

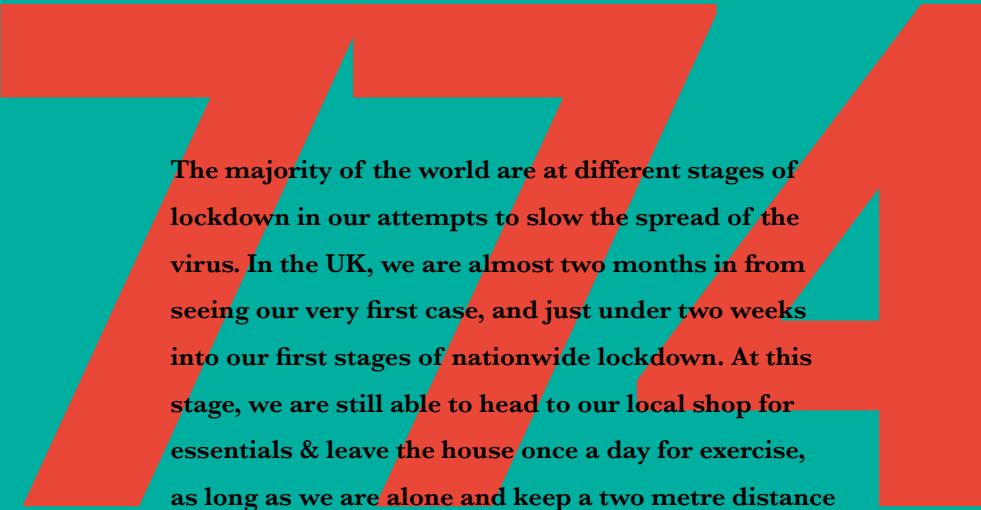
100 100 **THINGS WE'VE LEARNED**

**100 PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS WHEN
ASKED WHAT THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT THEM**

Emma Jones

March 24th 2020

It's March 24th, 2020. We are in the middle of a global pandemic. There's currently 416,774 cases of the virus worldwide & a devastating 18,580 deaths. As I'm typing this, more and more people are being tested positive across the globe. In the UK alone, there are 8,077 cases and 422 deaths. And we are only at the beginning of our journey.



The majority of the world are at different stages of lockdown in our attempts to slow the spread of the virus. In the UK, we are almost two months in from seeing our very first case, and just under two weeks into our first stages of nationwide lockdown. At this stage, we are still able to head to our local shop for essentials & leave the house once a day for exercise, as long as we are alone and keep a two metre distance between anyone we cross paths with. We cannot mix households and so any family members or loved ones that you don't live with, you cannot see. Unless they are vulnerable and rely on you for essentials, then you can drop shopping off at their door and walk away without contact. Schools are shut, most non-essential work has stopped, national parks are shutting and there are rules to abide by that can land you with a fine if you don't follow them.

China is just starting to see some normality after seven weeks of very strict isolation, which was enforced 2 months after their first case. Local businesses are reopening.

Loved ones are sharing their first hug in months.

Grandparents are seeing their grandchildren after months of wondering whether they will ever get to hug them again. A feeling that seems so far away for us yet.

Amongst the devastation, fear & heartbreak, I'm absolutely overwhelmed with the amount of love I feel. For my immediate family who I'm isolated with, for the rest of my family and my partner who I am unfortunately unable to see, for my community who check in on each other every day, for key workers who keep the country running & keep us safe, for the entertainment industry for keeping us all sane, for journalists for keeping us

informed, and for people I don't even know, who share their stories online. The acts of kindness I have seen and the level people will go to, to cheer each other up, makes me so proud to be human.

In a time where we are isolated and so disconnected, technology has enabled us to continue to connect with one another. To check in on loved ones. To have virtual dates with our partners. To have group chats with our friends. The thing I once took for granted, 'just' picking up my phone to chat or send a text, has now become something I rely on.

