SELF-DISCIPLINE THROUGH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

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March 15, 2020, the Philippines implemented its very first enhance community quarantine (ECQ) due to the threat of the COVID-19 virus. Public schools and government offices were shut down and restrictions were placed to try and contain the spread of the deadly virus which ravished our neighboring Asian countries. However, back then no one was expecting that it will take so long for normality to be back or that countless of lives of our countrymen, especially our health workers will be taken by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus took the whole world by surprise, given that there was no global scale pandemic after the Smallpox pandemic of 1877-1977 (www.publichealthonline.org). Most of the third-world countries are not equipped to handle such situation making it extremely hard to control the health crisis. Sadly, the Philippines is one of those countries.

Coronavirus is an infectious disease that is spread through respiratory droplets. The virus incubates in the human body for an estimated 5-14 days after contact. The infected person can be determined through blood test and swabbing. The common symptoms of being infected of the coronavirus is having repertory issues such as: dry cough, sore throat, and difficulty of breathing, the person with COVID-19 also contract high fever and fatigue. The patients can also lose their sense of smell and taste as a symptoms (www.who.com).

Due to the nature of how the virus spread, the most effective way on controlling it is to reduce exposure and contact through community quarantine and lockdowns. It is
also advised to avoid large gatherings like parties, wakes, weddings, and other similar events where large number of people congregate. But in order to secure the population of a country and/or city the place needs to close down for more than 14 days or two weeks. The Philippines tried to fully close down in the beginning of 2020 to reduce the chance of a wide spread situation, however, the country is not capable of sustaining its population for a long period of time without the risk of total economic collapse due to the not functioning trade and businesses, unlike wealthier countries like New Zealand, Japan, Korea, and even Singapore, which successful handled their COVID situation. In fact, New Zealand managed to be COVID free for one hundred eighty days (180) or over six months (www.reuters.com), until recently which they had another case. The whole country is once again in total lockdown as they trace the source of the transmission and contain the infected. Another way they accomplished the prevention of continuous spread of COVID is to ban international travels and create a travel bubble with its nearest neighbor Australia which is another thing that our country can not afford to do since many of our cities and towns rely on tourism as an economic means.

There are only so much that we can do to adapt with the pandemic situation or what we call the new normal. One of the more commendable solutions that we came up with is the option of working and studying remotely. Work from home and online schooling is one great way to prevent possible transmission of the virus especially with the educational setting in the country. A classroom in a public school can contain an average of 50 students with at least one teacher per class (in elementary) or one teacher per subject (in secondary and in tertiary) which is a considered as a gathering since it is more that 10-15 people in an enclosed space, this makes every class a conducive place in spreading the virus. This is also considering the commute that majority of the population take in order to get to work or school.

In theory, the government and the system is trying to put safeguards and guidelines to help alleviate the effects of the pandemic to our daily lives. However,
without cooperation with the public it will be futile. In these trying times, it is up to us, individually to take precautionary measures in protecting ourselves and our family. It is simple to wear face masks and face shields in public places, use alcohols and sanitizers or limit unnecessary travels. It is the little things that can make a difference. Instead of looking at the things that aren’t there, or that can not be done, look at the simple things that can keep us all safe. The pandemic is a daunting situation that no one was prepared for, but it is up to us on how we will pull through it. It only takes discipline and self-regulation to help prevent worse case scenarios. The sooner we all comply to health standards and guidelines, the sooner we can all go back to our normal lives.

Reference:

https://www.publichealthonline.org/worst-global-pandemics-in-history/
https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1