



What Challenges Teach Us: 5 Pandemic-Inspired Lessons That Will Benefit The World in the Long Run

Description

The COVID-19 pandemic that we are all experiencing is frightening and life-changing. It's one of those things we'll tell our grandchildren about, like how life changed during the World Wars or the Great Depression.



It is larger than many earlier societal revolutions, not just because of its catastrophic effects but also because it affects so many of us all at once, transforming every element of life from the most important (job, money, health) to the most ordinary (the availability of basic products).

Anything this large opens the door to new ways of thinking. If the size of the crisis is related to the

quantity of new learning it can generate, our brilliance will undoubtedly be magnified many-fold when we emerge in the new normal.

In general, new and broadened perspectives of view are beneficial. Indeed, the word “emergency” derives from the Latin “emergere,” which means “to spring up or out.” Here are a few lessons we’ll undoubtedly learn as we improve our capabilities for the years ahead:

Perspective-Taking Lessons

Patience. When his toddler son became anxious, a friend of ours would remark, “Push your patience button.” This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to do the same for yourself. Whether you’re hoping for your work to resume normalcy, waiting for the quarantine to be lifted, or simply waiting to eat at your favorite restaurant again, patience is the word of the game. Patience is a virtue, and you’re working on it right now.

The Big Picture. With a narrow viewpoint, current reality can be even more difficult; however, by taking a longer-term perspective, you can reassure yourself that current realities will evolve and those wonderful things will come—in the end—from today’s events and lessons. “Someone is sitting in the shade now because someone else planted a tree a long time ago,” Warren Buffet said. A study conducted by the Boston University School of Medicine discovered that a sense of long-term purpose in the children of centenarians contributed to happiness. We are living in a devastating epoch. “When I was a little girl, I thought history was something that occurred to other people,” my friend Anita says. The lesson is that we are living in a period of history that is part of a larger whole, and we will get through it.

EVEN MORE FOR YOU

According to research, empathy is the most important leadership skill, which explains why U.S. talent shortages are at a 10-year high.

You Probably Need More Friends—How Here’s to Make Them Resilience and Response Lessons

Adaptability. Everything feels off-kilter, out of balance, and unpredictable at the moment. You constantly need to reset and reorient yourself. Just as you’ve gotten used to your firm sending you home to work, you’ll have to get used to a wage drop. Or, if your partner has been furloughed from work, you must adjust to your children’s school being closed for the rest of the school year. Constant change can be problematic, and it isn’t easy to deal with both mentally and emotionally. But, according to research, having a clear picture of reality, a sense of meaning, and the ability to improvise increases resilience. Furthermore, according to University of Twente professor de Weerd-Nederhof, resilience is both a personality attribute and a skill. Hard times may be easier if it’s part of your character, but it’s also a skill (a muscle, actually) that you can develop in the midst of today’s difficulties.

Creativity. According to a coworker, working from home is extremely distracting because of all the duties she is reminded of. Her technique is to complete microtasks during meeting breaks. For example, she’ll spray cleaner in the tub while grabbing another cup of coffee, or she’ll fold a load of laundry during her lunch break. Your hacks may be more sophisticated—perhaps you’re coming up

with new methods to entertain the kids with creative activities, or you've discovered a game-changing new solution to an issue at work. Whether it's a minor hack or a huge breakthrough, difficult times that drive you out of your habits can be a blessing for creativity. In the coming days, embrace your new thoughts and make the most of your wider insights.

Lessons in Community

Connections. Nothing is automatic anymore, and you can't casually run into someone on your way to work or at the company café over lunch. On the other side, you're seeing the value of friends and coworkers. According to Susan Pinker in *The Village Effect*, we are wired for human interaction. When we have to put forth more effort to maintain relationships, we realize how valuable they are. As you respect physical distances, you may have the opportunity to develop new ways to stay in touch, whether through video conference, text chains, or even shouting across the street to neighbors. According to new research published in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, staying connected via social networks or microblogging can also be beneficial to your mental and emotional health. Of course, it is entirely up to you how you choose to connect with others. The lesson here is the value of solid relationships.

Gratitude. Gratitude for ordinary objects and people is essential for happiness. This is a time when you can multiply your thanks many times over. There are many reasons to be thankful, whether it's for the companionship of a pet, extended time with family, or the closeness you're forming with coworkers through shared hardship. You can also be thankful for healthcare and other vital professionals, not to mention the people whose jobs you are attempting to imitate, such as teachers, childcare providers, and restaurant staff. When you have to do more for yourself, you realize how much you rely on others—and how valuable their specific skills and contributions are.

Self-Management Lessons

Self-Discipline. Let's face it: having access to the pantry 24 hours a day, seven days a week is difficult. The temptation to binge-watch your favorite TV rather than exercise is also strong. This is a perfect moment to learn new behavior management techniques and form new habits. If the average new habit takes 21 days to form, you'll have plenty of time for self-improvement. One suggestion comes from James Clear's *Atomic Habits*. Associate your new habit with your identity, such as "I am not someone who raids the pantry all day," or "I am someone who consumes healthy food." You can also build a new habit by tying it to an old one. For example, if you want to do more deep breathing, remember to do it while doing dishes or watering plants, which you already do daily.

Self-Care. In the most basic sense, self-care is more crucial than ever. You may improve your well-being by eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep. *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker is an excellent book about the importance of sleep in all aspects of our physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Among the most significant strategies to improve your sleep is going to bed and waking up at around the same time every day, on weekends and weekdays.

Finding Happiness Lessons

Expectations. You want to remain upbeat and always wish for the best. However, lowering your expectations can imply that even small pleasures can lead to more prospects for happiness. Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, a Japanese musician, pioneered the Suzuki method of music instruction and taught hundreds of children through his child-centered, listening-based, esteem-building method. According to legend, Dr. Suzuki once taught a youngster who had one horribly damaged arm. He figured a how to have the child perform in an unusual manner—holding the violin on the right and bowing with the left hand. As a result, she has the ability to create lovely music. Her story demonstrates how the absence of expectations might allow for the discovery of successful solutions. You can notice more opportunities when present ways do not constrain you. You have expectations about how your typical life should be—how you live, what you do, what you buy, who you see—but letting go of those expectations opens up new avenues for happiness and fulfillment. Virtual happy hours, drive-by birthdays, and even yoga in your neighborhood cul-de-sac are suddenly possible options you would not have considered in the past.

You're pushing yourself past any limitations you thought you had, not by choice but by necessity. The good news is that these difficult moments can catalyze new habits, behaviors, and lessons. You're gaining perspective by learning to use (or simply locate) your patience button and taking the long view. You're learning more about resilience and responsiveness by broadening your adaptability and devising inventive techniques. By engaging with people and expressing thankfulness, you reaffirm your appreciation for the community. And you're learning new ways to manage yourself through self-discipline and self-care. Perhaps most importantly, you're discovering new paths to happiness. All of this will benefit you today and in the new normal of tomorrow.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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