

Good morning!

Hope your Sunday is off to a good start. My birthday is this Friday, and I'd love to compile a few responses in next week's newsletter to the following question: ***What was the hardest lesson you learned in your 20s that shaped who you are today?***

Reply to this email to share your stories. I bet there are a few good ones out there, and I'd love to hear them.

LINKS

Here we go this week:

- [Virgin Galactic's rocket man](#) (**HIGHLY RECOMMEND**)
- [The blockchain democracy](#)
- [The soldiers fighting a never-ending war](#)
- [The entrepreneur building a video game empire](#)
- [The startup operating in the shadows](#)
- [The non-chicken chicken company](#)

PEOPLE TO KNOW.

[Virgin Galactic's rocket man](#): Mark Stucker is the lead test pilot of Richard Branson's spaceship company, Virgin Galactic. People are paying \$250,000 to take a flight into space, and Stucker's job is to make that happen. In his time at the ambitious company, Stucker has dealt with failed rocket launches, a fatal spaceflight crash, and his own disintegrating family.

"We're test pilots of spaceships. As a Marine Corps colonel once told me, 'If you want to be safe, go be a shoe salesman at Sears.'"

[The blockchain democracy](#): A new movement says that crypto-voting can purify democracy — and eventually eliminate the need for governments altogether. Santiago Siri and his nonprofit startup Democracy.Earth are behind that mission. At the center of the project is the creation of what Santiago calls "political cryptocurrency"— tokens that users of Democracy.Earth's software can spend as votes. This article makes you question whether this is just crypto libertarian nonsense or a radical solution to a very old problem.

"I know it's ambitious. But either we build tools that help us adapt to our new weird reality or we go back to the dark ages."

[The soldiers fighting a never-ending war](#): Robert Soto enlisted in the Army, motivated by a desire to protect the U.S. from another terrorist attack. But his idealism quickly turned into realism, and the war had become a matter of him and his friends surviving each day. This year

marks 17 years since Sept. 11, which means recruits born *after* the 2001 attacks will be old enough to enlist. This haunting profile chronicles war through the eyes of a generation of soldiers with little to fight for but one another.

“The best guys always seem to lose. The guys you think are equipped mentally and physically ready for war — the guys you think are going to come home — aren’t the guys to come home.”

The entrepreneur building a video game empire: Talk about a second act. Jack Etienne has reinvented himself from a photocopier salesman into a CEO at a professional video-game-playing company that generates millions of dollars a year. Etienne is behind Cloud9, the most popular esports team in North America. Now, top Silicon Valley investors expect him to turn his team into a global entertainment business. Here’s the story of how he plans to do that.

“If the WWE could persuade rich guys that young men watching other men perform dramatized violence was a good investment, so could Jack Etienne.”

COMPANIES TO WATCH.

The startup lurking in the shadows: For years, augmented reality tech startup Magic Leap guarded its secrets, revealing very little about what its future product might look like. Developers, analysts, and tech enthusiasts had grown increasingly skeptical that Magic Leap was developing anything worth following at all. Six years and \$2 billion later, the company has finally released its secretive augmented reality headset. Is it worth all the hype?

“Secretive is this word that can be really loaded. The idea is to make sure people trust us and we have credibility.”

The non-chicken chicken company: Virtually all of Tyson Foods’ revenue comes from animal slaughter and processing. The company produces 1 of every 5 pounds of meat consumed in the U.S, and sells \$15 billion worth of beef, \$11 billion of chicken, and \$5 billion of pork. Now, its new CEO is pouring money into animal-free alternatives. Why? “We want to actively disrupt ourselves,” the CEO says. “We don’t want to be Kodak.” 😂🔥