



Missouri State
U N I V E R S I T Y

“Our Finest Hour” November 19th, 2020

Keeping the Virus Safe from Democracy

Remember last February when the words *novel coronavirus* and *COVID-19* first moved from the lexicon of epidemiologists into the common vernacular? Remember when we “sheltered in place” to “flatten the curve”? Remember when the Academy tried to codify teaching and learning modalities across traditional, blended, hybrid, and kitchen sink student deployments? Remember when we were first told to “social distance” and then “personal distance”? Remember when we heard leaders talk about “pivoting” and now “pausing”? [Hope no one starts talking about “punting.”] Remember when, as Lester Holt pointed out last night on the NBC Nightly News, we often heard, “we are in this together.” Remember when I began borrowing from Winston Churchill to encourage us to make this “Our Finest Hour?” Enough with the euphemisms. In the words of President-Elect Joe Biden, “Come-on”!

To be blunt, we have this damn virus on the run, now. If we are strategic in planning and carrying out our maneuvers over the next several months, we will be able to accept an unconditional surrender. However, if we do not act appropriately NOW, the COVID snipers scattered throughout every community across the globe will continue to pick-off innocent victims. The next four – five months may be the most critical yet, in terms of keeping folk safe.

As educators we need to turn the pandemic into a teachable moment. For me, it is a huge magnifying glass through which we can view human behavior and the forces of good v. evil. Good people put the welfare of others ahead of their own self interests. Evil people intentionally harm others for self-gain. In the middle of this paradigm, negligence (neither good nor evil) can result in accidental outcomes. I started my career 44 years ago in a high school English / language arts classroom where I taught great works of literature that were based on these simple realities. All people, across all cultures, from the beginning of time, have created works of art and literature that depict our archetypal quests throughout life. Read, for example, *The Golden Bough* and *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Both are cameoed in *Apocalypse Now*.

Stepping down from the soap box, now. As we finish the fall 2020 semester, observe the Holiday Season, and begin the spring 2021 semester; let’s remember “we are still (sic) in this together,” and we can make this “Our Finest Hour.” But only if we choose to do so.

Postscript: The following is from David Hall via Barri Tinkler and is what I intended to write about today.

“We do not have any policy requiring quarantine or testing based upon travel, other than international. We do encourage everyone to follow CDC guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html> and we offer post-holiday testing at no cost. In general, it is the activities that someone participates in rather than the act of traveling

that creates the risk. For example, staying at home in Nixa but having a large family gathering with individual from around the area is a greater risk than driving to Kentucky and staying with your parents that do not get out of their house.”

Gang, I appreciate you all so very much. Please join me in standing firm, doing the right thing, protecting others, and compelling community folk to do likewise. Let's lead by example - the example you have set so professionally and compassionately over the past eight months. In the words of LBJ, "Let us “contin-ya."

Keep Calm & Keep One Another Safe Until We Have the Terms of Surrender in Hand,

David