

## #DAY15LOCKDOWNSA

### **Building your perseverance and resilience during an extended lockdown**

by

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Last night President Cyril Ramaphosa decided to extend the national lockdown with another two weeks until the end of April. Economists, business leaders, small business owners reacted with shock citing the devastating financial impact on their businesses, staff and the economy at large. On the other hand, health experts welcomed the decision based on the reality that scientific evidence clearly points out that the health risk is simply too high to end the lockdown as originally planned. Also, the president made further announcements such as the 33% salary cut for himself, cabinet and premiers, a symbolic move that shows personal and collective sacrifice and commitment to the cause in an effort to generate more income for the Solidarity Fund to support those in need.

The stark reality is that the biggest reason for the extension is probably the lesson from South Korea and that is the need for mass testing. South Africa only reached the overall number of 60 000 of people tested this week, thus lagging far behind in terms of where we should have been. Mass testing needs to be rolled out in all communities over the next week as a matter of urgency.

As ordinary South Africans many of us have managed to adapt to the expected 21 days lockdown, and started to generate some hope that it would be over soon. With this shift in the goal posts, we need to add another 21 days to our recent history of 14 days to achieve the new total of 35 days of lockdown, a pretty tall order indeed. But as a people we have learned to become adaptable and resilient in these difficult times. As South Africans we have survived many terrible things in the past – from apartheid, to HIV/AIDS, to the Zuma administration, to the Guptas, to water shortages to load-shedding (ironically we are being spared this one thanks to the virus) and several other setbacks. Today, 10 April is also the day in which anti-apartheid activist Chris Hani was murdered in 1993 at a particular turbulent moment in our history. As the Presidency said this morning, the legacy of Chris Hani “inspires us to face this time of crisis and deep uncertainty with the same courage and determination”. As a nation, in more ways than one, we have learned to become resilient, hence our ability to bounce back, persevere and get on with our lives for yet another series of 21 days of lockdown. Just think about how we all managed to cope with load-shedding. We resent it, but we persevere.

But how should we move forward with another 21 days of lockdown? We first need some self-talk, and then a family meeting (how wonderful to have a normal traditional meeting and not another Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting) to plan another 21 days of lockdown. Here

are some ideas for you to consider as part of this process of persevering and building your resilience during this time:

- Make a list of all the things you have achieved over the last 14 days of lockdown and celebrate these successes.
- Make a list of all the things you wanted to do, and probably have fallen behind your schedule, be thankful that you now have more time to complete these tasks.
- Tackle the next big job at work and spend as much time as possible on it. Do it to the best of your ability.
- Decide to spend more time on the things you can do better over the next 21 days.
- Spend some time to think about your own personal brand and how you can build it over the next 21 days and after that.
- Treasure the special people in your life and thank them for their love and care.
- Improve on your writing skills by writing some notices to friends, colleagues or family members. Send a special WhatsApp or SMS to people you appreciate and thank them for their friendship and love.
- Write down all the things in your life that you are thankful for.
- Reflect on your life and plan your career and life over the next three years in terms of the things you still want to do and achieve.
- Spend more time to organise a real special birthday of a family member, friends or colleague and really put in some extra effort to make this (virtual) birthday special.
- Schedule a weekly day to clean the house and garage, remember hygiene and cleanliness is even more important during the absence of your domestic worker. Alternatively, do only one room a day, but do it properly.
- Do some extra work in the garden or pay more attention to your house plants. Remove the dust from your house plants.
- Tweet an extra 10 tweets a day, make sure that most of them are positive tweets or Instagram entries.
- Send a special message to an essential worker you know personally and realise that this person's life is at a much higher risk than yours working and staying at home.
- Renew your wedding vows at home, or commitment to your partner.
- Do a re-assessment of your house insurance schedule, given the fact that you are properly under-insured. Develop a formal inventory on Excel, then you can update it on an annual basis.
- Spend some time planning your personal finances and adjust your budget for the rest of the year.
- Update your tax administration for your next tax return.
- Listen to your favourite music.
- Watch a movie or youtube video.
- Read more articles and books to build your knowledge, we will need you to be stronger and sharper after the lockdown.
- Get some exercise at home if possible.
- Write a blog or an article, it may be your first one and share it with a friend or colleague who will gladly edit it for you.
- Download a few new apps on your phone that are really adding value to your life.

- Phone a friend or family member you may have neglected over the last month or year.
- Rearrange and reorganise your house to make it look different and more comfortable for you to occupy full-time for another 21 days.
- Take some photos of the things you appreciate at home, such as your family members, kitchen, study, patio or wine collection (if you do have any bottles left).
- Reach out to a person you know who is completely alone without a friend or family member in a flat or house.
- Save some water from your latest shower and wash your car or windows.
- Think of new ideas to improve your house and work, write these ideas down and convert them to action plans.
- Keep calm and stay positive.
- Spend more time doing reflection, prayers and meditation.
- Rate your household on a score of 1 to 10 on your compliance to the lockdown regulations and improve your score and keep it up.

Yes, some of these ideas may be uncomfortable, but remember this is about how you focus, refocus and persevere during these extraordinary times. Remember we are all in this together despite our isolation. If you have ideas, please share them with other people on social media. But keep in mind that we need to inspire one another and stay positive, even if it is really difficult and frustrating at times. Also think of the poor and homeless, people who are not in a position to do most of the above things.

The extension of the lockdown reaffirms the president's position of people first, and everything else after that. While the economic cost is devastating and will most certainly put us much deeper into hardship and recession, we will persevere and survive another two weeks. The simultaneous scary and exciting part of all of this, is that we should prepare ourselves for a new world after that. Life will never be the same. Business will never be the same. Society will never be the same. Things that will have not been prioritised before will now be prioritised, such as financial security, health, hygiene, and care for people. And above all, rebuilding the economy will require an extraordinary effort from all of us.

Moreover, while we are all praising the president for being such a great statesman during these difficult times, it is also sad that the delivery of water, accommodation for the homeless, food for the poor and other basic services were only delivered because of the crisis. When Ramaphoria 2.0 is over after the lockdown, society will demand that we tackle unemployment, poverty, inequality and service delivery with the same sense of urgency we had during the lockdown.

There is one thing that the majority of commentators agree on and that is that our top priority will be economic growth. We will need to work much harder and smarter and in total different ways, not only to catch up, but to turn our weak economy around. Therefore, let us get through the next 21 days and prepare our minds for the total transformation of work, society and the economy. It all starts with our own personal transformation to become good citizens in our own spheres of influence.

I wish you all a blessed Good Friday and Easter Weekend. For all of us this is our first Easter Weekend in lockdown. Hopefully it will also be our last. We need to be focused in our thinking

and actions to sustain our households through this period, and then to rebuild our organisations, societies and economies. The world will not be the same after the lockdown, perhaps here is our once in a lifetime opportunity to really create a caring society. Caring starts at home, how we look after our loved ones, and then how we support other people. But there are masses of people out there who need our support. Yes, we shall overcome Mr President, but we can only achieve full satisfaction and meaning as a people in a country free of homeless people, poverty, crime, violence, unemployment and inequality – a caring human space in which all people can realise their potential and be allowed to exercise their full human rights and live a fulfilled human experience. Let us persevere and be resilient during these difficult times of isolation in an extended lockdown.

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