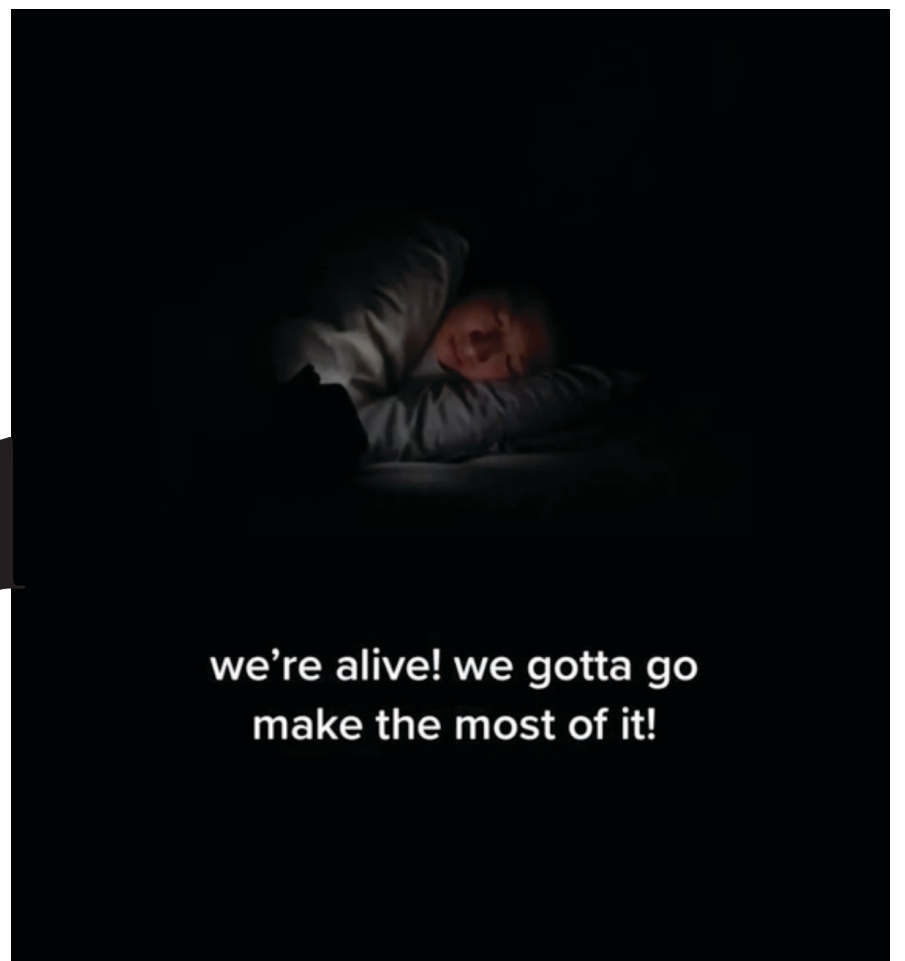


# The Need to be Understood

GROWING UP WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AND LONELINESS, TEENAGERS ARE TURNING TO CORECORE, AN AESTHETIC TREND ON TIKTOK, FOR VALIDATION.



we're alive! we gotta go  
make the most of it!

BY JACK GILLIN

Climate change, poverty, wars, loneliness, mental issues, addictions, violence and countless more. These issues are no stranger to our society. We all know about them, but continue to look the other way. The online phenomenon of "corecore" is an attempt to make people finally see these issues and do something about them. As Chance Townsend, an assistant editor at Mashable, puts it: "It caught my eye, because I was like, wow, this is spreading a message in a way that will actually ... convince someone to care about what's happening around them." This radical artform is touching people's hearts and souls, and we continue to be confused by corecore. The real question is: How does it do this?

Kieran Press-Reynolds is a digital culture reporter for Insider. He has a passion to write about and explore anything under the umbrella of the internet. For two years, he has focused on new technology and platforms, influencers that are blowing up, and all sorts of different trends. Kieran believes that digital culture is important to record, as he says, "It intersects with every element of the economy and politics. It has its tendrils everywhere, so I think in order to understand anything that's going on in society, you have to start or end up on the internet." The internet can be very pervasive and that can be seen perfectly through the corecore movement.

