# **“What If the Virus Is Medicine?” by Craig Freshley**

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[Go here for an audio version and a song](https://quakermessages.com/2020/03/24/what-if-the-virus-is-medicine/). Read on for a written version.

Well, I had a different message planned. It was gonna be really great, by the way. It has stories and quotes. I was even gonna play a song for you at the end. The message came to me a month ago. I called Martha and said, “I got one for ya!”

That was a month ago. That message was not about coronavirus.

I tried to hang onto that message. I told myself, “Well that’s okay. I’ll start this morning by telling everyone that this message is not about coronavirus. I’m gonna give you all a break and take you to a different place.”

But a new message has come to me. It’s about coronavirus. This is the place where we are.

As I struggled with, you know, what message to give – still hanging onto the old – I realized that the things I have to say about coronavirus are things that might be hard to say or even impossible to say a few weeks from now. The time is now.

As Quakers we’re supposed to be open, and proceed as way opens. I’m trying to do that.

And I am going to tack on a little song at the end. I love singing in this place and I think you might like it. Okay ready? I hope so. Let’s hold on.

What if the virus is medicine? What if the virus helps and heals, rather than hurts and harms.

Imagine a little chat between the Mistress of the Universe and the Master of the Universe. Reading the morning paper back in November 2019.

You know? Earth is in trouble?

I know! Those people are going to burn the place up?

Think we should do something?

I don’t know, maybe?

Like what? What would we do?

I don’t know. Something, something that slows them down for gods sake.

Right, and maybe…maybe it should start small and slow and give them plenty of time to adapt.

Right yeah, but it needs to be something that has real impact. You know, give nature a serious break.

Oh yeah, totally. We should do something.

Hmm. Want to try the old plant a microbe trick? We could start with just one microbe in one person.

That might work.

Well you do it this time.

No you do it.

No you.

Okay, okay maybe I can get to it next week. Right, well this will be interesting.

Pass the toast.

This is a provocative conversation, I know. The idea that God is intervening to save the earth. The idea that God is intentionally curtailing a specific species to save the earth.

I’m simply offering a different point of view. Looking at this from a different perspective. My little “Mr. and Mrs. Universe” conversation; I don’t mean to make light of this crisis. It is going to get bad. This is going to have real implications for real people. People are going to get sick and people are going to die. And when that starts happening it would have been way harder to bring this message. It is easier to talk at a high level before stuff gets real on the ground.

So let’s talk. What if the virus is medicine?

Some good things are happening. I heard that in the Wuhan Province, where the virus started, people are seeing blue skies for the first time. Some people there have never seen blue skies in their whole lifetime. People are hearing songbirds for the first time. For some people, the first time hearing a bird in their whole lifetime.

The great global industrial machine that scoops up natural resources and spits out pollution is being slowed down. Grinding to a halt in some places. Nature is being given a chance to recover, to heal.

When I look out the window of my house, I see people out walking more than ever before. I bet that we are all seeing that. Carol and I have noticed a fox hunting in the field. We have time to notice. It is kind of fun, the fox tends to show up about 6 o’clock every night. We’ve gotten to calling it Fox News! It’s way better than the other Fox News.

Fishing season usually opens April first, but have you heard that our governor changed the rule? She’s encouraging us to go fishing now. Do what Mainers do and get out on the water.

I saw two photographs on Facebook, side by side, maybe you have seen this too? The parking lot at Wolfe’s Neck State Park in Freeport: full. The parking lot at L.L.Bean in Freeport: empty.

Isn’t this the world that some of us have been hoping for?

I’m simply offering another way to look at it. Another perspective. In my work, and running Make Shift Coffee Houses- you know I have learned that there is always another perspective. Always another valid perspective. You could say that is it just a matter of perspective.

And a matter of values. It’s really a classic dichotomy, one of the great yin yangs of our existence: “me first” or “we first?” Do I want to help me? (Hoard toilet paper) Or do I want to help my community? (Give toilet paper.) Do I want to help my business? Or do I want to help the economy for everyone?

These questions go on. Do I want my race to thrive? Or do I want my species to thrive? How big is the perspective? When we ask that question, “me first” or “we first”, how big is the me? How big is the we? Do I want my species to thrive, or do I want the world ecosystem, mother earth to thrive?

These are not simple choices, and it’s never just one thing or the other. And, I change my answers depending on a situation, depending on what answers I find within. Sometimes, I’m all about “me first”. Sometimes I’m all about my neighborhood first, my people first. Sometimes I’m all about “we first;” I’m all about my community, my earth community.

I’m not bringing you an answer. I’m bringing you a question: What if the virus is medicine? This is our Quaker tradition, to bring questions and encourage you to look within for the answers. Honestly, I was afraid to bring you this question. So many of us are dealing with so many hard questions right now. And here’s another one! My thinking is, that if you and I can get even a smidge of clarity on this question, it might help with some other questions.

As Quakers we try to be always open to other views, always open to questions, and are led to proceed as way opens.