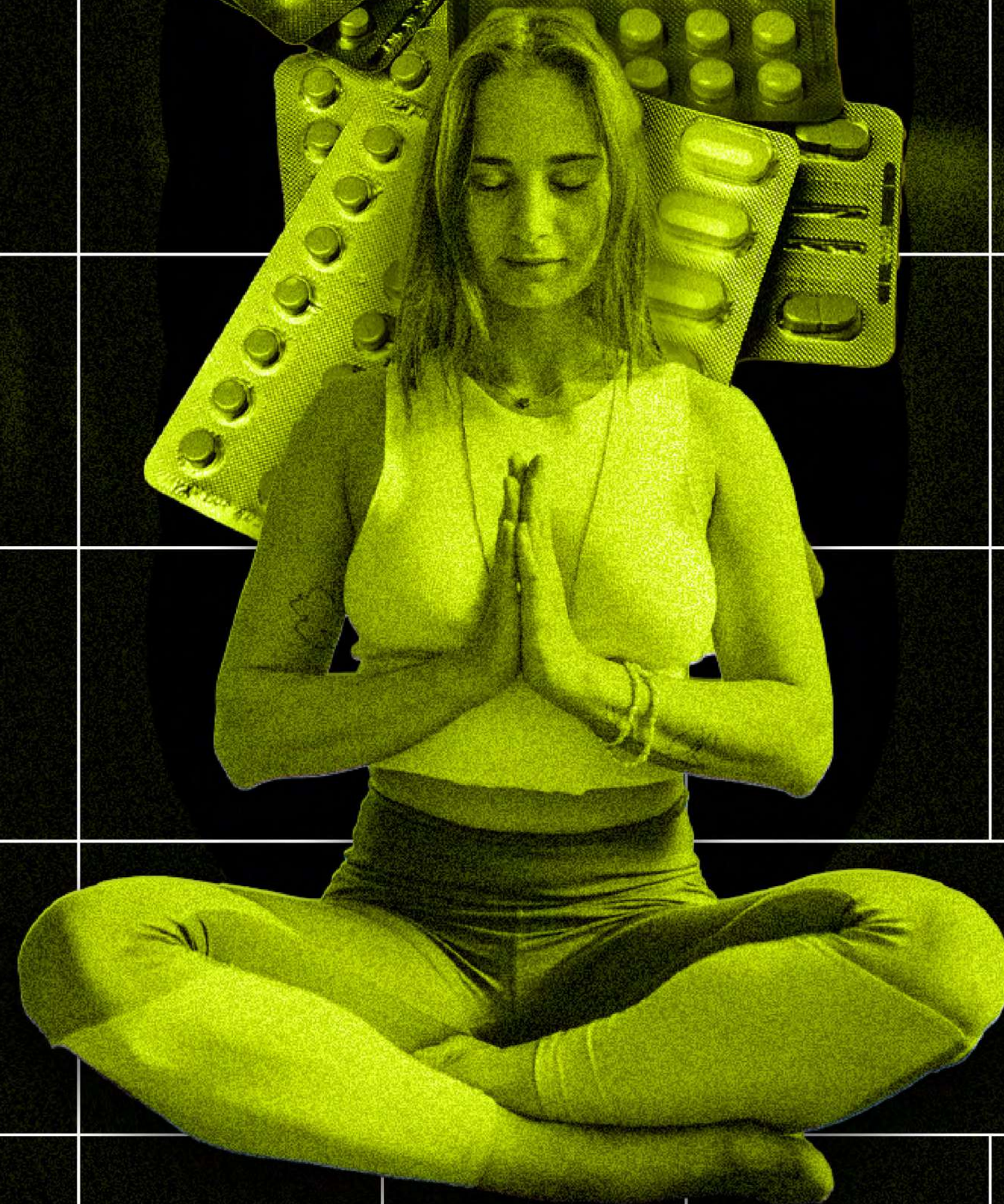


# THE WEBER FORECAST



Consumer Health  
and Wellness

# Introduction

In times of political, economic, cultural and environmental instability, we see a shift towards self-care as an attempt to retain control of our own lives.

We are looking to wellness, not only for solutions for daily life but for more profound aspects of ourselves, our identity and sense of purpose.

With access to more information than any other time in history, we're uncovering health and wellness inspiration in unexpected places. As such, our healthcare journeys are manifesting in increasingly different ways.

Follow this guide through our health and wellness 'tensions' to understand how people are defining their own approaches to health and wellbeing.



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# Ideology

People are seeking a health & wellness  
'belief system' to follow

## Spiritual awakening

At a time when religion and traditional faith doesn't necessarily reflect modern ideals, we're seeing a rise in manifestation and spiritual practices as people experiment with different ways to boost mental wellbeing.

## Scientific control

Rather than looking to the stars, there is a growing movement of people relying on scientific strategies to improve health and wellbeing, from medical AI to micro-dosing on joy.

# Spiritual awakening

From healing crystals to manifestation, embracing spirituality is fast becoming a way to create meaning and purpose in life.

