

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER...

“We have again learned to be present and allowed our humanity to shine.”

By Mill Creek resident **Elizabeth Lambert**

What truly matters to you? The phrase “return to a new normal” provides insight for a fresh perspective. In January with all of the holiday festivities behind us, it was back to normal. We heard about the outbreak of the coronavirus in the Wuhan Province of China, but were too far removed. After all we live in the United States, with access to some of the best medical facilities and doctors. What could possibly happen? But, were we missing something? Soon reports out of Italy grabbed our attention, and the scattered cases in our area increased.

Washingtonians responded with decisive action! Some of you were as shocked as I was to see shelves depleted of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and Clorox wipes. It was as if we woke up to Armageddon! Some shoppers hit the panic button, headed out to the store, and in a frenzy grabbed everything that sanitized and all of the paper products. They forgot to send out the memo and forgot that some neighbors might just need one roll of toilet paper. The first time I saw the empty toilet paper section, at the Mill Creek Safeway, Seinfeld came to mind, *Elaine sat in a bathroom stall pleading for her neighbor to “spare a square”* to no avail. For those who were lucky enough to carry off the TP, may I ask, Why the need for so much? Fess up... Where have you hidden it? Hear our



pleas, “Can you spare just one square?!” It’s April and like a pearl in the ocean, good toilet paper is still hard to find. If you’re lucky there might be one package of the imposter stuff used for campground septic systems. I don’t even want to know about the hand sanitizer. You need only a small amount, so why leave none for us late comers? I imagine people applying it liberally like lotion all over their bodies. We will know who they are by the extremely dry and cracked skin! Now, the Clorox wipes are truly a mystery. If you are in fact going home to clean, and you are isolated, whose germs are you warding off?

What about those of us who have giant drooling dogs? We need the wipes more than anyone! Have a heart!

It has been four months since we heard about Wuhan, but it seems like much longer. Businesses are shut-down, places of worship are closed, layoffs are happening, restaurants are take-out only, graduations are cancelled and the last day of school is something children cannot use as

a milestone. They had it, and didn’t even realize it. The brave souls working on the front lines are our everyday heroes. Let’s not forget to esteem them with our thoughts, prayers, and maybe a surprise hot meal on the porch. We were thrust into a new normal. Hashtags like #flattenthecurve and #stay-homesavelives, remind us of personal responsibility. Social distancing and self-quarantine are a part of every household. Zoom has become a classroom to complete school work or a social venue to connect with friends and loved ones.

COVID-19 placed us under siege, and made the world smaller. Let’s not lose sight of what we’ve gained through the experience. We do not like having



our freedoms restricted, but as Americans we grew up a little and accepted the challenge to do our part to stop the spread of the coronavirus. We are exercising in our neighborhoods, and although respecting the six-foot rule, we are greeting our neighbors. A lovely sight in my Mill Creek neighborhood; two homemade signs posted on a tree, “We are all in this together.” and “Above all else love.” What a beautiful reminder that a new normal MUST include individuals who support and love their neighbors. We have, by force, simplified life. We are connecting with those who matter most to us; friends and family, and helping strangers. We are asking about the welfare of others, with a genuine interest, and allowing ourselves to hurt with those who have lost loved ones to the virus. We are picking up groceries and leaving them on porches to reduce the number of people going out. Folks, we have again learned to be present, and allowed our humanity to shine. With all of the bad news around us, perhaps there is a silver lining – Our New Normal. One where we slowdown and allow the important things to rise to the surface. We will not be the same when restrictions are lifted. Perhaps before they are, we should each take inventory of our lives and refuse to be the type of people who face life with a “business as usual” attitude. We can each contribute to better neighborhoods, work places, and social circles by giving the best of who we are. What will your new normal be?

Email to

admin@elizabethlambertspeakingandcoaching.com.