

1951

Cold War: Ethel and Julius Rosenberg are sentenced to death for spying for the Soviet Union.

1956

Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro declares himself at war with Cuban President Fulgencio Batista.



1956

In Sri Lanka, the **Mahajana Eksath Peramuna** win the general elections in a landslide and S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike is sworn in as the Prime Minister of Ceylon.

1957

In India, Communists win the first elections in united Kerala and **E. M. S. Namboodiripad** is sworn in as the first Chief Minister.

Outrunning the COVID-19 bear



A grizzly bear roams through the Hayden Valley in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.

HOWARD LEEDHAM

There is an answer to an old hypothetical question that can help you survive any threat, whether it is to your security, your way of life — or even your health in the form of a pandemic.

It is a question I often use in security scenarios to influence the mindset of my clients: “How do you survive a bear attack?” The responses range from “curl into a ball” to “make yourself as large and loud possible.” These approaches may or may not have merit, but then I tell them the only sure-fire way to survive a bear attack: “You simply have to run faster than the person you’re with.”

Of course there is an element of cynicism to this theory — but the point I am making is that whatever threat you face in life, you have a choice about where you place yourself on the victim scale.

Such life-preserving choices can, for example, include the seat you choose on an aircraft, where you sit in a restaurant and even what shoes you wear. It is a personal choice to be aware of your surroundings, understand potential dangers and consciously decide on which choice to make when your safety is threatened. The threat posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and its potentially fatal consequences, is no exception.

Take the case of choosing a seat on an aircraft, for example. If you are seated within seven

rows of an exit and there is a serious incident during take-off or landing, which is when most fatal accidents occur, statistically your chances of survival are about 80 percent greater than if you are seated eight rows or further from an exit.

In a restaurant, the seat furthest from, but facing, the entrance gives you the maximum time to respond in the event of an attack or robbery. Your choice of footwear when walking down the street or visiting a mall becomes important if the need ever arises for you to run from a threat.

In the case of any threat, your choices are rapidly reduced to just one of three options: Fight, flight or freeze. That is to say, do you take on the threat (by attempting to put out a fire for example), take flight and run away from the danger, or do you freeze and stay in place hoping that the threat does not see or reach you?

In most threat scenarios, the “freeze” option is rarely recommended. Yet when it comes to COVID-19, staying put is not a choice, it is a necessity to give yourself the best chance of surviving a metaphorical COVID bear.

The only way to avoid a fight with COVID-19 is to freeze. The only way to outrun (or rather, outlast) the chance of infection by the coronavirus is to freeze. Self-isolation is the most effective way to maximize your chances of not succumbing. If you ignore the advice and fail to do so, you are simply ensuring

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you will be the slowest runner when the COVID bear is hot on your heels.

In addition to remaining in place, medical experts have additional advice that can help you to further stack the deck in your favor should the virus get too close.

First and foremost, keep clean; regularly washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water should be a new pastime. If you must leave the house for essentials such as food or medicine, shower as soon as you return and wash your clothes. While you are out, maintain a distance of at least two meters between yourself and others.

Spray your phone, keys and keyboard with alcohol-based sanitizer. Maintain your health through exercise (at home) and a balanced diet. Ensure your vitamin and zinc levels are maintained. Practice preventative medicine for any existing con-

ditions. Regularly gargle with mouthwash, suck on throat lozenges, and keep paracetamol in your house in case you develop a temperature.

Through these, and each and every other small precautionary measure that you take, your chance of outrunning the COVID bear increases.

Countries in the Middle East have moved quickly to try to slow initial infection rates: Flights and border crossings have been suspended; schools and social venues have been closed for weeks; curfews are in place. Virus testing rates are among the highest in the world, and hundreds of thousands have responded to the offer of volunteer Community Immunity Ambassador certification.

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But as countries continue to take differing approaches to the pandemic, the world watches in an attempt to understand why some are managing to outrun the bear and others are not. Italy and Spain were taken by surprise. Germany and the UK had more warning and have taken a scientific approach, although the latter is reportedly lagging in implementing testing.

The US, with its disparate health system that varies from

state to state, faces different, stark and potentially deadly problems against a virus with no respect for state lines, the dictates of private health insurance companies or social status.

The post-COVID normal into which the world will emerge when the immediate health crisis is over has yet to be ascertained. However, it seems inevitable that when developed countries have fought their battles, our attention will have to turn to developing countries that lack modern health infrastructure and which might, therefore, have to rely on herd-immunity protocols. This will mean localized epidemic levels of infection. Such countries might well face border lockdowns and travel restrictions for the foreseeable future.

Many of the long-term complexities that COVID-19 is unleashing on the world are as hard to see as the virus itself. So while each country fights its own pandemic battle, the situation requires each of us to make the paradoxical decision to “freeze” (self-isolate) so that we are running faster from the virus than those who will not or cannot.

Without doubt the human spirit will prevail over this pandemic, and in doing so it will doubtless establish a “new normal.” Who knows, we might even figure out that the world’s health is more important than the health of the financial markets, because without the former the bears will surely consume the latter.



TOP
4
TWEETS

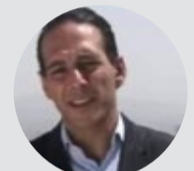
01



Had an extensive telephone conversation with President @realDonaldTrump. We had a good discussion, and agreed to deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership to fight COVID-19.

@narendramodi

02



708 people in the UK have died of #coronavirus in the past 24hrs where the death toll now stands at 4313. Amongst the dead, a 5 year old. The youngest victim to die of #COVID19 in the country so far. The UK now has the 4th highest mortality rate in the world.

@aliarouzi

03



Withering indictment of Trump’s response to coronavirus: “The failure has echoes of the period leading up to 9/11: Warnings were sounded, including at the highest levels of government, but the president was deaf to them until the enemy had already struck.”

@nycjim

04



Our public spaces will only stay open if Londoners follow the rules. If you were planning to meet people outside this weekend, don’t. If someone asks you to meet, say no. Stay strong and stay home.

@MayorofLondon

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