

## WISDOM AND DETERMINATION OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT GAINED THROUGH EXPERIENCES WITH COVID19 PANDEMIC



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In our lifetime, we may ask, “How many years do I have left to live?” Many people dig up the secrets of birth, aging, disease, and death, but how many years can we live even with our increasing effort? There are many different perspectives on the long journey from birth to death, which can be said to be close to 100 years. As the number of people living longer has increased, the hopes of living longer than 100 years have also increased, but can it be said that the quality of our lives has improved as much as the quantity of life expectancy? People want to live a high quality life, and want to change their lifestyle after listening to a lecture that impresses them, but it is difficult to change one’s lifestyle.

These days, due to social network sites, anyone can know more about the different life styles of others by searching for information from the news media, YouTube, or social network services such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. As many people work from home every day and live their lives on their own, they cross the boundary between the possible and the impossible,

wondering if such an isolated life can continue in the future. During the past year and a half we were unable to meet with anyone but close friends and colleagues. Also, family members were living apart from us due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have had to endure the loneliness and alienation of being in a world on our own, with little or no experience of life with others outside of our ‘bubble’.

Fortunately, even in COVID-19 conditions, without major changes in my life, I do the same routine. Although it is easier to adapt in everyday life by working and meeting people online, video chat, or on the phone, how can I understand people who have had difficulties in an environment that is different? And I have been wondering if I can help them get back to their daily lives as things were in the past.

Wouldn't the rapid rate of transmission of the Delta variant put us back into the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic? Many people are asking, “When will we ever be able to return to the state of before the COVID-19 pandemic?” Although it is difficult for people to adapt to a new environment, especially a negative and life-threatening one, it is time-consuming and stressful to escape from such an experience into freedom again. We try to adapt by focusing only on visible phenomena such as physical changes, but because we unconsciously ignore and do not know about our mental health, it is more difficult and time-consuming to mentally change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought me a life of self-control and self-discipline, where I have to live by others, especially by following the government guidelines, rather than living a life

of free choice. I feel like the world was going into darkness, so I had to close my doors to the world, but then things got better, so I could open the doors, but again, things got worse, and I closed them again, etc. Through these experiences, I felt the need to study the most necessary information, knowledge, wisdom, education, counselling, and outreach services to survive as Koreans in Canadian society. I think many people have learned the following lessons from this Covid-19 pandemic:

- Learn to survive alone or without a job or with unemployment insurance.
- Be able to delve deeply into self-reflection, self-discipline and intelligence which we normally ignore.
- Recognize the importance of family and unite with them.
- Know the facts of financial need and foster the habit of thrift and saving.
- Try to live a positive life with family members.
- Find the secret to overcome loneliness and living with crisis.
- Pay more attention to health and be sensitive to physical, emotional and mental signals.
- Find a way to prevent a serious condition by cultivating well-being.

How should I live with the life experiences I've had over the past year and a half? I have been asked that fundamental question. A consensus was formed by connecting to the wave of knowledge and wisdom gained from the process and experience of dealing with the COVID virus. As I share my philosophy of caring and sharing of my life, knowledge and information, I achieve unity rather than separation. While running toward the horizon of the intersection of silence and expression we are endlessly

asked questions, so we face the resistance of strong winds.

What will life be like after the COVID-19 pandemic? These questions have been asked and have given us a lot of confusion about whether it gives us anxiety or hope, up or down feelings, or sometimes gives us the heart to prepare. To find the answer, we need other people and a community to think about, not just ourselves. It was a time when I did not have to shoulder responsibility and self-consciousness for others, but it was also a time when a sense of community and wisdom of being together were more urgently needed.

I also realized that when I asked of how I would live my life, and when I was making the choices that determine the path of my life, I needed to be with others rather than be alone. Don't be lonely alone! In the past, doing something together for a large family or a village community was the most energizing thing in life. However, at this point in time when individualism has developed and people are living alone, they intuit that they are standing at a crossroads where the spirit of community has to disappear. I cannot live a life full of true humanity without taking care of the surrounding people. Our true happiness in life begins with love for people in a community. At the intersection of loneliness and love, if we love ourselves first, we will be loved by others. In such a time, the most important and essential elements will be education and learning.

