Happy-Go-Lucky Faster

by JJ Montagnier

<u>It's All Theatre</u>

Tabloid press, reality TV, TV talk shows, social networking and, perhaps, increasingly also, modern-day politics have all got something in common – they contain similar ingredients to those found in soap operas. A trademark of soap opera is that the less exemplary elements of human behaviour are exaggerated and dramatised for effect. A hallmark of the tabloid press is the use of emotional and sensational language which draws readers into the drama.

Gossip and the lives of others had always been of interest to people, but tabloids converted sideshows into the main show. This growing preoccupation spread into other mediums, too, and eventually it went well beyond the lives of only the officially rich and famous. Despite, perhaps, a few protestations to the contrary, those designated as celebrities hardly shy away from being in the limelight. As the saying goes: "All publicity is good publicity", and over time being famous has taken on major significance in modern societies.

By introducing "real-life" elements into the mix, reality TV took the soap opera concept a step further. Selected members of the public could now become famous, too. They would brush shoulders with genuine celebrities and, just like them, have large audiences observe and follow their every move. Taking a cue, perhaps, from soap opera, participants could spice up and dramatise their actions and activities for effect, bringing greater audiences and improved ratings with regard to the shows and themselves.

In these shows, participants were becoming adept at promoting themselves by sometimes being outrageous, controversial or provocative. Audiences were lapping it up and learning from it, too. Reality TV was hugely popular for its novelty value at first but, in due course, the concept influenced and was blended in with various other genres. Some of these shows, at least to a small extent, contain(ed) educational elements such as the celebrity chefs series. A particular type of TV talk show – which came to be known as "Trash TV" – preceded reality TV by a couple of decades already and was based on outrage creation and stirring up animosity amongst participants.

Initially, as with the tabloid genre which slowly spread around the world, not everyone considered the depiction of the lowest common denominator on television as being optimum entertainment. Many viewers actively avoided soap opera, trash TV and reality TV. The majority of professionals preferred to continue reading their broadsheets and magazines. Likewise, discerning television viewers continued to opt for quality TV programmes. On the other hand, more than enough readers and viewers were becoming eager consumers of dramatised and sensationalised entertainment and news media.

That humans have always been intrigued by the weird, the outlandish and the obscure is not in doubt, and an apt analogy would be that the modern-day version of "freak shows" increasingly came to town in some of these shows on a screen and in a newspaper near you. In the press, the tabloid media formula continued to spread and, eventually, even organisations once-known as conservative and well-established news publications adopted the model or blended it in.

Tabloid newspapers had already been using "tabloid headlines" for decades to prompt people to buy the paper. The "tabloid language" used in news content contained special "tabloid

vocabulary" (short, emotional and ambiguous key words) to create intrigue which draws readers into the emotional drama. These days, online tabloid-style headlines are referred to as "click-bait".

Slowly – but surely – the "tabloidification" of close to the whole spectrum of mass media has come about, and it is more or less standard fare today. Although many people grumbled over the loss of quality reportage during the process, consumer interest in serious news media has dwindled along with the quality. Those interested in in-depth analyses and serious factual reporting have to make the effort to seek out alternative news channels; however, the majority of people, it seems, are unlikely to make the effort.

Switching Channels

In the meantime, people's attention and interest were being occupied elsewhere. Social networking platforms had been around for a while already and were growing exponentially. Here, potential celebrity status and the possibility of becoming famous were taken to a whole new level – perhaps to "the ultimate level". These platforms offered the ability to achieve (small-scale) "fame" almost instantaneously. Members of the public were provided with their own broadcasting channels. Prior to that, only the few who had made it onto reality TV or TV talk shows had such opportunities – except for those (including sports stars) who had become real celebrities either through traditional methods or by pure luck.

It's Showtime!

Given the already strong craving from the general public for fame, the arrival of social networking was like opium to the masses. Everyone could now generate their own audiences in a variety of ways and be in charge of their own public image campaigns. By enhancing social media profiles and sometimes by presenting themselves in dramatised ways by being sensational and provocative, instantaneous feedback would arrive and audiences would grow. It was showtime for everyone!

Soon, "being relevant" socially would be measured by – or associated with – having a strong social media presence or not. Those who were not on social media were considered to be almost invisible, or they essentially "did not exist". Not everybody wanted fame, but hardly anyone wanted to be "irrelevant" either – and this remains true today. Therefore, the motivation for participating in social media and social networking was and always has been very powerful. For many, being in the loop and having access to current social events supersede almost everything else, despite the potential side effects of possible overexposure.

