

Looking forward – Hopes and Dreams


(What will my life be like after lockdown?)

By Jo Ohlson-Clark

I believe that this will be the question on many people's lips as we are easing out of the Corona Virus Pandemic Lockdown restrictions here in the UK.

For each of us individually, it will be very different and each of us will take stock of our unique experiences during the Pandemic, depending on how it affected us as individuals before we can really begin to move on. Were we among the lucky ones that kept our jobs? Were we furloughed? Were we made redundant? Were our businesses unable to open? Were we among those that lost our business? Did we have to rely on a foodbank? Do we know someone with Mental Health issues that struggled during the lockdown? Did we lose a loved one? Was it impossible for us to be with them when they died and hold their hand? Do you know someone that lost their loved one? Was it impossible for you to have a family funeral due to restrictions? Were you one of those who was not allowed to be with our pet to say goodbye as they were put to sleep? The restrictions and hardships that we have all had to endure as a result of this devastating Pandemic has in many ways changed our lives forever and for our own peace of mind, we should acknowledge that the restrictions that were put in place to keep us safe have undoubtedly caused heartache and heartbreak for many and that there are some things that we will never get over.

As someone who works part-time in the NHS and part time as an independent Funeral Celebrant and more recently as an author of non-fiction. I can only speak from my own unique viewpoint of the Pandemic and my own Hopes and Dreams for Life after lockdown. At the start of the Pandemic, I saw a number of patients come into A&E at the Princess Royal University Hospital and I know that many of them succumbed to this awful virus despite the Heroic efforts of staff to try to save them. I know a number of people who contracted the virus in a different form and have suffered with what is called Long Covid and who are in fact still struggling to regain their health. I have delivered groceries to elderly or shielding neighbours unable to get out to get their own, I have had to wave at an elderly relative through the glass of their conservatory. In my part time role as a funeral celebrant, I have had to do my family visits, (where you speak to the bereaved to get the personal information about the deceased to be able to write a unique and personal service for the funeral ceremony), via a zoom meeting and when the bereaved family are in tears, I have not been able to give them a hug or a comforting squeeze of the hand. I have in this last year, on a number of occasions, conducted Funeral Ceremonies where there were only 5 people allowed when the deceased had 50 plus relatives that would have attended in the normal course of things.



On the other hand, I been really impressed that the vast majority of our nation have shown respect for each other during these restrictions, and I have to say that I felt truly honoured to stand on the doorstep of my house and clap for my colleagues and friends working for the NHS. I have also been incredibly inspired by communities and individuals pulling together to set up Food Banks and deliveries for those in need as well as the incredible efforts made by numerous volunteers throughout the UK and the likes of Captain Sir Tom Moore and his efforts to raise money for NHS charities, which captured the imagination of our nation.

From a personal perspective on the subject of Hopes and Dreams for the future, I truly hope that some of the good things for us as individuals that came out of the restrictions, such as making sure we phoned our friends with Mental Health issues regularly just to check in for a quick chat or the more frequent calls to family or perhaps teaching elderly relatives to use Zoom etc. Even just asking elderly neighbours if they need help with anything and particularly for me continuing to develop my listening skills and spending less time watching TV, reading more and writing more (during lockdown, I published several non-fiction books on Amazon, under my pen name Suzi Livingstone) and most definitely spending more time playing board games and interacting with my family, these have all become lockdown habits that I'm eager to sustain for the future and my hopes for others would be that they take a look at what has worked for them and that they do the same.