Corecore is a transfixing genre of videos. It features an array of clips and sounds put together to convey an issue or topic. Kieran describes it as a "platform-wide catharsis." The public opinion of corecore is hard to place. It has confused people and drawn very conflicting views. Some call it a radical art form while others call it no more than gibberish. As Kieran puts it: "We are creating its meaning by arguing about it." He finds the TikTok aesthetic to be "a new art form online where people are literally defining what it is in real time." It made a name for itself by pointing out the very things that are getting people to see it. We are all stuck in the loop of technology, and we can't look away. Even when the dangers of it are being presented to our faces.

At its peak, corecore had such a niche audience. If you stumbled across one of these videos, you would find a lot of fascinating statements: "This is art," "The point of life is experience," "The first corecore video I've ever cried at," "I'm tired, man," "We weren't made to live like this," "I love corecore so much. It can say so much with so little. It's open to interpretation and whoever makes it can have a different point of view." All of these statements were found in the comment section of corecore videos. Corecore makes people switch perspectives and "change [their] mood for the whole day," as one commenter wrote. People seem to gravitate towards corecore content with less likes. The most popular comment you see under these videos is: "The less the likes, the better the corecore." Because of this attraction to "underground" content, all these videos started to blow up.

This led to clips being reused and songs being overplayed. As the originality faded, so did the impact. People started to drift away from corecore because of the repetition. In true fashion of a trend, corecore



faded. However, the thing that set corecore apart from other trends was that it came back in another way. People never forgot about the impact corecore made on them, even after it faded. The art form never left because of that, instead it was brought back as "hopecore." This was a positive parallel of corecore but had the same style of video. "Instead of being sad, we're happy. We love the joys of falling in love and living life, so it has come full circle from what it started," says Chance, the weekend editor for Mashable.

Chance also writes about digital culture because he believes in the impact the internet makes on our modern day lives. "We are basically the historians,"

Chance says. He grew up with the early internet. When Chance was in eighth grade, the iPhone 4 had just come out, so he has had the honor of watching the internet grow into what it is now. When Chance stumbled across a corecore video about climate change, it hit him in the heart, as he says, "It did give me a little panic, just because it hit a piece of my brain where I was like, man, I'm really growing up with climate change. I feel like there's nothing I can do about it."

When it comes to the science behind corecore, ideas are thrown around. Some believe that it's the familiarity of these clips, especially the ones from films. It makes you remember how emotional that

part in the movie made you feel. When it's repurposed with a new message of art, it's more focused on the overall theme. Now, imagine all of your most heartbreaking (or happy, in terms of hopecore) moments in film paired with powerful music and you're bound to be overcome with emotions. The impact could also come from the contrast between everyday social media broken up by such a heartfelt video.

Kieran and Chance agree that the root of corecore's effect might be the audio. "The audio can kind of create an inexplicable feeling in the viewer where it stirs ... something up from inside of you," Kieran says. "It unlocks a specific feeling." The songs used



in corecore videos usually feature a dreadful and sad tune. People have even started categorizing it as its own subgenre, so much so that Spotify made an official mix for corecore music. Chance's take on the audio's effect is more focused on the voices in these clips: "Especially with just very existential crises and like, sad men screaming, you will get someone to follow your cause just off that." Hearing people's emotions in the most raw way connects us. It's human nature to recognize and empathize with another person in distress/pain. The medley of music and people, creates an immersive atmosphere that brings you to tears.

Typical social media users may be startled by the

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# Inside the Mind of a Person with Dyslexia

HOW OUR INTERVENTION SPECIALIST, MS. BETH, CHANGES THE LIVES OF THOSE WITH DYSLEXIA.

BY ANA ORDONEZ

Some may think that people with dyslexia are not smart, but inside their heads, there are little gears working like crazy to process all the information around them. Their lives are filled with obstacles and challenges that they are constantly going through. Beth De La Torre, an intervention specialist, turns the mountains they have to cross into hills, making their lives easier and happier.