While older members of society can clearly remember these still relatively recent changes, younger people who grew up with technology and self-promotion have no other reference points. That narcissism has become rife is, therefore, not necessarily considered a problem, but rather an essential element for functioning optimally within society's current social (media) paradigm. Neither is the drop in the quality of news necessarily perceived as a big issue, because a lot of news is delivered by "citizen journalists" through social media which, of course, does have its merits.

The downside is that news feeds on social networking platforms blend real news with social news. Everything happens in "real" time, is treated equally and, due to an avalanche of information, is usually soon forgotten. There's not much time to read beyond headlines either way and even if there were, the loss of quality news reporting virtually across the board means

that the wider context and background or comprehensive understanding and insights are rarely covered.

<u>Life was Hard</u>

Let us contrast receiving constant feedback online with life offline, where feedback (for living your life normally) is not only *not* guaranteed but is generally lacking, except for feedback from family members and close friends. This is, perhaps, one of the reasons why "life as it used to be" (before social networking) was perceived as being hard. Having to go through life on one's own is somewhat of an alienating experience for many people. It is not surprising then that a medium such as social networking would be eagerly embraced.

Social media removes the possibility or necessity of having to be alone or lonely – ever. On the other hand, it leads to becoming dependent on constant support, affirmation and validation. Having so much – often artificial or superficial – support could provide plasters for basic insecurities, which would usually have had to be worked on within, personally and privately, with limited external support.

Internal strengthening processes can essentially only happen in relative isolation by, for example, becoming accustomed to dealing with negative thoughts or feelings privately. For example, where personal growth is required, introspection would identify the areas in which that would need to happen. Various approaches can then be followed, from reading on the subject to purposeful exposure to relevant real-life situations and circumstances with post-event reflection, which would then further consolidate resolution and growth.

A somewhat hard life – along with an independent struggle – is a necessary requirement for becoming emotionally self-sufficient and for developing a strong individual identity. Reaching full maturity in terms of full personal autonomy and wholeness is a lifetime's process and requires ongoing conscious self-evaluation.

By being digitally connected at all times, continuous external support is never lacking and the time for deep self-reflection is reduced. In many ways, life's direct harshness is filtered out. One could rightfully ask: "Who wouldn't want that?" The result is that this unfortunately translates into many people unwittingly developing co-dependencies with their electronic devices and the remote feedback they receive through them, where such dependencies didn't exist before.

<u>Self-sufficiency and Autonomy</u>

Traditionally, we used to share our successes and important personal events with family members or close friends. Constantly laying our lives bare to general acquaintances or complete strangers is a phenomenon particular to the social networking realm. Being capable of living our lives independently, largely without much recognition at all, used to be a measure of being a mature adult in the world. This used to be "the burden of reality" which we all had to carry after entering adulthood, but it naturally instilled a sense of self-responsibility which resulted in self-confidence.

You had to get on with life and excel in it without being able to bask in constant accolades. Most of the time, your only reward was an inner sense of self-achievement, despite the odds. People were not overly concerned (or obsessed) with the lives of others. They were too busy making it in the real world just like everyone else, and society had little sympathy for perceived

victimhood. Life was hard for virtually everyone, and you were expected to take the lemons you were handed and make lemonade with them.

Autonomous functioning was usually drummed into children from a relatively young age by parents who understood what the real world would hold once their kids were '"out there". Thus, most parents avoided sheltering their children too much. Depending on the country or region, this changed over time as giving constant praise and providing unlimited support became a new model. The expectation and need for constant validation and affirmation that we witness today, not only amongst children and teenagers but well into adulthood, can at least partially be ascribed to this approach.

Ironically, the previous generations succumbed to the reorientation of parenting models and child-rearing in contradiction to all the experience, knowledge and wisdom that they had attained through how they were raised. Having said that, there is no doubt that many in the older generations thought that their childhoods had been unduly harsh. Indeed, a well-known reason cited by parents for having spoiled their children or for not having challenged them more is that they wanted to spare their kids the hard upbringings that they themselves had to go through. However, raising children in an unstructured way may well pave the way to societal decay, as can be observed today. [1]

Recognition and Instant Fame

Before the idea of fame became so interwoven into modern society, instant fame was an exceptional event. People were too grounded in reality to consider it important or to spend an inordinate amount of time pursuing it. It was potentially achievable (people dreamed about it back then, too), but was dependent on extraordinary natural talent, out-of-the-ordinary circumstances or a major lucky break. Recognition within one's job sector was easier to attain. Working hard, earning your dues and fighting for recognition; developing your professional skills and honing them; becoming a master of your arts; building up experience and real-life connections and eventually becoming a real expert in your field usually led to well-earned recognition from peers.

