Why 2019 has been the best year in human history

If you're depressed by the state of the world, let me ***toss out*** an idea: In the long arc of human history, 2019 has been the best year ever.

toss　抛；投　　　　　　　　　　　　polio　小儿麻痹症

The bad things that you ***fret about*** are true. But it's also true that since modern humans emerged about 200, 000 years ago, 2019 was probably the year in which children were least likely to die, adults were least likely to be illiterate and people were least likely to suffer ***excruciating*** and disfiguring diseases.

fret about　担心；烦恼　　　　　　　excruciating　折磨人的

Historically, almost half of all humans died in childhood. As recently as 1950, 27% of all children still died by age 15. Now that figure has dropped to about 4%.

Diseases like ***polio***, leprosy, river blindness and elephantiasis are on the decline, and global efforts have turned the tide on AIDS. Half a century ago, a majority of the world's people had always been illiterate; now we are approaching 90% adult literacy.

You may feel uncomfortable reading this. It can seem tasteless, misleading or counterproductive to ***hail*** progress when there is still so much wrong with the world. Climate change remains a huge threat to our globe, and it's likely that we will miss a U.N. target of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030. We should keep pressing on all these fronts, but we'll get a ***morale*** boost if we acknowledge the backdrop of hard-won improvement.

hail　欢呼　　　　　　　　　　　　morale　士气；斗志

"We are some of the first people in history who have found ways to make progress against these problems, " says Max Roser, an Oxford University economist who runs the Our World in Data website.

"Three things are true at the same time, " he added. "The world is much better, the world is awful, the world can be much better."