I had the chance to interview Ms. Beth about dyslexia. Ms. Beth, who has a master's degree in education, has 24 years of experience teaching kids with learning disabilities. According to Ms. Beth, dyslexia is, "a neurological-based disorder that prevents people from seeing and hearing letters and sounds in the correct order." During our interview, Ms. Beth demonstrated how a phrase would look to someone with dyslexia. On a dry-erase board, she wrote: "Dyslexia is characterized by difficulty with learning how to read fluently and with accurate comprehension despite normal intelligence." The class passed around the board, attempting to decipher the strange text. Not many students got it right. What the board really said was: "Dyslexia is characterized by difficulty with learning to read fluently and with accurate comprehension, despite normal intelligence."

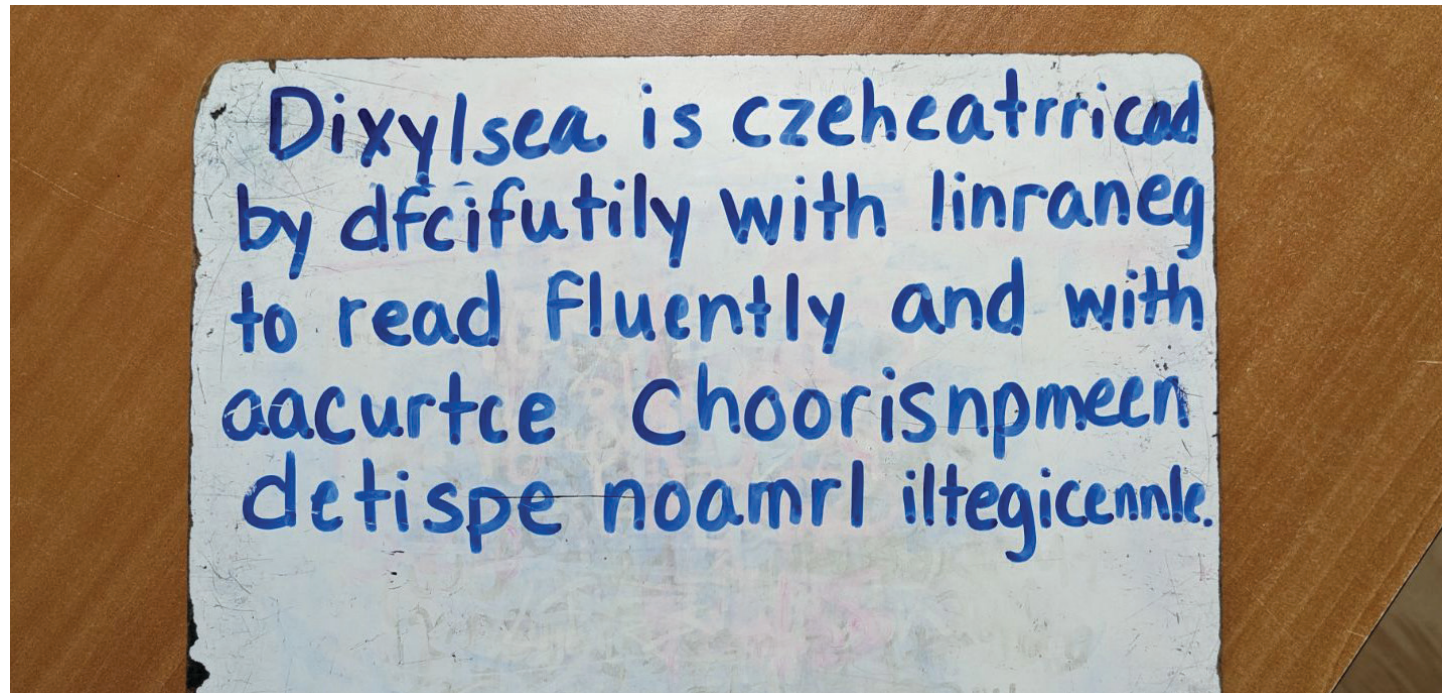
Beth explained that people with dyslexia work three times harder because they have to see the words, sound them out, figure out the proper order of the letters and then comprehend what they read. People with learning disabilities are often very intelligent, but their disability makes it harder to learn and they have to learn ways to figure things out.