I wanted to use the extraordinary ability to connect online to check in on 100 people over the next three weeks. Neighbours, family, friends, acquaintances & strangers. Of all different ages and backgrounds. I am asking them a very simple question:



“

**what
have you
learned?**

”



These 100 statements are coming from people who are in the midst of a pandemic, who are scared, lonely and experiencing something they have never experienced before. Yet I expect to see hope, humour, love & positivity.

Whatever your situation is when reading this book, whether it is during isolation, after isolation or years down the line, I hope the following words give you hope. I hope they make you realise that kindness and humour really can help you through any situation. And most of all, I hope they make you realise how proud you should be of our human race. There will always be some evil, stupidity and selfishness in this world, but there's so much more kindness, respect and love than we realise. And in moments like these, kindness and love really do show through.

WHAT
HAVE YOU
LEARNED?

**“I’ve learned
that we take
an awful lot
for granted”**

91

02

“The things you would find yourself moaning at, ‘can’t be bothered to do that’, I would jump at in an instance now! I currently have a cough so can’t leave the house at all, I’ve missed the ability to be able to pop to the shop. I never thought I’d say that”

03
“I never,
ever want
to become
a teacher”


04

“It’s good in these testing times to not put too much pressure on ourselves, take each day as it comes, try to see the best in things and deal with things in the way we see best at the time, spend quality time with family and treasure the simple things in life”

A large, stylized teal quotation mark graphic is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. It is set against a circular background that is split into teal and orange colors.

“I’ve learned the importance of family. As hard and scary as this is, having each other in the house all day and spending quality time together is so nice”

A large, stylized orange number '05' is positioned in the lower left quadrant of the page. The '0' is a simple oval, and the '5' has a thick, rounded top and a curved bottom. The number is set against a teal background.



“We can have all the materialistic things in the world and be so consumed by what we’re led to believe in terms of such busy and impressive lives, yet so many people are not actually comfortable in their own heads. Psychologically when we’re asked to slow down and stay at home, people are struggling to sit with themselves and just be quiet and with their own minds, hence the instant gratification people need to get their daily fixes to get out of their own heads and escape their deeper psyche, rather than face and fix their inner problems”

“I’ve learned that we’re all the same when stripped of our day to day normality and routines. We’re all human, we’re all trying to survive, all of our houses have four walls, all our cars have four tyres (apart from my Grandad who is still rocking the three-wheeler!), privileges and titles mean nothing, and the reality is that one day we’re all going die. And if all of this doesn’t wake us all up to what life is really about – the boring mundane tasks, the small things we usually take for granted, simple human interaction – then I don’t know what will”

07

“I’ve learned the true value of technology. What a fantastic world we live in that we can still check up on our loved ones whilst on lockdown, we can still continue to have work meetings over Skype, we can create fun videos and games to keep each other occupied. It really is wonderful”

09

“I’ve learned the true value of toilet paper”

10

“Despite how hard things feel, there’s always someone worse off. Someone I know was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer 3 weeks ago. He’s likely to not make it to the end of the month. He has two sons who are a similar age to me and they aren’t even allowed to visit their dad due to risk of catching or spreading this virus. Imagine that, having to put the care of the nation before saying goodbye to someone so precious to you. It really does put things into perspective for me. I won’t be moaning about things I once thought were so important anymore”

**“Beautiful
and wonderful
things can still
happen in the
midst of chaos”**

12 *“Things I thought were an emergency in the past, really aren’t. I used to book GP appointments for things that I can (realistically) deal with at home. Since this virus, local GPs and A&E waiting rooms have become so quiet for all other matters, as we are prioritising the people who are being taken in with Covid-19. If only we all realised this before. I’ll never take a trip to the local GP for granted again and I’ll be questioning if I really do need to go. A real hats off to our NHS staff during this time and always”*

“People are mostly very kind. There are people buying vouchers to keep local businesses afloat, the younger generations in the community have set up groups to make sure the elderly and vulnerable get their essentials, NHS staff have their own shopping hour and are given flowers and a round of applause on arrival. It’s beautiful. I’d love this kindness and appreciation to carry on way after the virus has gone”

14

“When the going gets tough, the tough go out and get toilet paper, hand sanitizer and pasta”

“The only thing that really matters to me is family. You could take my money, my things, my freedom; but as soon as I can’t see my family, that’s enough to break me. I’ve never really realised how little material things really matter to me to be honest, and I’ve never longed for a hug from my sister so much. I’ve cried and I’ve sobbed for hours on end.