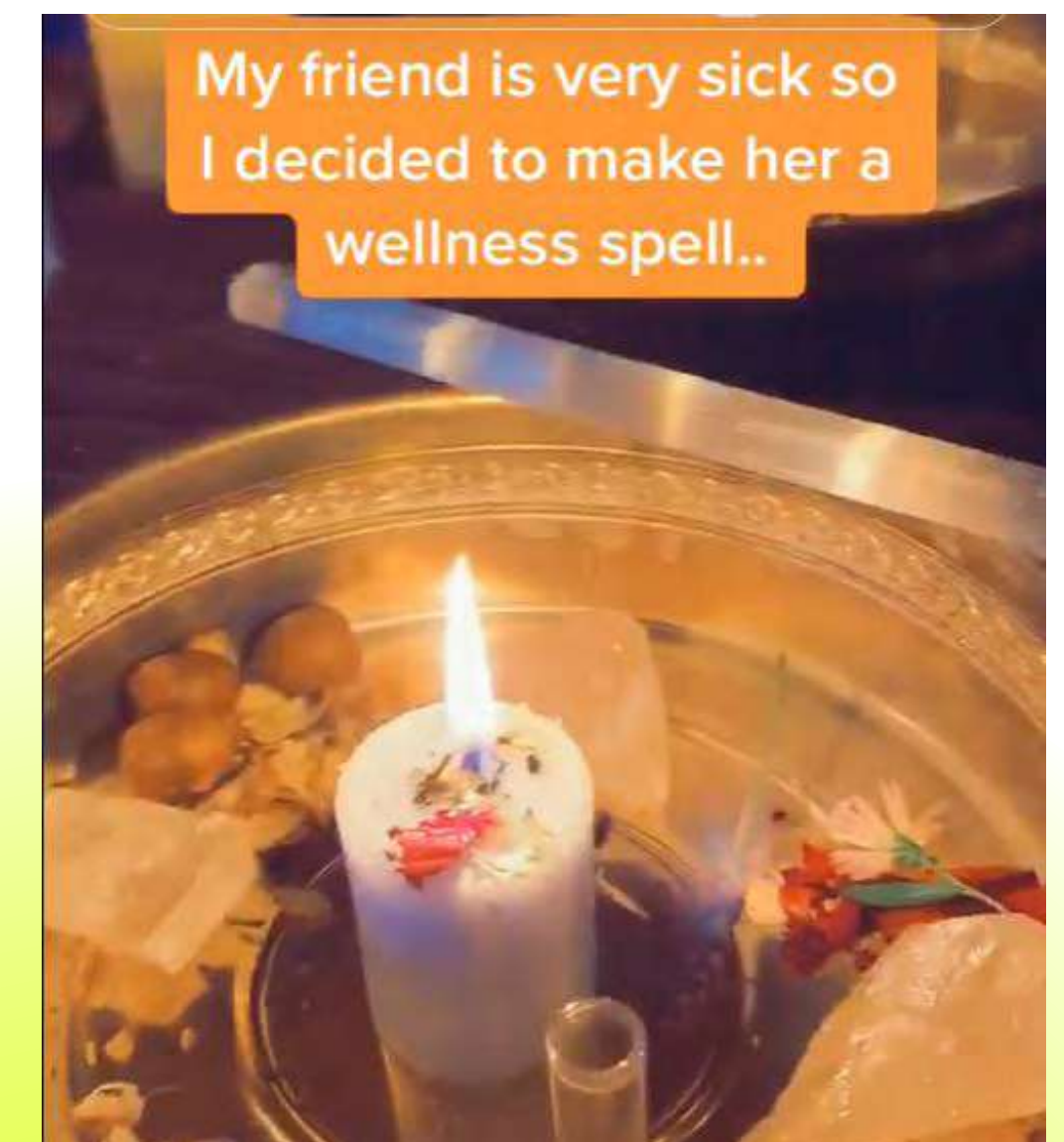
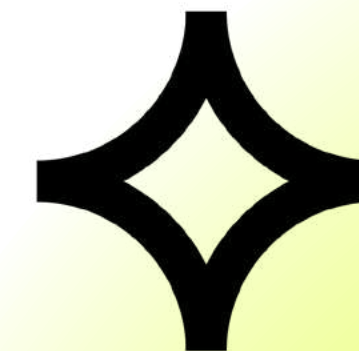
Manifestation and 'delulus' see people harbour positive illusions without losing a sense of reality. A viral study in 2011 found married couples are happier in the long term if they're slightly delusional about each other and their relationship, rather than purely sober and accurate. But experts cautioned people against full blindness of their situation. Be delusional, it suggests, as long as you remain aware that you're deluded.

It's an acknowledged truth that having a belief system or faith can be exceptionally valuable to people's wellbeing. Disillusioned with religious stances on issues like racial justice and sexual identity, some young people are now exploring their faith through AI.

Others have taken it to more extraordinary lengths. #WitchTok, which has over 44bn views on TikTok has been fuelling interest in paganism. Traditionally, paganism was seen

as a way to rebel against restrictive social norms, which certainly chimes with the mood of the moment.

A new survey from Empower showed that a quarter of millennials have consulted a fortune teller for financial advice. Research has shown that people are more likely to be drawn to divinatory practices in times of uncertainty, perhaps leading to the significant rise in astrology over recent years, as a growing number of young people allow star signs and horoscopes to dictate personal relationships and endeavours.



