

Souls And Spirits Of Alton People, Combined With Love Of Community Will Help It Survive COVID-19

by Derrick Richardson
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ALTON - There is a lot being said about how COVID-19 will change our way of life in the present and the future, in regards to the stay-at-home order, social distancing, restrictions and mandates, and the temporary closure of businesses. Some people label this is the beginning of the “new normal.”

Some believe that this will set a new course on how we behave in society going forward. Actors, celebrities, and businesses are doing commercials to reinforce the message to stay at home. The intent is to share the message in many as ways as possible and to drive home the message that this is a collective effort to keep each other safe.

This will eventually pass, but in the meantime, we must not panic, we must stay safe, and we must follow all the recommended and mandated safety guidelines. Something else we need to do is focus on is finding peace with ourselves with the limited social exposure, and a change in our routine activities. Like so many others, it has been very different and challenging for me. I have watched more TV than ever, I have adjusted my workout routine, and I have reintroduced myself to Redbox and streaming services. I have noticed that people are watching more TV than normal. Hearing what people are watching on TV these days is pretty interesting and funny. How many of you watched Tiger King? How many of you would've watched Tiger King had we been not ordered to stay at home? For some, staying at home is a way to save money, or cut down on non-essentials and create an emergency fund. For some, it causes anxiety having to pay bills without income coming in. Adjusting is a good word to describe what we are going through and what we must do to stay safe, sane, and afloat.

On nice weather days, I see people out walking, joy riding, and exercising. People are taking advantage of these days to get a break from cabin fever. No one is letting these nice weather days get away from them. How many of you went out and bought exercise equipment for home use? Personal gym equipment is heavily in demand and hard to find at retailers now. The person that had gym equipment at home and never used it is looking like a winner now.

Friends and families are using creative ways to stay in touch, such as online meetings apps and websites. Our conversation with each other has even changed. There is not much more to talk about other than the COVID-19 since we are all watching the news daily to stay informed. Before all this, we would wake up in the morning turn on the news to get the weather, traffic report, and sport scores. Now we turn on the news to get the updates about the latest COVID-19 cases and deaths tolls, wondering if today will be the day the tides turn for better or worse. We are used to having more things to talk about with each other, but that is changed since we can no longer do our normal activities. Outside of COVID-19, our topic of conversation is almost limited to kids at

home, home projects, movies you watch, getting outside when you can. Grocery stores and gas stations are the new hot spots for social interactions. The brief encounters at the store we used to have with people are now longer conversations to catch up with the outside world.

As states extend their stay-at-home order, it's looking more like it will be longer before we get back to normal. The Governors these days are either very popular or very unpopular with their daily news conferences, updates, and mandates. People are leaning towards authority figures for information they count on. Some people are listening to authority figures who shares their views, support their narrative, ideology, and reasoning. With any issues concerning our society, we are going to have opposite views and opinions, social distancing and stay-at-home orders, included. All we can do is respect each other's perspective and be respectful to others.

I am very confident that once this pass, Alton will return to normalcy. Our community has a lot faithful and loyal patrons and we will be back to support the businesses and organizations in our community. Alton will be vibrant and active again and events that were postponed will be back on. I expect that all of Alton will be ready to support and participate in those fun events. The souls and the spirits of the Alton people, combined with the love we have for our community, is what makes Alton special.

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A lot has changed for the better and the worse since the last time I wrote about this. Our country is more divided than ever, more than almost any other time that I remember. We are divided on race and the pandemic. There are different reasons why so many are divided on the pandemic: the cause, the origin, the effects, the transmission, and on wearing a mask. There is a battle between safety precautions, ideology, and personal and political agendas.

Some states open up too early and now some of those states are rolling back. Why is that? You will hear a number of reasons why that happened, but there is one reason that is undisputable no matter how many ways people try to vilify it, and that is safety guidelines were not followed.

The pandemic was not our choice, but the containment and being safe is our choice. Some argue that government restrictions and mandates don't give us a choice. Some say when given a choice, people are not making good ones, and that they are making selfish choices. The medical experts are saying the virus is spreading because people are not making the right choice in regards to following safety precautions. Small businesses, those in the service industry, and millions of other employees' incomes are all affected by the pandemic due to no fault of their own. They are unfortunate victims. I, for one,

can't imagine what they are going through. I pray that things change for those individuals soon and as fast as possible.

The world is waiting to see what happens in the fall. Will we see the second wave of the pandemic and or a rekindle of the first wave? The economy is on edge. Many businesses and industries are preparing for what's next and bracing for the impact.

Derrick D. Richardson, Author