



March 2021 Being Part of the Solution

Did you hear about the \$1000 tip on a \$26 restaurant tab in Redmond Washington?

How about Barstool Sports founder David Portnoy, he's raised over \$10 Million to save over 45 small businesses around the country?

Or Danny Trejo providing 500 meals to feed the homeless from his restaurant?

Wow! Who would have believed that March 16th marks a year since the world shut down for the COVID-19 pandemic? Adjusting to this crazy world of shut-downs, restrictions and disruptions to our lives has not been easy.

The rules are changing daily. In fact the CDC just issued guidance for those individuals that are fully vaccinated today which offered some real incentive to be vaccinated. This is guidance not mandate. Common sense and personal comfort continues to be our individual responsibility to protect ourselves and others.



- Vaccinated grandmas and grandpas can now see their children and grandchildren as long as they are not in an at-risk group.
- Vaccinated people can socialize with other vaccinated people without masks.
- Vaccinated people are not subject to quarantine or required to have COVID testing. We are making real progress here.
- Vaccinated people should still wear masks and socially distance in public and private with unvaccinated people.

States are easing restrictions and businesses are opening again. Schools are starting to move to reopening albeit with snail like speed. We are not however out of the woods yet. We are inching closer and closer to herd immunity and normalcy as 2 million people are vaccinated daily.

What we do now, will define each and every one of us going forward.

Surviving this past year has been challenging for everyone. I am grateful for my ever optimistic attitude, the circle of positive people I have around me, my spiritual connection, and my ability to choose to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

I could have been sitting home thinking 'woe is me', feeling sorry for myself, helpless in the face of all the things I could not control over the last 12 months.



Instead I have chosen a different path.

A path of empowerment.

A path that helps me see that things are in fact getting better.

That I am not helpless, That I can be of service to others in my community to aid in us all getting to the other side of the pandemic.

It comes down to little things.

I may not be able to do something as significant as David or Danny or leaving a \$1000 tip.

Many of us are not in position to do something so grand.

I am however, in a position to do *something*.

I have been part of an organization called CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) for the past two years. This is a nationwide volunteer organization under FEMA. We receive training in all areas of disaster assistance from first aid, search and rescue, fire, traffic and emergency shelter assistance.

In the past we have assisted with local events and have been called up to assist with disasters like Superstorm Sandy.

The pandemic has needed our assistance in two areas of activation. Early on we were asked to assist in the distribution of PPE at the county level. The shortage of PPE and the situation here in New York was dire.

I made phone calls to nursing homes, assisted livings and other group living situations to advise them that their request for PPE was available to pick up, at the county.

I could almost see the happy dance the person on the other end of the phone was doing when I informed them that we had N-95 masks, gloves, gowns, and hand sanitizer waiting for them. They excitedly asked where and when they could pick them up, many rushing right over within an hour of my call. Once a week I was able to give some time to this important task over a period of 2 months.

Now we have been called up for another activation. We are assisting with the county distribution of the vaccine. I have been at the vaccine site once a week for the past month and a half. My task is simple, yet essential, in moving people through the process.

I smile behind my mask, I know they can see me smiling with my eyes. I make them feel welcome, direct them to the registration or exit while allowing the paid professionals to serve more people. Just this Saturday over 900 vaccines were administered at the location I was at.

I feel empowered knowing that in my small contribution I am part of the solution that is going to get us to the other side of all this.

There are so many ways for us all to contribute.

You can be part of an organization like CERT, or the Red Cross, 4-H, scouts, or your church.

You can be part of a neighborhood watch, looking after the vulnerable seniors making sure that they have food, medicine, their driveway and walkway is cleared of snow, that someone is caring enough to check on them, masked and healthy distanced.

You can leave a card in the mailbox of a friend or neighbor letting them know that you are there if they need something or just need to talk. The isolation has been devastating for so many.

You can volunteer at a local food pantry, packing boxes, collecting donations, shopping and delivering food to those in need.



Your kids can get involved too. They are anxious to get out of the house and do something. Volunteering is important and needed now more than ever. Outdoor activities like beach cleanups will get everyone outside and moving.

I am inspired by the things that people are doing. From distributing cleaning supplies, to buying coffee for the next person in the drive through.

Maybe you are able to read childrens books with dramatic expression. Open a zoom room and invite your friends children to storytime once a week to give them a break.

Maybe you have ideas for creative projects for kids that you can post on Pinterest that can help parents struggling for activities to do with their kids.

Whatever you do, no matter how small, it does make a difference. It makes a difference for those you intend to serve and it makes a difference for you.

When you are part of the solution you are no longer part of the problem. You are standing in your power to control even a small part of your life even when everything seems to be out of control.

In taking control of something you create a cornerstone you can build on to once again be able to move forward with positivity and gratitude for all the good things in your life.

By giving to others selflessly with love and joy more love and joy will come into your life.

I invite you to join me in becoming a part of the solution.

Together we will triumph over this pandemic.

We will emerge stronger and kinder for this experience by what we are willing to give of ourselves.

It has always been so, and so it shall always be...

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