



## *Perspective* Pandemics Juxtaposed

by Sherry-Ann Brown, MD, PhD, FACC, FAHA

Many of you are wondering about what I as a leader in various ways am thinking about the racial pandemic, juxtaposed with the coronavirus pandemic.

In the coronavirus pandemic, I had been starting my emails with something like, “I hope you have been able to stay well during these unprecedented times.”

This morning, I started to write an email to a group of people. At first I typed, “I hope you are well.”

Then I deleted that and started over. And then wrote, “I hope you are sorting through these multiply tumultuous times.”

I deleted that too, and skipped that intro altogether, and instead decided to share it with you all.

Let me tell you why. You should already be able to figure this out, but let me walk you through it.

Here it is.

Plainly and simply.

I hope you are NOT well.

I hope you are not OK with seeing what is going on in the world around you. I hope you are not OK with the global ignorance we have as people. I hope you’re not OK with the complacency with which we live our lives.

I hope you are NOT well.

I hope that your heart has been breaking inside due to centuries and decades of injustice.

I hope your well-being has been ruffled knowing that all are NOT well.

That all is NOT well.

We all agree that as a society the goal is to be well.

However, the goal we should desire is for all to be well.

We cannot be true to ourselves until we honestly recognize that all are not well until the futures of our black men, women, boys, girls, and babies in this country and around the world are well.

Until then, how can you be well?

Together, in community, how can we be well?

We can be well when we start to admit that we are not.

We can be well when we commit to open dialogue and truthful conversation about race.

We can be well when we recognize our ineptitude as a society at understanding and addressing what ails us.

We can be well when it finally legitimately rings true that all men, women, boys, girls, and babies in the United States are indeed understood, recognized, perceived, and treated as equal.

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