

What I learned

by Barbara Snyder

These are interesting times. Fear, isolation, freedoms limited, for better or worse.

People are inherently good. We celebrate those workers on the frontlines with commercials and honking horns and howls from our balconies. Some try to assist small businesses by ordering food for pick up, leaving large tips, shopping in some small businesses that have remained open.

But we are itching to get back to “normal.” Shopping at big box stores, sports, going back to work.

Do we go out or do we not? Do we venture to some places, mask in place, for a touch of freedom that we lost during this pandemic. Will we ever believe that we can go out safely, without fear of exposure?

I have learned that pot shops and liquor stores are essential businesses, but places of worship are not. That small businesses are expendable while Wal-Mart and Kmart can remain open and sell non-essentials.

I have learned that even a pandemic does not stop the hate that we demonstrate on a regular basis. That people still whip around terms such as racist and Hitler and mentally ill.

I wonder what it would take, in this day and age, for us to put our politics and words and partisanship aside to assist our brothers and sisters. The new normal may close hundreds of thousands of businesses. We probably will not change our habits, shopping in chains as opposed to the small businesses that are the life blood of our economy. Maybe, just maybe, this is the time to demonstrate kindness and gratitude and rise above the pettiness that we have become.

We have the chance to be the change that we want. That means rising above partisanship and helping those in our community who need us the most. Maybe, just maybe we will discover that words matter and that we need to choose them carefully. Maybe, just maybe we can be a better version of ourself, each and everyone of us. Maybe this is our chance to wipe the slate clean and set an example for all to see and hear.

Unfortunately, what I have learned is that, for the most part, people have not changed. I have learned that you can get other diseases instead of Covid-19 while self-isolating and that is yucky. I have learned that we choose to be who we are, not thinking that change might be best for all of us.

Getting sick, I have had too much time to ponder and, in the end, I am sad and feeling somewhat hopeless about the future of our society. We have taught our children to hate. We should not be proud of that.