**ARE THERE POSITIVES WE CAN TAKE FROM THE CORONAVIRUS?**

We live in amazing times with so many unprecedented things taking place: Coronavirus, Black Live Matter, Climate Crisis (more severe floods, coastal erosion, fires,) the Plastic/Waste Crisis, Pollution of the Oceans and Seas, Rainforest Destruction, the situation in Hong Kong, the Beirut explosion, famine in the Yemen, political unrest in so many countries.

I was asked do I think anything good has come out of the virus situation and while we all agree that for many these are such difficult times I think there are some positives we should understand and hopefully when this is all over a number of these positives will remain in place.

Number one for me is: **COMMUNITY SPIRIT.**

I don’t just mean at home between **families** although that has been wonderful the strengthening of family links , relatives talking and when possible visiting other relatives more than normal. People going shopping for older people or people who are house bound. People joining and getting involved in charities and support groups, people prepared to give a stranger lonely and isolated on their own due to lockdown a telephone call.

**Families** spending time together in ways they never would have before the lockdown developing new and exciting and sometimes wacky things to do together.

The community spirit between companies, employers and employees creating new approaches and schemes to enable their work to continue, teachers and students being prepared to change and work together to find new and unprecedented ways of learning and the time it has taken to set these programmes up has been amazing. Even the little things such as the respect and discipline to wear masks (they drive me nuts but I wear one) or to social distance. The way communities found ways to come together to celebrate VE Day and show thanks to the NHS and Support Workers on Thursdays.

The creative way we as communities large and small have adapted and come together I hope will remain in place when things get back to normal. (What is normal anymore?)

**REDUCED CARBON EMISSIONS AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.** Have you noticed how clear the skies are at night? With virtually no planes, less traffic and factories working at minimum capacity the air quality has improved greatly and has helped 1,000’s of people who suffer because of air pollution. NASA and The European Space Agency through satellite imaging show a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. Stamford University USA has reported that globally the reduction in air pollution has resulted in fewer premature deaths from breathing toxic air. Environmental Resource Economist Marshall Burke reports that in the first 2 months of lockdown the cleaner air saved the lives of 4,000 children under 5 years old and 73,000 adults over 70 years old only in China. This reduction in carbon emissions helping to slow down the Climate Crisis.

We have learnt to have business meetings on line rather than travelling half way around the world saving time, money and the environment.

Unfortunately once the situation over the virus improves will we go back to how it was?

Many international corporations are now reporting that in future their staff will run meetings through the computer and only run essential meetings in person saving the company time, money and helping the environment.

One engineering company in England who bought their smaller items from China because the goods were cheaper than similar produced here in the UK has changed their ordering procedures and since the lockdown has started buying the products from the UK. The managing director said that once they changed their way of ordering they found very little difference in the price so when the virus situation improves they will continue ordering from the British supplier. This also helps the environment as there it reduces the need for air and sea traffic which results in less air pollution and slows down the Climate Crisis.

However in China they have reported that things are improving by saying their internal flights are back to 80% of what they were before the lockdown but their air pollution is climbing. It is sad that they are judging the success of their work to get rid of the virus by how many planes are in the sky.

**WILDLIFE** Due to the cleaner air and the fact that there are fewer vehicles on the road and lees people out and about wildlife has been seen coming out in ways they have not for years. Deer and mountain goats being spotted walking through villages, more birds in gardens and there has been a fantastic increase in the number of bees and butterflies in the UK.

Throughout the lockdown many councils are not mowing verges and parks which has helped increase the wildflower population, due to less vehicle and foot traffic it has given wildlife a break and helped hedgehog, toad and bumble bee populations

**POLLUTION** has decreased as less travelling, less air, land and sea transport so the air quality has improved greatly, with less travelling it has meant far less tourists this has meant less tourist pollution. In Venice due to the fact that there are far fewer tourists the canals and waterways are the cleanest they have been for generations. Due to the financial situation we all find ourselves in people are making the most of what they have so home pollution in some areas of the UK has actually gone down also because many people are now shopping online suppliers are making a deliberate attempt to use minimal and eco friendly biodegradable packaging.

**FOCUS on KEY and ESSENTIAL WORKERS** The virus has made us reflect and realise the importance of Key and Essential Workers who are often taken for granted by the vast majority of the population not only nurses, doctors, paramedics, teachers and police but also the people who work in care homes and with the vulnerable, farmers growing and producing our food, those who collect our rubbish, deliver the post, operate transport systems such as busses and trains. Maybe this virus is giving us time to reflect on how important we all are to keeping our families, homes, country and the planet running in a Respectful and Sustainable way.

While many businesses especially in the hospitality and travel industry are suffering greatly some industries having seen an increase here are some who are benefitting:

1. **Perspex Manufacturing** especially for hospitals, shops, offices and factories for the making of protective screens.
2. **Plywood Products** for divisional screens and walls.
3. **Bicycles and Exercise Gear,** Both manufacturing, sales and delivery.
4. **Outdoor and Indoor Games.** One supplier reported in 2019 the first week in May he sold 15 table tennis tables. For the first week in May 2020 during lockdown he sold 124 table tennis tables.
5. **Home and Garden Items** From plants to fence paint, from garden tables and chairs to hot tubs companies have been struggling to keep up with demand.
6. **Reading Matter** this includes physical books and magazines.
7. **Household Electrical Goods** from Computers to Washing Machines, from Cameras to Desk Lamps.
8. **Household Paints and DIY products**.
9. **Coffee and Tea supplies.**
10. **Delivery Services** as we buy more on line.

While it is going to take many years to return to anything resembling normal I hope we take time to reflect and realise there are things we can take from these problem times that will be of benefit in the future. The creative way we have worked together to find solutions. I have often said that in the industrialised world we sometimes talk about progress but in a way where we have lost control of progress only thinking of the short term financial gain and not the long term environmental, social and human cost of our short term actions some of which are irreversible. I have also said there is nothing wrong in making millions it’s how we did it that matters, with care, respect and responsibility not just for today but for the future.........our children’s future.

WE WORK BETTER WHEN WE WORK **RESPECFULLY** TOGETHER.

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