

Finding a Silver Lining During Covid-19

By Robert Blenker, President and CEO of WRB Energy

As I sit in my home office, social distancing, I think about how this pandemic has affected the lives of our families, friends, partners, employees, and colleagues.

While there are numerous impacts - ranging from minor inconveniences to tragic hardships shaping our lifestyles, communities, businesses, and economies - there are some positive elements that we can be grateful for amidst this crisis.

Working at home

Over the last month, I've only driven my car 14 miles, compared to the hundreds of miles clocked in previous months. The stay-at-home order has resulted in zero international flights: I have relinquished my previous weekly air travel. With the aid of video and teleconferencing, fortunately, my business continues, maybe at a slower pace than before, but with a much lighter carbon footprint and a more balanced structure.

Staying healthy

Fortunately, driving my car less has equated to more time bicycling. I clocked approximately 127 miles last week. (Although for the Bogota commuting crowd and those working to de-carbonize urban transport, this number may seem like nothing but a "good start"). Exercise is especially important now since I'm recovering from a broken leg and need the physical therapy.

With less work travel, I'm eating at home, and much more healthfully. At home, we all share in the cooking and we're shifting to plant-based meals (resulting in a much lower carbon footprint for food!).

Enjoying quality time with family and friends

Being quarantined and abstaining from "normal activities" outside my home reminds me of how much I appreciate and enjoy my family. We're doing things together that we haven't done in a while, like taking long walks, bird watching, and admiring the amazing Florida wildlife right in our backyard.

I also spend considerable time catching up with other family members, friends, and colleagues by phone, video, and social media. The other day we celebrated a birthday via Zoom, with celebrants dialing in from across North America, South America, and Europe - hilarious chaos. Keeping connected with my circle of friends and associates has sparked a lot of enjoyment, and interesting, productive, and deeper conversations. I have had appropriately distanced conversations with neighbors that I have not said much more than a quick "hello" to in years.



Positive things learned from this event

Being grateful and empathetic

This pause in “la vida cotidiana” makes me mindful of how fortunate I am to have my family, friends, business relationships, and good health. Each day it’s important for me to do something worthwhile to maintain creativity and productivity while adapting to the current situation. This experience has reminded me of my core values and the opportunity to discover and renew life lessons.

At the same time, I am also acutely mindful of those for whom a stay-at-home order is either impossible or represents seemingly insurmountable economic hardship. With income insecurity, insufficient capital reserves, uncertain health insurance combined with familial obligations, these have been and continue to be stressful and challenging times. And, likewise, I am sensitive to the anxiety and anguish of those who are exposed to or have loved ones falling to the disease.

Among the positive things learned from this event: it’s healthy to take time to reflect on what’s important in our lives; perhaps consider reordering some priorities; stay close with family and friends; and be mindful of what we have to be grateful for during this trying time. Being thankful, patient, empathetic, and thoughtful gives us strength and hope as we get through this situation.



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About WRB Energy

WRB Energy develops renewable energy projects in the Caribbean and Latin America to help stabilize electricity prices and reduce dependence on imported fuels to drive economic growth and sustainability. WRB Energy manages the entire project lifecycle, including site selection, design, permitting, financing, construction, and operation. To learn more, visit wrbenery.com.