Not unlike today, celebrity status usually came about within certain entertainment sectors such as cinema, television, fashion, the music industry and theatre. Being attractive was advantageous or was even the main requirement in some instances. Even so, these sectors were relatively small and difficult to break into. The possibility of a lucky break into the celebrity arena, therefore, had a powerful and enticing appeal. Nevertheless, for the most part the average citizen knew that it remained a far-fetched notion, reserved mainly for daydreaming.

New Show in Town

Cue social media where almost all obstacles were removed. "Instant fame" could now be attained within a couple of hundred mouse clicks, even by teenagers – perhaps, especially by teenagers. Of course, this type of "fame" might have been relatively lightweight, but for the ego it was (and is) fame nonetheless. With no barriers to entry, except for knowing how to use the internet, and with the motivation brought about by the knowledge that "everyone's at it", having a significant online presence became for many people almost the only way of feeling that they were relevant. It is, indeed, true that young people are often ostracised from their real-life social circles should they not also participate online. [2][iv]

The problem is that without having fully formed real-world identities before that process is transferred online, identity development is transferred to, and continues in, an environment where different rules are at play and where the dynamics lean strongly towards the narcissistic.

Changing Frequencies

In the digital age, many children report that they feel emotionally neglected at times, specifically due to their parents being distracted by their personal devices. Paradoxically, children do not spend sufficient time alone with themselves either (within safe environments) due to the constant presence of their mobile devices. [3]

Considering this context, attention-seeking strategies and habits are prone to be developed beyond what would usually be the norm. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that children often revert to their computers or Smartphones to seek out compensating validation and affirmation through self-promotion on the internet. When the online social media world becomes a regular source of emotional feedback, it can become a crutch to lean on at an early age.

Older people who had moved online later in life, but who spend excessive time acting out their online persona(s), risk experiencing a sense of loss of a part of their real or authentic self, even when they had a strong sense of self prior to their online lives. Due to neglect, the authentic-self may eventually recede into the background while the online persona(s) come more to the fore.

In an ideal world – one that already exists, but one that many people have left behind – children would have a combination of sufficient direct unfiltered emotional input from their parents, but they would also spend sufficient unfiltered time on their own, in order to figure themselves out for themselves. In such an ideal world, adults would balance their online and offline worlds in order to not lose track of their core individual selves nor their loved ones.

Social Media and the Persona

In the traditional and real world of direct human interactions, you can boost your persona only so much. Although pretence and vanity are tolerated in small measures, people tend to see through them rather quickly. During face-to-face interactions, a certain level of legitimacy is required, and continuous superficiality is counterproductive towards fostering authentic and genuine long-term interpersonal relationships.

In the social networking realm, persona-enhancing is the whole idea. Different rules of legitimacy are at play, such as social proof and group association, and the vast majority of people don't know each other beyond their avatars. If most interpersonal interactions happen online these days, it can be easily deduced that real-life character development has taken a major back seat. Persona-polishing and avatar-enhancing, for which no amount of time seems to be excessive, are the norm.

Posers and Followers

Offline, we do not post notes on the windows of our homes to announce what we are up to inside. Neither do we stick notes on our car windows to announce where we are going and what we are going to do there. We also do not add additional notes to our windows to provide updates. If that were the case, we would not be able to see through our windows. Peering

closely into people's lives ("windows") in real life would certainly be frowned upon. Yet, following the minutiae of people's lives online, which they willingly display, is completely acceptable.

Exhibitionism and voyeurism are human tendencies that reside in everyone. They may be given expression outside the online realm at times, but generally they tend to remain relatively dormant, hidden or suppressed due to natural societal expectations. However, in the social networking sphere these elements are given the opportunity for full expression, albeit in an altered format but within a framework of it being completely normalised. Where narcissistic exhibitionist tendencies were always discouraged in the real world, the opposite is true in the social media sphere.

