

Morale during the “New Normal”



The new normal... what does that mean? Immediately we might feel depressed by that term in this crazy year. Everyone behaves as if this has never happened before. Yet new norms have been thrust upon mankind repeatedly in our history. Some of the most wonderful things have come to pass because of some tragedy or turn of events which caused a **new norm**. Somehow, positives come out of a tough year like this one.

Think about it. World Wars I and II were horrible tragedies with many lives lost. So much destruction and suffering. Yet, from that terrible time some new normals emerged. Cities were rebuilt. Nearly a million women were employed in jobs previously held by men. Women held up the home front as men went to battle, everyone contributing and preserving our freedom.

It helped usher in the rights for Women to Vote and movements towards equality.

The concept of Victory Gardens, as an alternative to food rationing, became a new norm. US food consumption decreased by 15% conserving food for the troops, with homes *“do with less-so they will have enough”*. Today many people continue to have home gardens. We have learned the healthy alternative to chemically grown food.

The medical field greatly advanced in the treatment of mental disorders, limb replacement, burn therapy, and plastic surgery. Volunteerism expanded. The Red Cross, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts enjoyed a growth.

All those horrible despicable school shootings. Yet, heroic acts occurred and, somehow young people found their voice in social media, public demonstrations, exercising their right to vote in unprecedented numbers, and becoming engaged in the process of creating change for a better life.

COVID-19 has been devastating, disturbing, disruptive. Yet, we've learned social distancing and made a habit out of safe health practices we never took so seriously in the past. We're more diligent now, washing our hands, using hand cleaners, spraying everything we touch, fist bumping, etc. Curb service grocery stores, restaurants, online shopping now delivered right to our doorstep are conveniences we are growing accustomed to. Teledoc services have become more prevalent, saving time, money, gas, and helping to prevent the spread of viruses and flus. More people are working from home, with more flexible schedules. Air quality is improving in the big cities, with fewer cars on the road.

Parents have learned the value of teachers... They have discovered home schooling is not for the faint hearted, and new math has to be learned together by both parent and student! Families learned how much they valued their families when we could not visit and hug our 80-year-old parents for fear of spreading germs. So, what did we do? Drive by birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Holidays, both joyous and sometimes disappointing, we learned that hugs and regular contact are essential for life. Adult children are finding the time to include their aging parents in their schedules. It is more intentional now. What did Joni Mitchell sing? *"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone."*

In all of this we shall survive and overcome, this experience gives us an opportunity to grow and be creative... **not a new norm... but a new growth... a new experience!**