

Under Pressure!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a01QQZyl-I>

A little shy of 40 years ago (1981) David Bowie and Queen collaborated on a song that topped the UK charts.

I believe this song now represents a powerful anthem for what is happening in the world today, as the Covid-19 pandemic hits at the very heart of modern civilisation.

Originally titled “people on the streets” which ironically is something not allowed to happen right now, “Under Pressure” sums up how modern lifestyles are generating persistent stresses and strains in society that are destroying ecosystems, collapsing

economies and tragically killing thousands, perhaps millions, of people.

Indeed, this virus is threatening our very existence, because billions of years of evolution have not prepared us to survive and thrive in such chronically pressurised environments or withstand sustained attacks upon our defences.

However, the song, also offers us hope that a solution can be found, lives can be saved and we can once again live in harmony with nature and all that it provides, as long as we learn to love again!

When we reflect upon the events of 20:20, I trust we will do so with the clarity of vision that allows us to recognise a world that is under pressure on so many levels.

In fact, the SARS-CoV2 virus itself targets the ACE2 receptor, that lies at the very heart of the Sympathetic Nervous System and our own response to stress.

And, once you realise that this same ACE2 pathway also leads to our immune system response and energy supplies, you can begin to understand how this virus likes to play, and more importantly who it likes to play against, because those under the most chronic stresses, particularly at a metabolic level; obese, T2DMs, hypertensives, frontline medical workers, the elderly and males, are the ones under the greatest attack.

Today, we live on a planet struggling with overpopulation and the burden of feeding 7 billion plus people. The atmosphere is polluted with diesel and other hydrocarbons, whilst it's oxygen supply is diminished with every fallen tree, in a mass deforestation that has seen an area the size of South Africa destroyed in the past 25 years.

Yet, this is not a mass extinction event that many rebellious groups would have you believe, because the planet will adapt and life will continue, but it may do so with far fewer people in a new world order that many have predicted.

However, it is not only the ecosystems of the world showing the hallmarks of chronic strain; increased energy consumption and waste, activation of immune systems and reduced growth and repairs are happening all around us.

Economic systems are collapsing when they are deprived of the flow of energy they require to build, manufacture and function effectively.

That energy is called money, and when supplies and demand decrease, the markets fall of a cliff, with the only sign of life coming from a dead cat bounce, which is never a portent of good.

During this lockdown, we have witnessed “work done” diminish and energy resources diverted to only the most essential of services; communications, fuel supplies, transportation, repairs and medical services.

All these are maintained in an attempt to breathe life into both systems and bodies that are unable to do so naturally for themselves.

Indeed, this period has given many of us a rare breathing space to take stock and reflect upon what and who is actually important in our lives; being able to communicate with family and friends, having the time to read, cooking proper nutritious meals, enjoying the outdoors when we get a chance, even toilet paper has taken on a whole new meaning.

At an individual level, the pressures are just as great.

Without a job and bills still to pay, financial stresses become intolerable, starvation and homelessness become a distinct possibility. Inequalities between those who have (a job) and those that don't widen, and ill health and reduced life expectancies result.

Emotional stresses increase, depression and anxiety manifest themselves in increases in suicides, self harm, anger and domestic abuse.

Lives become meaningless and people feel helpless to take any action that might conceivably improve their dire situations, until eventually they lose all hope and give up trying.

Things are no better at a cellular level, where chronic stresses also prevail. Oxidative stress is the predominant threat to any aerobic cell and places just as much strain on energy resources as the cash flow problem in a collapsing economy.

For example, a fat cell, which you can view as the body's store of energy.

As you might expect, the body has systems in place to protect these precious stocks.

When a fat cell becomes overcrowded, just like the overpopulation in many cities, the environment becomes polluted, making it even more difficult for those living inside to survive.

These chronic hypoxic conditions are detected and trigger a response to alleviate the problem.

The fat cells can grow in size (hypertrophy) to provide more space and they also increase in number (hyperplasia) to allow more cells to share the burden, either way people get fatter.

This also triggers the immune system to take action, and obesity like many other chronic diseases is associated with persistent inflammation, the type that would indeed be enough to burn a building down, as the video of the song so vividly depicts.

Then, in this context, it is easy to see how the terror of;

“knowing what this world is about”

can stem from witnessing all these chronic stresses building up and generating the misery and polluted environments many of us live in today.

And, when someone feels they are unable to do anything about it, the,

“pressure on people”

increases until they can no longer take any more and begin to scream:

“Let me out!”

