

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: An Existential Threat-one individual's response to communal fear DAY2
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 10:14 AM
To: mojo210al@gmail.com
Cc: docgorin@aol.com
Subject: An Existential Threat-one individual's response to communal fear DAY2

Last night, oI was teaching a class for UMN Hillel via zoom. I have been teaching this class once a week during this semester. These students are bright, inquisitive and when I met them in January were all filled with the collegiate sense of self that all of us probably remember. Over the course of the semester, I had the chance to see them laugh, talk about their lives, grapple with classic Jewish texts and create a unique and caring weekly carve out for folks who may not really have known each other so well prior to the class. While there were a couple friendship circles already existent in the group, one could see these students create their own new circle of support. And then Coronavirus struck. In the midst of their spring break, their second semester plans were upended. All of a sudden the seniors lost the closure activities that come with the end of one's college career. Other students were dealing with moving back into their parents' home long-term and friendship groups being disbanded against their wills. For me, I was not sure how many of these "kids" would show up for our Zoom class last night. Surprise, they all did!! And they all needed it-and I realized so did I. I listened to their thoughts before we dove into our text study. They are overwhelmed. They are concerned. They feel their professors are in the same place. "They are adding on more work because they think we are just sitting around and doing nothing". "It's hard to be motivated sitting in your dining room all day watching classes on line." "What does it matter now, my job offer was rescinded and I have been left hanging as the economy tanks".

As I listened to them, I suddenly was transported to my own childhood and hearing my father and mother talk about what life was like growing up during the depression. It was hard and it was filled with challenges that they always would say "thank God our kids (me and my sibs) won't have to know about that world." And how right they were for the first 65 years of my life. But in listening to these kids, I came to appreciate once again that life is never linear. Those of us who thought that "progress once achieved is progress won forever" are being reminded that it is a false construct. The common truth of humanity's experience may have been captured in the book of Ecclesiastes, "there is nothing new under the sun." I wanted to reassure these students that their reality today could be transformed into a new "Greatest Generation". But in order to achieve that, they, and us, will need to recommit to a renewed call to the common good, to making do with less, and reframing our goals so that success is not defined by economics but by the richness of relationships and by embracing hope for the future. We all might take the advice of ancient sage who once remarked-"we are not obligated to finish the task, but neither are we free to desist from its engagement." Let's get to work on the new normal-which is actually the normal it has really always been. Morris

Sent by my iPad