Virtual "posers" and "followers" can now post notes on their own interactive tabloid press pages (virtual "windows"), while their counterparts and "online passersby" follow their news and updates. Posers and followers take both roles interactively while keeping multiple interactions going with other followers, posers and passersby. Validations and affirmations are exchanged for small changes made to profile statuses, and everyone keeps the dance going.

It is usually only when the dancing stops (or slows down) that inevitable withdrawal symptoms set in and replenishing efforts start up soon afterwards, either consciously or unconsciously. These enhanced mutual-affirmation emotional feedback-loops tend to eventually become integral for daily functioning.

Happy Chemicals

We rarely think about the technical functions or elements of our minds, but continuously working in the background are brain chemicals and hormones which act as influencers and drivers. They interact with our emotions and also produce physiological reactions and sensations. Some of these neurotransmitters and hormones are known as "happy chemicals" because of the way they make us feel when they are activated. No wonder then that we seek them out. Not only do we seek them out, but we tend to do so repetitively in habit-forming ways. Sigmund Freud's pleasure principle can most probably, to a degree, be ascribed to this phenomenon.

Happy-Go-Lucky Faster

The greatest positive advantage of the internet is that we have information at our fingertips and if we are discerning and selective enough, the internet can be hugely beneficial. A case in point is the multitude of resources available on brain chemicals and how they function, which fills in the picture and shines a light into some of our blind spots.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that (amongst other things) has a motivational function which causes us to experience anticipation for what we need or would like to achieve in life. This results in us striving towards our objectives. We are then mobilised to act decisively in pursuing our interests and in seeking them out. Dopamine is released as soon as we close in on our subject or our goal. During long-term projects, dopamine would be released shortly before each stage or milestone is reached, and this would drive the person forward to the next stage until the project is completed. [a, b, c]

The internal *opioid* system works in conjunction with dopamine and provides the feel-good satisfaction of a job well done after completion (of each stage) or the pleasure experienced after finding something you were looking for. [b]

However, we can get additional dopamine and opioid rewards (and get them faster) from frequent social networking updates. For example, milestones can become the amount of shares, likes or "friends" that we accumulate and going after more milestones keeps us going.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that (amongst other things) motivates us to improve our position or status in life through a sense of wanting recognition, respect or appreciation; receiving positive feedback from role models, superiors or peers builds confidence – and confidence releases serotonin. For example, building up credibility within a community through authentic actions and interactions would be worthwhile because subsequent natural positive feedback would be the result (as explored in Part 8). [a, b,e]

In terms of personal growth, the objective would usually be to reach a stage where a person's self-worth is solid enough to go through life without expecting or needing excessive validation or feedback. In other words, by having a natural sense of one's intrinsic qualities and real-life achievements and successes, one's serotonin levels remain elevated and are produced organically (intrinsically).

However, we can get additional serotonin rewards (and get them faster) from receiving instant positive feedback by frequently posting about our achievements online. Even posting about trivial matters, such as what we are doing or eating in the moment, would provide feedback.

Oxytocin is a hormone which (amongst other things) motivates us to seek out the company of people we can trust in order to bond with them. We are, therefore, motivated to seek out like-minded people and groups. When entering groups in real life, it usually takes time to be fully accepted or incorporated, but once accepted we would regularly receive our oxytocin rewards which are experienced as a sense of belonging and of being part of a group.

When one-to-one friendships or relationships form over time, they usually reach a point where there is enough trust for both parties to drop their guard and to relax into it; at that point, a bond is formed. Oxytocin is released, and it will be released regularly whenever the two persons subsequently meet or connect – for as long as the mutual trust lasts. [a, b, e].

However, we can get additional oxytocin rewards (and get them easier and faster) by joining online groups; we can then support their causes or can "virtue-signal" a group that we are "one of them".

Adrenalin is a hormone that has to do with fight or flight, but can motivate us to see stressful situations through. For example, an adrenalin rush during a stressful exam can provide the energy and motivation to keep a clear head and get through it. Although adrenalin is usually linked to fear, it can cause a rush which many people experience as pleasure when it is triggered in a controlled environment. For example, to relieve boredom and to feel alive, people would often seek out controlled adrenalin rushes. The most common would be extreme sports such as bungee jumping or skydiving. Aggressive direct physical or emotional confrontations would also release adrenalin, but are avoided due to the real possibility of their resulting in physical harm due to negative feedback. [e]