## AI has better 'bedside manner' than some doctors, study finds

ChatGPT rated higher in quality and empathy of written advice, raising possibility of medical assistance role



❏ A panel of healthcare professionals preferred ChatGPT's responses to medical questions over those of a doctor 79% of the time. Photograph: Ariel Skelley/Getty Images



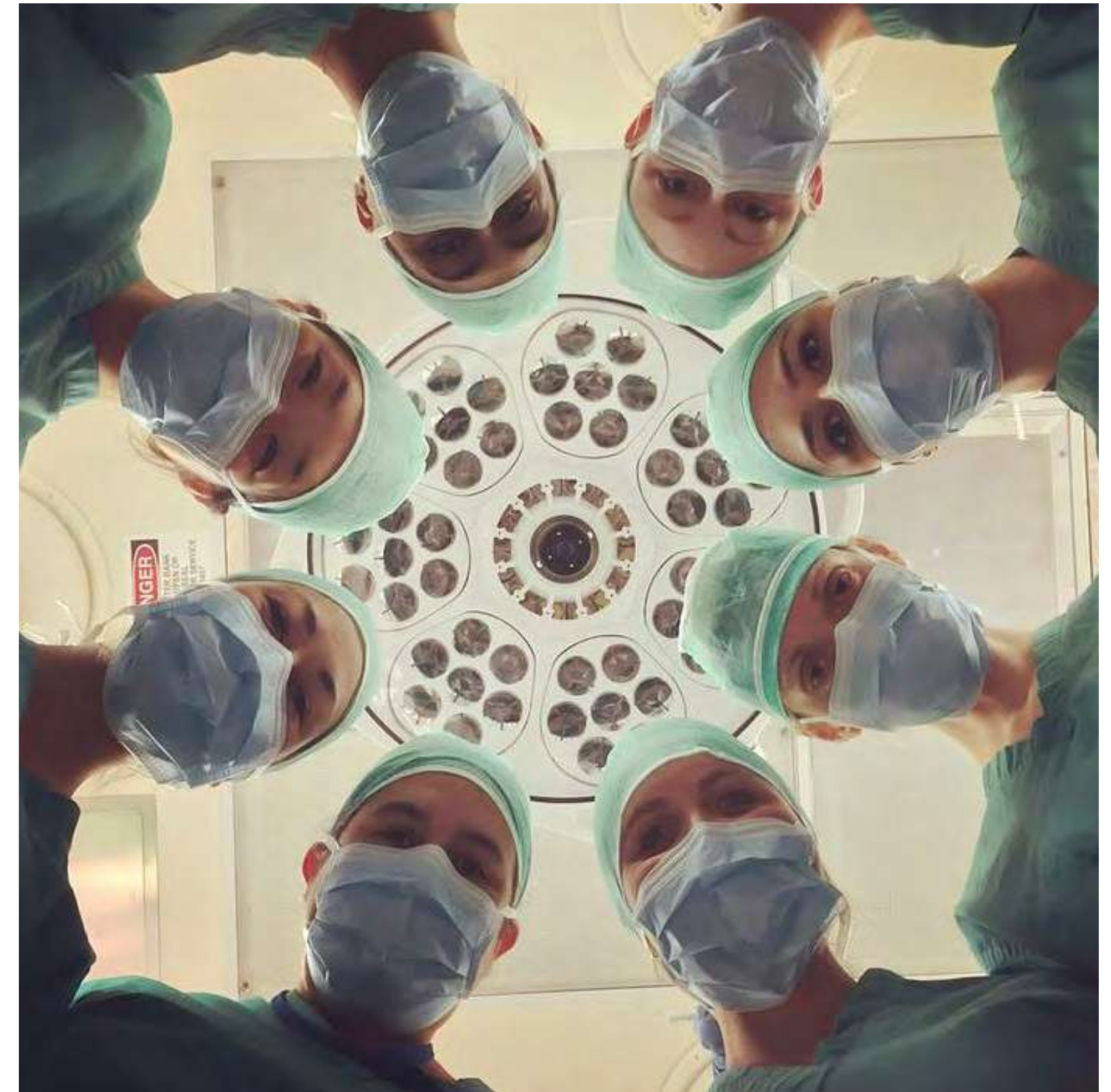
# Scientific control

While some like to look to the stars for meaning, others have a far more conventional approach when it comes to health and wellbeing guidance. However, with pressures on health services across Europe, even these landscapes are adapting.

A new online AI tool **Doctor GPT** passed its US medical licensing exam earlier this year. The tool can diagnose medical ailments from cancer to Alzheimer's with speed and accuracy. The tool is available to the public but will also be instrumental for doctors and GPs to help diagnose quickly and efficiently.

Some of us are trusting our gut to improve our health. Nearly **a fifth** of adults look for specific health and wellness benefits from their food, and brands are quick to take advantage. Lumen measures breath to create diets that hack your metabolism and **Toto** has developed a toilet that analyses stools and suggests recipes based on the findings.

How doctors measure health is changing too. Scientists have pinpointed 'joy' as the next **'next frontier of precision medicine'**, with researchers studying happiness and satisfaction as markers of wellbeing, disease progression and medical treatments.





Science, data and accuracy are all fundamental to having productive healthcare conversations. But science doesn't have to be cold.

## What if

Healthcare brands could take on new meaning? Search for meaning and inspiration is behind the spiritual awakening. But this can all be found in science too if you tell the story in the right way.





# Identity

Health & wellness practices are becoming  
core to who we are


## Emotional depth

Ingesting content that nourishes and comforts the soul as a response to growing loneliness, unhappiness and anxiety.

