

Worry, the spread of misinformation and action

Gayle Nichol - November 2020

She's just six-years-old and there are a few things weighing on her mind.

She can't sing the national anthem with her classmates anymore because she understands that will spread Covid-19. She's so excited to dress up for Halloween, but she's very aware that it will be different this year, because we have to take care not to spread Covid-19. She loves school and the thought of returning to a learn-at-home model, isolated from her teacher and friends is too painful to think about. But her little mind thinks about all these things and more. Because she knows we have to be careful not to spread Covid-19.

Several months ago, missing her grandparents and worn thin from isolating from friends and missing her weekly trip to the grocery store and a take-out treat with her parents and baby brother, she broke down and cried at her mother, "I just can't take this anymore"!

In that moment, this tiny little pixie of a girl was all of us.

Worries now turn to things like Christmas and how it will play out; the fallout of that moment when flu season and Covid-19 inevitably collide; the reality of the economic fall-out that hasn't been felt yet with government supports so firmly in place, but with word from the government that those supports will be tapered off in the months to come.

Now, after the enthusiasm of supporting our front line workers and lining up to applaud hospital staff and honking for first responders, people have had a little time to grow skeptical and become arm-chair scientists. Deciding after an hour of reading on "the internets" that they can disseminate scientific information better than those with decades of study in the field of epidemiology. Now we have zealots with a seven-month Reddit degree calling the deadly and life-altering spread of this virus a Scamdemic, refusing social distancing, donning masks when required only with vocal and obvious derision and with an air of superiority. Behaviour toward this long-predicted pandemic has followed the path of our current political climate – polarizing, with an element of ugly pomposity that shows little charity for our neighbours and community.

I find myself shaking my head at the very thought of Christmas. I wonder at the many people who refuse to follow three very simple rules to protect mankind (wear a mask, keep your distance, wash your hands), yet will speak the timeless refrain of peace, goodwill and the brotherhood of man. The hypocrisy makes my skin crawl. Seriously, what would Jesus do? My guess is he would do everything as a loving teacher to protect us. And would weep at the stubborn pride of man.

Now even the hope of a vaccine is tainted by a swell of dissenters who are already refuting the benefits of any vaccine, again choosing to believe social media bunk (Bill Gates is NOT trying to alter your DNA) over the actual science that is available to anyone who seeks actual information. Speak to your doctor and ask for facts from someone who works in science and does not peddle in fiction.

Do skeptics wonder where the world would be today if people had refused Jonas Salk's polio vaccine in 1955? How quickly we forget.

I always support asking questions. I support doing what you believe in best for you. But to opt out of the very simple actions that are best for you and everyone in your community because of stubborn, ignorant, misinformation and beliefs gathered from biased sources is harmful for everyone. And for those who choose the path of ignorance and don't get sick, it will be because of the choices of everyone in your path who made the right choices, which by extension protected you.

You're welcome.