"Dyslexia is actually a learning disability. In order to be diagnosed with dyslexia a person must have above-average intelligence. The person has the ability and intelligence, but something is preventing them from moving forward," Ms. Beth explained. Dyslexia only affects the right side of the brain. Many people with dyslexia are good at other things that are not reading, like sports, art and music.

According to a study by the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 20 percent of people have dyslexia, many of whom are undiagnosed.

Beth clarified a common misconception claiming that dyslexia is not reading backwards, but instead is mixing up the letters. In order to help people with dyslexia she uses different strategies. She teaches them to sound things out phonologically and teaches them the spelling rules. The CUPS technique is another tool she teaches for writing. CUPS stands for: C-capitalize, U-use verbs correctly, P-punctuation and S-spelling.

Spelling in English is difficult, there are 26 letters, but 44 sounds. Ms. Beth gave the example of the



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— BETH DE LA TORRE, AN INTERVENTION SPECIALIST

letter "a", which has 4 pronunciations: -ay, as in day, -uh, as in across, -aw, as in water, and -ah, as in mad. These properties can make it harder to learn how to spell and pronounce English words.

Computers are useful tools for people with dyslexia. There are certain fonts that help them not get the letters confused. Some problematic letters are "b," "d," "g," "p," and "q". The right fonts help people see the differences between the letters. Cursive handwriting can also be helpful because the differences are easier to see.

Beth also has students practice reading aloud so they can hear themselves and catch miscues



PHOTO CREDIT: MENA ZAVALA

(errors). This gives the brain more time to process information (sound sequences) and helps them learn sight words, which have to be memorized, such as "said," which sounds like it would be spelled "sed."

So, how do people overcome dyslexia? Dyslexia is hereditary, those who have it are born with it and it is passed down to their offspring. While dyslexia can not be cured, with help, those who have it can learn to work with it.

Famous people with dyslexia include Anderson Cooper, Albert Einstein, George Washington and Henry Winkler. A student asked Ms. Beth how they knew George Washington was dyslexic and she said that experts examined his writings and they also knew he

TOP: A DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT A SENTENCE MIGHT LOOK LIKE TO SOMEONE WITH DYSLEXIA. DECIPHERED TEXT WOULD READ: "DYSLEXIA IS CHARACTERIZED BY DIFFICULTY WITH LEARNING TO READ FLUENTLY AND WITH ACCURATE COMPREHENSION, DESPITE NORMAL INTELLIGENCE."

LEFT: AUTHOR ANA ORDONEZ WITH MS. BETH.

had other people write things for him.

Dyslexia often goes undiagnosed and kids drop out of school because they get frustrated, feel bad and are called names. The stress and frustration can make them mad about other things more easily and cause them to have problems with other people. When dyslexic people have supportive family members, friends and teachers, they can do very well. It is very important that dyslexia is diagnosed when people are young. Dyslexia can only be diagnosed by a psychologist.

When asked how we can support people with dyslexia, Ms. Beth said that if we are in a group with them we can encourage them to read things aloud and help where needed. Also, knowing that a person with dyslexia may be very good at different things can help you in a variety of scenarios, such as dividing work on group projects.

The brains of people with dyslexia work differently, this doesn't make them better or worse, just different. Because dyslexics have to learn new ways to look at words in order to read them, they develop new ways of looking at other things, too. Dyslexics have different mindsets and can become very good at problem-solving and working hard to finish things.