Yet, many of us still choose to turn;

“away from it all like a blind man”

because only a person with a distinct lack of vision could fail to see the catastrophic environmental damage that is occurring all over the world right now.

From air pollution, to climate change, from food consumption to metabolic health, from economic growth to worker exploitation, from a happy purposeful life, to learned helplessness and depression.

Everywhere you look, pressures are mounting, systems are collapsing and we all sit on the fence and do nothing, and as a result nothing changes except for loved ones paying the ultimate price!

Unfortunately, true love is now;

“such an old fashioned word”

that it’s been superseded by celebrity, popularity, ratings and followers, with “likes” and “hearts” on social media representing the feelings we now attach to the four letter word we call love.

We say we love this and we love that, but, our notion of love is now so;

“slashed and torn”

we have actually forgotten the true meaning of the word, because we are all so caught up in a pressurised state of modern living, there simply isn’t time for reflection or asking the questions;

“why, why, why!”

Is it any wonder then, that the stresses of failure, unemployment, loneliness and inequality, produce the chaotic laughs of insanity, where people just accept what is happening and never question why it is happening?!

In this technology driven world, we no longer actively participate, instead we live an increasingly virtual existence, dominated and directed by algorithms and guidelines that only give the illusion that we are writing our own life stories.

When:

“Love dares you to care for the people”

especially those;

“on the edge of the night”

the most vulnerable, the elderly, those in care homes, then you must take action to protect them from a viral attack, and not leave them to die a sad and lonely death.

Because, to find the solution to these problems requires us not to be “woke” to media driven agendas, but to be truly awake to what really matters in life; purpose, authenticity, good health, meaningful relationships and true love.

The external measures of success, such as; appearances, money, the latest gadget or iphone, have led us down the hedonic road of adaptation, in which technology makes us instantaneously aware of changes in our environment and even dictates how we think and feel.

And, in that instance, we forget that being happy, relaxed, and true to oneself, must ultimately have an internal focus.

I doubt anyone on their deathbed ever regrets not having a six pack, or reaching 1000 followers on twitter, or missing out on the

latest technological device, but somehow that is how we are made to feel in that moment we call “Now.”

Knowing what really matters in life is far more important than any material possession or indeed possessing any knowledge about anything or everything.

This planet or the universe isn't interested in your religion or politics, socioeconomic background, the size of your bank account or the design of the clothes you wear.

It's interested in the “real world”, the one we have evolved and adapted to over millions of years, the one that is concerned with substance, not celebrity or superficiality.

What can you contribute, what purpose do you serve, and for what reason?

These are the questions we should all be asking.

Because, it's not about how much you know, it's about realising how much you don't know and attempting to find out, and by making the unknown known, is how order is created out of chaos.

And making order out of chaos is how we will overcome and survive this virus!

The big message this virus is telling us, as it generates so much stress and chaos throughout the world, is that we need to take more care of the environment we live in.

And, this applies equally to the environment inside and outside our bodies.

Because, ultimately that is the key to good health and you cannot rely on medical services to sort out chronic problems resulting from toxic environments, when that needs to start from within the individual themselves.

And, as the song asks why;

“can’t we give ourselves one more chance? Why can’t we give love that one more chance?”

Love does indeed dare us to care - not just about others but,

“caring about ourselves.”

Unless we learn to understand and care about ourselves how can we care about others.

This virus is not going away anytime soon, and a safe, effective vaccine is not likely to become our saviour.

Besides, even if this virus isn’t

“our last dance”

there will undoubtedly be others.

Viruses are the great mutagenic drivers of evolution and we must take this opportunity to adapt the way we live in an environment that is very much one of our own creation.

So, instead of panicking and fearing the unknown, how about we take action for ourselves, reduce the stresses both in our bodies and in society as a whole, and allow the polluted environments to clear and health to improve.

Perhaps, defending our bodies with a strong immune system is the best way to tackle this virus, developing a robustness, and a resilience that flows from a smarter way of living.

And then, perhaps, the lesson we must learn, when the mountain of ash and dust has finally settled, is that we all need to reconnect with nature, and stop thinking we are above its universal laws, because maybe, just maybe, it is we who are the virus (parasite) infecting the earth, and Covid-19 is simply nature's vaccine.

And, unless we wake up to this reality, it will indeed be:

“Our last dance”

As the chronic relentless stresses take their inevitable toll upon everyone of us.

Because:

“This is ourselves, Under pressure.

Under pressure.

Pressure!”

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