

Mr Simpson's Thought For The Week, 18th June 2020

Things are slowly emerging from lockdown around the world. There's still a need to take precautions and to follow scientific advice about how best to move forward, but it looks like the complete shutdown that we've been in for the past few months is gradually easing.

This is causing anxiety in a lot of people as well as welcome relief for many others. I guess most of us feel a combination of both. But one really positive thing that struck me during this time has been the number of reports about how pollution and greenhouse gas emissions had significantly reduced during the earlier part of the lockdown. Cities that were smog bound were clear and fresh. Animals had benefitted from quieter roads. It would take a lot more than just that to reverse climate change, but there was some real encouragement from this. Unfortunately, as people have started going back to work and the world is opening up again, the same issues are there. People are back using cars and factories are chugging up the atmosphere again. On my walks with the dog, there have been massive piles of litter and rubbish from where people have been meeting up after so long apart. Some of the optimism I'd felt about how things could be different when the virus was under control has evaporated.

Understandably, there might be a rush to doing some of the things we've missed most when we regain those opportunities, which might involve using more natural resources just at the time when we need to be most mindful of sustainability. I'm desperate to go to concerts and the cinema again. Unfortunately, governments want us to start consuming more again, in order to get economies going, so the temptations to spending our money again on stuff we don't need or even really want are going to be strong. However, another benefit of being under lockdown for so long is that it gives you the chance to think about what's important. We've been shown that we can undo the damage we've done to the world before it's too late, and that if we all do it, a lot can be done with minimal sacrifice.

The link below is to an animation of a poem, "What happened when we all stopped." It speaks to the idea that rebirth is possible. Many of you reading this will move into decision-making roles in the future – remember that you can be part of this through that role. Even if you're not in that kind of job, remember that big change starts with ordinary people simply doing the right thing.

Have a good week, and keep active with your plan for September.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gX0HOy8Pi54>