

## People can bring themselves up when you let them imagine

Seldom has the whole world come to be in such singularity within a short time as now. And, with almost everyone seemingly understanding what each is saying without saying much!

Yes, we are in a changed world dominated by an unseen-with-naked-eye pneumonia-causing viral enemy. I would be lying if I say this is an easy time: Cooped up at home when one is supposed to be “free-range” ... looking like a hippy with unkempt long hair ... stressed out caring for so many more ... burning my reserves ... newly “discovered” neighbors only since April 7 ... interactions reduced to a quick “hi” when we come across each other ... the unforgiving daily statistics ...

But we are far from being defeated. In fact, we are gaining advances in this battle with simple hygiene practices – washing hands, wearing masks, containing sneezes, curtailing group meets – to keep this virus from taking advantage of the human host’s machinery to do harm. There is a silver lining too – that patients do recover from the disease!

The human spirit has always triumphed over adversity: Anne Frank was in hiding yet she inspired generations with her diary, Apollo 13 astronauts brought home safely after their just-another-space-travel spacecraft exploded, 33 trapped Chilean miners rescued after an accident threatened to bury them alive, 12 Thai football boys and their coach found alive after 18 days trapped in a cave by heavy-rain flood (unfortunately, 2 rescue divers perished as a result), or the story of a man relating to his roommate of the joy outside the only window in their hospital room only for the latter to discover the former to be totally blind and the room is without a window!

Could I survive the ordeals? Do I have the strength to care not only for my own well-being but also my loved ones? Nearer home, I was shocked ... now absolutely positively confident ... when I learned Singapore fought with gumption the 1918 Spanish Flu, the 1957 Asian Flu, the 1968 Hong Kong Flu, 2002 – 2003 Sars, and 2009 – 2010 H1N1. We pulled through as one people, and stronger.

Fast forward to now, we have been through COVID-19 for a few months ... not too badly despite some sacrifices. The next one month will be crucial. At least, there is a shimmer of light at the end of this tunnel (no pun intended). Let us hold out just a little more for our loved ones and ourselves. Let us inspire the mind and yoga oxygen to the brain with imaginations!

What if we imagine ourselves on a family staycation? Switch on the home air-conditioner to live it up like in a hotel, watch Netflix like going to a movie, read a book with NLB’s PressReader, play virtual board games like WORDS 2, WhatsApp relatives and friends whom you have lost touch with, stretch the

muscles as if in a hotel gym, order in a feast like foodies, watch YouTube TED Talks and MasterClass for new perspectives, dress up for the “occasion”, and much more.

While “staycation-ing”, imagine us (maybe you already are these professionals but no harm firing up those imaginations like Einstein) as nurses, chefs, social media influencers, lawyers, historians, or financial advisers? Work on a business plan, list your assets and ogle the figures, draw a family tree, make glass-cleaning solutions with vinegar and baking soda, sew reusable masks (yes, very popular now, and there are also non-sewing masks too), learn to trim hair, concoct your favorite bubble-tea. Our mind is limitless!

It is also encouraging to know that we are never alone in this journey. We have each other. Caregivers Alliance, too, is there for us. Seek help if you need to. National Care Hotline 1800-202 6868, launched on April 10, adds to an existing generous list of care and support. Temporary Relief Fund, COVID-19 Support Grant, and The Courage Fund could alleviate financial worries during this difficult period.

All said and done, let us catch up after this episode is over. Till then, stay safe, and verify that news you receive before passing them on (lest we spread a different kind of virus). Do not forget to imagine ... too.

Koon Kok Kwong