

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: Fwd: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 10.26.20
Date: Monday, October 26, 2020 9:16:03 AM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 10.26.20
Date: October 26, 2020 at 9:13:32 AM EDT
To: "mojo210al@gmail.com" <mojo210al@gmail.com>

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 8 Cars 5 Trucks 1 Dog Walker 1 Runner

As we were closing up shop for the day, Phyllis remarked that "the weekend felt full, just pretty small." What ensued was a brief, although enlightening, reflection not only on the weekend then ending but on the past 8 months of life. Neither of us are bored with our life, and in fact, both of us are doing important and necessary work. What is different is the scale of our life altogether. Remember those four quadrant graphs that we made when we began to learn about graphing. You draw intersecting lines and create 4 different boxes being able to identify whether you are in the Northeast quadrant or the Southwest quadrant. I spent my walk [this morning](#) thinking about the discussion from last night and placing our lives into quadrants that by and large are quite different than a year ago. If the intersecting lines are full and empty on one axis and small and large on the other, I guess we decided we are in the full and small box as opposed to what we use to consider our lives as being full and large.

Truth to be told, I am not sure that this is only the impact of Covid-19. In no small part it is also a piece of life's actual journey. While we are both, thank God, still basically vital and vibrant, our time on the main stage is changing. That is particularly true for me. There is something quite profound and significant that our son is now the chair of a rabbinic search committee for his congregation. And I think for Phyllis the fact that one of our daughter's is now a Pediatric resident reminds her every day of what those years from 82-86 were like when she did her own residency. Seeing our youngest and her husband figure out her professional life and his rabbinate, reminds us both of the commitments and compromises we both wanted and needed to make in order to make our lives and our family all work. In part, having a small but full weekend is not something that is only driven by the Pandemic. But it is clearly exacerbated by it and profoundly troubling as to the prospects of returning to a larger life experience in the coming months or year or years.

While 1600 blows hot air and tells you that, "you won't even hear the fake media and the Democrats mention Covid [after November 3rd](#)" the truth of the matter is that it will remain a serious and societal issue to grapple with well into 2021. Perhaps beyond.

Our lives are going to continue to be smaller as a result—not because of the decade we are in, but because the world as we once knew it is now so different. Theatres are dark, arts and culture opportunities are fewer and often found on-line. Shopping is no longer a leisurely [Sunday afternoon](#) outing-but a designed and organized visit to a store to get exactly what is on your list or to pick up a prescription that is needed. Saturday nights in restaurants are not happening and house parties and gatherings are pretty non-existent. At least among those who really understand that life is precious and worth protecting. One only needs to look at sporting events on TV and see that the large gatherings that dominated sports venues has come to an end. (Thank God the Gophers, the Vikings, the Twins and the Loons already built their stadiums:). And what is true in the world of culture and the sports will also come to impact the worlds of both religion and civic engagement. Two years ago, yesterday would have been a day that Phyllis and I would have been out door knocking and canvassing. In fact, every day this week there would have been phone banking and door knocking-identifying peoples plans for voting. And while we will certainly still be calling, there is something different that one feels in making these calls. The only remaining aspect of serious campaigning in retail fashion is the phone call—but people are worn out. They crave human contact and another phone call is only a reminder of their own isolation and the absence of campaign material being left on their doorsteps. Organizations are left to virtual gatherings and while they work on an individual basis, it is increasingly hard to distinguish between getting on a livestream of a [Iwillvote.org](#) event and a DARTS or Planned Parenthood fundraiser. The content is different, but the presentation is fairly indistinguishable. While necessary to do and important to attend, the truth is that the energy that is generated by in-person gatherings is gone. And that is certainly the case with religious communities. I hear it from former congregants, and I hear it from colleagues of all religions and religious stripes.

There is nothing like in-person gatherings to remind us not only of our humanity but also to remind us of our dignity and of the possibility for reaching the sacred we all desire. Yesterday, I was particularly moved by a “zoom unveiling.” Gathered together on this zoom were two people at a cemetery performing the act on behalf of all those who couldn’t gather in person. On the call were people from across the country—all willing to spend an hour being reminded about the strength and dignity of the woman whose memory we were honoring. And yet, as powerful and as important and beautiful as it was, the end of the ritual was hitting the “leave meeting” button on your computer screen. No hugs, no shared emotional departure from the grave, no lingering at the cemetery to be with other folks you may have wanted to honor and remember—just a leave meeting button.

Our lives are full, but they are smaller. Learning to live with a different set of expectations as a result is the life-task we all must engage with. In each of these areas-religious, political, civic and cultural- the ones who take the lead on understanding the impact of the changes will be the ones who succeed in delivering a cogent message of hope and opportunity. Thinking that we can zoom our way out of the situation we are in is simply a lazy response to a real-life situation. Thanks Phyllis—Once again your

insight is a gift worth sharing. Morris

Sent by my iPad