

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Pandemic - One Year Later - Final Entry

March 20, 2021. It was approximately one year ago when the country (particularly in New York City) began to experience the deadly effects of Covid-19; a virus about which the best medical minds in the United States knew very little. The combination of extremely high fatality rates and no cure quickly created a national crisis, and on March 23, 2020 the financial markets plummeted. We were left to deal with the unknown, and a great national debate began over how bad the pandemic would be and how long it would last. So it was at that time that I decided to write this blog. See March 20, 2020 - Time of Reckoning.

This will be my final entry, so I am going to look back at that first entry and examine my perspective then against what really happened. A year ago I predicted the impact Covid-19 would be far-reaching and last a long time. And I believed we would be fighting two battles: finding a cure for the virus and saving the US economy. It never occurred to me that political lines would be drawn. Instead I naively believed that the nation would rally together like we have always done in the past during a crisis.

Back 12 months ago I wrote that

I am going to accept what exists today, not try to predict the future, and just be guided by 7 principles or observations moving forward:

- 1. Stability - Inject in our daily lives a sense of stability, wherever possible, and find peace of mind and stop dwelling on the past;*
- 2. Compliance - Act as an obedient citizen and strictly adhere to all the recommended health guidelines, such as social distancing;*
- 3. Stress - Diffuse stress, especially avoid religious and political discourse.*
- 4. Good News - Find "good news" in places and events that seem unlikely or unexpected.*
- 5. Permanent Change - Recognize change that is going to be permanent and deal with it.*
- 6. Boredom - Combat boredom by doing things you enjoy (for me, things like writing) as a replacement for activities and habits that are no longer possible, advisable or productive.*
- 7. Connection - Stay connected with dispersed family members, friends and colleagues by learning and mastering social media, collaborative and video software services.*

In retrospect my wife and I followed the above principles but it is not surprising; the guidelines are consistent with what we already believed.

I concluded my first entry a year ago with the following statement:

It is sobering to realize that this new lifestyle that we are being forced to accept is going to be permanent for a long time (at least until a vaccine is widely available) and there is not going to be a return to life as we knew it in a few weeks or a few months. For individuals like myself, who fall in the most vulnerable category (i.e., elderly with medical issues), sheltering-in-place will be the new normal.

The fact that my wife and I shared the above perspective very early in the pandemic was fortunate. We were in touch with reality; so we were never engaged in second-guessing the medical experts.

Everything now seems to be headed in the right direction: everyone will soon be eligible to be vaccinated, infections and death rates are on a downward cycle, and more services and institutions are becoming increasingly eligible to open with restrictions. So while the long-term outlook is optimistic, there remains a short-term worry; the country is still months away from reaching herd immunity.

It will be a happy day when we all can say goodbye to Covid-19, but will the country learn from the experience. What to do in the future if we have another pandemic?

The End.