

The 'K.I.S.S.' Principle

Written by SHERALYN ROMAN

I'm not sure where your head is at, but I know mine is crying out for some simple common sense. Or, at the very least, what appears to be common sense in my opinion and certainly in the opinion of many of my acquaintances.

With our COVID numbers continuing to climb, another holiday season fast approaching and the inconsistent application of lockdowns across arbitrary municipal borders, it's creating a 'free for all' out there which can only make matters worse than they already are.

If, in the spring, we locked things down when our numbers hovered around the 4-500 mark, why the heck are we not closed down now when we more than triple that number? This current patchwork approach isn't helping any of us already suffering (whether that's financially, physically or with mental health issues) and, I would argue, is only adding to the potential for suffering for many, many more.

It's time for an 'all or nothing' approach. There's an old training acronym that's not really appropriate these days but I'll modify the principle by leaving off the second 'S' to make it more palatable: Let's just 'Keep It Simple.'

The announcement a couple of weeks ago by the Ford government, to place Peel and Toronto in lockdown, caused a great deal of angst, particularly so amongst small, local shop owners. Penalizing the local bookstore, toy store, hair salon or specialty giftware shop makes zero sense when each is perfectly positioned to monitor traffic in their premises, keep shoppers safe and provide exceptional customer service.

Funnelling all of that shopping traffic toward massive line-ups both inside and outside of big box retailers instead simply places a whole bunch of people in harm's way by forcing them to flock together, potentially spreading the virus.

Not only did it endanger people in our own community (by putting livelihoods at risk) but placed us all at greater risk as we travelled to regions outside of our own to shop, eat or get a haircut.

To make matters worse, another announcement on December 11, that York Region and Windsor-Essex would join us in lockdown, resulted in about a gazillion shoppers flooding Vaughn Mills to be sure they could shop in person, resulting in long line ups that Dr. Michael Warner, the Director of Critical Care at Michael Garron Hospital called 'irresponsible.'

Seems simple to predict that more crowds means more chance to spread the virus which in turn gives a whole new meaning to the saying 'shop 'til you drop,' except in this case, 'drop' means from COVID, not fatigue.

The government had a chance to make things right in the lead up to this holiday season. They had a chance to help contain the virus which is clearly now spiralling out of control. A number of hospitals have gone on record in these last few days to say that they have reached and/or surpassed their tipping point.

As of the time of writing we are closing in on 2,000 cases a day. Are we waiting until we have to call in the refrigerated trucks before we declare a disaster?

Are we waiting for the vaccine that arrived on Monday but realistically will take the better part of a year before we all receive it?

With Christmas just around the corner, you and I both know that while many people are responsible, some will not be and the spread of the virus will spike again about 10 - 14 days later. That's if it isn't spiking already as a result of all our panic shopping across city borders.

Mr. Ford and his Health Minister Christine Elliott should have placed the entire province back in to a lockdown situation and Mr. Lecce should have joined them with an agreement to close the schools a week early and keep them shut for an additional week after the holiday. This would have ensured a window of isolation time both before and after Christmas that maybe, just maybe, would have helped to curb the rise in COVID cases.

If in the past political action has been taken for the greater good, why not this time? Why not just universally declare a lockdown like our counterparts in Manitoba and Alberta and give families sufficient notice that Christmas if you celebrate it is amongst the members of your own household only?

Suggesting there is hope by drawing an arbitrary line in the sand locking down some regions and not others is just wrong. Additionally, it only fosters false hope that Christmas 2020 will look just like any other Christmas when you suggest you'll review lockdown requirements on December 2, just four days before Christmas.

The potential, if lifted, which I doubt, is that volumes of shoppers will flock back to malls again in their own, or other towns and cities, to buy gifts for family they shouldn't be going to see anyway.

Lockdown would have protected us all. Lockdown would have helped small business because they wouldn't be competing against big box stores and perhaps more people would have purchased gift cards for services to be obtained from small business owners when this pandemic is over.

Shutting schools would have helped prevent all those little asymptomatic spreaders from spreading the virus. I fear it's all too late now. Should have kept it simple?