

Combatting Coronavirus overload

Okay, I understand the need for shutting down our social intercourse with our fellow man, and I even get why we need to limit that contact at restaurants, schools and shopping malls. Staying at home is a blessing for some of us who've been working too hard and have begun to feel the stress of compensating for those who've slacked off. I'm guessing, however, that we've just traded in one form of stress for another by being homebound. The first few days of kicking back and lying in bed, nibbling on snack foods has turned into a nightmare of Coronavirus overload. Let me explain.

We're now exposed to a whole different virus that is rooted in the mania of 24/7 reporting on Coronavirus deaths, Coronavirus guidelines from the federal, state and local governments, media outlets' 'breaking news' items about the Coronavirus, exposes on those do-nothing Congressional and Senate representatives who are milking the crisis to their own benefit, etc.

Pundits are speculating round the clock on every bizarre wrinkle associated with Covid-19 whether it be a plot by the Feds to keep necessary equipment from 'Blue states' or feuds between the President and Governor Cuomo or whether or not there exists a rift between the President and Dr. Tony Fauci to God knows what. And who are the real victims in all of this? You guessed it...all of us who are glued to our computers, social media or our TV screens. Coronavirus updates are every few minutes with the CV tote board screaming about hundreds of new deaths in Italy; new victims in the Gen X, Y and Z population; Skype interviews with recovering folks off-loaded from cruise ships and dire warnings from every MD that ever studied about viruses in med school that we're headed for extinction as a species.

Governors are now commandeering the air waves and introducing new measures that are designed (they say) to protect us from each other. The more skeptical among us question their real motives, especially leading up to elections that are a few months away. Seems that every politician is cashing in on the crisis, while those on the Left are tickled pink that they have yet another chance to bash the President for his "mishandling" of the most terrifying thing to come down the pike since, well, the last national crisis. It all rings more than a bit hollow when San Fran Nan's Dems fight to keep non-Coronavirus-related 'baubles' on the single most important piece of legislation that demands immediate bi-partisan passage to fight the virus. Money for greening up the airline industry? Sure, why not? Funding the Kennedy Center? Absolutely. Who do these people think they're fooling, anyway?

It boggles the mind to hear Senators like Charles Schumer whose home state has a real threat to its very existence criticize the Republican majority and the President instead of putting a non-partisan shoulder to the wheel and getting behind a 'clean' bill to fight the economic and health challenge caused by the virus. Where are his priorities? We all know; it's to get his party's presidential candidate elected in November. I ask you, can you imagine a President Biden in the captain's chair managing this crisis? Now THAT'S a scary thought, fellow citizens.

So, here we sit, glued to our screens while the death march of the Coronavirus continues to paralyze us. We are quarantined in place, unable to even hold neighborhood gatherings where we might share our experiences or band together to fight misinformation or unfounded fears out in the open. Is that self-isolation and the destruction of our economy going to be the cure for what ails us? How many more hours of the endless loop of bad news about this virus can we take before we all go berserk and what will be the long-term consequences of a national shutdown of our economy? I'll tell you what I think.

Companies will lose their value, their cash, and their investors. The survivors will vow to do more with fewer employees and radically change their business plans. Theirs will be a massively scaled-back 'footprint' on the world stage. Hundreds of thousands of smaller companies will fail. Mail order fulfillment companies like Amazon will gain new market share and more market dominance.

We will see a major reduction in service companies operating in the entertainment and hospitality sector but not before they try to woo their customers back with price cuts. Unemployment will rise because many of those surviving companies will have seen that they don't need all those 'superfluous' workers they had on the books in pre-Coronavirus times. Stock market investors will be wary, very wary, of putting their money in 'iffy' stocks.

How will the states kick start their own economies?

Many of the 'Blue states' will impose higher taxes on their companies and their citizens in order to right-size their balance sheets that were upended by the virus. Expect higher value-added taxes, administrative 'surcharges' on government services. The more forward-thinking states will offer incentives for new business start-ups or business relocations from other states. In other words, Blue and Red states will use traditional Left or Right methods to kick-start their economies, but it will take years to recapture any semblance of normalcy as America has suffered a gut-punch to its unique brand of capitalism.

Expect more distance learning, more telemedicine, more impersonal service delivery, higher prices from service businesses due to the paucity of competitors. Expect fewer products on the shelves of retail stores and fewer imported goods from China. The world's money will be moving to safe havens. There will be less risk capital for new companies with promising ideas and products. A new investing paradigm will be created based on investments that offer investors a quick and painless exit strategy.

There is an upside to every crisis, and the upside to this one is that we Americans are now aware that the chinks our armor didn't just appear with this virus. They were always there, and that we now know that every superpower or empire has its day AND that our survivability depends on more than just economic or military might...or good marketing and the power of positive thinking.

The smallest microbes can destroy the most powerful societies.

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