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Surviving the Ravages of COVID-19

By **Brenda S. Thompson**
UCF Forum columnist
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Every small action we take today to combat the coronavirus will be multiplied if others take similar steps in the same direction.



(Photo by Gustavo Fring at Pexels)

While standing on my balcony last week, I felt a great need to capture my thoughts about the recent health crisis affecting all of us. Everything around me was so still and peaceful; birds were chirping in the background and the afternoon shadows over the

courtyard below helped me appreciate the contrasting sunny areas from my perspective above.

Yet, with all the beauty and tranquility around me, I could not erase the surreal events of the past few weeks when—with rocket speed—America became vulnerable and joined the rest of the world in a fierce battle of survival against the ravages of COVID-19.

This all happened so suddenly.

My thoughts flickered between the daily updates regarding the virus. I was reminded again of our dire circumstances while standing in the checkout line in my neighborhood grocery store. Being very careful to take no more than my fair share of any grocery item, I was surprised when the checkout cashier informed me that I could only purchase one package of rice; I had two in my grocery cart.

Calling friends and relatives to check on their well-being and taking time to gauge our own mental and emotional balance during this crisis are important.

“Of course, no problem,” I quickly said and surrendered the second packet to her, but in the back of my mind I thought, “Will this type of rationing really make a difference in getting a handle on what’s going on in the world right now?” I later concluded that yes, it would help!

In a broader context, every small action we take today to combat the coronavirus will be multiplied if others take similar steps in the same direction. Practicing social distancing, washing our hands frequently, sanitizing living and work areas more thoroughly and frequently, and imposing self-quarantines are essential to reducing the spread of the virus.

Calling friends and relatives to check on their well-being and taking time to gauge our own mental and emotional balance during this crisis are important, as well. Every single precautionary action could have a positive impact.

My reflections continued while I was on the balcony and I thought about the selfless actions of a group of local veterans who came to the assistance of their community and made sure that the neighborhood school children had daily healthy meals for breakfast and lunch. Normally, meals would be served during the school day; however, out of an abundance of caution, schools closed a few weeks ago in order to curtail the spread of the virus.

And then I personally witnessed the care a veteran took to sanitize a work-related item before he handed it to me.

These types of actions demonstrate a genuine concern for others during this difficult time and reminded me that we are all in this together.

And let's not forget the organizations, businesses and especially charities that are doing their part to restore stability in people's lives during this time. Many are struggling themselves. This might be a good time to donate to their charitable efforts, if you are able to do so.

A century ago the world experienced a similar event with the Spanish Flu pandemic that spread worldwide from 1918-1920. It was a horrific time and at the end of the virus' cycle, it is estimated that 500 million people worldwide were infected with the virus and approximately 30 million to 50 million people died, with about 675,000 deaths in the United States. These stand-alone statistics are quite frightening and may give us a sinking feeling inside.

However, an optimistic and pragmatic view helps one to realize how America and the world have advanced during the past century. Through research and advanced medical methods and treatments, we are better able to respond to such catastrophic outbreaks, so there is great optimism ahead.

As we continue to identify and utilize available resources effectively and efficiently, we will gain a foothold in controlling the virus. If we demonstrate our faith, follow science, analyze, interpret and apply data correctly, and adhere to recommended health precautions, then we will have the best opportunity for success.

I believe that once the dust settles, we will realize how resilient we are. We can, we must, and we will rise to an unprecedented level of excellence through global team efforts.

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