But I’ve managed to leap back and be creative in the ways that I connect with them. Technology has been a real life-saver during this - it’s provided the closest thing to human contact without being in the same part of the world. I’ve been able to still speak with my family without physically seeing them - and without that I would have been lost. Next time I give them a hug - it’s going to mean so much more, and I’ll never take it for granted again”

15

“It’s taught me that it just takes one person to cause panic but also one person to promote change and kindness. It’s taught me that my mind works in a crazy way and that I only really have my myself, my friends and my family in this world. It’s taught me that the gym, work and everything else is temporary. But most importantly it’s taught me to appreciate and cherish every moment, you really don’t realise what you have until it’s gone”

16

17

**“If we
all stick
together,
we can get
through
anything”**

“I’VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE YOUTH OF TODAY. THEY ARE MUCH KINDER AND MORE CARING THAN I HAD REALISED. I GOT A LETTER THROUGH MY DOOR OFFERING HELP FROM PEOPLE MUCH YOUNGER THAN ME, TO DO MY SHOPPING AND PICK UP MY MEDICATION. I WAS A KID IN THE WAR AND I AM FINDING THIS MUCH HARDER THAN THE WAR. AT LEAST BACK THEN, AS SCARED AS WE WERE, I COULD MEET MY FRIENDS FOR A KICKAROUND, GO TO SCHOOL OR GO OUT TO THE SHOPS. I’D LOVE TO NIP TO THE SHOPS RIGHT NOW”

70

19

“In times of need,
people either come
together and help
those who need it,
or they only think of
themselves”

2

“I’VE
LEARNED I
CAN GAIN
A STONE
IN 1 WEEK”

21

“No matter how rich or poor one is, no matter if you live in a mansion or on the street, we all come the same way and go the same so no one is above anyone, all the money in the world can’t save you when your time is up so treat everyone the same not according to their status”

22 **“I’ve learned how much we depend on technology to keep the kids busy so we can have some time to ourselves”**

**“I’ve learned how
much I take the
freedom to go outdoors
for granted. And also
how much McDonald’s
I actually eat”**



24

“The country only seems to respect and realise the work of people in the community such as shop workers, police, NHS staff, when there is a crisis. It should be noticed all year round”

25

“I don’t spend enough time with my friends and family in ‘normal life’ and I really need to value them more”

“I’ve learned how much I appreciated and took for granted seeing my family and friends before this”

26

**“I’VE
LEARNED
HOW
ANNOYING
MY KIDS
ACTUALLY
ARE”**

27

28

“I’ve learned to treasure every moment I get with my friends and boyfriend because they really are the things that make me the happiest”

29

“It’s the people I miss the most. The places I went to regularly are shut and I’m not even missing them that much, it’s the people I went to those places with that I long to be able to see. It doesn’t matter where”

*“I’ve found out
how many Terry’s
chocolate oranges
I can eat in a
day... 4 before I
throw up!”*

31

32

**“I’ve learned I
definitely don’t
need a man’s
company”**



**“WORKING
FROM HOME
IS NOT AS FUN
AS IT SOUNDS,
ESPECIALLY
WHEN YOUR PA
IS A TODDLER”**

“I’ve learned the biggest lie in the walking dead is that they’re still scavenging for supplies years down the line. ASDA was wiped clean within 2 weeks of people panicking”

35
“I’ve realised how much I have taken human contact for granted. Not being able to give my own mum a hug or being able to go to my Nana and Grandads house. I miss it so much, things we were able to do every single day and now we can’t”

