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Subject: Re: Self Isolation

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:37:22 GMT

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Well, but, in fairness, I think part of the problem is that even scientists and doctors that study this kind of thing admit to not knowing what to expect. They're on the front end of their learning curves here. So they're making educated guesses, and some of those are naturally going to be wrong. They adjust their working model as they learn. That's perfectly reasonable, and truly, the only honest way to study a new problem. Nobody can pretend to know the facts before they've honestly studied, especially when the subject is new and novel.

I personally think the biggest problem is people are expecting an answer, and they're quick to blame people that make "mistakes." But this is, in itself, the biggest mistake of all, in my opinion. The only way to learn anything is to start with a hypothesis and test it. And really, a hypothesis is sort of a guess. We're all guessing here.

A hypothesis may or may not be wrong, and if its found to be wrong, then we've learned something. To blame the person making the hypothesis that turns out to be wrong is to simply sit in judgement. Real easy to do that, but I think it's the biggest mistake of all.

Some say this virus is really dangerous, and that it is going to have killed a large number of people before we find a way to treat it. Those people say we should quarantine ourselves until we find a cure or at least a treatment.

Others say it doesn't look like it is all that bad, at least by the initial numbers. They say the annual flu kills more people. And they say the damage this quarantine is doing to the economy is worse than the virus.

I don't really think that either side is wrong. I think that both are probably right, at least to some degree. I myself, lean towards the thought that the quarantine is worse than the virus. But I have some really good friends whose opinions I trust that are genuinely concerned about the lethality of this virus.

What I guess bothers me the most is how ugly some people get when defending their hypothesis. We all forget that we're all essentially guessing. And we sometimes get really tied to our guesses, not wanting to be "wrong." But to have a guess and then to later find out that the guess was wrong is absolutely OK. It's the path to honest learning.

Everyone thought the world was flat and the center of the universe just a few hundred years back. That's only about a dozen generations, not that long ago. We thought the stars were set upon a layer, like an egg shell. That's quite OK. We learned and we adjusted our mental models to match what we saw.

The same thing will happen here eventually. We will have learned how lethal this thing is, and we will have learned what to do about it. Only then can any of us really know. That old silly saying that "hindsight is 20/20" is not really all that silly. It's one of the few absolute truths.

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