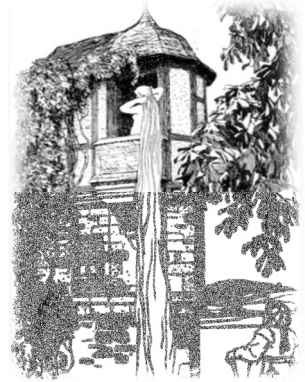


## Letters from Lockdown

Hi everybody,

Greetings from Rapunzel's tower. I guess that everyone is mildly excited over the latest figures on Covid-19. It's 'a light at the end of the tunnel'. But as one scallywag said: "Just make sure that its not a train coming in the opposite direction!"



That got me thinking about the difference our attitudes make. Words are one thing, actions are another, but we underestimate the power of our attitude. *The way* we speak and act, is as powerful as the other two as a transformative tool. Many are the testimonies of how the attitudes shown by people have made a huge difference to a situation which was problematic. But sometimes we are just negative about life, and at other times unrealistically optimistic. [or as my scallywag said: "a pessimist is an optimist with years of experience"]

How then may we to be able to find and exercise the 'right' (or helpful) attitude? I have found a little dictum from my training days useful; I was taught: "Power + Attitude = Performance" i.e. If one wanted the aircraft to climb then two things were necessary – one, you had to apply appropriate power and two, the nose of the a/c had to be raised up.

It's easy to be pessimistic or negative, and sometimes it is the default approach for some, for one can find much that is 'wrong' or evil within the world. Newspapers too follow this trend towards bad news! What we may not see is that by surrounding ourselves with this negative hue in life we might be building our own prisons. Gurdjieff [a mystic philosopher] once said that "the only way you can get out of jail is to know you are in it".

Subconsciously we may have begun to depend on things like social distinctions, possessions, image and status as protections and balk

wards in our inner sense of self belief. This may result in events, such as we are going through, that make us feel a bit trapped by life, that may be interpreted as 'typically unfair' and fill us with a bitter spirit.

Yet as life progresses, we can discover the truth, that we are but players on the stage of the world's narrative. The early Church not only survived but thrived, they had no power, wealth, status or even safety, but they grew (as in Acts 2:42-47) 'in the favour of all'.

Their freedom came from the knowledge that they were equally loved by a God of grace and justice and part of something bigger than individual empires and causes. This 'conviction' was not built on knowledge of events or control of their immediate situations, it was not a 'quid pro' agreement with God, but on an unconditional, and explicitly favourable orientation of blessings upon the earth and all its creatures. They had something that all the might of the Roman Empire could not crush, something that was created inside all of humanity, that in Genesis was named as the 'image' of God. This faith in a God who was interested, involved and part of their lives in an intimate and loving way gave them a freedom that real prison walls could not contain! (read Acts 16:22-29 about Paul and Silas 's actions in prison))

This 'power' was discerned and accessed by and through 'relationships'! As we think of the essences of relationship we may understand why Rohr says about this Covid-19 shut down: *Who would have thought that creating physical distance from others would be an authentic way to care for our neighbours, especially the most vulnerable?* Yet all around us we are discovering almost a greater sense of freedom to reach out (by Telephone and email or image Face Book or many more means) to those around us, to engage, include, to support. We greet and chat with strangers, leave messages, support those who are vulnerable, practice our little talents locally, in so many ways we have never been so free!

Till the next time I let my hair down, or my beard grows...  
Leigh