

**From:** [David Kraemer](#)  
**To:** [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)  
**Subject:** FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.15.20  
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**From:** Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:09 AM  
**To:** MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>  
**Subject:** One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.15.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 5 Cars 3 Trucks 2 Runners 2 Motorcyclists 2 Walkers 1 Runner

We are well into the second trimester of this embryonic change taking place inside our lives. While not yet fully viable or perhaps viable at all, for 18 weeks we have been engaged in a national experiment of change and reorganization. While the virus has impacted every country and all peoples, certain places seemed to either be divinely blessed or humanly led by effective national leadership. For the past 3 and ½ years, being led by an individual who only seems to revel in disruption, Covid-19 has been a gift that he has bequeathed to the American people. But I digress...

These past 18 weeks have changed assumptions about almost everything we know about our daily life-as it applies to work, professional relationships, religious behavior, political thinking, racial understanding and the role of the local coffee shop, gym, grocery store, house of worship, communal or civic organizations and restaurants. While these changes may not take, given that they are not yet fully formed or viable, anyone who believes that the lessons internalized over these past 18 weeks will simply be lost when "normalcy" returns is a foolish thinker. In a country where too many have died and many more have been permanently impacted by the disease, there is almost no one who hasn't been touched by a degree or two of separation from its curse. And the assumptions that we made for generations, about our work life, our relational life, our financial life, our religious life, our communal life, are all in play. Any organization or entity that does not fully grasp this truth is playing with fire for their future. And none of this is removed from the realizations that this country, filled with profound aspirational vision, has serious structural problems related to racial divides and socio-economic gaps. But one column can't address all of these concerns.

I have a meeting in a half hour and a long day ahead of me. So instead of waxing (in)eloquently about a variety of topics, I will only do so around one. What have we learned about ourselves as a result of social distancing and isolation? Relationships still matter! I haven't seen my working colleagues in person for 18 weeks. I, like many others, continue to feel a strong bond of support across screens and virtual chats. Other than 45 minutes in Chicago and an hour in Columbus, Phyllis and I haven't seen our youngest or oldest and their families in months. Blessed with the presence of our middle child for much of the first part of the pandemic shutdown, were we to go visit her now we would have to quarantine in New York for 14 days before venturing out. And yet, those bonds, appear strong and secure. Friendships are now sustained with screen shots of visits, and a rare socially distant gathering in a park or patio setting. And yet, without any of these virtual moments,

our isolation from the core of who we are to be would be completely destructive. What all of this represents, however, is the role that personal choice is now playing inside of people's decision making. Organizational connections are increasingly becoming irrelevant for many people in structuring their "free-time" activities. Going to a meeting or working on a project or attending a religious service—all things that drew people into social connections—aren't happening. I worry about those losses a great deal and about organizations and communal entities that are preparing to fight the next battle with the last wars battle plan. For the time being, what should give us hope is that the answer to the future as to how it will be that we will live—is right in front of our nose—if we only look. Not simply the screen on which my words are appearing—but the content of our connections that continue to provide us with meaning. Over the weekend, a couple I know who have retired to California celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. One partner was in the hospital recovering from a procedure. The other partner reached out to me and asked if I would write them a note. A simple note that took me 3 minutes to write, was responded to with a beautiful recapitulation of purpose of the relationship from years ago. A beloved senior colleague wrote me yesterday and said my words struck a responsive chord in his own understanding of his career. Last night, someone sent me a note about their comments to an organization and a decision it made concerning world affairs. All of those exchanges created a reminder of a bond of connectiveness that will outlast the viral nature of this disease and our physical isolation from one another. I guess what I really want to say is that devoid of all the structures that we thought created connections for people and that were necessary to sustain relationships—in this new world in which gestational change is occurring—relationships that matter are not those that are created by communal gatherings or physical presence. They are the ones that transcend time and place—and at the end of the day—that is my real worry. For how will this "new baby" forge new, meaningful relationships in a world that is not creating space for their formation? That is what concerns me—that is the life that we must be battling and the resolution we must be seeking. I have to give it much thought—but for today I am sustained by what I have and the relationships the past has provided. Morris

Sent by my iPad