

What the value?

 By [Lisa Steingold](#)

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I have no doubt that most of us have been wondering what on earth happened in the world recently. The problem with just wondering is that it doesn't really leave us anywhere and doesn't translate into any kind of meaning - therefore rendering the whole crisis somewhat useless in my opinion. We must find meaning from our struggles if we are to allow them to transform us for the better. I adopted this from the great philosopher and psychologist Victor Frankl, who developed logotherapy after surviving Nazi concentration camps in the 1940s. For those of you possibly unfamiliar:

"It is through a search for meaning and purpose in life that individuals can endure hardship and suffering." ~ [VeryWellMind](#)

Truth, fear and value

If we are to unearth the meaning from these radical times in which we find ourselves, from the perspective of leadership, I see three main trends arising from the period of coronavirus; truth, fear and value. It's more important than ever before to question what is presented as truth, and to question our own truth as it is to learn to manage our fears. Whilst I believe that Coronavirus is a serious problem, the spillover effects have potentially been far greater. Fear and untruths have run rampant and to this day I do not believe any government nor health organisation can categorically state that prolonged lockdown is the best-known response. But more on that another day as I want to focus on value.



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It's fascinating and more than a little scary to see how quickly the value of certain products, services and even people changed as our context changed. The value of a car suddenly went down, but the value and usage of internet connectivity and apps rose. The value of human connection and tobacco went up, whilst the value for hotels decreased. Of course, as the world opens up the value will shift again - but there is a greater conversation to be had despite the constant flux.

We as humans have always played the value game. Our very currency system is based on the propensity to pay more or less based on perceived value but if we are going to take full advantage of this crisis and its opportunities then we must look at value on a deeper level. Whilst money can be the currency or definition of value in some instances (and I'm not going to delve into cryptocurrency here), it does not define value in its most expansive and true context. Value is quintessentially solving of problems and true value is always, yes always, mutually beneficial.

Partnership and human connection

If one looks at this in the context of relationships one could say that an intimate relationship solves the problem of loneliness and the desire for partnership and human connection. Whilst one might take on other problems in exchange such as who washes the dishes or makes morning coffee, it is generally accepted because of the larger problem solve and sense of mutual fulfilment. Let me reiterate, the value is always mutually beneficial, and potentially even exponentially beneficial, which is why great brands don't just solve their customers' problems in their own way, great or small, they change the world.

Brands that stem from meaning and provide meaning greater than a product or service will win hands down every time over a purely commercially-minded brand. Create meaning for your audience and your value will outlast the impact of coronavirus.

This is something that many brands and marketers (and I include myself here) have to keep in mind. The highest form of a brand, and by its extension its marketers, is to solve problems, not sell stuff. The best brands in the world make this seem effortless and in recent months have proven this.

“ The impact of coronavirus is showing us the shadowside of value. Value is not busyness, hustling nor is it status. If one looks at value along a continuum with worthlessness at one end of the scale and over-inflated worth on the other then I do believe that leaders, organisations and us, as individuals are being shown where we sit and as a result how models have to shift. We're being asked to be able to articulate our value, to show up to deliver it but also to sit back and redefine what we determine to be valuable and how we receive value from the people, products and organisations that surround us. ”

Something to potentially consider next time you're looking at the world and wondering what on earth happened.

ABOUT LISA STEINGOLD

Lisa Steingold is a marketer, wannabe cyclist and author of *Out the Crap: the Power of Authenticity for Brands*.

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