

The major lesson from the pandemic: “We are part of a greater whole”

The Bethlehem Gadfly [coronavirus](#) April 2, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus 

[Dana Grubb, “Vital Viral Lessons.” Bethlehem Press, April 1, 2020.](#)

Up until the current COVID-19 pandemic, the two most momentous events in my lifetime were the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

A third life-impacting event, the current public health crisis, has introduced an invisible enemy that has manifested itself very quickly and has taken many lives around the world while infecting untold others.

It has required adaptation by each of us and caused changes in our daily routines.

Despite the shelter-in-place orders and social distancing recommendations, in a way we’ve become closer. At least I have, with friends through phone calls, emails and social media. Some have reached out to me, and I am touched by their thoughtfulness.

A very dear friend brings hope, positivity and humor in her frequent Facebook postings, and I love her for that. I’ve been driven even more into the outdoors: biking, hiking and walking on trails and in area parks. I’ve noticed that many others have sought out the serenity of these natural places as well. I’ve had to adapt my grocery shopping to address shortages. Like many, I now carry hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes with me at all times. In addition to normal hand washing hygiene, I now wash my hands more frequently, especially after I open my mail and whenever I return home.

I’ve chosen to do a takeaway meal once a week to support local restaurant business owners. And, I’ve noticed far fewer retail emails in my inbox as businesses considered non-essential are no longer operating.

I read local city government's COVID-19 updates and watch regional and national news programs a little more closely, so that I can stay abreast of the facts and not the political hype.

I find not hugging anyone difficult because it is against my instincts, but I have complied with that suggested behavior modification. I miss that part of human contact tremendously and look forward to the day when a hug is once again welcomed.

There is a stillness in the air, less traffic, and perhaps a newfound concern for others. There seems to be a little more kindness and perhaps a hope for better days ahead.

I have learned a few things from this pandemic, and will likely learn more as it continues, peaks, recedes and ends. I've learned that if we adapt, we can survive. I've learned that if we receive good information and act quickly, we can make a difference. And I've learned, most importantly perhaps, that we really are not alone, even if we think or feel that we are. We truly are connected. We are part of a greater whole, and of each other. And it is that one-ness that I believe, in the end, will save us.

Deborah Courville contributed