The spirit of community means that the world is connected as one and that we live while slowly adapting to each other and forming relationships and communicating with others, free from competition between

individuals. Let's think about the problems of frustration, anxiety and pain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Does my life just disappear when I die? If you are trapped within yourself, then your energy, thoughts and mind are stopped without being communicated to others. Then people living only for themselves. We can form a community when we break free from our ego, establish relationships with others, and share meaningful and rewarding communication. The spirit of the community we enjoyed must be restored.

Creating a community, destroying a community, joining a community, or leaving a community is my choice, but I shouldn't be forced to leave the community because I'm too constrained. We need an environment where we can freely choose the right to participate or not to participate with the spirit of community sharing. It is important to prepare in advance so that the sharing of a bowl of rice and the spirit of caring coexist so that it does not flow into an obsessive collectivism that does not change. In our own situation, we grow when we exercise self-control and deliberation, and pour out our passion for others and the world for reasonable conclusions. We believe that the most desirable thing to do is to help each other grow while belonging to a community, continuing relationships, and having conversations with consensus.

I am now in a transition time when I have to make choices about what to keep and what to leave behind in my life amid the COVID-19 pandemic. I wonder if the COVID-19 pandemic will free me from Government guidance, and I will be able to get my old life back the way it used be. If not, is it okay to recover what I have lost,

and lose what I have kept. What lessons have this COVID crisis and pandemic taught me? I also had a realization that I could say 'aha' in some way, and other people also have different meanings and interpretations of that their experience depending on the situation. There is a fear that it will disappear without the opportunity and time to share what I have learned. Therefore, through that decision, I want to share with others so that the wisdom and realization do not disappear, and my future life will be different after the COVID-19 pandemic, and I can live a creative life that is different than before COVID-19.

In my case, it is time to gain the previously-mentioned lessons COVID has taught me. This gives me confidence, what do I need, and what is most important to me in my life. Working at FUTFS has made me think carefully about what I can do here for people that are struggling with COVID. I was able to do a lot of thinking that I am a blessed person in an environment where I can continue to work at what I love, and whatever I do is worthwhile and meaningful without waiting for others to do something for me. Also, it was rewarding. It is a pity that there is no division between my work and my life, but instead, work has become so familiar to me that I can do the activities I need to master and the activities that make me grow, and it has given me confidence that I can focus on my life and do better.

But if it was just for me and my family, there would be very limited changes in growth. I am moving towards my goal, and although I have not achieved outstanding results, I am fulfilling my role, duties and responsibilities at FUTFS based on my experience, abilities, skills and mindset. I am not an observer, but with my own

life, there are other people who can achieve results in action. I am on a mission to build relationships with them and to protect the health and well-being of those around me through direct and indirect participation with them. Because people are truly world-changing creative things that can help us empower each other to live positive, active and productive lives.

Of course, I know that being 'busy' is not a good thing and I tire myself out and sometimes stop growing because of burn-out, but what my time and space allow is awareness, mindfulness and purpose. To work intentionally for myself and others, not just for my own instincts and desires. I was intentionally resting for myself,

being connected to others, making intentional decisions for myself and others, speaking and acting intentionally for myself and others, etc. It takes important tasks to find something.

We need to make good use of our limited time and allocate it according to our purpose in life and consistently manage it, but the busy modern life does not allow us to do so and leads to difficult situations. Because our lives are burdened and stressed by the expectations we and others have, we demand a reward, especially after heroic work. However, we are extremely limited people and cannot continuously respond to these expectations. The longer we live, the more exhausted we are, and the more

helpless we are to do anything in a desperate situation. But we have within ourselves the wisdom, ability and strength to overcome. What experiences and memories do you want to keep in your long COVID life of a year and a half? Create fresh and creative lives and activities that we can do in groups and communities, whether it's a friend's group, a religious group or a social institution like the one to which I belong. Whatever you like to do - exercise, quiet time, reading, volunteer work or just things for you - make good use of the time and energy you have to live well with others and with your community. This life is a blessing and creates happiness to be given a life to live with others and to be given time to share with others.

