NEW NORMAL: A MAJOR PARADIGM SHIFT

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As we lavish on the onset of the “ber months” to mark the beginning of the countdown to Christmas, we couldn’t help but worry about the possibility of the pandemic taking away the “merry” in our Christmas this year. This came about, because we still have not found a vaccine for COVID-19 yet. Will Christmas be different from now on? Is this a part of the “new normal” we are all trying to live by?

The onslaught of novel corona virus during the first quarter of this year, led to the emergence of the “new normal” in the public health sector. If we are used to living life with no special regard for health risks; that we cannot do anymore. Under the new normal, we have to think, decide, and carry out our usual affairs with an invigorated sense to remain healthy by keeping a healthy lifestyle to reduce vulnerability; observing infection control measures; to reduce virus transmission; following social distancing protocols to reduce contact with a potential disease carrier; establishing effective disease management mechanisms to reduce the duration of the infection and following health regulations that are in place to ensure governance and accountability.

Recent medical findings show that COVID-19 is usually more severe in people who are older than 60 years or who have health conditions such as lung or heart disease, diabetes or other conditions that weaken their body’s immunity. Due to this restrictions, senior elders can no longer go out whenever they wish to. Someone must run errands for them instead. They can no longer attend ballroom dancing parties or enjoy a free movie at the mall. Unless they can do this virtually, then it could be a potential alternative. Since we want to protect our friends and family who are at a higher risk to the virus, we would tend not to enter their home or at least keep a distance of at least 1 meter. What will
happen to our tradition of showing respect to our elders through “pagmamano” or a kiss on the forehead? How long can we remain friends to people whom we cannot physically talk to? Well, this is the new normal we have to embrace. If we worry about looking after our elders and keeping the connection with our friends, the virtual world offers an array of alternatives that we can all adopt. Traditions will always be traditions, “pagmamano” is just a physical manifestation of respect, what matters is that we will always remain polite and respectful in the way we talk and treat our elders.

Nowadays, a bottle of alcohol or hand sanitizer has become very handy. The urge to wash hands after each hour is very strong for some. The wearing of masks and face shields is now a must, especially in enclosed dwellings where spaces between people are so limited. We are also mandated to follow social distancing protocols, wherever we are. Seldom you will see people talking inside public transport vehicles. This isn’t because of the makeshift barriers, but our being mindful of the probability of acquiring the virus through tiny droplets expelled when we talk is solely to be blamed. Just imagine the impact on communication if these will persist.

How long can you hold your cough or your sneeze, just because you don’t want people to tag you symptomatic. Funny as it may seem, but it is easier to let out a barn burner than to cough or sneeze. There is nothing wrong about being cautious, but the stigma that anyone who coughs, and sneezes is infected is totally unjustifiable.

The work-from-home set has been adopted due to the global pandemic. Thanks to the online platforms like Skype, Facetime, Zoom, Google Meet, Zoom and the like - people can now be productive in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Although many works can be done just as effectively, from a home office, we cannot discount the fact that a major adjustment is required in order to get used to this set up. At first, one will struggle stick to a routine, for it is hard to mirror one’s schedule and processes once outside the actual place of work. Boredom is such a huge wave one should face in a work-from-home set up, unlike when you are in the actual workplace where you can have some
short chit-chats with your co-workers or colleagues. How long can we go without seeing another living human being?

Even the education sector is greatly impacted by this pandemic. Under the “new normal”, education will be continuously delivered through various distance learning modalities such as blended learning. Online learning were in the teachers uses different platforms to teach their pupils and using modules for those who are not able to attend online classes or to those pupils who live in a remote areas. This will require a major adjustment from the teachers, students, and parents. It’ll be hard, but education must continue whatever the case may be.

This adaptation, all these adjustments that we need to make in our lives, and all these changes that we need to embrace are our “new normal”. If we want to get through this pandemic, if we want to be victors in this epic battle against an unseen enemy, might as well live by these new ways of life. What is a little sacrifice for what really matters – our life.

References:

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