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Two short pieces written this week

Nighttime terrors – apocalyptic meets pathologically optimistic 00:57

I slept for a couple of hours last night. Apocalyptic thinking. Afraid of losing my loved ones, fearful of calamity and chaos. Afraid, afraid, afraid. Unsettling, this apocalyptic frame of mind in a usually pathologically optimist. Deep breath. Perhaps because I read a sober, informed, oddly hopeful article in [Medium, the Hammer and the Dance](#) about what lays in front of our faces. Escalating, dramatic, world-changing. Smells right; data checks out; well written.

I've been a team gap filler my whole life: leader, doer, next step, missing step, whatever. Anticipating gaps and trying to fill them. Most of what this article talks about are out our control – public policy, epidemiology, community systems (except of course the personal, one-on-one handwashing and physical distancing stuff).

Testing and tracing 02:20

The hope lies in testing and tracing (at the end of the long article), knowing where the Pandemic hotspots are. Profound knowledge: where exactly by census tract and block and home and managing isolation at that level. I remember it vaguely from my Public Health training. While the powers-that-be work on universal testing logistics, the next gap will be tracing every person with the virus and who they touched and touch. It's a gap we might be able to help fill. How can we contribute to the activity of **tracing** - personally and virtually as we are capable? Is this important? Who would we help? What kind of assistance would be helpful? How would we contribute to tracing? What do you think?

Now a word about our sponsor, ABRIDGE.

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Re-equilibration 04:15

Learning on the journey toward best health. A couple of years ago: **Finding equilibrium together on the journey toward best health.** Health Hats mission statements. As a student of life, leadership, and

health, I'm - we're - learning at a rapid pace. Relearning my public health education, sharing learning about virtual meetings and homeschooling. Practicing what I preach. Pretty heady stuff! Exciting! Sober!

My – our- sense of disequilibrium is a bit dizzying, occasionally nauseating, rapid heart beating, and high anxiety. We're in a turbulent sea, unsure of ourselves as swimmers. As a person, both pathologically optimistic and apocalyptic. I'm schizophrenic – back and forth, back and forth.

Taking stock, here's what I have going for me: I'm a two-legged white man of privilege with a full pantry, clean running water, excellent wastewater plumbing, weekly garbage pick-up, and two week's supply of meds. I'm spending 95% of my time in the house with my wife. We still get along great and love each other deeply. One son and family are upstairs, and the other son and family and one sister are within short driving distance. All healthy so far, knock on wood. I feel connected: my internet is slower, but reliable. My circles and communities are all kind, mindful, and industrious problem solvers. My many active virtual communities stay in very regular touch with each other. It's not all about the Coronavirus. I'm grateful and hopeful.

On the other hand, OMG, WTF, what are we up against? Can we be less prepared as a nation, world, community? Can our federal leadership have done worse? The worst trolls, unkind patter, and actions proliferate. I'm a retired nurse, and I can't go out and offer what I know about communities, disasters, emergencies, and intensive care. I'm high risk and stuck. Damn! People talk about 2-3 weeks. Let's think about the rest of the year and into the next. The odds are people I know, and love will die. How will we stay mostly sane and manage this unmanageable stress day-to-day and in the long run? Hyperventilate...

OK. Deep breath. Now another. Thankfully I learned some basic yoga online from Melissa Reynolds before the shit hit the fan. Mountain pose and downward dog rule!

There's way too much stuff out there in the ether-sphere about Coronavirus – repetitive, uneven quality, scary, unkind, mostly macro – the big important stuff. As this selfish, self-centered, old white man of privilege, I'm curious about personal lives, day-to-day experience of managing in these altered states without drugs.

Self-care 08:02

Let's take a minute to focus on self-care. We're not useful to anyone and at higher risk without self-care. I recommend:

1. Sip plenty of water all day, every day. Hydration strengthens and reduces risk.
2. Wash your hands and all that recommended stuff.
3. Go ahead and freak out. Take a full minute (time it) and complain and whine about how f'd up this is and unfair and unknown and.... If you can't make it through a minute the first time, start with what you can manage and build to 60 seconds. After the first time, be creative and try not to reuse curse words in the same freak out session. Own it, express it. Have a good laugh, cry, sigh. It's easier to move on to *what do we do now*.
4. Keep up good habits of sleep, diet, activity, stress management. Pick one to improve. Start with five minutes a day. Five minutes more movement, five minutes free of junk food, five minutes of stress reduction. Five minutes off your favorite screen. Whatever. Pick one. Five minutes. Then six, then seven.

5. Take stock of what works for you to reduce stress (physical stress and head talk). If you have more than three that work sometimes, celebrate, and use them when your heart beats fast, your stomach churns, your head screams (I know they are). If you don't have three, find more. Nothing works every time, all the time. Mine are taking a walk, listen to or play music, watch a Marx Brothers movie or Tim Conway skit, talk to my grandkids, read a book. Laugh at every opportunity. This is all truly ridiculous.
6. Find a Coronavirus partner – a health partner who will stick with you no matter what. Be a partner to someone else.
7. Learn lung hygiene – mindful breathing, fluids, activity, change position (downward dog)
8. Find two people who will watch your kids, parents, grandparents, anyone who relies on you, when you need help. Like, watch your kids (or whoever) while you go to the store, to the doctor, to clear your head. These are different people than the Coronavirus partner.
9. Do it for someone else. I know we're supposed to be physically isolated. Let's be practical – it's socially isolated and sane and relatively well.
10. Finally, model this for your kids, your family, and your virtual connections. Talk to them about it. You need people to talk to. They're right there in front of you all day. Take advantage when you're able.

I seek to spend as much energy as I can muster, where I have at least slight control. Reinforce and sustain my good habits, exude realistic optimism, and pray to open my heart with kindness and connection, take calculated risks when forces of good are in tension, and trust as I am able.

How goes it for you? Thanks for the opportunity to share this with you.