

Writing an Opinion Piece: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger

2020 was a very special year for every one living on earth. Shops, gyms and even schools had to close. Temporary, we weren't allowed to meet our friends. We had to stay at home as much as possible. Then in summer, the restrictions¹ got less strict. We started finding our way back to normal life. But then in the late autumn the number of infections increased² again and the restrictions came back. Now it's clearer than ever that this pandemic won't be over without a vaccine³. We have to learn to live with this virus until it's over. And I'm totally convinced that being positive also during these hard times is much more effective than thinking pessimistically.

During the first lockdown in March there were a lot of actions and campaigns to make staying at home more attractive. Stars gave concerts online, younger people went grocery shopping⁴ for their older family members or neighbours and people were clapping in front of hospitals for doctors and nurses⁵ to thank them for saving so many lives. Back then, the restrictions were harder than they are today. For example now I still have the possibility to go to school. From March to June, I had to stay at home because schools were closed. But nevertheless, some people started protesting against these Corona rules. They are annoyed by not being able to do the same things as last year. I can understand very well that the people want to celebrate Christmas with their families. Honestly, all over this year it was my biggest wish to spend the winter holidays in Romania at my grandmother's. I'm very sad about the fact that this won't be possible, but I also see the increasing numbers of infections or even deaths because of Corona and I can really understand that now isn't the right moment for travelling or big family parties. Because of this, I'm somehow shocked that so many people react that aggressively. Have they forgotten that the virus won't just go away if they protest against it? Why can't they behave like in the beginning of this pandemic? Many people haven't felt so suppressed by the restrictions then because of the hope and this optimistic community. It was way easier to endure⁶ these hard times while having the feeling of not being alone. While knowing that there are a lot of people being in the same situation, having the same hopes and thoughts.

Furthermore, it's not only my impression that having hopes and thinking positively is very important to resist this pandemic. Martin Seligman, an

American psychologist, founded a new area⁷ in psychology in 1998. He claimed⁸ that people who hear “psychology” or “therapist” often associate⁹ these words with “illness” or “suffering¹⁰”. He wanted to change these thoughts and this way the so-called “Positive Psychology” got more and more popular. Following Martin Seligman’s thought, psychologists found out that living with an illness or getting over a crisis makes people and their character stronger. Since then, therapists also want their patients to talk about their strengths¹¹ and not only about their weaknesses¹². Scientists found out that patients feel better afterwards than others who only talk about problems. I’m pretty convinced that we can make a connection to this current Corona crisis. If we see the positive aspects (and there really are some very important aspects!) too, it will be easier to get through this crisis. In addition, I believe that sometime it will be over. Maybe soon, because of this vaccine, but even if not, also one hundred years ago, humans survived the Spanish Influenza¹³ although they didn’t even have a health system. After this pandemic, we will live our lives again like we want and we will be stronger than before.

The annual statistics for global happiness also show that Corona can have a positive impact too. Since 2019, the percentage of happiness has increased in countries like China or Italy (until August 2020). I remember that both of them are countries which were very affected¹⁴ by the virus in spring. The first wave was over in summer and I suppose that the people were very thankful for surviving the pandemic. I’d say that there’s a positive correlation. But we can also see that in Germany the percentage of happiness has decreased¹⁵! From my point of view, the Germans just aren’t that thankful as for example the Italians because the first wave wasn’t that hard here. In conclusion, being thankful for what we have makes us happier.

At last, I know that living a restricted life isn’t as nice as living a “normal” life. But I think it’s very important to stay optimistic and to be thankful for the positive aspects. Giving up is no choice. We will get over this pandemic and be stronger than ever. What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger!

Written by Sandra Seyberth, 10c

Dictionary:

¹Beschränkungen

²größer werden, steigen

³Impfstoff

⁴Lebensmittel einkaufen

⁵Krankenschwestern

⁶aushalten, ertragen

⁷Fachbereich

⁸behaupten, fordern

⁹in Verbindung bringen, assoziieren

¹⁰Leiden

¹¹Stärken

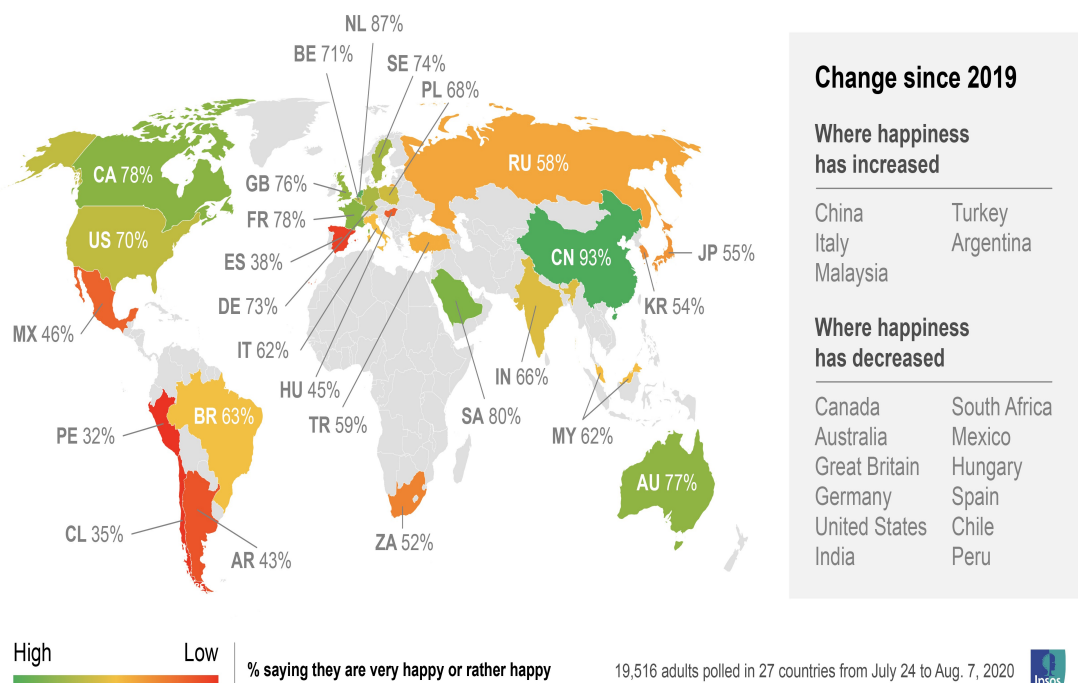
¹²Schwächen

¹³Spanische Grippe: Brach am Ende des 1. WK aus, dauerte ca. zwei Jahre, hatte drei Wellen, forderte 20 bis 50 Millionen Tote

¹⁴betroffen sein

¹⁵kleiner werden, sinken

What percentage of people say they are happy?



Sources:

- Psychologie in 30 Sekunden, Christian Jarrett, Libroero 2020, Page 26
- <https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-happiness-study-2020>