

In the words of Dr. Tim Elmore, “A Pandemic is a Terrible Thing To Waste”. Our normal, everyday lives have been interrupted. Life has been put on hold and it feels like society is not making any progress when in fact, the outcome of this pandemic is totally up to us.

This pandemic is not to be taken lightly and we must certainly abide by all directives provided in order to come out of this situation knowing that we have done everything possible for everyone’s safety and health. If we handle this life interruption well, we might be surprised at the outcome of accomplishments that would have never happened in our “normal” and busy routines.

Dr. Elmore, founder and CEO of Growing Leaders, refers to the Great Plague of London in 1665 when Isaac Newton was a college student. Cambridge personnel practiced common sense and sent students home to practice social-distancing – in 1665! Newton, without the guidance of his teachers, flourished during this time. He continued working on math problems which resulted in the creation of calculus.

Newton also experimented with prisms emerging with theories on optics. When noticing an apple falling from a tree, Newton launched his thinking and developed his theory on the law of gravity and his laws of motion.

We can learn from Isaac Newton during this pandemic time. Instead of looking at it as an interruption, think of it as an introduction to discoveries and advantages previously not seen. It is all about choices in taking the opportunity to invest in this non-scheduled time or to waste it. Neuroscientists report that during times of boredom, brains develop empathy and creativity. Good things can happen when we own our time and can pursue our passions. What will you do with your free time?

On another topic, parents have suddenly been thrown into the role of being a teacher. What will be the effects of COVID-19? Will there be a new normal? Will families gain a new appreciation for their student’s teachers? Assuming the role of parent/teacher for your child/student will shed a new light on the responsibility we turn over to school teachers in educating our youth. This is not an easy task! Many parents will realize that their child’s teacher has a great deal of patience and understanding throughout the teaching process. It is my belief that parents will have a much greater appreciation for teachers! Many will stop to re-evaluate who is responsible for the success of their children.

During all of these changes and upsets to our old “normal”, take the time to really notice your child and how they are handling all of the changes in their daily routine. Many youth may be dealing with loneliness in missing social time with their friends and if your child is someone who has been bullied in the past, chances are it has continued.

Dr. Tim Elmore reports that one in five Americans rarely or never feel close to others. He believes that our portable devices designed to connect us have actually isolated us.

How can you spot loneliness in your child? Lonely kids will be unable to express how they feel about friends or social situations. They begin to look sad and withdraw and they lose their appetite for food they like or lose interest in fun activities. This loneliness can lead to depression. Simply be attentive to your children and make sure they don’t get forgotten in the upset of our daily routines.

Our 4-H motto is “To Make The Best Better” and that is certainly our goal during this pandemic period of time. Watch for new ways to engage your youth in “Learning By Doing” activities. We have some fun and exciting activities in the planning stages so check your local newspaper, Facebook and emails for upcoming activities and virtual events.

Part of this article is adapted from Dr. Tim Elmore, CEO and founder of Growing Leaders, an international non-profit organization created to develop leadership and life skills in the emerging generations.

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“A Pandemic is a Terrible Thing to Waste”

“Chasing Clovers”

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