

# **The Great Return**

Lessons and Opportunities of a Pandemic

By Jay Taffet

We've always known that time is cyclical, and that history repeats itself. We find some level of comfort in this knowledge, but we've not mastered the trends and realities of this momentum. We feel helpless as the world "turns", but we don't embrace this forward motion until we're forced to by situations beyond our control.

That's where we are today. We are helplessly riding the currents of a pandemic, while mourning what society will lose in its wake. Yes, our world will look quite different from what it did yesterday, but will it be all bad? Will the opportunities of our life be truncated by this new reality, or will there be a return to a time when the world was defined by meaningful opportunity?

70 years ago, we lived in a society that was rebounding from war; giving birth in record numbers; and focused on family. The majority of our meals were at home; school and family were intertwined; home health took priority over doctor visits; and brand-based consumerism had not yet been invented.

It was also a time of fear. We sheltered-in-place in nuclear practice drills; we screened friends and acquaintances through political filters (communism); and we watched helplessly as the world seismically erupted in geo-political shifts and aggression.

This was not an idyllic time, but nor was it better or worse than any other time in history. It was just reality. Optimism ebbed and flowed, and hope was the most valuable commodity on the market.

Today, we live in a society that is rebounding from a health war; moving into a quarantine-induced “Baby Boom” later this year; and focused on family more than any time in recent memory.

The majority of our meals are at home due to stay-at-home orders; we are active participants in our child’s education with the support of school-based distance learning; we visit hospitals only if absolutely necessary to survive; and we’re losing touch with our brand sensitivity due to product shortages and depletion.

It’s a time of fear. We are sheltered-in-place to disrupt the spread and infection of the virus; we anxiously view our neighbors and friends as potential threats to our health; and we watch helplessly as the world’s

economy and political systems struggle with the realities of forced unemployment and societal paralysis.

Just like before, it's critical that we keep moving forward, and embrace hope and optimism as the panacea for our problems. We have no parallel precedent for what we're experiencing today, but we do have history to illustrate that what seems insurmountable is always converted into opportunity and forward momentum.

The world as we know it will not perish. It will just reform into another time when our lives require new habits and routines to optimize the conditions of the day. The world and its time is circular, and both will eventually return to a place of security, comfort and opportunity, like it always has throughout history.

We know that because the world seventy years ago did not end. It evolved, and two decades later we landed on the moon.

Just imagine what we'll do tomorrow.

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