“I DON’T TELL
MY FAMILY
I LOVE
THEM
ENOUGH”
36

“I’m learning to recognise how lucky I am to have a home and how important making your space into a sanctuary is. I’m so thankful for my current situation which I will continuously work on and I’m thinking of those not as fortunate”

37

“It’s ok to cut out toxic family members out of my life, as blood isn’t thicker than peace of mind”

38

39

**“MONEY HAS
NO VALUE IN
TIMES LIKE THIS.
MILLIONAIRES
ARE STUCK
INDOORS TOO”**

*“Lots of people are exercising,
learning a language, writing,
singing and doing all sorts of
productive things. It’s great, but
I’ve learned you don’t have to
keep busy or be productive all
of the time. If a few days in bed
watching TV is what your soul
needs, then you don’t need to feel
guilty about that”*

40

4 “There is more to life than my phone. Appreciate the birds singing, flowers growing”

“Health is ultimately the most important factor in life”

42

43

“I’ve learned the importance of telling people you care about them and how much you love them”

**“IT’S NOT
IMPORTANT
TO STRESS
ABOUT THE
SMALL
THINGS”** **44**

45 *“I snack far too much and spend so much money on snack food that I do not need”*

46
“I was going out far too much and needed some time to recharge my batteries and chill”

“Life is too short if you want to do something just do it there and then, tomorrow never comes. Don’t let life take over just do what makes you happy”

“I’ve learned the importance of friendships and relationships for our own sanity”

**“You cannot
take anything
for granted”**

49

50

“JUST A SMILE
FROM ANYONE
CAN LIFT
YOUR DAY”

51

I am a supermarket worker. I have been embarrassed at admitting my job on occasion, it often feels menial and I don't get to use my brain very much. However in the last 3 weeks my total mindset has changed. I am now classed as one of the most important workers in the country!! Yes, financially I may be no better off, I'll still struggle with bills... but I am now immensely proud of myself and of the role I play in fighting this horrific virus, in putting food and essentials in people's homes!! Instead of feeling worthless I now feel very, very worthwhile. As tough and enduring and physically exhausting my role is at the moment, I've never loved it more!”

Half way through
this book, on April 3rd,
there are now

38,168

cases in
the UK

and **3,605**
deaths.

Worldwide,
there are

1,002,000

cases
and

51,500
deaths.

52 *“I’ve learned that teachers deserve every single one of those holidays!”*

53
“I’ve memorised pretty much every Cocomelon song there is”

**“I’ve learned
to take life
one hectic day
at a time”**

54

55

*“When all of this is over,
I’m going to make time for
people and actually make
arrangements then and
there instead of saying ‘we
must do that’”*

56

“SELF-CARE
IS REALLY
IMPORTANT
WHEN YOU’RE
STRUGGLING”

“I’ve learned to appreciate my home and I am also trying to learn how to relax more”

57

58

“At least the world also gets to take time out with less pollution in the air and more love in the world, which is what we should still be doing when this is over. I’ve also been able to spend more time with my cat”

59

“Three year olds don’t stop talking!! And I’m actually missing going to work”

60
“Nothing has actually changed. People’s ways of living, moral standpoints and human behaviour just become more prominent in such unprecedented times. Everything about people, life and society is already happening, but during something like this it is amplified. Selfless people become more selfless and are acknowledged more. Greed lives in all of us, but we let our fear feed it until it controls our actions”

61
“Before this virus, I didn’t get out and exercise enough. Now that it’s one of a small number of reasons we can leave the house, I’ve realised the importance of it physically but mostly mentally”

62
“IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE, YOU REALISE WHO REALLY IS THERE FOR YOU”

63. “I’ve learned the real value of community and of being neighbourly. The whole street have helped each other out. Some are dropping food off, some are putting on entertainment from their garden for us all to watch/listen to, some are checking in on each other. It’s so lovely. And if you don’t take technology & vehicles into account, our neighbours are really all we have in situations like these”

