

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 4.24.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 9:29 AM
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 4.24.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 2 Cars 2 Trucks 1 Runner 1 Walker (who joined me for the end of my own-it was Phyllis) and TWO (2) busses #1916 and 1914.

In January 1968, I celebrated my becoming a Bar Mitzvah in Lincoln, Nebraska. My parents for the occasion gifted me a subscription to the New Republic. (I think it was a way for my dad to extend his subscription at a less expensive rate). My eldest brother, not to be outdone by having me become simply a reader of the New Republic, gifted me a subscription to the then newly reorganized National Guardian which shortened its name simply to the Guardian(not to be confused with a British newspaper of the same name). I am sure that my brother did so to counter any tendencies I might have had towards a "middle-class" morality that had to be eradicated through revolution. I tell you that because the only series that Phyllis and I are watching now is another run through of the "West Wing." Last night, in an episode in season 2, I was aghast. Toby indicated that the phrase "permanent revolution" originated with Mao. In arguing for a radical approach to America's educational system, he suggested that president Bartlett call for a "permanent revolution." I told Phyllis, it wasn't Mao who called for a "permanent revolution", rather it was Trotsky. It was his argument against Stalin—it ultimately led to his untimely death...but I digress

I did think of the significance of that phrase popping up, though, because it is now 6 weeks since I have been working at home and the culture of our office that existed prior to that has changed dramatically. Indeed, we were just integrating three new staffers into our team, as is usual with turnover in congressional offices after a first year. Suddenly, the process changed dramatically as the work style had to shift significantly. Six weeks later, it has not been a permanent revolution by any stretch of the imagination, but my workday and my workplace have had dramatic changes. And in the process, our staff is connected and doing the work which we have been called upon to do. It was not a matter of learning or using a different platform or work arrangement. It was a recognition that what worked inside an office, in the space where we bounced ideas off one another with ease, had to change and people had to step up and face the change. We weren't going to capture the office dynamics—both good and bad—while sitting on Zoom or Microsoft Teams at meetings. We weren't going to have a work experience that met our previous expectations of what "work" was all about. If we were going to succeed and our Boss was going to have the work done that she needed us to get done, we were going to have to change what we did and how we did it. We have all

learned to work smarter and more effectively, at least from my perspective. What we have lost in office camaraderie, we have made up for over and above with new found respect for what each of us is doing and is getting done. We no longer have time to do things the easy way, but instead must focus on getting it done the best way. Each of us has had to surrender a little bit of our secure decision-making process and replace it with calculated and carefully thought through risks. We have each left our comfort zones and been challenged. We have no time for excuses and have accepted responsibility and for being accountable. The office culture, in my opinion, has shifted as well from a “me” perspective to a “we” perspective. Yesterday, our comms director needed to get all our 17 months of our daily news clips organized in a new fashion. One “Team” message produced 6 people who stepped up and helped out. In what may have previously taken a day or two to just get going was finished in a few short hours.

For me this new work style has led to each day being different and unexpected. Yesterday for example, I began my day with a wonderful meeting with the African Health Care Professional Association—an agency in MPLS that places health care folks into nursing facilities and home health care projects some of which are in my congressional district. I ended it with a Local Issues meeting in Lake City, MN. In between I was on an interfaith hunger forum on the impact of Covid-19 and attended the River Heights Chamber event celebrating its Small Business of the Year award winner. There were phone calls about when the new PPP funds would be available, calls from cities wondering the status of help for smaller communities, and many other interesting conversations along the way. We have had to change what “meetings” we attend and what processes we follow for deciding. For me, the past week has been filled with conversations with everyone of the cities and town for which I am responsible. Those contacts depended on my initiating calls and seeking information. In weeks gone by, we might have depended on local papers being delivered to our offices and scoured them for information. I don’t see those papers now in my “home office.” So, to find out the news—and to glean the community’s needs—we must change our style. In each of these encounters, I have never encountered someone suggesting that their city is overwhelmed or feeling unenthused in response to the challenges. These professionals understand that at the end of the day all any of us can do is to control that which we can control and let go of self-pity for what was or use to be. I do miss many things about what my life was like only 6 weeks ago. I miss morning minyan at shul most of all. But I love my response and my ability to adapt and to embrace change. I hope I never lose my newfound love of walking, my commitment to healthier eating and my joy of embracing technology that I previously shied away from. At 13, it was fun to think about permanent revolution—at 65, however, it is much more satisfying to still read the New Republic—and maybe the Wall Street Journal as well. Maybe that isn’t the permanent revolution that Trotsky intended—but he also never imagined a world where a President would suggest ingesting disinfectant to fight disease either. Morris

(FOR NEW READERS, THESE RAMBLING THOUGHTS ARE THE PRODUCT OF MY THOUGHTS ON MY 45 MINUTE MORNING WALK. WHEN I GET HOME, I SIMPLY SIT DOWN AND WRITE –NO EDITING AND NO REREADING)

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