## Skin deep perfection

Pressures from society and online culture are manifesting in physical appearances, from a rise in diet pills and the return of the size zero ideal, to sales of fake tan and lashes.

# Emotional depth

We're living in a loneliness epidemic.

While videos helping you #protectyourpeace have been viewed millions of times, there's a growing sense that a lack of socialisation could be doing us harm. According to data from the European Commission 2022, 13% of respondents report feeling lonely most or all of the time.

Science **shows** that tending to friendships is as important as getting enough sleep or eating well, but society is increasingly set up to avoid social interactions - remote working and self-service checkouts are just two norms that reduce in-person contact. It's already impacting the workplace – **recent studies** found that young people don't know how to make small talk at work, and **KPMG** is creating extra training programmes to help address Gen Z awkwardness.

Beyond loneliness, unhappiness is also on the rise. A 2022 Economist report '**Depression in Europe**' found an 'alarming rise in the number of young people who are experiencing symptoms of depression.' Young people are setting incredibly high expectations for themselves having been bred to believe that anything less than exceptional means failure – and it's making them **miserable**.

As a result, we're seeing a rise in short term fixes like **emotional spending** and treat culture often observed in times of crisis.

When it comes to our inner wellbeing, new forms of therapy are helping people channel fun into their lives while exploring behaviour patterns. 'Theraplay' sees people turn to fantasy and escapism as a form of self-care – according to experts, **dungeons and dragons therapy** can be used to treat everything from exploring gender to recovering from traumatic events. In Asia, students made **cardboard pets** to tackle boredom and loneliness and provide a non-judgemental ear.

Online, a rise of comfort content fits into this mindset as we seek out content that makes us feel good – think **donkeycore**, **critterposting** and **positive affirmations**.

This lack of social interaction has definitely taken a toll on my personality, I just feel so dull now, like I've lost some of my character

10:07 pm - 16/06/2020 - Twitter for iPhone

View Tweet activity

783 Retweets 3,524 Likes

View Tweet activity

SAINT





The Viral "BOLD GLAMOUR"  
Filter Tutorial  
PAINTEDBYSPECER ✓  
513K views • 4 months ago



# Skin deep perfection

In a world of instant content, we're on the lookout for quick fixes when it comes to our looks.

**Ozempic**, billed as a miracle weight-loss drug, made headlines earlier in the year. More recently, Berberine, dubbed **'nature's Ozempic'** has been trending on TikTok. Using supplements and drugs as a shortcut to weight loss, while continuing other unhealthy habits, has potentially dangerous long term effects – Ozempic is **currently under investigation** in the EU.

We can look to the **current Y2K trends** as part of the reason for this resurgence in interest in the 'size zero' body. In the fashion industry, which had made great strides towards inclusive models, we're seeing a worrying return to smaller, standard sizes, leading some experts to believe that the body positivity movement was no more than a fleeting trend. And while social attitudes to weight have changed, the **economic reality** has not.

Y2K style is also impacting beauty trends.

According to Nielsen IQ, Gen Zers are treating themselves with beauty products more than any other generation. Artificial nails are on the rise and are set to outpace nail polish this year after 'press-ons' have seen four years of consistent growth. #FakeTan has received over 2bn views on TikTok and London-based tanning expert James Harknett said "It feels like we're back in 2008" – however, compared to the noughties, fake tan users are rejecting the streaky obvious tan, and looking instead for a healthy glow. When it comes to lash love, Mintel reported last year that 33% of Gen Z women use false eyelashes, compared to 17% overall.

Viral filters such as 'Bold Glamour' and Bratz Dollz have taken over TikTok For You Pages. After seeing hyper-realised versions of ourselves, are we recreating our looks based on AI?

NEWS

## What is berberine, the supplement dubbed 'nature's Ozempic' on social media?





We've examined behaviours that place an emphasis on mental or physical health - but it's time to think about them as interconnected.

## What if

We could treat the whole person? We are learning more about the link between mental and physical health, understanding this is fundamental to understanding ourselves. What if healthcare brands finally helped us embrace both?



# Attitudes

Health & wellness practices are reflecting  
new generational attitudes


## Radical restraint

Some young people are cutting back on so-called vices for the sake of their physical and mental health, seen through a rise in sobriety, digital detoxing and puritan content.

## New age of hedonism

On the other hand, older generations are living it up. Tired of traditional milestones, they are re-inventing the wheel and looking for reasons to enjoy their later years as much as their younger ones.

MODERN ROMANCE

## No sex please, we're millennials: Celibacy has become all the rage among young people

As experts predict a rise in periods of celibacy among twentysomethings, **Olivia Petter** speaks to people who've deliberately stopped having sex – and how it's transformed their lives

# Radical restraint

We've noticed an uptick in Gen Z exercising more restraint than previous generations.

A growing number of **'puriteens'** are opting for voluntary **celibacy**. Often confused with prudishness or awkwardness around sexual relationships, instead, they are looking to establish more meaningful boundaries and connections before exploring sexual relationships.

This generation has also made global headlines for their commitment to **staying sober**. There's been a €2.7Bn (4%) decline in European sales of beer, wines and spirits, fuelled by younger generations as they struggle with financial and health concerns.

While we recognise Gen Z as the most digitally savvy generation as they enter the workplace, some are choosing to use **'dumb phones'** rather than smartphones. They are practising digital detoxes to help them better connect with the world around them and improve mental health by disengaging from social media.





Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are on the rise in pensioners because of Tinder

# New age of hedonism

While younger people are reigning it in, their elders are letting loose.

It was reported earlier this year that older people, dubbed silver splitters, have been divorcing in record numbers – and jumping on dating apps to fill the romantic void. 8% of **Tinder's** user base is between 45-54 years of age, with another 10% being over 55.

Late last year, it was revealed that a spike in **sexually transmitted infections** are on the increase among Britain's pensioners due to the surge in interest in online dating.

In addition to experimenting more in dating, there's a growing phenomenon of older people, **particularly women**, pursuing same-sex relationships following a realisation in mid-life that they experienced lust and longing for women.

We're also redefining what milestones matter to us. With the journey of life deviating away from marriage, then kids, then retirement, we're creating life milestones that are unique to us. For example, **divorce parties** are on the rise, we're celebrating friendship with **'homey moons'** and thirty year olds are entering a new decade by taking a **'thirty trip'**.





Whether your audiences are living it up or taking a modest approach, cultural relevancy is key. But brands can also shake things up...

## What if

We flipped the script on stereotypes? In a world where younger generations are displaying behaviours more associated with their elders (and vice versa), how can healthcare brands respond to these shifts and avoid the old stereotypes that could be holding them back?



# Lifestyles

What it means to have a 'healthy' lifestyle is becoming increasingly diverse


## The soft life

A lifestyle that embraces rest, relaxation and not putting too much pressure on yourself – something that's been lost in today's 'always on' culture.

## Embracing extremities

Experimenting with sometimes controversial methods after recognising that the status quo doesn't necessarily mean health or happiness.



# The soft life

**Soft living** puts relaxation and mental wellbeing first; making time for lunchtime walks, long lunches and living life in the slow lane.

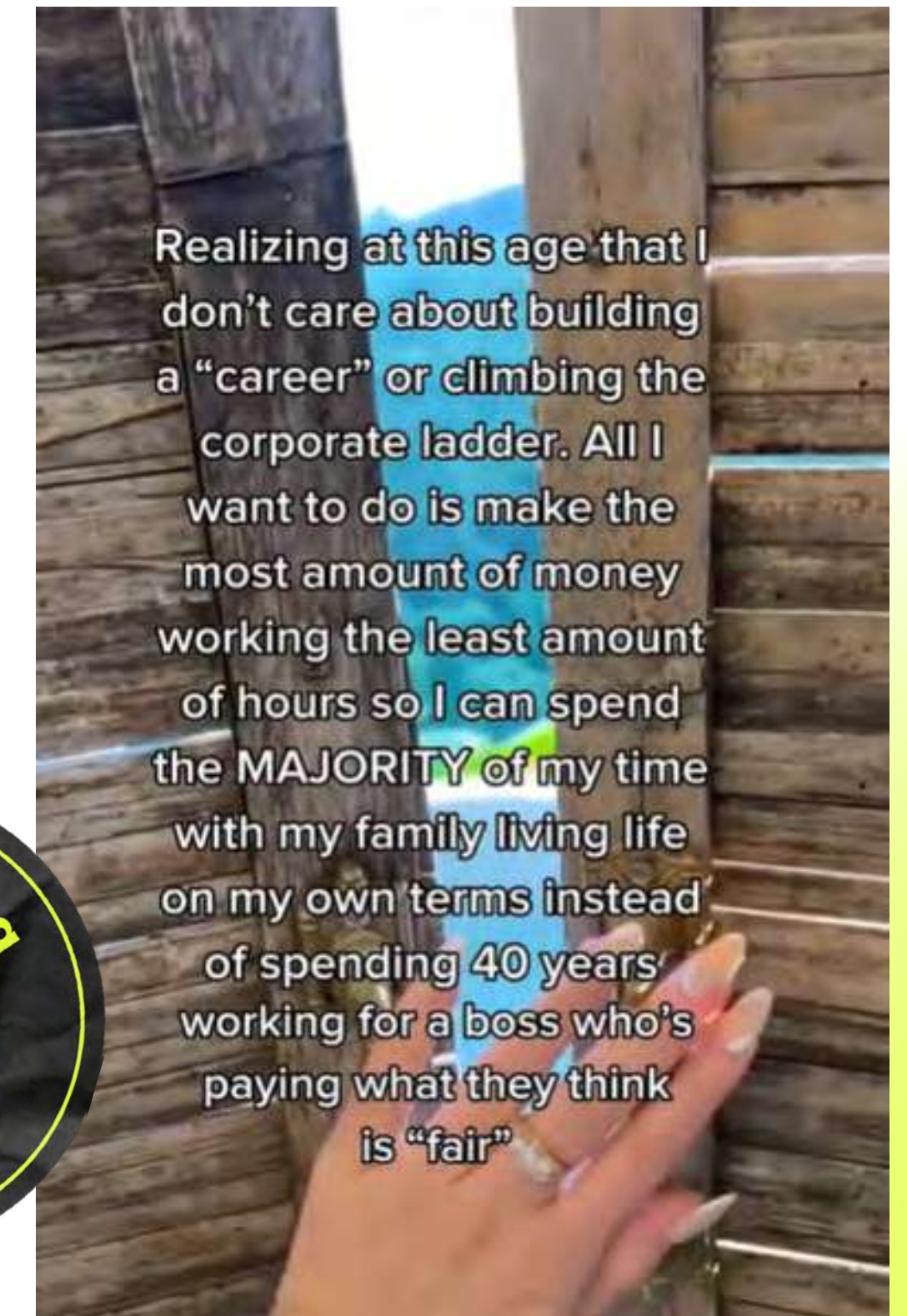
In the workplace, the recent rise of **Bare Minimum Mondays** plays into this trend, with people easing into the week with easy, mindless tasks.

