

Home alone together

27 June, 2020

As I may have mentioned earlier or elsewhere, Mary and I are both of an age and have the usual age-related health issues. So, as you might imagine, we tend to very carefully follow the best available advice for avoiding Covid. Which means wearing masks and distancing during our only-as-necessary trips to the store, limiting social contacts and observing precautions during the few that must take place and generally, staying home.

An interesting aspect of self-quarantine is the whole idea of 'can't.' It's not like staying home is something new to me; I've been working from my home office since my back injury 2-1/2 years ago, I don't do business travel since the same injury and let's face it – I've never been much of a social animal. I read FB posts of friends talking about their partying days or getting together for fun adventures and I admit to being mystified. My social interaction has always been employed through my writing and occasional sit down visits with old friends.

I would be unconscionably selfish to whine about Covid-related restrictions to my range of movement. People who have loved ones infected by this awful virus don't need to read of my annoyance at not being able to run to Sumner Woodworking on Saturday mornings. And while the house in which we're riding out the pandemic is not grand, neither is it a cell. My writer's garret is roomy and my workshop is ample, so long as I don't get in a hurry.

So I have to admit my primary objection is not to the fact of seclusion, so much as the fact that it is imposed by factors outside my control. And I have to wonder why I – really, most people, I think – object so strongly when denied the ability to do things they wouldn't normally be inclined to do, anyway. I mean, I think it's a human thing and not just one of my many personal failings. But common or not, it's something I'm trying to work on.

I have a huge advantage in that my life partner and I tend to each allow the other our preferences, even eccentricities. I don't tell Mary how to launder our clothing and she doesn't tell me how to fold them. I vacuum, she sweeps and mops. I clean up dog detritus, she mows the lawn. And we don't comment on the 'right' way to accomplish a chore the other is doing. (Well, usually...) She loves TV shows I can't fathom and I watch woodworking videos that would bore her to tears.

I guess what I'm saying here is that my life problems just now have more to do with adjusting expectations than with actual, you know, crises. My retirement has been delayed indefinitely while we wait for the global economy to settle down. I don't run out to the store for a single item. Day trips are undertaken with a careful calculation of when and how we will take lunch and where we can make a fluid adjustment stop (touchless public restrooms are key here). I won't get my broken tooth fixed anytime soon but it doesn't hurt so, what the hell.

I am very aware of the privilege of place that leaves me with mostly insignificant problems. And I wish everyone's situation was as mild.

I wish that everyone could feel safe, valued and loved and that everyone had the richness of opportunity that my life has afforded me. And that, when this is over, we start doing a better job of building a community that allows the other guy a place to stand.

