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Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



A New Perspective: Make the Comeback Greater Than the Setback! by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

**Trying to Build Awareness of the Possibilities and
What Lurks Around the Bend, as the Pandemic Eases Up**



Heavenquake, Gaslighting, A New Normal

Like any crisis, it can lead to a breakdown . . . or a breakthrough, a turning point. What I call a “Heavenquake,” pushing us toward inner awareness and outer change.

This Pandemic is testing us all in unimaginable ways, from disrupting our daily lives to the shifting health of the world and economy. During this time of national trauma, many are thinking of more than getting through this crisis. Many people are also thinking about a defining feature: *community*. At a time of national trauma, strangers have reached out to each other to offer support. Communities have been building themselves up to be beacons of light in the darkness, taking the time to help others. Our community-building gives meaning to our lives and defines our humanity. Human evolution has prepared us to respond to threats that we can see, identify, and respond to, as in fight or flight. However, we are now confronted with a lethal pathogen that we cannot see, and for which we do not have an evolutionary-prepared response. Many people are scared, because they feel trapped and lonely as they are shut in at home. This can lead to chronic fear, helplessness, anxiety, and depression, as well as to various physical symptoms.

As in the video The Great Realization <https://youtu.be/Nw5KQMXDiM4>, others are finding resilience in this challenging time, an opportunity for growth; a time to rethink what really matters turning their attention to making this crisis “an Event” that evolves into a breakthrough — a positive move for humanity rather than simply a tragedy for us to get beyond. We can use this time of isolation to rebuild and revitalize our outer structures to innovation in businesses and resilient communities and more vibrant lifestyles?

Gaslighting — A Whole New Perspective

The Great American Return to Normal is coming! If we want to create a better world we have to pay attention to issues like “gaslighting,” a technique of deception and psychological manipulation made to confuse or question the “victim’s” own judgement: to think their reactions and they are crazy. The term shows up in the psychological arena and gets its name from the 1944 film [Gaslight](#), starring Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer (based on the play Gas Light, 1938). In the film, Paula (Bergman) is deliberately and gradually manipulated by her husband, Gregory (Boyer), into believing she is insane.

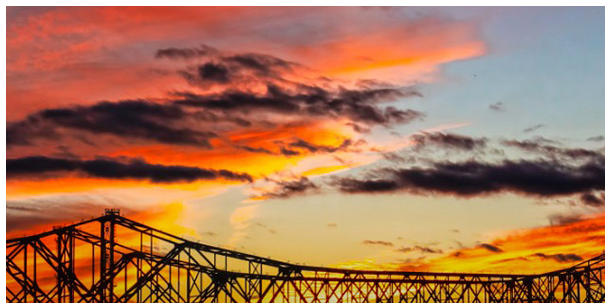
If you have listened to Shaggy’s hit song, [It Wasn’t Me](#) (in which a man tells his girlfriend it wasn’t him she saw having sex with another woman), you’ve seen gaslighting in action. So, how might this manipulative strategy “gaslighting” apply to a vulnerable society anxious to get back to “normal?” How can it help us recognize, then create positive change in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis? Although the term is used to describe more intimate, controlling, and difficult to escape behavior, today it gives us a deeper understanding of what abuse looks like on a wider arena. Gaslighting’s application in the public lexicon has become quite broad. The public gets manipulated by smart marketers into “doubting their reality.” Our lifestyle, routines, as well as our hearts have been traumatized the past few months. We are vulnerable to manipulation on a whole new level. It makes victims question the very instincts that they have counted on their whole lives, tricking the victim into distrusting one’s sense of self and sanity.

Consider what you want to put back into your life. This is your opportunity to define a new sense of normal, as a community, we are not helpless. We are strong advocates of for ourselves and others. In our homes, we choose to spend our family time on nights and weekends, what we watch, what we listen to, what we eat, and what we choose to spend our money on and where. We can do it locally in our communities, in the organizations we support, the truths we tell, and events we attend. And we can do it nationally in our government, in which leaders we vote in and to whom we give power. If you want a simpler life style, one that limits acquisition as life’s goal, it is your option if you can hang on to your sense of self and resist the gaslighting by media and peer pressure that hopes to define your world.


Resources

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FOR THE CHILDREN SESAME STREET AND CNN



As the nation faces the coronavirus pandemic, families are adjusting everything they do from grocery shopping to school to how to talk to kids about what is going on, both at home and in the bigger picture. Given that a public health crisis is challenging for most people to wrap their heads around, it's reasonable to assume kids need a certain style of delivery to stay in the know without being terrified. Who has stepped up to the plate? Sesame Street.

Sesame Street is [partnering](#) with CNN to hold a

“town hall” for kids on Saturday morning at 9 AM EST. The town hall will span about 90 minutes and focus on issues including screen time, anxiety, and school. Familiar faces from the Sesame Street cast will participate. The characters will answer questions submitted by kids (and their parents). People can still submit their questions using this [questionnaire](#).

Sesame Street continues to offer educational and arts-based content to a wide range of kids, which is always valuable, but it can't be appreciated enough while people are staying safe at home. And make sure to check out my colleague Lauren Floyd's [guide](#) to surviving coronavirus at home with kids.

Thank you for your support!

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