Fed up with the hustle culture, some TikTokers are sharing their **'lazy girl jobs'** – ones that pay well without involving a heavy lift. The #lazygirljob hashtag currently has about 14m views, and the mood is overwhelmingly positive. It plays into the growing anti-work, anti-ambition lifestyle, prioritising self-care over the grind.

The **Guardian** reckons that pop culture could be fuelling this shift: "Millennials had Legally Blonde and Ugly Betty, stories about high-flying, stressed yet sexy women who dared to 'have it all'". Young people today are more interested in shows such as Euphoria, The Last of Us and Sex Education.'

Outside of work, hobbies such as **soft hiking** are making the outdoors more accessible and on TikTok, 'beigeinfluencers' are touting the **'bed rot summer'**; getting cosy in bed and embracing the quilt without the guilt, checking out from the real world and romanticising the mundane – **filler episode days**, if you will. As pop culture newsletter Embedded said; "Girlrotting' and the rest is clearly a reaction to the unrealistic aesthetics of girlhood that proliferated online in the early 2020s, and a way to excuse ourselves from inhabiting gender roles."

And we're no longer going on holiday to explore – we're going on holiday in search of the perfect night's sleep in an attempt to remedy sleep deprivation. **Sleep tourism** is a major wellness trend and hotels are now offering sleep-specific retreats and specialist-backed programmes.



# Embracing extremities

From controversial **all-meat diets** and the rise (and fall) of **The Liver King** to **primal screaming**, **swearing** and **abandoning dinnertime decorum**, sticking to the status quo no longer guarantees health and happiness – and some people are embracing extreme behaviours as a response.

Back in 2020, Iceland encouraged people around the world to record their screams of frustration online, then released them into some of its most remote locations via huge speakers – a form of ‘primal therapy’. Younger generations, perhaps influenced by #TraumaTok, are laying their feelings bare and opting to cry it out, **scheduling sob sessions** as a form of emotional self-care.

According to a **survey from Gallop**, women have been getting angrier over the past decade, and some are now channelling anger to incite change – whether its rage-blogging, sacred rage healing, embracing villain eras or idolising out-for-blood characters like *Gone Girl*’s Amy Dunne and Megan Fox in *Jennifer’s Body*, they’re finding their voices and speaking up for what’s right.



And we’re not just pushing ourselves emotionally. On TV, breakout hits like *The Physical 100* see people push themselves to their absolute limits to test the capacity of the human body.

It’s a sign of the times. Some of the darkest times in history have been coupled with extreme experimentation as we try to make sense of rapidly changing surroundings.





As we've just observed, people are preserving their health and wellbeing in radically different ways. Brands must have a point of view and be specific in their comms to cut through.

## What if

We challenged wellness norms? As consumers we have been conditioned to associate certain imagery and lifestyles as 'healthy', but what if we reframed what that meant and explored what soft health looks like?



# Habits

New & creative ways are emerging to keep  
up healthy personal habits



## Wellness snacking

Tired of structure, people are embracing short bursts of activities that boost wellbeing and break free from routine.

## Rigid regimes

Communities prioritising routine and organisation are growing, with people undertaking rituals each day to help them achieve mindfulness and calm.

# Wellness snacking

Tired of structure, some people are taking time out of their day to prioritise snackable moments that boost their wellbeing.

