



it seems like we can't agree on much as a culture, but we can all probably agree that a year has passed.

and that people are trash.

now, depending on which side of my social venn diagram you are on, the reason for the above statement is either that people are cowardly virtue signaling sheep who refuse to think for themselves **or** they are selfish science denying babies having tantrums because they are being asked to act like members of a civil society and instead fling their own shit and cry about not being allowed to get their haircut.

i do, however, appreciate that the term "covidiot" seems to simply mean "someone whose coping mechanisms for unprecedented levels of stress brought on by a global pandemic and more accurately the response to said pandemic differs from my own"

i think one of the issues is that patience and goodwill are luxury goods, and in a time where our spouses or children are drawing down on our limited coffers, we find it unpalatable to offer either to a stranger in the grocery store. our entire limbic system is screaming for us to hoard and defend, to push away anyone who hasn't already proven themselves and tighten those bonds - because if we can no longer experience a true physical human connection, at least we hate the same people.

and it feels good. or at least righteous. we are not being emotional, that is the realm of the "other" side. we are rational actors. we look at the data. at sense. its funny because the problems we are facing have always existed - at least in my lifetime - the issue is it is being accelerated because many of us have lost our coping mechanisms and our social distraction. the world is uncertain and our guts are trying to force us to find stable ground... so we create stability by accepting our peers and attacking everyone else. we argue - not with actual people who disagree with us - but with the caricatures of those others. we demonize and mock, and thanks to the near infinite expanse of

human stupidity there is going to be someone on twitter who embodies every terrible thing we imagine about our opponent. i think it was george bush who said that we judge ourselves by our best intentions and our opponents by their worst examples. i think that is one of the larger problems, for all that is being said, for all the sound and fury there is actually very little being communicated.

i am scared. i am uncomfortable. i want this to be different. this is all your fault.

i think that mostly covers it. it comes out in different ways but i hear very little discussion and very much emotional venting. the scary part is when the venting is being misconstrued as objective reality. i was honestly taken aback at the level of offense that many individuals had to being categorized as “nonessential workers” by the US government (particularly because there is a large overlap between those individuals and the people who make fun of safe spaces and the general “fuck your feelings” crowd) as well as seeing many of my liberal friends suddenly jump to the defense of a private business’s right to refuse service to someone for any reason while the conservative talking point becomes “my body my choice” and “the government shouldn’t be involved with health decisions”

its a topsy turvy world until you look past the slogans and into the behavior...

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i think if there is one other thing that we can all agree upon it is that we have all been *exposed*.

not necessarily to the virus, but to each other, as ourselves. not our best selves, not our ideal selves... but some real base model shit. fatigue and stress wash away most niceties and what one week seemed like a moral commitment (when there was no other option) can turn so quickly as soon as it becomes personal. people who complain about government handouts chasing PPP money and scamming unemployment, people who constantly post that we need to trust medical professionals *except* for the last decade when their doctor was telling them to lose weight and stop eating shitty food.

the guy who says that we don’t really know what the vaccine will do to our bodies while smoking a cigarette...

hypocrisy interests me to no end. my friend once said that there is no such thing as a paradox - it was simply an issue with your model. you weren’t looking closely enough (or maybe too closely) - hypocrisy is simply an incomplete picture. maybe that’s a little generous, i firmly believe that there are malicious hypocrites out there; mask wearers and hucksters, (we can just call them politicians) men and women who choose their mark and claim whatever high ground will get them the best access to peek into bedroom windows and reach into back pockets - but i feel that most are a tamer, gentler version. individuals who discount that most of their so-called morality is circumstantial. emotional framework to justify their behavior - unwittingly choosing the most generous reasoning behind doing exactly what they fucking want. the thing here is that there was a miss identification of defining principles. no one wants to be the villain in a story (well, almost no-one) or even worse - a NPC. a placeholder. fluff. so we give ourselves a moral compass, find enemies to stand against, but not so it actually shows.

we tell ourselves a story.

so i guess my question is, a year into this: what is your story? how has it changed? is it consistent and if not - why not? have you grown? changed your mind? or perhaps you are the same and your framework for reasoning has shifted? do your enemies exist? or are you inflating them to give yourself a sense of importance?

i feel like a large part of the response to the pandemic is that politicians (and many business owners) do not want to deal with the blowback if they were/are wrong. everyone seems to be trying to defer the decision making to someone else and then complain about what was or was not done. because in the internet age nothing is forgotten (kinda) and hindsight is 20/20 (again, kinda). the other part is that it seems like a lot of people are having their very first existential crisis - and they are all doing it at the same time, televised and live-streaming.

in a big enough scheme: we are all *non-essential*. if your business fails, another one will take its place. if you lose your home someone will buy it. if you get in the way of the government fulfilling its biological needs it will destroy you with no consequences. there aren't enough masks or hand sanitizer in the world to keep you from getting sick. having a lot of money makes everything easier. none of us are getting out of this alive.

fuck you go further.

if that is all true, then what?

then we do what we can.

we help those who we can help. change those things we can change.

we can give people a little grace, and realize that most people are not against you as much as they are for themselves. and that you are probably doing many of the same things.

we can recognize that "being wrong" is not necessarily a personality trait but a state of being. that the fastest way to be right is to accept when you are wrong and advance your ideas. we can normalize discussion, thoughtfulness, and growth as people. change is messy. learning is messier, "doing your best" in an uncertain world is messier still. try and roll with it.

we can recognize that if your autonomy can be subverted by putting on a paper mask while on a crowded airplane, then it was a weak, ineffectual thing in the first place and deserves to die.

we can recognize that if the only thing you are willing to do to protect your health is demand that other people change their behavior, then you haven't earned a seat at the table and don't get a voice in this discussion.

we can also agree that "you take care of your health i will take care of mine" is disingenuous at best when discussing infectious disease. think muzzle discipline. i don't care if you tell me its unloaded, i don't care if you tell me its a prop gun, i don't even care if you point out that 77% of people survive being shot. you may be right, but the fact that you expect me to take your word for it is proof enough that you don't deserve my trust. and if you tell me that if body armor works then why am i worried about you pointing a gun at me, just realize you sound like an idiot.

we can even go so far as to recognize that, despite my last comment, calling people idiots does not do much to advance our understanding of the underlying stressors. it doesn't help us get through this. recognizing that people's stress is real even if the way they speak about it is flawed. that we all have different coping mechanisms and that generally the things that damage us the most are the ones where we can not ourselves identify. winning is not an option - we are all just trying to get

through this. so in the immortal words of james dalton: be nice.

name your feelings. become friends with them. being afraid. being stressed. being tired. its all being human. and if we can connect on that, then maybe we can actually get somewhere.

and hopefully in less than another year...