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breaking of mindless scrolling, especially in such dramatic ways. When your everyday "GRWM" videos and latest trends, barren of emotion or personal connection, is interrupted by a video molded to personal emotions, it's a sudden wake up. That change of pace could be the reason it hits your heart. Perhaps it could also be the theme. Corecore and hopecore videos pick a theme for a video, which makes the message immensely more powerful. Corecore's common themes include loneliness, purpose of life, climate change and politics. Hopecore's frequent themes are love, accomplishment (especially in sports), humanity and family. Because of the specific themes in these videos, you feel more connected, especially if it's something you relate to. Corecore will visualize your deepest thoughts and mindsets. It pictures your emotions in a physical way, which is what people yearn for. Emotions are a strange thing, so when they're visualized and put right in front of your face, you feel understood.

Gina Tran, a professor of marketing at Florida Gulf Coast University, studies consumer behavior. She started specializing in technology in 2010 and has been focused on the science of the internet since then. "I study specifically technology and consumer behavior, because that's where the consumers are,

and I go where the consumers are," she says. Dr. Tran uses TikTok for research, rather than traditional social media interaction. When her friends and family send her a video, she says, "I'll look at it because I want to understand what struck them? What motivated them to share it with me? And what makes it popular?" Fascinated by consumer behavior on social media, she found corecore intriguing. Dr. Tran believes that part of the draw comes from the difference in content. "It's in contrast to what's been done before," she says. "And so because it's in contrast to it, people will give it more attention, meaning the audience watching it ... jumps on to that trend."

TikTok's fast-paced nature has been broken by corecore. Dr. Tran thinks that the videos just keep getting faster. "I must admit, they're so fast that I have to keep watching it over and over to catch what somebody says," she says. Dr. Tran thinks the difference that corecore brings to the table is shocking people so greatly because they aren't used to this kind of content. "That trend of slower, more artistic videos are ... evoking some sort of emotion within."

As for the science behind corecore, Dr. Tran thinks it all comes down to understanding. "When an individual identifies with that emotion that's evoked by that corecore message, that sense of identity with any emotion, or the person who created it, causes them to stop and say, 'Oh, this is what I feel in my life too,'" she says. "Being understood by someone is a powerful thing. We're looking for identification, and I think that's really important in our world right now." She explains that even if you're going through something hard, if you see someone who's going through the same thing, it makes your feelings feel valid.



Feeling connected to someone, in most cases, starts by seeing face-to-face. Seeing another person's identity reminds us of humanity. Corecore creators strive to invoke emotion and connection, but never show their identity. If connection is rooted in seeing people, why do they not show themselves? Dr. Tran thinks one possibility for the anonymity of corecore content creators could be a wish for privacy. These creators share such deep issues, maybe they just don't want their identities attached to something so heavy. Dr. Tran compares it to celebrities: "I know we love celebrities, and we try to follow them and everything, but I do understand that they want to have private lives too ... In that same way, maybe these content creators of corecore want some level of privacy as well." Or, perhaps it could all be for the "mystique," as Dr. Tran puts it. It could be for engage-

ment, so people will follow their cause and view their videos, drawn by this curiosity. "That makes us more curious, and makes us want to give it more attention, because we are focusing our cognitive brain power on trying to figure out who this person is," Dr. Tran says.

Being on social media at this time in history means witnessing art forms. It's definitely a "You just had to be there," moment. Corecore is a creative and beautiful way to express the hardships of the world. The media may continue to be torn by corecore and hopecore, whether it is art or merely a trend is anyone's opinion. However, this conflict won't erase the massive impact it has made on the younger generation. Corecore has definitely left a mark on the internet. Stumbling across a corecore video randomly will still hit the heart just as much as it did the first time, maybe even more. So many people have been touched by this "anti-trend," and for that, corecore deserves a spot in internet's history. This baffling phenomenon continues to elude the internet, even after it's come full circle.

The science of corecore is simply just, not simple. We as humans are complex in nature, and so is our art. Corecore, in all its complex beauty, might not have a definite explanation to its effects, and that gives it more depth to dive into. Maybe corecore's effects are based on your personal experience with it. Maybe the impact changes depending on what you make of it. The experience you take from it is yours, and it always has been. The art movement of corecore rests on something as simple as the want to be understood, and what you see in it will be as personal as what you feel inside yourself.