

IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE

Happy New Year 2020. Can you imagine what the future holds?

Imagine our movements will be restricted, plans upended, relationships altered as we face a deadly, invisible enemy. Welcome to the strangest of years.

Imagine a world so dangerous we will voluntarily, if reluctantly, agree to stay at home, to stop travelling locally or go on holidays abroad.

Imagine not kissing or hugging our family and friends, not even the grandchildren. Do not suffer little children to come unto me!

Imagine submerging our individual needs for the greater good of the society, social responsibility emerging to dominate individualism, selfishness.

Imagine discovering new activities, enriching home-based learning, home exercise routines, discovering the joys of walking.

Imagine developing new interests, unearthing latent skills, talents, deepening relationships with friends old and new, learning what activities and people are more important to you.

Imagine living chunks of your life on-line, communicating with family and friends on screen.

Imagine working from home (WFH) will be a new concept for many as offices and workplaces close.

Imagine falling out of bed into your workplace, it's called home. No dressing up to go to the office, just shaving or putting on make up and wearing a smart top.

Imagine holding work and leisure meetings in large online groups. No more commuting. And just think, you will not need to go out on a cold winter's night to attend a class or book-club meeting.

Imagine not being able to go to choir rehearsals, practise music together or perform in the local panto.

Imagine missing shared coffee or tea, biscuits and cakes, or visiting the pub together after a meeting to socialise and build friendships. All banned.

Imagine friends far away, even on the other side of the world, will be closer. It will be so easy to chat face to face on a video call, or have them attend our work and social meetings with a few taps on the keyboard.

Imagine sharing a small space with our partners and children. Experiencing the stress of stay-at-home, the need for our own physical, emotional and mental space to breathe, which isn't there.

Imagine being desperate to get away. How often can you walk around the block, or the garden if you are lucky to have one.

Imagine getting to know our neighbours, meeting in the street or on our balcony when we applaud the health workers risking, or sharing a summer drink with a neighbour across the garden fence.

Imagine keeping in touch with people you know are alone, or doing shopping for elderly, volunteering to help out.

Imagine, at the end of 2020 we will have learned to appreciate the small pleasures, understand what really matters in life, or have we?

As 2021 dawns, in a new lockdown, we will have a chance to check that out because it's déjà vu, all over again.

Welcome back to the future.

David Lennon