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Corona Insight; From A Prisoners Perspective

Though exceptionally inconvenient for all of us, the covid-19 pandemic has produced a potential positive insight on a very controversial subject; prolonged isolation and its effects on humans. It has forced the members of the free world, those not incarcerated, to experience the effects of social isolation.

The citizens of this country have been ordered to stay at home for months now, away from friends, coworkers, and even some family members if they happen to be in a care facility or, even living some distance away, due to travel restrictions. At least most have their immediate family members with them which, by now, may not be considered such a good thing. Most have ample entertainment, food, comfortable beds to sleep in, and if absolutely necessary, can take trips to the grocery store, go for a jog or a bike ride, even go to a drive-in movie if they're really bored. All in all, things could be worse, right?

Why then, would a huge percent of the population completely disregard the mandates to socially distance, stay away from crowds, and to wear masks, to protect themselves and others, against a virus that's killing tens of thousands of people world wide? Why you ask? Because social isolation is difficult to endure, even when all of the creature comforts we're used to are still available to us. It's causing people to literally risk their lives in order to

reconnect with their former way of living. We are social animals and we crave companionship. When you deprive a human being of this companionship, and even any other type of contact, it does unexplainable and sometimes irreversible damage to the psychological status of that person.

How else can you possibly explain why people would risk dying just to go out and socialize with some friends? I'm sure you could blame ignorance of the actual danger they're putting themselves and others in. Bravado, by thinking I'm too healthy to get sick. Maybe they simply don't believe what they see on the news. Regardless of the reasoning behind their recklessness, the vast majority just can't stand the isolation and loneliness involved in staying at home and are willing to risk death to avoid it. Remember, we're only talking about a few months of perceived isolation here.

Now, let's consider the thousands of inmates being kept in isolation situations in this country, many for years and years on end. Can the psychological impact this isolation has on them, now be considered? Many of these inmates will one day be let out of these facilities to attempt at resuming a normal life on the outside. The big question is, can the psychological damage from years of isolation prove to be an insurmountable hurdle to overcome for these inmates? Will they even be provided the help they'll surely need to have a chance at adjusting to the outside world after all of those years of isolation? As it stands, the answer is no; they'll be let go and expected to fend for themselves due to an understaffed and overburdened prison and parole system. They will most probably become another victim in the recidivism rate of re-offenders because freedom will simply overwhelm them and they'll subconsciously want to go back to the only situation they're comfortable with, prison. If normal citizens are willing to risk death due to a few months of, so called, isolation, then why would this analogy be so hard to believe? Maybe this corona virus and the implications of various reactions from the isolation that social distancing produces will give people pause to rethink the effects of

prolonged "social distancing" that thousands of inmates are forced to endure throughout this country with no thought of whether these effects are irreversible or not.

I have no problem keeping the most violent individuals locked up in a cell until they can prove they deserve to be treated otherwise. There are plenty of those inmates that should never be allowed out of their cells without being in restraints. Some are beyond help, in my opinion. For the most part though, keeping a person locked in a box for 22+ hours a day is cruel and inhumane treatment that needs to be changed. As I hope that everyone is now realizing, extremely limited human interaction is difficult to endure, not just for free people, but for all of us. I'm just sorry it's taken a pandemic, that's caused the demise of many innocent people, to make everyone aware of the effects of isolation on the human brain. Yes, social distancing is very hard. I've been forced to do it for years now.