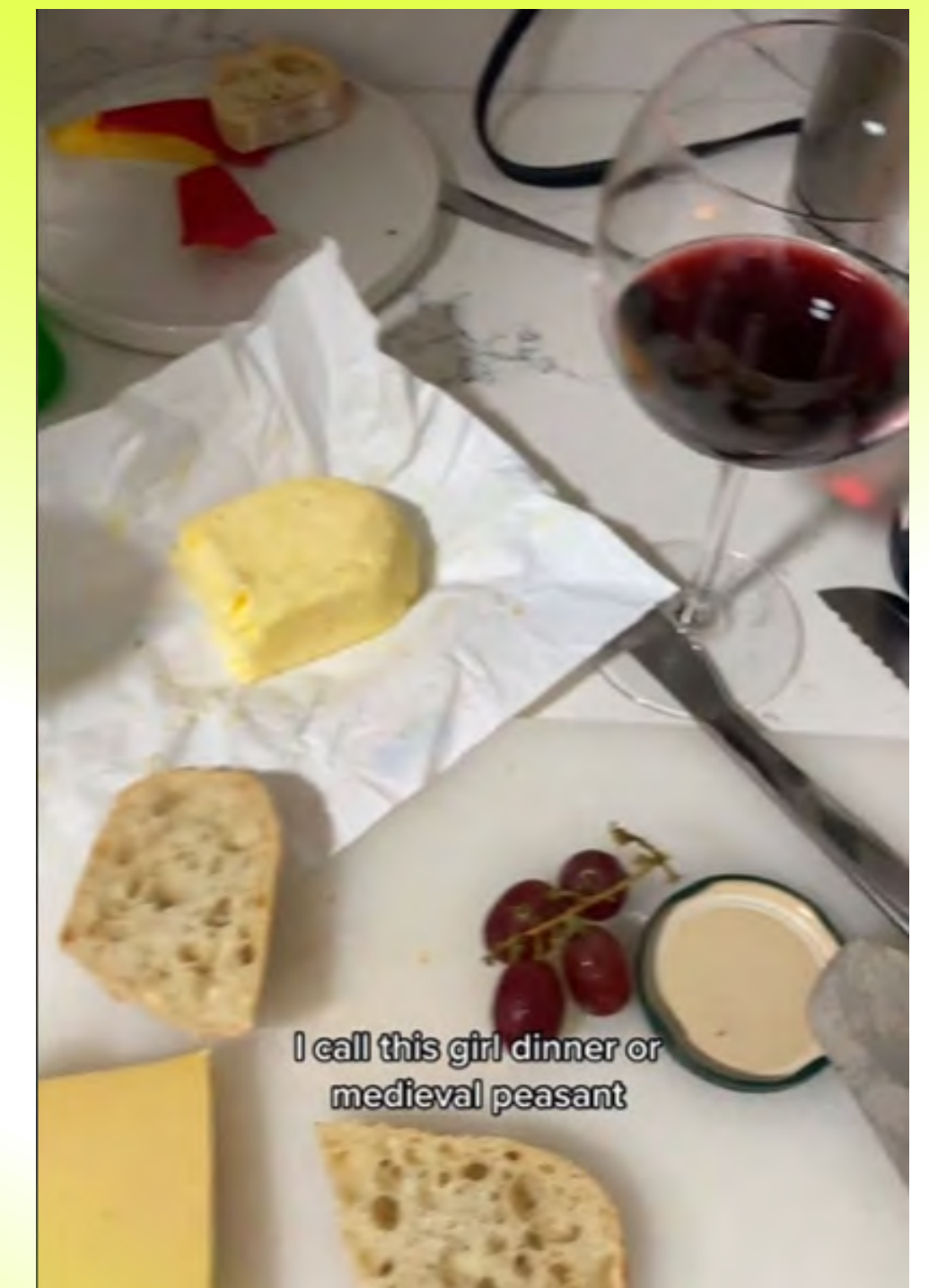
One way to quickly increase joy is to try **savouring**; 'mindfully paying attention, appreciating and accentuating the positive experiences to cultivate a happier life'.

Or why not try talking to plants? Nearly half of all plant owners chat to their plants – and 62% of those think it improves their mental health. A survey by **Trees.com** last year found that more of us are chatting away to nature than we perhaps realise, as 37% of people chat away to plants or trees they walk by on the street. In fact, it can be as simple as looking up to the sky when stressed to gather a sense of perspective – a practice dubbed skychology.

Remote working has meant that it's easier than ever to integrate moments of self-care into daily routines. It was **reported** that daytime bookings for golf courses and nail salons have spiked post-pandemic. Some activities don't even involve leaving the desk – the **Y-Break** is a five-minute desk yoga routine designed for working professionals to de-stress, refresh and re-focus.

When it comes to mealtimes we're moving away from meticulous planning and embracing an element of chaos. The viral **Girl Dinner** resonated with millions around the world who finally had a name for an act that's literally been around since medieval times. Sometimes a hastily assembled dinner of bread, cheese and wine is everything.

We're also starting to see a rejection of excessive wellness routines and unattainable standards from the likes of Gwyneth Paltrow. On TikTok, influencers are embracing the 'trad health' approach by taking part in achievable hormone challenges, stressing the importance of seeing the sun, eating healthy diets, and chewing food properly – and taking a more flexible, minimalist and realistic approach to wellness routines.



# Rigid regimes

From Gwyneth Paltrow to Kourtney Kardashian, we're inundated with A-list celebrities' 'wellness routines', which inspire regular people to stick to a routine to see tangible results in their health and fitness.

