

## Week 8 – Lockdown

**'The more you have, the more you are occupied. The less you have, the more free you are.'**

**Mother Teresa**

Just as schools finished before we went into lockdown, I recall somewhat flippantly saying to folk – 'see you on the other side'. Like many of you, I had no idea of the road ahead of us. Of what would unfold as we each tried to manage our response to this epidemic, that knows no borders and does not discriminate. We watch every day what is happening globally and how we need to work together as a community of nations to be effective in rising to this challenge. The U.N. strongly point out that this epidemic requires outreach to all - focusing especially on those whom society often neglects and that the path of the coronavirus will also undoubtedly test our principles, values and shared humanity.

In my week 2 blog – I was heartened by the compassion that seemed to be somewhat organic in its reaction to the early days of lockdown and reaching out to our neighbours and those more vulnerable, who needed our help. We developed community support groups and soon found ways, where possible, of working from home. We sent round funny videos and jokes about being in lockdown, which still keep us amused. We started to use zoom or face time to talk to people and have quizzes, (which we could have done before!), but the isolation of lockdown heightened our need to see each other and visually check out that we are ok. We were forced to spend many hours and days within our homes with our families, when ordinarily we would have been able to access space outside with other humans. Life took on a different format and we all adjusted accordingly, to stay home – to save lives.

Now we are nearing the end of week 8 and the nation was hurled into some confusion as to this next phase of lockdown. What is not confusing, is that we **still** need to do all the above...and some more! I naively maybe had not anticipated just how long haul this journey would be but I am trying, like everyone, to continually adapt, grow and creatively manage the situation on a daily basis.

For our young people especially, there is so much uncertainty and I do know how hard you are all working to keep spirits up. This is now about sustainability and for some of us it tests every core of our being, to be continually faced with the ground hog day scenario that I have heard many of you talk about this week. Whilst I am hearing from the young people about how much they miss their friends and actual school (yep), they are also invested in keeping themselves and their families safe and not messing this up at this point – both as individuals and as a nation, having come so far.

Our individual survival is bound upon with one another's well-being, on both an national and international level. We aren't going anywhere without a collective surge on this. Whilst charities still desperately need our support and our neighbours still need us to call and ask if they are ok or if they need anything - your inventiveness and love and care within your homes and with each other is paramount now, more than ever. One young person I spoke to this week had recently had a birthday. As I was about to lower my head and commiserate with her in her story of it being the worst birthday ever.....'we had pancakes for breakfast (never happens on a school day-too rushed), my dad then had to work and then we played silly games all afternoon (find the Malteser in a plate of whipped cream...no hands), even my brother joined in and

he never leaves his bedroom. And then I had a zoom party with my friends, and we all had our own pizzas....it was THE BEST day!!' My head did not lower, and my smile just widened!

Another lockdown birthday - '...I was able to finally see my friend. Yay. We sat on her patio (2m apart obvs) and projected a movie onto a big white sheet on the wall and ate homemade popcorn!'.  
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**'Out of clutter find simplicity, from discord find harmony, in the middle of difficulty - find opportunity'**  
**Albert Einstein**

It seems that maybe we are starting to concur with Confucius who said, 'life is really simple but we insist on making it complicated'. When initially we felt bereft from 'stuff' and the life we knew that had been taken away from us – we have on some levels managed to fill that void and replace it with simplicity. Where simplicity is not about deprivation but about the greater appreciation for the things that really matter. So, keep up the hard work folks – it is not forever.

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