Dear Max,

Your mother and I don't yet have the words to describe the hope you give us for the future. Your new life is full of promise, and we hope you will be happy and healthy so you can explore it fully. You've already given us a reason to reflect on the world we hope you live in.

Like all parents, we want you to grow up in a world better than ours today.

While headlines often focus on what's wrong, in many ways the world is getting better. Health is improving. Poverty is shrinking. Knowledge is growing. People are connecting. Technological progress in every field means your life should be dramatically better than ours today.

We will do our part to make this happen, not only because we love you, but also because we have a moral responsibility to all children in the next generation.

We believe all lives have equal value, and that includes the many more people who will live in future generations than live today. Our society has an obligation to invest now to improve the lives of all those coming into this world, not just those already here.

But right now, we don't always collectively direct our resources at the biggest opportunities and problems your generation will face.

Consider disease. Today we spend about 50 times more as a society treating people who are sick than we invest in research so you won't get sick in the first place.

Medicine has only been a real science for less than 100 years, and we've already seen complete cures for some diseases and good progress for others. As technology accelerates, we have a real shot at preventing, curing or managing all or most of the rest in the next 100 years.

Today, most people die from five things -- heart disease, cancer, stroke, neurodegenerative and infectious diseases -- and we can make faster progress on these and other problems.

Once we recognize that your generation and your children's generation may not have to suffer from disease, we collectively have a responsibility to tilt our investments a bit more towards the future to make this reality. Your mother and I want to do our part.

Curing disease will take time. Over short periods of five or ten years, it may not seem like we're making much of a difference. But over the long term, seeds planted now will grow, and one day, you or your children will see what we can only imagine: a world without suffering from disease.

There are so many opportunities just like this. If society focuses more of its energy on these great challenges, we will leave your generation a much better world.

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Our hopes for your generation focus on two ideas: **advancing human potential** and **promoting equality**.

**Advancing human potential** is about pushing the boundaries on how great a human life can be.

Can you learn and experience 100 times more than we do today?

Can our generation cure disease so you live much longer and healthier lives?

Can we connect the world so you have access to every idea, person and opportunity?

Can we harness more clean energy so you can invent things we can't conceive of today while protecting the environment?

Can we cultivate entrepreneurship so you can build any business and solve any challenge to grow peace and prosperity?

**Promoting equality** is about making sure everyone has access to these opportunities -- regardless of the nation, families or circumstances they are born into.

Our society must do this not only for justice or charity, but for the greatness of human progress.

Today we are robbed of the potential so many have to offer. The only way to achieve our full potential is to channel the talents, ideas and contributions of every person in the world.

Can our generation eliminate poverty and hunger?

Can we provide everyone with basic healthcare?

Can we build inclusive and welcoming communities?

Can we nurture peaceful and understanding relationships between people of all nations?

Can we truly empower everyone -- women, children, underrepresented minorities, immigrants and the unconnected?

If our generation makes the right investments, the answer to each of these questions can be yes -- and hopefully within your lifetime.

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This mission -- advancing human potential and promoting equality -- will require a new approach for all working towards these goals.

**We must make long term investments over 25, 50 or even 100 years.** The greatest challenges require very long time horizons and cannot be solved by short term thinking.

**We must engage directly with the people we serve.** We can't empower people if we don't understand the needs and desires of their communities.

**We must build technology to make change.** Many institutions invest money in these challenges, but most progress comes from productivity gains through innovation.

**We must participate in policy and advocacy to shape debates.** Many institutions are unwilling to do this, but progress must be supported by movements to be sustainable.

**We must back the strongest and most independent leaders in each field.** Partnering with experts is more effective for the mission than trying to lead efforts ourselves.

**We must take risks today to learn lessons for tomorrow.** We're early in our learning and many things we try won't work, but we'll listen and learn and keep improving.

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Our experience with personalized learning, internet access, and community education and health has shaped our philosophy.

Our generation grew up in classrooms where we all learned the same things at the same pace regardless of our interests or needs.

Your generation will set goals for what you want to become -- like an engineer, health worker, writer or community leader. You'll have technology that understands how you learn best and where you need to focus. You'll advance quickly in subjects that interest you most, and get as much help as you need in your most challenging areas. You'll explore topics that aren't even offered in schools today. Your teachers will also have better tools and data to help you achieve your goals.

Even better, students around the world will be able to use personalized learning tools over the internet, even if they don't live near good schools. Of course it will take more than technology to give everyone a fair start in life, but personalized learning can be one scalable way to give all children a better education and more equal opportunity.

