

Clarity, Courage & Connection

The coronavirus. How should we respond?

The coronavirus has presented us with an historic challenge. As our nation and the world struggle to respond, I want to share some insights. I am not an ER doctor, nor am I a virologist or specialist in epidemiology. However, like everyone else, I must decide what to do in response to the threat of this highly infectious pathogen that is spreading around the world and causing major disruptions in financial markets, travel, business operations, and our daily lives.

What I do know is that The R Factor provides valuable guidance for how to navigate this crisis.

The central message is that our greatest power resides in our response. We do not control events, but we do control how we choose to respond.

The outcome we get is determined by the response we choose. We are not defined by the circumstances we experience; we are defined by how we respond to our circumstances. Now, more than ever, we need to apply the core principles of *The R Factor*:

$$E + R = O$$

Event + Response = Outcome

- 1 The R is most important when the E is most difficult. The more challenging the event, the more important our response.
- 2 Clarity of vision determines quality of response. How clearly we see determines how effectively we act. Perception drives action. It is imperative that we see the situation with clarity and courage, and then respond with discipline.
- 3 As fear goes up, clarity goes down. Fear distorts, distracts, and debilitates. It makes us weaker. It fixates on the negative. Fear is the enemy.
- 4 Courage clarifies and empowers. It makes us stronger. Courage helps us see with clarity and act with discipline. Courage looks for solutions and focuses on what needs to be done.
- 5 Don't make a difficult situation worse by responding poorly. No BCD. Don't blame, complain, or defend.
- 6 If your response isn't working, don't waste time and energy blaming the event. Choose a better response. You can't change the situation, but you can change yourself. Adjust and adapt. Make the changes you need to make.
- 7 Embrace productive discomfort. Adversity is painful, but it also pushes us out of our comfort zone and motivates us to do the work to get better.
- 8 Connect and collaborate. We find the best solutions when we stay connected and work together.

How does **E+R=O** apply to the COVID-19 crisis?

• *See the situation with clarity and courage*

We are learning more about the virus every day. Medical experts around the world are diligently gathering data to better understand CV19, specialists are working hard to develop testing kits and treatments, companies are gearing up to produce ventilators, and hospitals are kicking into overdrive to prepare and expand facilities and capabilities.

I encourage you to avoid two extremes: one is cynical pessimism, the other is naive optimism. The cynics hype every piece of negative information and fixate on the worst-case scenarios. The optimists discount the real threat of CV19. “It’s not really a problem,” they say. “People are overreacting. It’s just another version of the flu.” The reality is that CV19 is not the same as the flu, and it has the potential to spread faster and be more deadly.

Don’t jump to conclusions. As each day goes by, we gain more clarity about the virus and how to slow down its growth and treat its symptoms. Stay informed and educated. Listen carefully to the experts.

• *Focus on what you can control*

You always have a choice regarding what you focus on. Find and focus on what matters, and give no energy to things you can’t control. Just because something gets your attention doesn’t mean it deserves your attention. Control the controllables.

Where your mind goes, you go. The quality of your inner response (what you focus on and think about) determines the quality of your outer response (what you do and how well you do it). Don’t focus on trying to control the situation, focus on understanding the situation and controlling yourself.

• *Respond with discipline*

We are being asked to minimize social contact and be vigilant about hand-washing and other common-sense preventive measures. And we all know about the temporary shut-down of non-essential business operations, public gatherings, conferences, travel, and sporting events. These measures are being implemented to prevent or mitigate a spike in the number of infections that would be too large for hospitals and medical supplies to handle.

Respond, don’t react. Be smart. Be safe. Follow the guidelines. Do what needs to be done. Make the changes you need to make.

• *Defeat fear*

The coronavirus is a problem, and the danger is real. But fear doesn't help, because it distorts and exaggerates the problem. Don't feed your fear. Anxiety, stress, and fear are as dangerous as the virus. If you see CV19 through the lens of fear, anger, frustration, and complaining -- then your response will be directed by fear, anger, frustration, and complaining. But if your mind and heart are directed by courage -- focused, calm, and confident -- then you will see this challenge through an entirely different lens, and your response will be much more effective.

In times of adversity, your mind either creates barriers that hold you back or builds bridges that move you forward. I encourage you to build bridges.

Please note: Courage means "strength of heart." It is not the absence of fear. It is building belief within you that is stronger than the situations that challenge you. Courage is the inner strength to take effective action in the face of fear.

• *Take advantage of the down-time*

The shut-down we are experiencing provides a unique opportunity for you to invest in your personal and professional growth. If you are sheltering-at-home, take advantage of this time to read, listen to podcasts, and study. Build yourself mentally and physically. Exercise more. Grow. Get better. Get stronger. Your future you will thank you.

If you have children at home, there's a very good chance that your time is invested in helping with online learning. This is a great opportunity for you to get personally involved with your kids' education. Also, make sure you take time to play games and do fun things with your children. Get outside and play whenever you can.

• *Be ready to go*

While we don't yet know how long the lock-down will last, we do know that it will be temporary. We will go back to work, and when we do, we must all be ready to go. We must be ready to innovate and find new ways to solve problems and be productive.

We also must be prepared for more change. We don't know what the post-CV19 world will be like, but we do know that it will be different. So get ready. Don't let the past control you or the future intimidate you. Be ready to step up to the unknown and act with courage. Don't make change a threat. Make it a competitive advantage.

CV19 is pushing us out of our comfort zone, and that's a good thing. Now is the time to embrace the productive discomfort that change requires.

• *Stay Connected*

We are stronger together. Much stronger. We will get through this crisis better and faster if we collaborate. Take care of yourself, but also find ways to help those around you. Support and encourage each other. Whether big or small, look for opportunities to serve. You will be amazed at how serving others increases clarity and decreases fear.

Let's work together to defeat the virus. Do not contribute to the confusion and chaos. This is not the first time the global community has been threatened by a virus, and it won't be the last. Let's get this one under control and learn from it so we will be better prepared the next time it happens.

We are here for you. Please reach out if you need support.



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