

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Pandemic - Truth Or Consequences

May 26, 2020. It has been over two months since we have been living within the guidelines of shelter-in-place. Now everyone is restless and anxious to get back to a normal lifestyle that includes in-person socializing, businesses and restaurants reopening and live sporting events. But opening up is proving more difficult than closing down. Due to a combination of political pressures and different infection rates in geographical areas, it has become impossible to follow a single national plan. And it is becoming exceedingly more difficult for state governors to execute a coordinated effort. Essentially local governments, individual businesses and individual citizens are thrust into being part of a collective decision-making process; one that is bottom-up sure to create chaos.

Making the right decisions at the right time is dependent on the publication of pertinent factual information. On one hand we have the doctors and epidemiologists doing their best to tell us what we need to know, truth. On the other hand we have the politicians telling us what they want us to know, propaganda. Then we have social media propagating misinformation. We are left to our own resources to choose the right path or suffer the consequences.

In the midst of this conflict we are stuck with the realization that after over two months no one seems to know much more about the disease. Pharmaceutical companies are working furiously to find a vaccine and/or cures for the virus but until they find solutions we are still stuck with the same dire consequences; i.e.; infection can be fatal if you are older or have a preexisting condition.

In this time of confusion and uncertainty it is natural for individuals to formulate their own ideas about what is happening; how it impacts their family and community; and what self-imposed restrictions they will place on themselves? When making that judgment will they be using truth (what we know), or propaganda (what politicians want us to know), or misinformation (what social media promotes). Unfortunately the propaganda seems to be winning because it paints a picture of the world we all want. It is anecdotal on my part but I see individuals progressively becoming less cautious and taking more chances even if the numbers (truth) does not validate the action.

Likewise in the near future if the numbers indicate a resurgence of the virus, many people will be dismissive of the numbers (truth). As a result, a return to shelter-in-place will no longer be considered. Instead political and economic realities will prevail and confusion will reign. What does it mean, what will be the consequences? Of course that is not a question we can answer, because no one really knows.