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The social distancing dilemma

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I was standing in line at the grocery store the other day waiting for my turn to greet the cashier.

It's that strange few minutes you go through just standing there waiting for the person ahead of you to finish up before the cashier turns to you and says ?hello, how are you today.'

The women in line behind me was quite noticeable. She was standing at least six feet behind me and was swaddled from head to toe in more clothing than was necessary for the weather.

She was wearing latex gloves and a face mask. She looked terrified at the thought of having to step forward and have any contact with another person.

Yes, we are going through a national crisis right now, but it's not the worst thing this nation has gone through.

There is some good advice issued by Health Canada, the federal, provincial, and local governments, as well as by local hospitals and health authorities on what we should do to help stop the spread of the virus. Obviously a lot of measures are in place and for the most part, people and businesses are complying with requests to help for the common good.

Some of the advice is just plain common sense we should all know. Wash your hands with soap and water. That alone will remove a virus even much better than hand sanitizer. Don't sneeze or cough on a person standing beside you. And don't go around intentionally kissing strangers.

While keeping your distance from strangers might be a good thing for the time being, it seems that some people are taking this way too seriously. Seriously, in the way that they think this should be the way we always should behave.

We will get over this current crisis hopefully in a few weeks and things will get back to what we would call normal ? or will it?

It has been drilled into us over the past couple of weeks that human contact has now somehow become taboo.

And like the lady in the store, fearful to even approach a fellow human being, some people are now accepting this as the new way to behave in society.

Germs, viruses, and bacteria are a part of life. They have always been around and always will be.

You might horrified to see a microscopic view of your own skin that reveals no matter how clean you are, you are still covered in tiny little creatures that live on your body.

I've seen a lot of posts on social media where parents have told their children it is no longer acceptable to play with other kids because they could give you a virus that could kill you.

One woman on my Facebook feed was shamed by a neighbour for taking her two young children for a walk in the park.

Yikes! Is that the way we want kids to grow up? I hope these parents are explaining that this is just a temporary thing that will pass and not a lesson in terror that will lead to a life long aversion to interacting with other people.

While we keep hearing about social distancing, this should not be a warning to live in terror of contact with other people for the rest

of your life.

Do you really want to live in society where shaking hands when introduced is considered taboo?

Or where a wedding must be kept to a 50 guest maximum? Or where you are turned away at the funeral of a friend because they have reached the required guest limit?

How about sitting in a restaurant that was designed to seat 100, but now seats only 30 because everyone must be separated by six feet or more?

I cringe at the thought of two young people on their first date, standing on the girl's porch at the end of the night ? the girl thinking ?is he going to kiss me goodnight?? while the guy is thinking ?I'm not getting too close to her, she might have a virus.?

For the time being we have had to make some changes in how we interact with others.

However, lets not get caught up in some crazy society where a kid is too afraid to hug his grandmother for fear of catching germs.

This situation will pass like everything else has.

It's not the Adromeda Strain and handing a $20 dollar bill to a cashier shouldn't cause a panic attack.