However, adrenalin rushes can also be found remotely (fast, frequently and safely) through online gaming, online trolling and (in more extreme cases) by participating in "online lynching".[iv,v]

<u>Happy-Always-On</u>

As we know, external drugs, such as nicotine, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines and others, overstimulate brain chemicals, but so do online gaming, social media and social networking – just somewhat differently. "Happy chemicals" such as dopamine, opioids, serotonin and oxytocin are not designed to be "always on", but with the advent of mobile devices they are rarely switched off. [f]

<u>"It's All Good"</u>

Sometimes, any feedback can become "good feedback" with the differentiation between it being positive or negative having faded out. In such cases, "feedback is feedback" because it is the stimulation that the user is after. The need for kicks means that negative feedback can be a substitute for positive feedback and is often easier to obtain. For example, being controversial, shocking and insulting in forums or on social networking tends to trigger stronger responses at a higher rate, which would explain why some people troll. [v]

This is corroborated by research done in Japan which identified a subset of dopamine neurons which are stimulated by negative feedback instead of positive feedback. [4]

<u>"More is Better"</u>

A common feature of spending time on the internet is that people spend more time on it than they intend to. This has to do with the dopamine and opioid mix. Dopamine motivates seeking behaviour, and opioids provide the rewards when finding what the seeker is looking for. However, research has found that the dopamine-motivated seeking behaviour is stronger than the opiate-provided rewards. [b]

Sometimes, people browse aimlessly for hours, looking for something without knowing what it is that they are looking for. Nothing they come across satisfies them sufficiently to stop browsing, only to eventually succumb to the urge to go offline once sufficient browsing-fatigue has set in. Due to the vast amount of information and content on the web, there is always more to find and (so the thinking goes), potentially, something better.

However, browsing social networking platforms excessively tends to have the effect of either comparing oneself with others (potentially resulting in low self-esteem) or of being drawn into some kind of drama playing off on it (which then triggers negative emotions and reactions).

<u>Mobile Pinball Arcades</u>

In the past, when a person left the shopping mall, the casino or the pinball arcade, for example, they gave their minds a rest. Besides, they only went there once in a while except if, perhaps, they had become somewhat addicted to shopping or gambling. Even so, they would not have been present at those places every waking moment of their day. Presently, life offline literally pales in comparison to life enhanced by the always-on mobile "pinball arcades" that an increasing number of people – perhaps, the majority – carry around with them.

<u>Bouncing off the Walls</u>

Feelings, sensations, affirmations, validations, jealousy, envy, blaming and shaming, anger and outrage, trolling and online-lynching – virtual theatre provides it all … and it's just a touch-

screen away. The intense emotional highs and lows experienced remotely through screens have our brain chemicals (constantly) "bouncing off the walls".

Not Such a Happy Chemical

Not all brain chemicals have a feel-good effect. Cortisol, for example, produces negative feelings naturally and there is a reason for it. If we were euphoric at all times, we would become reckless. And so, the "unhappy chemical" is meant to bring us down to earth as a survival mechanism.

According to psychologist, Loretta Breuning (Ph.D.), unhappy feelings produced by cortisol are always present, but are masked by "happy chemicals"[a]. That is why we sometimes experience negative thoughts at random times. When our happy chemicals dip, the unhappy chemical filters through. The implication is that the less we are able to deal with unhappy thoughts, the more we may want to seek out happy-chemical rewards so they can mask the negative feelings or sensations. (There are, of course, cases where people have brain-chemical deficits or imbalances which would usually be resolved through prescribed medication – but those are the exceptions, not the rule.)

The purpose of the cortisol-induced negative feelings and thoughts that come through at times is to "send information" or "give a message" so that we can reflect upon what the message is and then potentially make adjustments to certain courses of action. According to Ms Breuning, if these messages or impulses are ignored or not paid attention to, more cortisol is released by the brain, typically causing the person to overcompensate even more by going after more happy chemicals. [a]

If we never learn how to take the time to deal with negative thoughts or feelings, because we are never away from our devices (in the case of younger people) or if we have fallen out of practice for the same reason, compulsive happy-chemical-seeking is a very possible outcome.

Merry-Go-Round

Social networking is not very content-rich in terms of quality information, and the "pinball arcade" factor is high. The satisfaction factor is thus equivalent to that of "fast food", which, to use an analogy, is high on sugar, but low on sustenance. Binge-social networking is even more of a reality today than binge-eating or binge-drinking. The tasty bits in social networking are the social bits which are the equivalent of the sugar in fast foods (the more you eat, the more you tend to want to go back for more).

