

## My Life Has Been Disrupted, Again!

by Gordon W. Brown

Of course, in this age of the virus everything around us is different. Inside there are lockdowns, isolation units, changed schedules, losses of companionship. While outside there is unemployment, lines to enter stores, people honoring and dishonoring the wearing of masks and keeping six feet apart, shutting of restaurants and places for distractions and amusement. And in both places there is illness and death.

So what's new? Is all this really that devastating? Yes, for some. Not so much for others. But how we cope remains much the same.

If the past is approved, then we have to recognize that disruption has come to us in many ways before. Coming to prison was the end result of multiple disruptions of varying degrees. But saving that tragic course, life otherwise is struggle. One doesn't have to be engaged in crime or locked up to experience disruption in many forms. Our experience may help us to predict bad outcomes if we do, or don't do, certain things. If I leave a fire unattended something could burn down, if I drive too fast I could wreck, if I cheat on my wife I could lose my kids, if I don't wash my hands and wear a mask I could catch the virus, and much worse, infect others as well.

So we take all manner of precautions to get through this life unscathed and we still fail sometimes. So we try again, begin again, do things differently next time. But our real recuperation comes not from things, things we do, or changing circumstances. It will come from how we perceive others and how we are perceived. Yes, we should be self-scrutinizing, self-caring, and strive to be life-giving. We observe others for inspiration and as good examples of the humanity we seek. We rely on others to verify our restoration, recovery, and reassembly from

myriad disruptions. And if we are fortunate we have the humans we admire near to us. But, even when alone, we can engage those relationships.

“Whenever you want to cheer yourself up, consider the good qualities of your companions, for example, the energy of one, the modesty of another, the generosity of yet another and some other quality of another; for nothing cheers the heart as much as images of excellence reflected in the character of our companions, all brought before us as fully possible. Therefore, keep these images ready at hand.” Marcus Aurelius

It is these memories, these images, which help us sustain our humanity, even in the midst of disruption. And each one of our most beloved have contributed brick and mortar to the building of The New Man we have become. We will continue to grow, lest we forget.