



The Last Word

Ten Days of Confinement

The results come in an email entitled “Test & Go.” Such an innocuous title for a COVID test makes it clear that whoever chose it knows something about human psychology. As you anticipate receiving your test results, your initial reaction would probably be more somber had the email’s subject line been “The Results of Your Life!” or “The Ultimate Test That Will Determine the Rest of Your Life!” In any case, though, when you receive the email, your heart starts to pound and your mind starts to wander off to places you haven’t been before. Denial takes over and, similar to your firm belief that road accidents only happen to other people, you are almost sure, at least hopeful, that the test results will be fine. Not really wanting to click on that wretched link and wishing you were in any other situation anywhere else in the world, you hesitantly do click on the link. With one eye closed and the other only half open, you look from as high up as you can to get a glimpse of the result. Of course, if you’ve also received the results of your children’s tests, you obviously look at them first. When you realize that the test results of both your children are negative, you’re encouraged and empowered to look at your own. Only to see that your results are positive! And thus begins the real journey.

First you wonder why a positive result could be so negative! Your mind now wanders off to places even farther away. Images and news of people who have suffered from COVID-19 flash through your mind. Your heart now starts pumping very fast. Flashes of even more morbid images also appear, but you try to suppress them, falling back on your “This only happens to others” hypothesis. Apart from the fear for yourself, you start to think of the others living at home. How can I not be in connection with them when I’m living with them? Then you spray aftershave to make sure your sense of smell is still intact. Some even eat a piece of chocolate! The trauma of the first moment is the worst. How will you inform your loved ones that you have contracted the virus and that anything can happen now? You start to worry about the people around you more than about yourself. What an ugly moment when you’re notified that you’ve tested positive.

Ten days of confinement is a long time. If you’re lucky, as I have been, and the symptoms are very mild, you lock yourself in your room and work on your laptop. Of course, your exile is made easier with a hundred “Can I get you anything?” questions every day. You become privileged in a way and don’t even help out with the house chores. “Consider it a holiday,” my daughter says, but forced holidays are never fun. You keep spraying aftershave every day and test your palate on a regular basis. The hours are long and the days are longer. You’re thankful that your symptoms are mild and you’re grateful to have support from the people who love you.

Long live Palestine!

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Publisher

