

05/30/20

**Mrs. Gordon** - Well, we spent three week in crisis-mode, and then I made the decision to close it down for a while. So we have been in "hibernation-mode" since April 1st, so almost two months now, which has been, you know, really challenging in itself. In a lot of ways, ..operating in crisis-mode was harder because everything was changing in a way, and that's really exhausting.. but it's easier in that you're doing something, and even if you're just bailing water, you feel like you're doing something to kind of control the situation. Closing down, especially with three locations (we have two retail centers, plus a kitchen).. so that's three rents and three sets of utilities , none of that stop just because you stop operating. So in many ways, this felt like deciding to stop a leaking boat in the middle of an ocean to regroup but knowing "That's okay! water is coming in"; how long can the cash reserves last? So that was really, really challenging, but at the same time it felt like and still feels like the right decision. Now, deciding when to reopen has actually been substantially harder than I thought because there's nothing dramatically different. There's not a vaccine.. we're not going to get one any time soon.

Everybody is just sort of figuring out "Well we can't do this forever,"... everybody's got a different pace, and that's fine. I think every small business owner I've talked to is asking the same questions and cares about the same things. Everybody is trying to take care of their staff, take care of their customers, and care about the community. I'm sure there are some people out there that are like "Woohoo, dolla' dolla' bills y'all!", but honestly everyone that I've talked to is just trying to weigh all of these different things and do the right thing, but every business has different needs, has different concerns, and has different resources, so that's really important (and different customers)! We have been talking, well the management team and I have been talking a lot the last few weeks and been working on plans towards reopening. But for us, I think the biggest challenge is going to be that it's not going to be the same. We really recognize that for a place like Muddy's specifically, that you come to Muddy's for the hospitality; you might be coming for the cupcake or the cookie, but for a lot of the people coming, the reason they're coming to us isn't just the food.. It's because it's their tradition: it's where they get their birthday cake; it's where they come in and have their after school treat with their kids; it's where people come when they feel anxious because their world is all topsy-turvy and they want that comfort. We're aware that there is going to be the likelihood of a challenge of "oh!"...you walk into Muddy's, and it's not the same Muddy's you remember coming into. Things are different: everybody's wearing masks, serious social spacing, there's plexiglass! Our product line is going to need to change, because we're going to need to focus a little bit more on something you can take with you and bake at home, both to serve the customer but also because we got to think about what if three months in, there's an outbreak in our team. We've got to be able to quarantine an entire shift of bakers if we need to, and we wouldn't know because that would be something where someone would call me and tomorrow things would have to look really different. We're having to rework the business, and we internally are thinking of it as a start-up, and we are trying to get ourselves used to the idea that we aren't going to come back to what we love. That's not one of the options on the menu right now. So can we get okay and excited about this new thing? We can grieve the thing that we lost, and do something new and appropriate for the time that we're in.... and we are talking and praying a lot about how to guide our customers through that as well. Very open to ideas and suggestions on that! That's kind of the state of the business right now where we are. We've been doing a lot during hibernation; I've been making along with my assistant Kirby, because thank god I don't think I could figure out video editing if I tried for a hundred hours. We've been doing a little "bake-along" series online. We've been doing a little Wednesday Market because I know people had trouble getting flour and yeast, things like that, and that's actually really easy for us to get so we've had a little thing going there. And for staff we've had a little weekly leadership toolkit zoom workshop, so some ways that all of our staff that aren't seeing each other and coming to work can stay connected and be invested in the meantime. So whether they come back to work for Muddy's or they might find something else in the meantime, letting them all know that they need to make the good decision for themselves and that they are under no obligation to me... but trying to think about "okay!", whether somebody comes back to us or finds a position somewhere else, what is going to help them be more equipped in that future? That's some of the stuff we've been doing in the meantime.

**Gahana** - That's really awesome! I've actually watched some of your episodes, it's on "Muddy's Funhouse". Yeah! I really love your series that you have going on. Yeah! **How is your home life and your work life changed due to this pandemic?**

**Mrs.Gordon** - I'm at home a lot more than I used to be.. as is my husband, he's been working from home. It is really funny thinking about work life and homelife; so I've mentioned I have three locations: the kitchen and the two retail stores, and usually when we are opening and people are working there, I don't have an office at any of those three places or a desk. I just kind of commute between the three, and I carry my laptop and all my stuff

with me and try to just sometimes squat by the back door or sometimes snag a little table over here. I recognized last year that I needed to figure out a place for me; I've got to figure out a place, and I hadn't yet. Now the ghastly silver lining of this situation is that if Thomas is on zoom calls and stuff here, I have three places I can just take my laptop to... and I can have this whole table if I want, so I have been going into the kitchen a little bit and spreading out, which has been great. Doing the internet show has been the biggest change for me. You know, I get a little..I think a lot of people get a little self conscious; it's basically like you're shooting selfie-movies in my kitchen. I've never been really big on the selfie Instagram stories; I'm not going to do that..I don't think anyone wants to see that. I definitely think that's been out of my comfort zone, but in a way, I'm really, really glad I did it because the human connection is kind of what Muddy's is all about. By doing that, it's not the immediate feedback you get of "Oh! You're interacting with someone from the hospitality industry in the setting of the store,"; but it's been great! I've actually heard back from some people, so even though it's like "Okay, they're not actually in the kitchen and I'm not laughing and talking with them in real time." But it'll be like a delayed, two days later, then I'll hear from somebody. So, I'm really glad that Kirby, my assistant, kind of pushed me and nudged me a little bit to do that because I have really enjoyed it, and it's been really fun to get to feel connected to folks.. but that's been a big change; I mean like we have a tripod in our teeny, tiny kitchen that we've been navigating around!

**Gahana** - Time is running out in this zoom call. I'll still continue these questions; I'll just open a new meeting, but you can use the same username and passcode, everything is just going to be the same. Alright? I'm going to end this one.