media to reach out to those who need help, and the use of video is enabling new types of socialising and interaction with colleagues.

“I felt our phones and the internet were bringing us apart, but these weeks [technology] has done the job it was originally created for: bringing us together.”
- Quote from the Americas

Productivity: Renewed Focus

People have rediscovered their circadian rhythms and personal productivity and are experimenting with the things they can control. There is a renewed focus on personal fitness and in education, teachers can focus on teaching rather than disciplining students (who are reaping the benefits of a less distracting or challenging environment).

“I don’t get the chance to exercise or go out, but now me and a friend, we have a dance video on YouTube and we both dance together—she in her house and me in mine. It’s fun actually.”
- Quote from South Asia

Expectation Reversal: Time to embrace things we feared

Older generations have found technology is not as difficult to use as expected. Those who were resistant or sceptical about social media—specifically messaging and video calling—now appreciate their value in connecting people. E-commerce has also become a positive experience.

“The first time (I ordered online) I was doubtful, will I get everything I ordered? My second time is something working very well.”
- Quote from Southern Europe

WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:

This is a time for technology to shine – to bring people together in a genuine and authentic way. There is an opportunity to better support those who are new to these technologies, and help understand their unarticulated needs.
**COPING:**
Self-acceptance, re-evaluation, the unexpected

People are appreciating themselves and evaluating their consumption patterns in the face of change.

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**New Appreciation for Self**
People are becoming more aware of and comfortable with themselves. There is no longer social pressure regarding appearance, as many people are remaining at home. Some people are maintaining their beauty practices to maintain the perception that ‘all is well.’

“Usually I’ll do something on a Saturday night because that’s what you should do in your 30s, but now I feel kinda free, no one is going to judge me now for spending the whole day getting lost on YouTube or doing knitting.” – Quote from Northern Europe

**Radical Re-evaluation**
There is an awareness about what is essential, what is sufficient and what is unnecessary, making people reassess their consumption patterns. Understanding of globalization has become more localized, with a focus on self-sufficiency & homegrown produce.

“I ordered a home-brewing kit, which is something I would otherwise not have tried.” – Quote from ANZ

**The Unexpected Spectrum**
There is an attempt to control the situation through supposedly mundane tasks, but some more organised people are losing their focus. The fear of loss of self and yearning for validation has increased social media activity for some. People are being positive by helping others, revisiting nostalgia and rebuilding lost connections, but some see vanity being exposed where solidarity is mixed with opportunism.

“Walking other people’s dogs is a blessing, I have at least 3 outings a day.” – Quote from Western Europe

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**WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:**
Will buying behaviour now shift more towards filling the emotional vacuum and making aspirational purchases? Will the dilemma of whether to live life as previously or to reboot cause businesses to rethink their strategies? A simple question of ‘who am I?’ is perhaps up for deeper introspection.
Increased recognition and appreciation for primary frontline workers and an awareness about missing human contribution towards climate, physical environment and nature is evident.

**Appreciation**
There is new appreciation and empathy for medical workers, other frontline workers (delivery people, police and security) and domestic workers. Their wages, working conditions and employment relations are being better understood. Restricting lower income jobs have highlighted social disparities. Global economic uncertainties are being relooked at.

"NHS workers are getting rightful praise—we have to hope that there is a big shift in the way they are treated and the strength they feel as a group of workers too.”
- Quote from Northern Europe

**Restructuring of Roles, Responsibilities & Rituals**
There is a paradigm shift in gender roles. Expectations linked to social responsibilities are changing. There is tension between a desire for autonomy, and obedience to rules & regulations. People are adapting to the new culture of rules while also following the former. This conflict adds to already existing distress.

"Had a beer with 6 friends 1.5 week ago after sitting at home for 4 weeks. All at least 1.5 meters apart, outside. We would have probably been told off if noticed by police, but one also has to stay mentally sane.”
- Quote from Western Europe

**Changing Perception & Unexpected Spectrum**
There is destigmatization of mental health challenges and newfound kindness towards those suffering. Concerns around children include their learning and development, social interaction and safety. There is more appreciation for solitude and empathy towards loneliness. Issues such as domestic violence are now being illuminated.

"I am not worried right now but as time passes, I will be more anxious due to this restricted movement. I am feeling emotional towards people’s struggles.”
- Quote from South Asia

**WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:**
Appreciation, illumination, and de-stigmatization are silver linings of COVID-19. How might we take advantage of the positive changes to create lasting improvements in our societies? Will this restructuring lead to new taboos and social disparities?
CONFIDENCE: Rethinking trust

I try to read other media and coverage then the mainstream, to broaden my horizon. I think we simply still don’t know a lot of things about the Coronavirus, but I can’t check who is right.”
- Quote from Western Europe

News: Relying on curated, personal digests

People are searching for reliable news sources among independent media and innovative journalism. Individuals are creating a special mix of news sources, including international media, and anecdotal word of mouth. Even though people need to stay up to date, they want to avoid fake news and being overwhelmed.

Experts / authorities: Seeking proactive leaders who get results

Contradictions among experts and authorities raise questions on truths and half-truths. There is tension between respecting authority and government distrust. The 24/7 information cycle provides comparisons on how different governments are responding to the crisis with varying effects. Where government authorities fail to engender trust, people are turning to religious and community leaders.

Breakdowns: Others stepping up where governments fail

In South-East Asia and the Americas, pre-existing or new breakdowns of people’s trust in their governments are driving local community activism and empowerment. While local communities are stepping up to support themselves in South-East Asia, in the Americas some of the groups filling the void include drug dealers and the mafia providing supplies and militias imposing shelter in place orders.

“People did not just wait for the government to reach out to people in small villages and give them the support they need during this crisis.”
- Quote from South-East Asia

“I try to read other media and coverage then the mainstream, to broaden my horizon. I think we simply still don’t know a lot of things about the Coronavirus, but I can’t check who is right.”
- Quote from Western Europe

“‘It’s not about them. It’s about their people. They left their egos at the door. It’s about doing the best, for the most. Versus the ineptitude of some of our leaders. I don’t mean that from a political point of view, but from a leadership point of view. It’s just so discouraging.’”
- Quote from the Americas

WHY WE BELIEVE THIS IS IMPORTANT:

When the power of trust and guidance goes to non-official groups, people grow uncomfortable. They fear that many pretend to help in order to advance their own agendas. Could a crisis like this require us to be more morally flexible and let natural leaders do their job, regardless of their credentials? How might official and underground leaders come together to lead for a greater good?

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