

“THE SPLENDID AND THE VILE”: TIME TO SHOW RESILIENCE

**A Piece on Censorship and North American Government
Inspired By A Book of the Same Name**

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Association on April 12, 2021**

2020 was a wild year.

COVID-19 gave us an experience about government control over our lives that, regardless of whether you support the government decrees or not, it is a reach we did not expect. I never dreamed that I would be locked down in my home. I never dreamed that stores and restaurants would be closed. I never dreamed that not wearing a mask would become an unwelcome thing to the majority, creating self-reinforcing compliance pressure.

And then there was the US Presidential Election run up and run down. There were strong passions on both the Democratic and the Republican sides. The drama was more than I expected. I never expected to see the National Guard protecting the capital. I never expected that protection to carry on as long as it has.

Both COVID and the US Election have revealed wide divides.

Relating to COVID, there are those who totally believe the narrative they are given in the mainstream news and there are those that strongly believe a very different narrative in the alternative news. There are people in between, not sure what to believe.

For the US Election, we see the same divide in views. The narratives, which show core beliefs between the Democrats and Republicans, are as different as they are alarmist. This has not improved after the election.

I think Canadians may be less polarized than people in the US, but we are as divided, and in a state of fear and uncertainty like I have never experienced. And whether we should be scared or should not be scared, fear is not a good place from which to make decisions. As difficult as it may be to accept on a bad day, we can spend less time in fear if we work on it.

A friend gave me a book called *The Splendid and the Vile* for Christmas.

It is about Winston Churchill and his family, starting when he took office just before the air Battle of Britain and ending when he lost the election near the end of the war. One thing that struck me was how afraid people were when the bombing of the cities started. Then after a while, they became resilient instead of afraid. They adapted because they had to. **We can adapt also, because we have to.**

Another thing that has struck me in the last year, is the amount of censorship.

There has been story after story of the major Internet platforms censoring viewpoints that they do not accept. People who built media and information platforms for years found themselves shut down for having an unwanted view. New platforms have formed to give the "banned" a place to publish again. This creates the situation where people will generally be on platforms that only attract information consistent with the view of the platform.

Censorship is not consistent with a liberal democracy.

Censorship does not help citizens make informed choices. Censorship makes some of us suspicious of our institutions, which may or may not be warranted. Censorship can make us suspicious of each other.

I don't have any solution as to how to stop the censorship. I do think that we should do all we can to reduce it and voice concern when we see it. Refrain from being part of a mob.

I usually focus on censorship of truthful health information. That is still going on and will increase when the Self-Care Framework is fully introduced. We are set for some changes soon, so watch for updates from NHPPA.