We're starting to build this technology now, and the results are already promising. Not only do students perform better on tests, but they gain the skills and confidence to learn anything they want. And this journey is just beginning. The technology and teaching will rapidly improve every year you're in school.

Your mother and I have both taught students and we've seen what it takes to make this work. It will take working with the strongest leaders in education to help schools around the world adopt personalized learning. It will take engaging with communities, which is why we're starting in our San Francisco Bay Area community. It will take building new technology and trying new ideas. And it will take making mistakes and learning many lessons before achieving these goals.

But once we understand the world we can create for your generation, we have a responsibility as a society to focus our investments on the future to make this reality.

Together, we can do this. And when we do, personalized learning will not only help students in good schools, it will help provide more equal opportunity to anyone with an internet connection.

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Many of the greatest opportunities for your generation will come from giving everyone access to the internet.

People often think of the internet as just for entertainment or communication. But for the majority of people in the world, the internet can be a lifeline.

It provides education if you don't live near a good school. It provides health information on how to avoid diseases or raise healthy children if you don't live near a doctor. It provides financial services if you don't live near a bank. It provides access to jobs and opportunities if you don't live in a good economy.

The internet is so important that for every 10 people who gain internet access, about one person is lifted out of poverty and about one new job is created.

Yet still more than half of the world's population -- more than 4 billion people -- don't have access to the internet.

If our generation connects them, we can lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. We can also help hundreds of millions of children get an education and save millions of lives by helping people avoid disease.

This is another long term effort that can be advanced by technology and partnership. It will take inventing new technology to make the internet more affordable and bring access to unconnected areas. It will take partnering with governments, non-profits and companies. It will take engaging with communities to understand what they need. Good people will have different views on the best path forward, and we will try many efforts before we succeed.

But together we can succeed and create a more equal world.

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Technology can't solve problems by itself. Building a better world starts with building strong and healthy communities.

Children have the best opportunities when they can learn. And they learn best when they're healthy.

Health starts early -- with loving family, good nutrition and a safe, stable environment.

Children who face traumatic experiences early in life often develop less healthy minds and bodies. Studies show physical changes in brain development leading to lower cognitive ability.

Your mother is a doctor and educator, and she has seen this firsthand.

If you have an unhealthy childhood, it's difficult to reach your full potential.

If you have to wonder whether you'll have food or rent, or worry about abuse or crime, then it's difficult to reach your full potential.

If you fear you'll go to prison rather than college because of the color of your skin, or that your family will be deported because of your legal status, or that you may be a victim of violence because of your religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, then it's difficult to reach your full potential.

We need institutions that understand these issues are all connected. That's the philosophy of the new type of school your mother is building.

By partnering with schools, health centers, parent groups and local governments, and by ensuring all children are well fed and cared for starting young, we can start to treat these inequities as connected. Only then can we collectively start to give everyone an equal opportunity.

It will take many years to fully develop this model. But it's another example of how advancing human potential and promoting equality are tightly linked. If we want either, we must first build inclusive and healthy communities.

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For your generation to live in a better world, there is so much more our generation can do.

Today your mother and I are committing to spend our lives doing our small part to help solve these challenges. I will continue to serve as Facebook's CEO for many, many years to come, but these issues are too important to wait until you or we are older to begin this work. By starting at a young age, we hope to see compounding benefits throughout our lives.

As you begin the next generation of the Chan Zuckerberg family, we also begin the [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative](https://www.facebook.com/chanzuckerberginitiative/) to join people across the world to advance human potential and promote equality for all children in the next generation. Our initial areas of focus will be personalized learning, curing disease, connecting people and building strong communities.

We will give 99% of our Facebook shares -- currently about $45 billion -- during our lives to advance this mission. We know this is a small contribution compared to all the resources and talents of those already working on these issues. But we want to do what we can, working alongside many others.

We'll share more details in the coming months once we settle into our new family rhythm and return from our maternity and paternity leaves. We understand you'll have many questions about why and how we're doing this.

As we become parents and enter this next chapter of our lives, we want to share our deep appreciation for everyone who makes this possible.

We can do this work only because we have a strong global community behind us. Building Facebook has created resources to improve the world for the next generation. Every member of the Facebook community is playing a part in this work.

We can make progress towards these opportunities only by standing on the shoulders of experts -- our mentors, partners and many incredible people whose contributions built these fields.

And we can only focus on serving this community and this mission because we are surrounded by loving family, supportive friends and amazing colleagues. We hope you will have such deep and inspiring relationships in your life too.

Max, we love you and feel a great responsibility to leave the world a better place for you and all children. We wish you a life filled with the same love, hope and joy you give us. We can't wait to see what you bring to this world.

Love,

Mom and Dad