64

**“People are
much kinder
than you think”**

*“There’s more kindness in the world
than there is selfishness, we just ignore
the selflessness too much, until now”*

65

66

**“We put celebrities on a
pedestal, as something to
aspire to, but when push comes
to shove, who do we rely on?
Is it the Kardashians who are
safe at home? No, it’s the key
workers that put their lives at
risk to keep the world spinning”**

67

“The real heroes are our kids. Imagine the fear you would feel right now as a child, dragged out of school and told to stay indoors. Yet they don’t bat an eye lid, follow the rules and even cheer us up with their funny ways and positivity”



68 “HAPPINESS
CAN BE
FOUND IN
THE HARDEST
OF TIMES”

*“I’ll never take
sitting at my
grandparents
having a brew
& natter for
granted again”*

69

70

“The world has suffered so much that it has ceased to hate. I’ve not heard any arguments or unreasonable debates. This is because a national pandemic really does make you understand what is important. And that is our health”

“I’ve learned that we can spend much more time at home than we do in ‘normal’ life. We have the technology and capability to continue with work at home. Thus spending more valuable time with our families”

71

“BEFORE THIS, I USED TO BE AFRAID OF BEING ALONE. SO AFRAID THAT I WOULD RATHER BE AROUND ANYONE THAN SPEND A NIGHT ALONE. NOW, I’M MORE AFRAID OF HAVING THE WRONG PEOPLE AS COMPANY”

72

73

“I’ve learned to be at peace with who I am and my own thoughts. I love who I am. That’s the first time I’ve ever said that and meant it”

74 “A party for one with a bottle of wine and a good movie is all you need at times”

75

“IT’S OKAY TO BE SCARED. IT’S OKAY TO WORRY. WHAT’S NOT OKAY IS TO LET THOSE THOUGHTS CONSUME YOU. REALISE IT’S OKAY TO SCARED, UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT IT IS THAT’S SCARING YOU AND REMIND YOURSELF THAT THIS FEELING WON’T REMAIN FOREVER”

76

“I’ve never been more appreciative of the simple things in life”

77

“I’ve learned to accept things I cannot change and be courageous enough to change the things I can”

**“I’ve realised
the value
inside these
four walls, all
I really need
is in here”**

78

**“I HAVE DISCOVERED
THAT I OWN AN
EXERCISE BIKE.
I HAVE BEEN USING
IT AS A ‘PLACE TO
HANG MY CLOTHES’
FOR YEARS!”**

80 *“I’ve learned that there’s more to life than work. Months without work and keeping occupied sounded so daunting to begin with. But I’ve spent time with my kids, started to learn a language, read self-help books, done more exercise than ever and have never felt busier. You do not need to stay constantly busy with work, there’s so much more to life to get busy doing”*

81

“I’ve become more emotional, more appreciative. I cried for an hour after the whole of the UK stood outside their doors clapping for our key workers. It was beautiful. Imagine if we did this all of the time”

**“Sitting in the
comfort of your own
home, alone, eating
snacks and minding
your own business is
priceless”**

02

03

“I’ve learned how lucky I really am. To be isolated in my home with my family. To still have my job. There’s people suffering much more than I am and I’ll never take it for granted again”

“There’s no greater expression of love than to stay at home to protect one another. Ignoring your selfish desires to see your loved one, for their safety & wellbeing”

84

“We really don’t need to indulge as much as we have done before. All you need is some food in the fridge, family by your side and to be at peace with yourself. Everything else really isn’t important”

85

86

“IF THE ROLES WERE REVERSED AND YOUNG PEOPLE WERE MORE AT RISK, OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO KEEP US SAFE. NOW IT’S OUR TURN TO KEEP THEM SAFE. I’LL NEVER TAKE A HUG FROM THEM FOR GRANTED AGAIN AND I’VE REALISED I’LL DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO KEEP THEM SAFE”

89



“What a beautiful world we live in. The virus is amongst us but the birds still sing, the sun still shines, the sky is still blue. And those things alone make it worth getting up every morning”