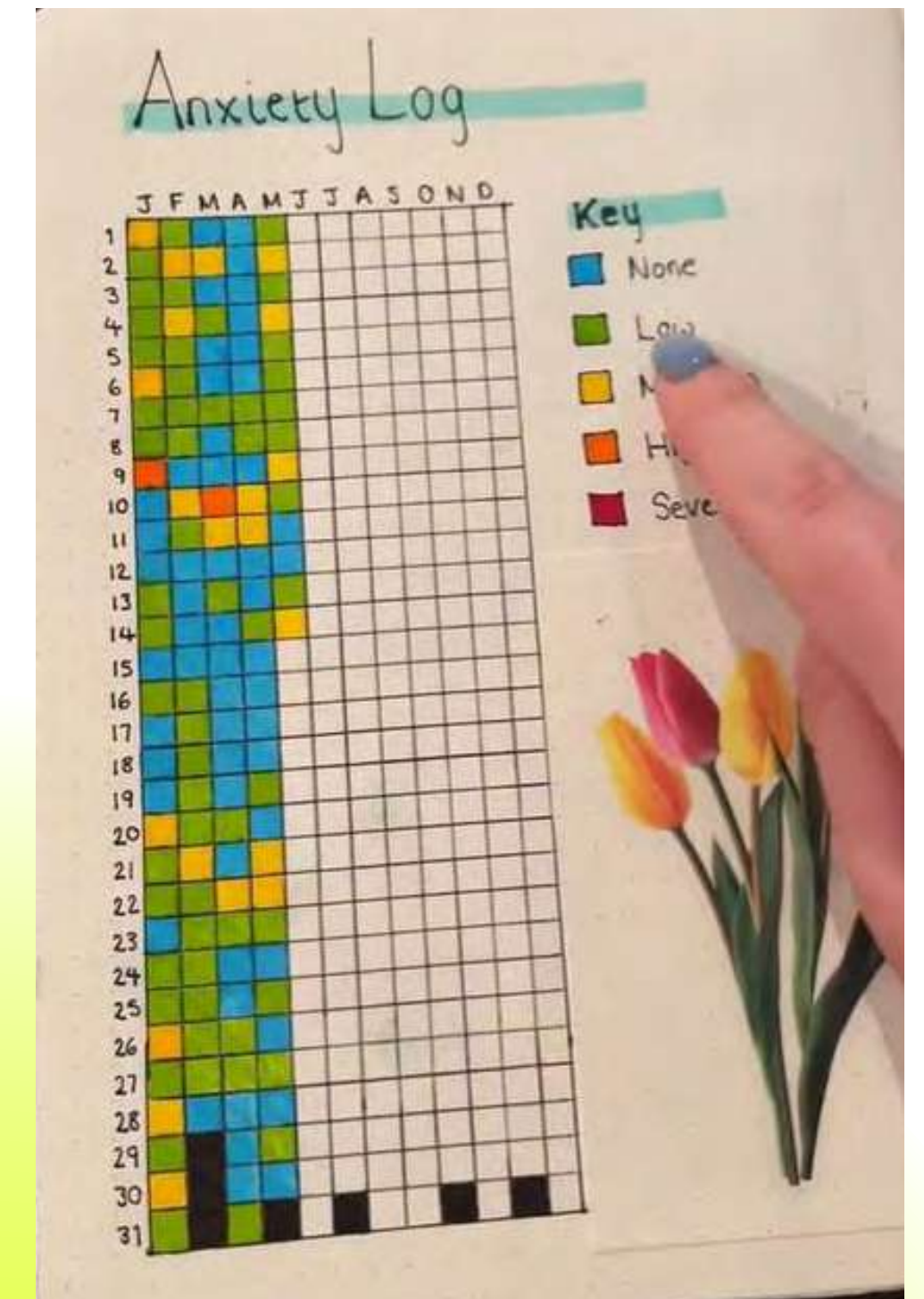
These rigid structures can raise eyebrows, just take **Mark Wahlberg's** routine that went viral last year as an example – but for some, this guidance helps us plan how we can become more successful, healthy and motivated.

Influencers have gone viral on TikTok for sharing their '**5-9' routines**, the margin of time before or after the average workday. These tend to be filled with skincare routines, recipes, workouts, as well as chilled leisure activities such as reading or watching TV. Not as dramatic as their celebrity counter-parts, these videos have inspired legions of followers

to incorporate similar structure into their day to day lives. On the extreme end of the scale, the **75 Hard challenge** is made up of six 'non-negotiable rules' which have to be completed for 75 days straight.

Since the dawn of TikTok, we've seen an uptick in **organisation** content, from fridges packed to perfection to bullet journals documenting our daily lives. To some, this level of compartmentalising would be a struggle, but for others, this daily routine provides the clarity they need to achieve mindfulness.

```
2:30am wake up
2:45am prayer time
3:15am breakfast
3:40-5:15am workout
5:30am post-workout meal
6:00am shower
7:30am golf
8:00am snack
9:30am cryo chamber recovery
10:30am snack
11:00am family time/
meetings/work calls
1:00pm lunch
2:00pm meetings/work calls
3:00pm pick up kids @ school
3:30pm snack
4:00pm workout #2
5:00pm shower
5:30pm dinner/family time
7:30pm bedtime
```





People are picking different ways to integrate wellness into their daily lives. Some crave structure and regiment, while others like to live flexibly.

## What if

We got personal? We're all familiar with personalised medicine, but what if brands communicated with consumers in a hyper-individualised way. It's up to brands to learn where they fit in to the chaos vs structure.



# Summary




# What if

**People are seeking a health & wellness 'belief system' to follow**

Healthcare brands could take on new meaning? Search for meaning and inspiration is behind the spiritual awakening. But this can all be found in science too if you tell the story in the right way.

**Health & wellness practices are becoming core to who we are**

We could treat the whole person? We are learning more about the link between mental and physical health, understanding this is fundamental to understanding ourselves. What if healthcare brands finally helped us embrace both?

**Health & wellness practices are reflecting new generational attitudes**


We flipped the script on stereotypes? In a world where younger generations are displaying behaviours more associated with their elders (and vice versa), how can healthcare brands respond to these shifts and avoid the old stereotypes that could be holding them back?

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We challenged wellness norms? As consumers we have been conditioned to associate certain imagery and lifestyles as 'healthy', but what if we reframed what that meant and explored what soft health looks like?

**New & creative ways are emerging to keep up healthy personal habits**

We got personal? We're all familiar with personalised medicine. What if brands communicated with consumers in a hyper-individualised way too? It's up to brands to learn where they fit in to the wellness snacking vs structure.



**Want to talk more about how your company or brand can tap into these health and wellness trends?**

Please reach out to your regular The Weber Shandwick Collective team, or get in touch [here](#)

