

# Seventeen Gorman

ADVISORS LLC

## "Innovation through Collaboration"



Creating Individual and Organizational Excellence via Leadership Development, Management Development, Mentoring, Coaching, Team Building, Skill Building

## Achieving Excellence

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### Welcome

Welcome to the May issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of **Seventeen Gorman Advisors**. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

**Seventeen Gorman Advisors** is a consulting practice focused on improving individual and organizational performance through skill building programs and developmental services.

Our approach to problem solving and issue resolution involves client participation at all points in the process. Above all, we listen to our clients to understand their needs and goals so that the solution we develop together - as true partners -

provides a sustainable business advantage.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey C. Leventry  
Principal

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## In Your Quest for Excellence

"Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity - not a threat." - Steve Jobs

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## Is There a Silver Lining to the Coronavirus Pandemic?



I was intrigued by a recent article in the Philadelphia Inquirer about a 14 year-old middle school student who is manufacturing face shields for local hospitals to help protect some of our heroes - medical professionals. He borrowed 3 of his school's 3D printers, found a design for face shields on the internet, obtained the raw materials with the help of his parents, and set up a "little factory" in his basement that operates 24/7. To date, he has produced and disseminated 100 shields to 3 local hospitals. He has plans to produce 1000 shields to support the heroic efforts of those who staff Philadelphia area hospitals.

This young man is not alone in going "above and beyond" to help support our country's war against COVID-19. Similar to what our citizens did to ramp up production during WW II, all of us are being asked to do our part to prevent the spread of the virus, and volunteer our talents to combat our latest public enemy. What is required is a true Team effort!

It is clear to me that no one has been spared the far-reaching impact of this pandemic. Many Americans have lost loved ones and were refused the opportunity to plan a memorial service to honor the memory of those they cherished. Still others have lost their jobs, been denied medical benefits or have suffered a significant decline in their retirement investment portfolio. The emotional toll of this pandemic is hard to estimate, but it has been immense for all of us who hope and pray for better days in the weeks and months to come.

However, I believe there is a "silver lining" in this daunting experience that has quickly materialized. Many of us have noticed that this difficult time has brought out the best in human behavior, in ways that were unimaginable a few months ago.

### **New Behaviors / Change in Behaviors**

Among other things, my wife, daughter and I have noticed that people seem to be

exhibiting new behaviors (or more realistically - a change in behavior) in the following ways:

- Friendlier attitudes toward others
- More smiles and greetings (even with strangers)
- Greater empathy for those who are suffering
- Enhanced respect and admiration for those on the front-line of the pandemic
- Increased innovation and creativity to produce things of value

Every day we see how this change in behavior helps all of us deal with our new reality, while also providing us with the ability to cope with hardship and loss.

Here are just a few examples of how people are exhibiting their new behaviors:

- Neighbors helping neighbors find needed supplies of food, sundries and other items
- Increased donations to food banks and homeless shelters
- Executives donating their salaries to help employees in need
- Lenders and landlords forgiving mortgage or rent defaults
- Various consultants offering free services to those who desperately require their area of expertise
- Franchise owners and celebrities donating millions to pay for hospital supplies, emerging research in vaccines, and the development of new treatments
- Hotel chains offering their rooms for health care workers or as a quarantine for those who have contracted the virus

While it is true that this type of generosity has long existed, it is uplifting to see that more people are displaying these behaviors than ever before.

### **Why are we Behaving this way?**

As we take a step back to consider our recent calamity (and the change in behavior that has resulted), it is helpful to ponder the motivation for the positive behavior change.

Here are some of the reasons why I believe people have risen to the challenges that face all of us:

- Recognition of our own mortality
- Fear of the unknown
- A sense of responsibility to the community to do something positive
- The understanding that we cannot afford to let someone else do it
- An awareness that we have not done enough to help in the past

Regardless of the reason, I am encouraged to see the productive ways that most of us have reacted to the pandemic. However, the real challenge is how to incorporate these behaviors into our "new normal" once we emerge from the pandemic so they become sustainable over the next several generations. This is what I refer to as the "silver lining" resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Similar to the way we altered airport security after 9/11, our approach to interacting with and supporting one another following the pandemic will be significantly altered - probably permanently.