Stepping Away

Many people cannot understand why it is so difficult to step away from their screens. When it is being suggested that we should balance the time connected to personal technology with time away from it, it is commonly interpreted as insinuating that we should be "less happy". The fact of the matter is that many people have become accustomed to experiencing "happy sensations" to a much higher degree and much more constantly compared to how they would have under normal circumstances without technology.

Everything in Moderation

The suggestion for balance is thus not suggesting that we should be "less happy", but rather that we should aim to be happy more organically. This implies guarding against building

dependencies on superficial, simulated and stimulated emotional feedback and responses and to rather source the real thing from fellow humans directly through in-person and face-to-face interactions.

Heads are Away

Clearly, we have created a lot of additional complexity in our lives by having embraced personal technologies to the extent that we have. A significant portion of people's attention span and space for deep reflection and contemplation is constantly captured by social media (even when they are not on it, they still think about it) to the extent that many people are oblivious of many of the real issues facing the real world and humanity. In addition, what constitutes as being "real issues" have become obscured and relative to everything else, while whatever is "triggered in the moment", due to online habits, tends to take priority.

Tunnel Vision

If all issues are relative, then what is relevant is only determined by what gets the most exposure or has "gone viral". In this way, by living one's life through modern media, one risks ending up with tunnel vision. What is not presented, featured or exposed by the channels we browse or subscribe to, is off the radar and "doesn't exist".

Ignorance is Bliss

Without stepping out of the mainstream and making a concerted effort to inform oneself and check all facts, ignorance as a constant is almost an inevitable result. This, ironically, contradicts the erroneous belief that by being connected, a person is automatically "in the loop" and informed. One might be in the loop socially, but whether that equates to being truly informed is, of course, highly debatable.

However, one could speculate that really being informed assigns a certain amount of responsibility in relation to various issues in life and in the world, because with knowledge human conscience comes into play. Hence, the popularity of the entire range of mind-numbing and escapist media tools available for our pleasure, which we eagerly consume.

Reality May Bite

Our increasing reliance on technology for everything, including our emotions, has made it virtually indispensable, while the near future almost certainly holds a world of vastly reduced energy and other resources. This means that the viability of many future technological solutions could become constrained. There is, in fact, a likelihood that in the future we may have to do without some of the modern technologies that we have already become accustomed to.

By being so distracted by what we are holding up right in front of us, we have potentially lost sight completely of the bigger picture. Therefore, the future described above is one which, for the moment, can hardly be fathomed in our current conceptualisation of a limitless world of absolute abundance; yet, this is a world that the majority of us will come to experience within our lifetimes.

According to Carl Jung, that which we avoid tends to meet us halfway on the road to our destiny (see Part 10). The questions that we need to ask ourselves are: "Do we care to open our eyes and look at what our destiny holds, in relation to our current trajectory?'" and "Do we

dare to exit the tunnel and look at the bigger picture to see what has been creeping up on us 'while we have been away'?" [7 - 15]

<u>Big Picture News</u>

Energy Transition
Research and important recent reports suggest that, it is most likely already too late to convert all human energy requirements into renewable energies in time before fossil fuel energies run out. [7,8,9,10]

Climate Change
Due to the industrial world's impact on climate change, temperatures are set to rise well into the future, even if we cut C02 emissions right down right away. [11,12,13]

Mass Extinction
The World Wildlife Foundation reports that, due to the human impact on the planet, earth is already deep into the 6th Mass Extinction which may seriously threaten human food security and the balance of the whole planetary eco-system. [14,15]

<u>Coming Down</u>

A combination of personal self-reliance, the ability to contribute and function within a community context, and emotional self-sufficiency has always been regarded as a set of crucially important personal commodities during difficult circumstances. Those lacking the required skills to function within a partial return-to-basics paradigm, which is something we are bound to encounter in the years ahead, may find themselves challenged during the transitional process.

However, those who pay close attention to what is happening in the real world and seek out real news (while discerning facts from fiction and drama from reality) and prepare accordingly, both internally and externally, stand a much better chance of finding themselves on higher ground when difficult times roll around.

By J.J. Montagnier

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A shortened version of his article is available for publication - please contact the author: http://gypsycafe.org/contact/

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http://wp.me/p4E4HJ-1aa   gypsycafe.org