

Happy Holidays?

On Thursday, February 6, 2020, the *Financial Times* ran a story on page two about another one of those Asian SARS viruses. I read the *Financial Times* because it is based in London, and therefore presents global news. Previous Asian viruses posed little more than a minor scare to those of us in the West. This particular article focused on the disruption that this Asian virus was having on Apple's supply chain through supplier Foxconn.

Foxconn's Apple plant is in Poyang, not in the Wuhan Province. The article read, "Until February 1, Poyang had confirmed only two cases of coronavirus, but between Sunday and Tuesday, that number rose rapidly to 27 cases." The point of the story: Would this coronavirus affect the global supply chain of Apple? It quoted a worker at an iPhone factory, "It is unclear when work will restart."

If only! If only that's all that became of this coronavirus. By the time you will read this, there will have been over 60 million cases of Covid-19, the disease that this coronavirus often causes. The world is closing in on 1.5 million deaths...that we know of. Experts suspect that these figures significantly understate the severity of this pandemic.

All of us have likely experienced loss of acquaintances, friends, or worse, family. All of us have had to change our lives to cope and/or avoid catching the virus. Add to that intense political divisions and the financial carnage in the spring, and well, it's been a rough year.

In trying to come up with a way to wish you happy holidays, I will share some of the little things that have helped me cope. One of them, is my Covid friend, nameless, lion-hearted, well, here she is:



The tree that my friend sits on top of is about six feet tall and is just a few feet from my home office, where I have spent much of this horrible year. But every time I see her looking at me, and it is often, she puts a smile on my face. It is as if she has sympathy for me, for all of us, in lockdown, caged in by a virus too small to see.

Many of you have told me how caged in you feel this year, out of fear for the virus, and out of anxiety over the political divisions. To you, I offer this poem by N. Scott Momaday.

In the Time of Plague

We keep indoors.
When we dare to venture out
We are cautious.
Our neighbors
Smile, but in their eyes there is
Reserve and suspicion.
They keep their distance,
As we do ours, in mute accord.
Much of our fear is unspoken,
For there is at last the weight of custom,
The tender of rote consolation.
We endure thoughts of demise
And measure the distance of death.
Death too wears a mask.
But consider, there may well be good
In our misfortune if we can find it. It is
Hidden in the darkness of our fear.
But discover it and see that it is hope
And more; it is the gift of opportunity.
We have the rare chance to prevail,
To pose a resolution for world renewal.
We can be better than we have ever been.
We can improve the human condition.
We can imagine, then strive to realize,
Our potential for goodness and morality.
We can overcome pestilence, war and poverty.
We can preserve our sacred purpose. We can
Determine who we are in our essential nature
And who we can be. We are committed to this end
For our own sake and for the sake of those
Who will come after us. There is a better future,
And we can secure it. Let us take up the task, and
Let us be worthy of our best destiny.

N. SCOTT MOMADAY is a novelist as well as a poet and won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969 for "House Made of Dawn."

All of us at Burke Financial hope that you find some joy during the holidays, be it with friends or family, or by finding small pleasures like my lion-hearted chipmunk. And we hope that in 2021 this virus leaves us, however it happens, so that we may all get out of our cages.

Happy Holidays!
Sincerely,

John B. Burke

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Financial Advisor