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FROM THE DESKS OF  
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July 17, 2020

To Our Patients,

Does it feel a bit like déjà vu? Or like we are chasing our own tails? Originally Dave was mailing quarterly newsletters. Then I (Jeannette) joined the practice and added monthly talks. When COVID-19 interrupted the in-person talks and there became a need to get information out to patients more urgently, we switched to weekly emails. Our goals were to keep our patient community informed, healthy, engaged and connected.



We are here to stay as long as we have something to say and patients find it helpful. And, the number of COVID-19 cases continue to climb. This past week, most of the COVID related phone calls to our office have been concerning patient exposures to their 20-year-old children and grandchildren that have tested positive. I spoke to one family whose children all tested positive and they had been in contact with over 100 people over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Social distancing is hard for everyone, perhaps hardest for the young adults to understand. Please continue to be careful. Think, if you tested positive today, how many people have you been in contact with in the last 2 weeks.

Random Suggestions and Requests

- To keep your spirits up and those of others: Make a small difference to someone today (or tomorrow). It does not need to be big. Small gestures are big to the person who receives them.
- Let's make a list of COVID friendly activities. Reply to this email and send me a COVID friendly activity that others might also enjoy. They can be solo or "group" activities. Here are some examples:
  - My friends bought a bunch of dartboards and put them along their fence 10 feet apart, each with their own darts. So that couples could share boards, yet we could all play and compete together in the outdoors.

- Free karaoke using Zoom. (Some minor variations in internet speed added to the amusement)
- Trivia night via Zoom
- Practice using your camera (see Dave's moon and planetary snap)
- ...send me more ideas to share in the next email!



### Coping with an Unexpected Event

For some of our patients, COVID-19 is their first major life challenge, while for others it is one of many they have endured. Our poor friends in Evergreen now have yet another “adventure” to deal with, given the most recent wildfire. How do you cope with surprises and unexpected events? Do you experience stress, anxiety, panic, sadness, insomnia, scattered thinking, anger, and/or frustration? There are some people that actually thrive on change and the unexpected. Coping with unexpected events leaves them feeling excited, curious, invigorated, energized, motivated and creative.

The beauty in the diversity of the human experience is that we can learn from each other. Some people are naturally better at coping, others have had years of experience and learned. I noticed about ten years ago that my neighbor across the street never seems flustered. When a hail storm came through, broke all of our home windows, added leaks to the roof, and made swiss cheese of our cars, I asked her how she remained so calm. Her response, “I’m 78 years old. I’ve seen it all and I know I can get through it!” How do people who we would like to emulate behave so that we can too? Here are some tips for dealing with surprises and unexpected events.

#### **1. Accept that Unexpected Things Happen**

It’s a fact of life worth acknowledging. Surprises and unexpected events are part of life and unavoidable. Once one can accept this, it becomes easier to deal with whatever happens in your life. Life is dynamic and full of change. Years ago, I started calling unexpected events “adventures,” and it has definitely changed my mindset.

#### **2. Make a Plan**

How can you adjust to the new situation and either fix it, improve it, or make the most of it? Develop a plan to tackle the unexpected events under your control, and know that you can always create or have a plan B if necessary. Expect for everything to turn out well. This helps provide a sense of control in what might otherwise feel overwhelming. It will help allay fear and helplessness.

### **3. Acknowledge your Emotions**

Pay attention to your reactions. Which of your reactions are emotional? What is your emotional response? Acknowledge that they are real and valid. Expect the phases of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, then acceptance. Determine how you wish to manage your emotions. Take a step back and try to better understand your emotions. This can be very calming. When you are calm, possessing inner peace, a bit of emotional detachment and inner strength, external events start to lose their power over you. You stop getting agitated and losing your composure when surprises enter your life. At the talk we gave on depression, someone in our patient community told a great story. She is in her 70s and very happily married to her second husband. She said, "They tell you that the pain in your heart from the death of a spouse goes away. That is not true. It is like a hole in a tapestry. But over time, you build a bigger tapestry and it becomes a smaller portion of your life."

### **4. Never React Immediately**

Wait for a few moments before saying or acting when hearing unexpected news. Is your reaction based in logic and reason or is in an emotional response? Both are valid experiences, but your will likely want your actions to reflect a more measure response. Take a look at what is happening and take time to assimilate the news. Stay positive. Always, remember that "this also shall pass." Are you about to model the behavior of the people you wish to emulate?

### **5. Power of Positivity**

A positive attitude is a key in unexpected situations. Have you heard of the saying "a blessing in disguise?" Not all events are negative, and there are often positive things that result from change. Look for those positive changes. A negative event can awaken ambition, motivation, and persistence, which would lead to progress and success.

### **6. Trust in your Ability to be Okay**

I've had times in my life where it felt like I had jumped off of a cliff. I was falling and I didn't know how long I would fall, but I knew that I would always land on my feet. And you will too. You are not alone. Focus on long term goals. Learn from the unexpected event as much as you can and take advantage of new opportunities that come your way.



### Question for Dave and I

#### **1. Do you wear a mask when you go hiking... outdoors?**

Yes around my wrist until I see a human in the distance and then immediately put the mask on my face. Yes, the chance of getting COVID while hiking outdoors is very low, but I do it out of courtesy for others healthy and personal comfort.

## **2. Is COVID getting less virulent?**

In April and May, COVID-19 led to as many as 3,000 deaths per day, killing 6-7 percent of infected Americans. As of 7/12/20, the number of daily deaths is just above 700, with a death rate of 4.1%. Overtime, we know that viruses become less deadly. The weaker strains that don't kill their host are able to go on to infect other people, while the more deadly strains that kill people are not able to spread as well. While we remain hopeful that the virus is getting weaker, there are more likely explanations.

The three reasons why fewer infected patients are dying include: access to testing, a better understanding of how to treat COVID and a shift in who is getting infected. Unfortunately, I must temper this news with some additional reminders. Because death reports can lag diagnoses by weeks, the current rise in coronavirus cases could still portend increases in mortality in the near future. And, even at this rate, over 20,000 people a month are dying.

## **3. What are the new treatments?**

Doctors are much more aware that now that COVID causes blood clots that can lead to limb and organ embolisms, including strokes. Patients who are positive for COVID-19 should ask their doctors about taking aspirin or blood thinners. (Do not start these without talking to your doctor or in anticipation of COVID)

We also know that lying on your stomach in what is called the prone position helps to open lungs and ease distress.

For severe cases, dexamethasone can help speed recovery and decrease mortality, while the medication remdesivir – speeds recovery without effecting mortality.

## **4. Tell us about the shift in who getting infected?**

80% of deaths have been in people over the age of 65. Now, most of the people getting COVID are under 50, averaging 35 years old in some states. This may explain the lower mortality rate.

## **5. Do you think COVID is in the air as an aerosolized particle, not just a droplet that falls to the ground?**

Yes. There has been a lot of press about this topic lately, as 230 scientists recently wrote an open letter to the World Health Organization (WHO). In the letter, they were

concerned that the WHO has downplayed the presence of COVID 19 in the air and that it can be spread as an aerosol. Dave and I have always believed that COVID-19 can be spread through airborne transmission and all of our recommendations have kept this in mind.



...because you deserve a hug and acknowledgment for all of the months of COVID that you have endured so far and all of the unexpected “adventures” that have interrupted your life plans!

Don’t forget to reply to this email and send us a COVID friendly activity that others might also want to try!

Oh, and for our new patients, old emails, newsletters and patient education can be found at

[www.jeannetteguerrasiomd.com](http://www.jeannetteguerrasiomd.com).

Take care and wear your mask,

*Jeannette and Dave*

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