What will you do today (and in the weeks ahead) to ensure that the best behaviors that we have seen over the past few months become the "new normal" as we care for one another and show each other a new level of respect and gratitude?

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During my Decision Making course that just concluded at The College of New Jersey, we discussed and applied various tools that can be utilized for making better decisions that lead to optimal outcomes. One of these (made popular by Chip and Dan Heath in their book "Decisive") is called the Vanishing Options Test. This test is designed to help decision makers overcome the villain of the narrow frame - defined as: unduly limiting the options that we are considering as we evaluate an important decision.

The test challenges us by asking the question - what if you were not permitted to utilize any of the options that you have come up with after brainstorming your decision situation? In other words, what else might you try as a possible solution? The beauty of this approach is that it empowers us to become more creative and innovative in our thinking!

Like the Vanishing Options Test, COVID-19 has forced us to invent and implement new approaches for doing every day tasks that we took for granted a few months ago. In fact, it has required us to rethink how we shop, travel, work, communicate and interact with each other.

Fortunately, this adaptation process has enabled us to brainstorm ideas that few of us considered prior to the current pandemic.

### **Innovation examples in the "New Normal"**

Examples of our new-found innovation run the gamut from low-tech to high-tech and everything in between.

Here are just a few ways that people and organizations are tapping into their creative mindset to invent new approaches for adapting to our current environment:

- Creating new ways to entertain our children who are now home-schooled
- Establishing pop-up drive-in movies in empty parking lots to replace movie theaters
- Convening impromptu family tailgates in the park in lieu of eat-in restaurant dining
- Using Zoom technology to conduct lectures at high schools and colleges
- Mandating the use of Meeting in Teams (by Microsoft) to foster team collaboration
- Manufacturing and distributing vending machines that sell KN95 masks (by RapidMask2Go)
- Helping people grow green produce at home (via Microgreen kit producer

Hamama)

- Developing "contact-tracing" technology for workplaces, retail stores and warehouses
- Formulating new drugs and medical devices to successfully diagnose and treat the coronavirus

### **What are the implications for this wave of Innovation?**

From my perspective, there are both short-term and long-term implications (and possible benefits) that result from the increase in innovation that we are currently experiencing.

#### Short-term

- Learning new skills and technology to improve performance and enhance career opportunities
- Strengthening interpersonal relationships and social networks to prepare for future societal disruptions / black swan events
- Improving customer buying experiences as technology makes purchase transactions more efficient
- Overcoming disrupted local and global supply chains as we formulate new ways to deliver products and services to customers

#### Long-term

- Creating new jobs, skill sets and new categories of businesses and industries
- Speeding up the generation of new products, services, and business models
- Greater use of robotics, artificial intelligence, and automation that may test the regulatory and legal systems of all countries
- The utilization of temperature screening and "contact-tracing" technology that may impact privacy and data protection concerns

Like it or not, our world is changing rapidly as a direct result of the innovation that is now required to meet the challenges brought about by COVID-19. I believe that this wave of innovation will evolve and ultimately become a permanent part of how we live, work and interact with one another.

In light of this reality, what breakthrough ideas will you devise to make a positive difference in the way we respond to our "new normal"?

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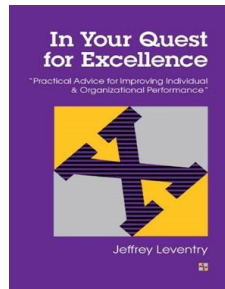
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<http://seventeengormanadvisors.com/book/>

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**Seventeen Gorman Advisors** looks forward to collaborating with you.

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