

HAPPY HOLIDAYS IN THE ERA OF COVID:

IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

by

Dortell Williams

As the holidays creep upon us, and loneliness, along with other anxiety-ridden feelings emerge and linger, I've purposed in my mind to be festive. After all, things could be so much worse.

For me, it's all about perspective; how I choose to view life's adversities. I think Viktor Frankl said it best, "The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."⁽¹⁾ Of course, I had to learn this philosophy the hard way.

In my stupid youth, I embraced a fatalistic perspective. My fate was either prison or death as a result of the choices I made. Poor choices that promised me nothing other than negative results. In order for me to reach that level of low I had to ignore all the good, all the right, and all the positive in my life. I took a lot for granted. That was then. Now you can't pay me to call it a bad day. Rain? Clouds? It's still a beautiful day, my glass is half

full! Even rose colored.

In addition to harnessing my perspective, what I had to learn was resilience. I had to learn how to bounce back from the inevitable adversities of life. I call them challenges. We all have our challenges, and we're all capable of conquering them.

The truth is, there are a lot of problems in the world. But there's definitely more right than wrong; more fixed than broken, more love than hate. Otherwise life would have swallowed us up my now. And at the end of the day, you can't have a testimony without a trial first, right? So I have learned to welcome the challenges. Like a pugilist in the ring, I am willing and ready.

As an incarcerated person, I miss my family every day. Now that the holidays are here, there's not a minute that goes by where I don't fervently wish to be with kin. And with the 'rona, I can't even enjoy them through a glass visit. Unfortunately, neither can you, free people. Health experts won't allow it. Now we're truly all in this together. We're all discouraged from visiting family during this holiday season. It's sad, really sad. Yet that is the reality of things, and looking at it from a healthy perspective doesn't mean ignoring that reality. The perspective I now chose to employ is this: by refraining from visiting those I love, I am actually saving their lives; and they are saving mine. The bigger picture is to live another day. The day we're all COVID-free, healthy and safe.

So happy holidays -- on the phone, on Skype, through the mail, whatever it takes. The way I see it, with all the rain checks I'm owed for hugs, by the time we're safe again, I'll be one warm, beloved and happy man. It's a choice, 'cause its all about perspective.