

Covid-19 presents a golden opportunity for change

By [Greg Nott](#)

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The weeks wear on under lockdown and Covid-19 cases are ramping up in South Africa. As we cling to semblances of life before the pandemic, I'm convinced that if we're going to come out victorious, it's going to be hope for the future that sees us through this especially difficult time in global history.



Greg Nott

We are living in a time of not only national, but global uncertainty and economic and social turmoil. We've seen public figures succumb to untimely deaths, governments facing bankruptcy and corporations that have been with us for generations fall to the Covid-19 storm. Even sporting events, which have a unique ability to unite and inspire us, have been put on hold until further notice. The human engagements and interactions that give meaning and provide witness to our lives have even the introverts among us crying out for connections.

For those of us who have been holding out for justice, or breakthrough, or better prospects or a better year, 2020 has brought further devastation and delays.

“ The world is united in suffering and what matters now is keeping hope alive for not just survival, but for a brighter - albeit very different - tomorrow ”

Use this window of opportunity

I believe that there are only a few windows of opportunity in one's life to really change the course of one's trajectory. Sure, one can choose to change on any given day, but for the most part, the choices we make are shaped by the thoughts and habits which have become our defaults. It's usually a change in circumstance, a confrontation or tragedy that provides the energy and reflection to redirect the course of our lives. And in this instance, Covid-19 is providing all of us with that gift.

The current reality has also provided industries with the impetus to prioritise their digital transformation. For firms of attorneys and corporates that boast impressive offices in the heart of business districts, our client engagements and consultations are now all happening virtually. Overnight it seems we as Africans are leaping into the Digital Age.



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On a personal level and as an attorney, I have been reminded that it's during times of crisis that important pieces of legislation can emerge. It was Apartheid's treacherous legal course that was the fire from which our Constitution and Freedom Charter emerged. A legal fraternity that is able to protect citizens and keep society on a sound moral grounding is critical at this time. Whether it is challenging unreasonable lockdown regulations, ensuring the contractual rights of a client, protecting the personal information of individuals as cyber threats grow or defending the role of journalists, now is the time for the legal fraternity to re-imagine its contribution to a meaningful future.

Reflect, recalibrate, reset, reimagine. Then recover.

Covid-19 has made molehills of our mountains and reduced much of what we deemed important before to the ash heap. We're all having to reflect and reset. We are having to re-evaluate our priorities, reset our focus, redo our budgets, resize our businesses, reconsider our relationships and recover our lives. And to do so every single week, sometimes even daily.

When all that can be shaken is being shaken, foundations are the difference between survival and failure. The Covid-19 pandemic is exposing our foundations from individual to societal levels. The pandemic is exposing our misplaced hopes and showing us that a life revolving around profits at the expense of people and purpose is futile.



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I recently wrote that current crisis provides South Africa with an opportunity to reset our energy master plan and plan for our recovery with a new green deal.

Now is the time to review our foundations, and where they are shaky, to reset our course and to rebuild in a different way, using materials and principles that will withstand future storms.

Stay the course and keep plugging on

It's easy to react in a crisis and give up whatever goodwill and efforts you were applying to a worthy cause. But now is the

time to buckle down and dig a little deeper, to keep in the direction of the things you established and foundations that were laid that will leave a good legacy for the generations to follow.

Keep hope alive

Human beings are amazingly creative and resilient. And as Africans, we are incredibly entrepreneurial and resourceful. Constraint can spur the most inspiring creativity but you need to keep hope alive. Faith and hope encourage creativity that leads to solutions. Despair crushes it.

With hope and faith, we can keep saying 'Out of the ashes, hope will arise' until it's no longer an empty mantra but starts to create thoughts, opportunities, open doors and eventually – new realities.

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