

BUSINESS EYE

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We will see a silver lining in the end

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This week's pre-tence at unprecedented confidence and omniscience comes to you following two weeks of social isolation, which, I have to admit, I am enjoying for the moment.

I don't believe I have ever spent this much time in one stint at my home on my own and it feels like we are getting to know one another; finally.

Mind you, we have months ahead to be cooped up together and I bet she starts making demands on me like getting dusty and falling apart, requiring my attention.

As terrible and painful as the Covid-19 epidemic is in its impact on human life and the economy, it nevertheless remains true that every virus has a silver lining.

When they write the story of this episode in the history of mankind, they will remember that we had come to think we were invincible at the top of the species tree. We were bigger than the planet, bigger than disease, and were planning to live forever. Now we understand that we do have a predator that could wipe millions of us out in weeks, we will perhaps in future feel less confident.

For example, my doctor has been on at me for years in relation to my weight and its impact on my blood pressure and diabetes, but for whatever reason I figured I would be ok. Two weeks in self-isolation under threat of imminent death and I've been exercising like mad and flipped my unhealthy diet. I'm four pounds lighter and my blood sugar

numbers have nearly halved.

They will remember the rush to volunteer to help the NHS in the midst of the crisis, and the strengthening of community courage amid fear.

I have lived in the same village for over 25 years, but tend to be a bit of a recluse and stay behind my closed gates, so I tend not to socialise as much as others. Nevertheless, it has been heart-warming to witness the village come together electronically to help one another while keeping social distance.

My neighbours have reached out to offer me help in my isolation. I'm sure this crisis will bring many communities closer together and, paradoxically, help solve the growing social isolation in our society.

The impacts of this crisis will be deep and long lasting. There will be the abiding memories of those who stepped into the burning building to help others and to play their part, the doctors,

the nurses, the army of social care workers and many more. It will also be the case that many generations will be paying back the colossal financial costs of this Covid war.

If it is clear that we are more threatened in cities when we are all crammed together in a perpetual congregation, it may slow or reverse the concentration of people flocking to live in cities around the world and perhaps we might begin to see a drift back to countryside living as people re-assess what matters.

We are, however, a social animal. As time passes, even extreme introverts like me will begin to crave the closeness of others, the adrenalin of team sports, and the freedom to leave home without the risk of arrest for doing so.

As horrible and frightening as life is at the moment, to quote Jerry and the Pacemakers: 'at the end of the storm there's a golden sun and the sweet silver song of the lark. Walk on...'



In years to come people will remember the strengthening of community courage, and those who played their parts.

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