“A LOT OF OUR KEY WORKERS WERE CLASSED AS ‘LOW-SKILLED’ WORKERS, I.E. CARERS, RETAIL ASSISTANTS, YET THEY ARE THERE WHEN WE NEED IT. I’LL NEVER FORGET THAT”

90

91

“Everything I once took for granted ‘just nipping the shop, ordering something online, calling breakdown cover to come and get me’ I have now realised the work that goes behind all of these transactions”

92

“I’ve learned the importance of a nice walk alone with beautiful scenery”

**“FAMILY
DAYS OUT
ARE SO
UNDERRATED. I
CAN’T WAIT TO JUST
GO ON A FAMILY
DAY OUT AGAIN, IT
DOESN’T MATTER
WHERE, AS LONG AS
I AM WITH THEM”**

93

94

“I’ve learned the importance of being a good person and having good connections. You can be the most popular person in the world, with a lavish lifestyle and all the fancy products going. But when all of that is gone. When the bars & clubs shut, and the restaurants close their doors, what have you got left? If you’ve been a decent person and put people before materialistic things, you should still have a lot”

**“There’s no
better feeling
than a hug from
the people you
love the most”**

95

**“I’VE NEVER USED MY GARDEN
AS MUCH AS I HAVE IN THE PAST
FEW WEEKS. WHAT LOVELY
THINGS WE HAVE LIVING ON OUR
DOORSTEPS THAT WE NEVER
NOTICED ENOUGH BEFORE”**

96

“I’ve realised the value of gatherings, holidays, concerts. Just human interaction in groups. Those moments you look at the people you love with a smile because you’re doing something so memorable together. I can’t wait for that moment again”

A large, stylized graphic of the numbers '97' in a light blue color, set against a dark blue background. The '9' is a simple, rounded shape, and the '7' is a simple, angular shape.

“I’ve learned the value of meeting strangers. One thing we haven’t been able to do in this pandemic is have those moments on nights out, where you get chatting to someone you’ve never met before. A moment so common that it’s taken for granted”

**“I’VE LEARNED
THE IMPORTANCE
OF MUSIC,
MOVIES, ANY
FORM OF
ENTERTAINMENT.
THEY KEEP
US SANE AND
HAPPY”**

99

100

“I’ve learned how important it is to try and be the light in someone’s day. People will worry and struggle, probably even more than they make out. You never really know how anyone is feeling. But you can provide them with comfort, humour and happiness. That call to your Grandad could be such a small thing to you, but could be the highlight of his day. That offer to help your neighbour out, again is a small gesture, but could mean the world to them. What I’ve learned is, if it feels right, and it feels like a nice thing to do, just do it”

To put this pandemic into perspective, when I started writing this book, there were: 8,077 cases and 422 deaths in the UK.

Today, as I finish the last few sentences of this book on 20th April 2020, there are now 124,743 cases and 16,509 deaths in the UK and 2,478,634 cases and 170,389 deaths worldwide.

It fills me with such sadness that these numbers are expected to rise. They may just look like numbers on a page, but each of them represents someone's sister, brother, daughter, friend, partner, mother, father and so many forms of loved ones.

Despite the heartbreak and devastation, it is such a beautiful thing that 100 people were asked what they have learned during this and most were positive, humorous, wise & thoughtful.

To the people who have lost their lives far too early, this book is dedicated to you, your loved ones, to all of the key workers and to every person across the world, whatever age or background, who sacrificed their selfish desires and decided to stay at home to save lives. It sounds like a very simple task, and in the grand scheme of things it really is, but it does come with its challenges when we are so used to living a certain way.

Community, compassion and selflessness are of such importance in unprecedented times. I do hope that we reflect on this time, remember what we have learned and change our behaviour based on this.

After all...

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members”

“ALONE, WE CAN DO SO LITTLE. TOGETHER, WE CAN DO SO MUCH”

100
**THINGS
WE'VE
LEARNED**

By Emma Jones

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