



COVID-19: One Enemy that Can Be Defeated by All

Covid-19 is the most devastating health issue that we have faced in my lifetime. Its resilience and ferocity has not been matched in the last 100 years. It is a worldwide phenomenon that has caused havoc with health-care systems specifically and economic systems more generally. Literally, it impacts every nation on earth. Because it is a problem confronting every country, it represents a threat to mankind. But even though it is a threat to sustaining human life, it also represents an opportunity for humankind to grow as a species. All life is infused with the energy and motivation to grow and evolve. Sustaining life in any particular form never is a given. All life is composed of intricate systems of energy organized to grow in functionality; life everlasting, if you will. Environmental conditions, both internal and external, change constantly, though sometimes in ways so minute we don't recognize them. All living things seek to survive, but no specific form is guaranteed. This is how evolution works. There is no better example than the virus, Covid-19, which is mutating constantly in an effort to flourish and grow, even if it comes at the expense of human life.

This worldwide pandemic, therefore, is just one system competing with us for resources that sustain its life. It's a virus, like plagues of the past, that is in direct competition with human life. A virus like Covid-19 is sustained by the internal environment of humans. We pass it to others. We keep a virus like this alive. As the most evolved life form on earth, human beings have more influence over our environment. This means that human beings have the capability of limiting a virus or overcoming it. A virus cannot overcome human beings, unless humans help it.

How might humans help? They don't come together to present a united effort to combat the virus. Cooperation, not competition, is required to successfully defeat the virus, thereby limiting its impact on healthcare and economic systems throughout the world.

I am always amazed at the report of astronauts, who view the earth from space. The distance and perspective accentuate a feeling of oneness as artificial bound-

aries fade away. All of our tribal differences that breed distrust and fear seem trivial when our relatively small planet is viewed in the vastness of space. On earth, however, competition for resources and 2 political powers interfere with efforts towards global cooperation. There are more efforts to close borders than to develop systems to vaccinate enough of the world to achieve herd immunity. Even within the United States, the issue of vaccination has become a political football. Many who refuse vaccination cite the personal freedom to make their own decision about getting shots as a reason for opposing mass vaccination. Yet personal freedom must be balanced by responsibility. Cries for the primacy of personal freedom are ego driven, i.e., no one can take away my freedom to make my own choice. Ego driven actions can come from countries as well, in the form of "nationalistic" choices, which place needs of one country in competition with the good of all humans on earth. However, preservation of personal ego at the expense of collective health and welfare does not help our species evolve. Indeed, from a systems point of view, the concept of love is about placing the welfare of others above one's own. Most religions teach a variation of "I am my brother's keeper", but it is very difficult to live this value. Decisions that prioritize one's personal ego over the "greater good" is one reason we all are considered "sinners".

In summary, the pandemic currently is dividing most within our country and many throughout the world. We have yet to decide that the one sure way to defeat a virus like this is to work cooperatively and to realize that the survival of our species depends on decisions that enhance the collective welfare more than individual or nationalistic egos.

**Jeffrey Henry Davis,
PhD**

