

May 2, 2020

My Fellow Collaborators –

Below are my thoughts and updates for the week.

Week-end reflection

This week, about half of the country's population became subject to the relaxation of the stay-at-home orders and many businesses are starting to reopen. In this light, after being frightened to death for many weeks by the barrage of fear-inducing imagery and stories, I hope each one of us will actively seek to courageously relearn to be with and around other people.

The truth of the matter is that the novel coronavirus is not going away anytime soon, so wishing it gone, while expecting to never encounter this pathogen, is simply not grounded in reality. In fact, we are surrounded by microorganisms all the time: some symbiotic, some illness-producing. Bottomline: for eons, there's been no escaping from ever-present pathogens, and so it will remain. The good news, however, is that most of us possess the most elegant defense to any pathogen, old or new, the human immune system. When functioning properly, our immune systems tirelessly and effectively protect us from the dangers constantly lurking right outside of and on our skin.

Several latest studies point out that about 98% of all COVID-19 infections are either asymptomatic or carry mild-to-moderate range of symptoms, while a new study from Italy suggests that 99% of all COVID-19 deaths occurred in people with one or more comorbidities. Certainly, there are people whose immune systems are compromised due to underlying conditions or age, and who must take additional precautions to keep safe. For most of us, however, the level of the immune armor is determined by our dedication to maintaining the health of our bodies.

Hence, instead of being indefinitely scared of your own hands or obsessively jumping out of the way of other people, I urge you to focus on elevating your and your family's health. Thankfully, the modern science has just the formula we need to succeed on this quest. *Lifestyle medicine* is the most effective guard against the vast majority of diseases; it calls for predominantly whole-food, plant-based nutrition, regular physical activity, restorative sleep, effective stress management, avoidance of risky substances, and cultivation of positive social connections.

I realize that when presented with this information, our egos tend to recoil and put up every defense, justification, rationalization, and excuse they have, in order for us to not disrupt the status quo and continue perpetuating the unhealthy systems they had built. However difficult it may be, taming our egos, with all their fears, their desires, and their unwillingness to evolve is the key to the long-term, sustained health security and, consequently, returning to the world of true social connections. I have been on my journey of taming the ego for several years now. Are you ready to embark on or accelerate yours?

New Semester Start

As the College approaches the beginning of the new semester and is preparing to welcome the largest ever cohort of learners on Monday, I find myself reflecting on the promises all of us, as collaborators, collectively make every time a new human being, filled with hopes and dreams, comes through our doors.

We promise to guide and support every learner on their quest for elevation and better life. We promise to tirelessly facilitate their educational endeavors and professional development. We promise to bring every ounce of Evolvitude into each learner interaction, however challenging it may be at times. Finally, we also promise to compassionately hold every learner accountable to their commitments, deliverables, and learning outcomes, and relentlessly remind them that every failure, when learned from, holds the possibility of being a building block for success.

To stay true to our promises, we must remember that none of us arrived where we are today, holding all of our experience, skills, degrees, and accolades, without someone else's unyielding love, coaching, and mentorship and, equally, without ever failing. So, as the Summer 2020 semester gets underway, let's become vulnerable enough to share our personal stories of struggles and triumphs with those whom we promise to guide and let's open our hearts and extend to our learners the limitless love encapsulated within! Flame Forward!

With all my love,
Mikhail